



LANCASTER & MORECAMBE

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NEW MEMBERS' BOOKLET

WELCOME TO L&M U3A!



WELCOME

Thank you for expressing an interest in the Lancaster & Morecambe U3A. We hope you will find this New Members' Booklet useful and informative. As you will see, we cover a wide range of interests with about 70 interest groups meeting each month, far above the average for our size of U3A. So, there could well be something of interest to you!

Should you decide to join us, I would encourage you to get involved by trying a number of different activities as well as attending our Monthly Meeting. We are a self-help organisation, run by the members for the members. Consequently, if at some stage you would like to contribute as a group leader/coordinator or help in running the L&M U3A in some other way, you would be most welcome to let us know of any interest, skill or expertise you would be willing to share.

The L&M U3A offers all of its members the opportunity to pursue and share their individual interests and to meet new friends in a relaxed and welcoming environment. I look forward to welcoming you as a new member, soon.

Pauline Fielding

Chairperson

What does the Lancaster and Morecambe U3A offer?

Retired or semi-retired and living within a reasonable distance of Lancaster? Want to learn a language, or delve into your family history? Perhaps join others for a walk in the beautiful local countryside? Or maybe your taste runs more to singing in a choir or going to a wine appreciation evening? With over 800 members and 70 interest groups meeting each month, the Lancaster & Morecambe University of the Third Age (U3A) offers all this and much more.

What is it and what does it do?

The L&M U3A is a self-help, voluntary organisation with no religious or political affiliations. It is an independent, self-governing, charitable body with a Committee drawn from the membership. It is affiliated to the Third Age Trust which brings together U3As throughout Britain and is itself part of a world-wide movement. Further information at: lancaster&morecambeu3a.org.uk, and u3a.org.uk.

The central concept of the U3A is for members to participate in a shared learning experience, to which all contribute, in order to enhance the quality of their lives. The social side of life is also well covered. No member of L&M U3A needs to be lonely.

Each interest group is led or coordinated by one or more of its own members.

Activities can be of an academic or practical nature, or purely for relaxation. Or even all three!

Learning within the L&M U3A is very relaxed. No curricula are set and there are no exams. Nor are any qualifications awarded. New members should not expect a formal or classroom environment! We encourage active participation in the various groups, and the direction of the groups and the levels at which they work are entirely for the individuals within them to decide.

Who can belong?

Membership is open to all those who are no longer in full-time employment. There are no entrance requirements and people of all backgrounds, ethnicity and beliefs are equally welcome. Many live in the Lancaster and Morecambe area. There are neither age nor geographical limits, and our members can - and do - come from all over the surrounding areas.

Monthly Meetings

These are usually held on the fourth Tuesday morning of every month (except December) in the Dukes Theatre, Lancaster. The Annual General Meeting is held in February. Monthly Meetings start with an informal half-hour for coffee/tea, followed by the main meeting, which includes a speaker. All members are welcome.

A wide and varied range of outside speakers is engaged. Occasionally the

speaker is one of our members. Recent subjects have included The Settle to Carlisle Railway, Cumbrian Food Traditions and the work of the North West Sound Archives. We are pleased to hear from members who are able to recommend speakers.

Groups

Groups are the backbone of the L&M U3A, with at least one group meeting in both the morning and afternoon of almost every week day. There is also a small number of weekend and evening activities. Occasional attendance is completely acceptable for some groups, but others have meetings that are linked. A list of current groups appears near the end of this booklet.

Where do the groups meet?

The Friends' Meeting House near Lancaster Railway Station is used for many of our indoor meetings. (The L&M U3A has no connection with the Quaker movement but rents rooms from them in their attractive and conveniently located building.) Some groups are held in members' own homes and other venues. Outdoor groups meet in a variety of places.

What's on when?

A monthly Diary is produced and circulated to all members and includes times and venues of all meetings in the coming month. In addition, a monthly Newsletter provides reports on previous activities and advance information of special events and

other items likely to be of interest to our members. They are available for collection at the Monthly Meeting. If not collected our monthly mailing will be posted or hand delivered by one of the members.

