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Message from the Chair

As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding year at U3AC, I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the life of the organisation - our tutors and course leaders, our volunteers, our small but dedicated staff team, and of course our members, whose enthusiasm and curiosity give U3AC its character and energy.

This year has reminded me again what a distinctive community we are. Someone said to me recently that people join U3AC for the courses, but they stay for the relationships. It's a simple point, but it captures something essential about who we are. The learning matters, of course, but so does the sense of connection - the conversation before a class starts, the familiar faces, the friendships that quietly form over time.

The new Programme reflects that spirit. With over 400 courses and activities - a record for U3AC - it shows the extraordinary commitment of our tutors and course leaders, to whom we owe a great deal. The range is exceptional: everything from walking groups, sport and fitness, to languages, history, science, music, literature, practical skills, and our weekly lectures. Whether your interests lie in rock climbing or tap dance, classical Greek or cosmology, cryptic crosswords or creative writing, there is genuinely something for everyone. The Programme is larger than ever, so I'd encourage you to take your time with it: sit down with a cup of tea, browse at your own pace, and think about what you'd like to explore in the year ahead.

We will also be holding our Open Day on Thursday 2 July, from 10.00 to 13.00. This is an important moment in the year when prospective members can come in, meet people, and get a feel for what U3AC offers. Around 70% of new members join because someone they know recommended us, so if you have friends or family who might enjoy being part of U3AC, please do encourage them to come along.

Looking forward, we now have the stability of a renewed lease on 27-28 Bridge Street, agreed at the end of 2025. This gives us a secure base for the next decade and allows us to plan sensibly for improvements to our facilities and the member experience. Council will continue to work through the practicalities of this over the coming year, and we will keep members updated as that work progresses.

As you plan for the year ahead, I hope the Programme helps you shape a mix of activities that suits your interests and your time. Whether you prefer something structured, something active, or something more exploratory, there is plenty of choice and flexibility built in.

On behalf of the staff and the Council, I wish you a very enjoyable summer, and I look forward to welcoming you back in the autumn.

Kevin Holmes

Welcoming our third patron – Professor Ron Laskey CBE FRS FMedSci FLSW

On becoming a patron Professor Laskey said: “I’m delighted and honoured to become a Patron of U3AC, an organisation and community that has been a major part of my life and Ann’s in retirement. Many of you know me already from taking my course on Dazzling DNA, Scintillating Cells and Disconcerting Diseases between 2015 and 2022, or from my role in the Norah Boyce Lectures for nine years. Others will know me from having introduced me to the extraordinary range of U3AC subjects that I’ve enjoyed learning about (or in the case of languages, enjoyed struggling to persuade my ageing brain to learn about). Thank you; I’m enormously grateful!

Before I joined U3AC I taught about 10,000 Cambridge University students over 29 years as the Charles Darwin Professor of Embryology, while directing the CRUK half of the Gurdon Institute and then the MRC Cancer Cell Unit.

I feel intense “Impostor syndrome” joining Nicholas Coni and Martin Rees as a U3AC Patron, but I recognise that U3AC deserves any service that I can give.”

In his new role as Patron, Professor Laskey will serve as an ambassador and advisor, joining an esteemed group that includes U3AC founder Dr Nicholas Coni OBE and Professor Martin Rees, Lord Rees of Ludlow OM.



2026-2027 Academic year

Mon 5 Oct – Fri 11 Dec 2026
Mon 11 Jan – Fri 19 Mar 2027
Mon 12 Apr – Fri 11 Jun 2027
The start date for each course is given on the website, which is regularly updated.

Summer events

A programme of events is now available. Events have started and include tours, visits and garden parties. Places for most of the events need to be booked in advance, preferably by email to office@u3ac.org.uk. Full details are in the programme on our website: www.u3ac.org.uk and click on the link on the homepage.

Hybrid courses

Several courses are running in a hybrid format, whereby some members are in a classroom and others attend simultaneously via Zoom. Courses in hybrid format have the same course code, but the Zoom class has a (z) suffix e.g. HIS 01 and HIS 01(z) - you need to apply for one or the other. If you enrol for the classroom option you can also attend via Zoom if you cannot attend in person one week, but if you enrol for the Zoom course, you **cannot** attend in person.

Message from the Treasurer

Legacies and donations update

It is that time of the year again when we hope that most of you will be renewing your membership and selecting courses and activities from the huge range offered by U3AC.

Apart from remaining active members of U3AC another way you can support the organisation would be to leave a legacy in your will. Over the years many members have chosen to support U3AC in this way and we are extremely grateful for such acts of generosity. It shows a high level of trust in our work and a desire to see U3AC's success continue in the future.

If you are considering leaving a legacy, the Office can provide a leaflet with further details or feel free to contact me directly at treasurer@U3AC.org.uk

Another way to support U3AC's activities would be to make a donation on top of your membership subscription. Donations, no matter their size, are really appreciated and are important in ensuring U3AC maintains a strong financial condition. This in turn means we can continue to offer appropriate levels of support to members and maintain the diversity of courses and activities on offer. A donation can be made at the same time as you complete your membership subscription, either online or using the traditional paper form. Alternatively, you can make a separate BACS payment at any time using the following details:

Payee: U3AC NO2 ACCOUNT

Sort code: 08 92 99

Account number: 65863363

Please quote your membership number followed by "DONATION" as a reference for the payment.

On behalf of all the U3AC Council I would like to thank you for your continuing participation in and support of our great organisation.

Tony Pooley

Course information

Closing date for applications and course allocation

We would like to receive your application for courses by 1 August. Applications received after this date will not be included in the automated allocation process. Remember, all courses are allocated using a computer algorithm; details of this process are explained in the Programme.

A letter giving details of which courses you have been allocated will be sent to you by post with your membership card and Newsletter at the beginning of September.

New course

CUR 03(z): Cornucopia or crisis: the geopolitics of hydrocarbons, rare earths and other resources

Places: 40

As for CUR 03 but attending via Zoom.

Amendments to 2026-27 Programme

SCE 30(z): Introduction to weather and climate - **starts 6 Oct.**

ARTH 05: Greek sculpture at the Museum of Classical Archaeology - **CANCELLED**

Tutors' details

For data protection reasons, the Programme does not include tutors' contact details or the venue if a course is held in a member's home. This information is available to members only on the website once logged on. Members without internet access can obtain this information from the Office.

To view the details on the website, log in using your username and password. Your username is usually your first name, then a full stop, then your surname. The first time you log in, you will need to set up a password. To set up a password, click the 'Forgotten Password?' button on the login screen. Please contact the Office if you have any difficulties using the website.

Oversubscribed courses

Every year, several courses are oversubscribed - not necessarily the same courses each year and we can't always predict what they will be. However, in case it helps in terms of managing expectations we wanted to let you know that we would expect the following ones to be heavily oversubscribed again this year:

ART 05	Back to basics 1. An introduction to drawing and painting
ART 06	Back to basics 2. An introduction to drawing and painting (Spring term)
ART 08	Conversations about art
ARTC 03	Knitting
ARTC 06	Patterns and how to make them (Spring term)
ARTH 06	History of art for absolute beginners
ARTH 07	Looking at art: Golden Age and Academies (Spring term)
FIT 14	Introduction to Pickleball
FIT 32	Walks around Cambridge - Tuesday
FIT 38	Walks in Cambridge city - Saturday (Autumn and Summer terms)
FRE 01	French, the very beginning
FRE 03	Express yourself in French
HIS 09	Democracy in ancient Athens
HIS 26	Napoleon Bonaparte (Spring term)
HIS 29	Ten Turning Points in European History
HIS 31	The Great War 1914-19
HIS 36	The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street: The Bank of England 1694-1946
HIS 38	The Three Kingdoms under the Stuart Monarchy 1603-1714
ITA 01	Italian beginners
LIT 34	Neglected women writers
SCE 09	Emerging science and technology discussion group
SCE 15	Inventions that shaped the modern world
SCE 20	Spines, shoulders, hips and knees. How do they work normally, what can go wrong and what can you do about it?
SCE 30(z)	Introduction to weather and climate

General information

A reminder

The annual membership subscription of £120 contributes to the administration and accommodation costs of the U3AC. It is not a payment for courses, lectures or activities. Members can attend the Wednesday and Norah Boyce lectures (space permitting), apply for up to 6 courses and apply for visits arranged throughout the year. You can also join any of our "Xtra activities" groups which are open to all members. If you apply for only ONE course and that course has a limited number of places we cannot guarantee you a place on that course, so it is advisable to provide an alternative.

Open Day

An Open Day for prospective members will be held on **Thursday 2 July 2026** from 10 am - 1 pm. Please tell your friends and neighbours.

Please note staff will not be able to assist current members with enrolments or enquiries on this day.

Forthcoming social trips (see page 6 for details)

- Wednesday 9 September - Roof Garden Canary Wharf, River Boat, London Museum and Tower Bridge Museum
- Wednesday 4 November - "Frida Khalo, The Making of an Icon" at Tate Modern, London
- Friday 11 December - Holkham Hall

Sheila Farrant

Sheila Farrant sadly passed away in April. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who attended her courses over the years. She gave her last classes at the grand age of 90 and it gave her so much pleasure to share her knowledge. If anyone would like to email me with their memories of mum it would be lovely. She ran poetry workshops for many years with the U3AC, also ran talks on archaeology, Britain begins and others. Thank you to U3AC for the opportunity for mum to keep sharing her knowledge and her creativity.

Caramoorey7@gmail.com

Volunteering

There are many opportunities for ensuring the ongoing success of the organisation by volunteering. Although many members will have joined U3AC to take part in courses, all members are encouraged to commit to volunteering in one of the ways below. When enrolling online please complete the Volunteering section in 'Your Info'. If you are completing a paper application form, please enter the details on there.

Reception desk

You will be meeting and greeting members as they come onto the first floor and be there to assist with any enquiries they have, plus doing photocopying for tutors. Interested members will be friendly and welcoming, and need to know their way around the website to confidently be able to answer members' queries. There is a small team of volunteer receptionists who each work one day a week and we are in need of cover for them in case of holiday or illness.

Zoom host

The role entails being in the U3AC premises, digitally opening and closing Zoom classes as a host on our licenses, being alert to anyone having technical difficulties, troubleshooting and giving advice where possible, taking the register, liaising with the Office staff via walkie-talkie and tidying classrooms at the end of the day. Interested members will be friendly and welcoming, have a good understanding of computers and have attended Zoom courses. Could you spare half a day each week in term time? The day would be the same each week and would be fixed by mutual agreement. This is a very important role which benefits a large number of members, without volunteers we will be unable to host Zoom courses.

Trips and visits

The Cultural and Social Activities Committee welcomes members to join them in arranging day trips and visits and processing applications.

Tutoring

Like getting satisfaction from teaching others something interesting or helpful? Enjoy sharing your interests with like-minded people? Teaching for U3AC is particularly rewarding as all the students are not only keen to learn but can also provide knowledge and information from their own experience which enlivens the whole process.

Access to venues

If you have mobility issues please look at the 'Course venues' pages at the end of the Programme to check whether the course you are interested in is held in an accessible room before applying for it. However, every effort is made to ensure courses are accessible.

Gift membership

Do you know someone who is retiring shortly? Would you like to give them a retirement gift of a year's U3AC membership? Contact the Office and we can send them a gift card along with a Programme and application form.

Wednesday Lecture recordings

Recordings of last term's Wednesday lectures are now on the Wednesday Lectures page of our website for you to view.

Norah Boyce Science Lecture recordings

Recordings of previous terms' Norah Boyce Science lectures are now on the Norah Boyce Science Lectures page of our website for you to view.

Other organisations

Details of events held by other organisations can be viewed on our website:

<https://www.u3ac.org.uk/social/other-organisations/>

Achievements

We are delighted to hear that U3AC member and tutor Mike Levy has been awarded an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours for his services to Holocaust Education. A writer, playwright, researcher and public speaker, he holds a fellowship on Holocaust education with the Imperial War Museum. Mike runs history projects with schools and has studied British responses to the Kindertransport.

If you have received a major recognition in the last 6 months please contact the Office so we can celebrate your success.

Deaths

We were sorry to hear recently of the deaths of:

Richard Wynn in February

Ruth Hawkins in March

Rob Searles in March

Michael Pitman in April

Elaine Rose in April

Brian Wallis in April

Valerie Mahy in May

Sheila Farrant in May

David Thear in May

U3AC Cultural and Social Activities Committee

The Cultural and Social Activities committee, chaired by Clem Messenger, organises trips and visits throughout the year. Information about these can be obtained from:

- weekly email Bulletin
- U3AC website: [Trips and visits](#)

Applications open at least 4 weeks before each outing and will be processed on a **first come first served basis**. You can apply either via the website, or by completing a paper application form. Places can only be offered to a non-member if there is no waiting list and arrangements must be made through one of the organisers. Our standard pick-up points are the Trumpington and Madingley Road Park & Ride sites (where parking for the day is free).

The following trips have been arranged:

Wednesday 9 September Roof Garden Canary Wharf, River Boat, London Museum and Tower Bridge Museum.
Application forms available 1 July

Wednesday 4 November "Frida Khalo, The Making of an Icon" at Tate Modern, London.
Application forms available 2 September

Friday 11 December Holkham Hall.
Application forms available nearer the time