How to join a group

In many cases, it is possible to arrive at a meeting unannounced. However there are exceptions:

- Meetings held in members' homes: the group leader/coordinator must always be contacted prior to attending for the first time.
- Inevitably some groups are full (this is indicated in the monthly Diary). Limits may be due to the way the group operates or the size of the venue. If you wish to join a group that is full please talk to the Groups Coordinator. We try to start new groups whenever limits are reached.
- A group may be mid-way through a project or a series of linked meetings making it difficult to join at that stage. In such a case, the monthly Diary will indicate that the group leader or coordinator should be contacted before attending.
- Language Groups: Prospective language group members should contact the group leader to introduce themselves, as both parties will wish to discuss current levels of knowledge to ensure the best option is found.
- Walking Groups: See specific notes on page 7.

How big are the groups?

The size of the groups differs greatly. The smallest consist of less than half a dozen individuals, while some of the biggest groups have over 50 members.

How many groups can a member join?

There is no limit! Some members join many groups, while others attend only one or two.

What is the standard of the groups?

Most groups cater for non-specialists although some are a bit more advanced. Inevitably some have progressed over time from beginners' to a more advanced standard.

How long do group meetings last?

Meetings indoors (including in homes) usually last around 2 hours with time for refreshments. Other activities may also be of around the same duration, though some will be longer. Some last all day (e.g. many trips and some walks). Details are in the monthly Diary.

How is the L&M U3A financed?

There is an annual subscription and a small charge is made for each indoor group meeting including the Monthly Meeting. Costs are kept to a minimum as both the administration and groups are run on a totally voluntary basis by members.

As a registered charity, tax-paying members help to boost funds at no cost to

themselves by agreeing to Gift Aid their annual subscription.

In addition, funds have been secured from various bodies including Awards for All, and the Lancashire Lease for Life Fund, to help purchase equipment, produce booklets, buy materials to kick-start new groups, provide financial assistance with trips etc. etc.

Membership

Single membership currently costs £15 annually, running from 1 September. Joint membership is £28.00 (available to any 2 people living at the same address provided they are willing to receive only 1 copy of all publications). Those who join after 1st March pay a reduced fee. The subscription covers affiliation to the national organisation (the Third Age Trust), a copy of their quarterly magazine, insurance, the monthly Diary/ Newsletter, subsidies for groups and administration costs. New member application forms are available from the Membership Secretary. Cheques should be made payable to "Lancaster & Morecambe U3A".

Other Costs

To help cover the cost of hiring rooms, refreshments and the expenses of running group meetings in homes, a charge of £1 is made for most indoor meetings in public places such as Lancaster Friends' Meeting House or the Dukes Theatre and £0.50 for meetings in private homes. (These charges include tea/coffee). Higher charges do apply to some groups where special facilities are required (e.g. Crown Green

Bowls). There is no charge for groups that involve no direct cost to the organisation (such as walks). Individual charges apply for special events such as Theatre Trips, Coach Trips, the Christmas lunch etc. These are fixed with the aim that they will be self-funding, but are not designed to make any profit.

Liability

For all L&M U3A activities, the ultimate responsibility for personal safety must rest with the individual member. Insurance is limited to public liability for the negligence of members.

Transport

Many members are car owners and are very generous in providing lifts to others. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have difficulty in reaching any venue. However, members are asked to be considerate and not expect drivers to provide a “door to door” service. A contribution towards petrol is expected from each passenger - currently this is £1 for trips to and from destinations up to 10 miles, £2 for 10-20 miles and so on.

Volunteering and Potential New Groups

All members are encouraged to consider becoming actively involved in the running of the organisation. Ideas for, and volunteers to lead or co-ordinate, new groups are always most welcome. Any idea or subject consistent with adherence to the aims, objectives and principles of the U3A and an adequate number of participants is all that is needed.

Current group leaders/coordinators may want to share the load or even to retire, and all members are urged to consider if they can help. With no leader or coordinator, groups cannot of course survive.

A booklet giving information on leading/coordinating a group is available from the Groups' Coordinator.

On the administrative side, volunteers are always welcome. There are many jobs to be done, ranging from filling envelopes, making refreshments, delivering the monthly newsletters, to assisting with management etc. etc. Interested members should contact any Committee member to express their willingness to be involved.

Data Storage

Membership records are kept on the computers of three members. No details are ever divulged to outside individuals or organisations – with the sole exception that, unless individual members request otherwise, a mailing list is sent (usually four times a year) to the Third Age Trust to enable them to send out direct mailing of the national “U3A News”. They undertake that this data will be used exclusively for this purpose.

Notes Specific to Walking Groups

Please note that members participating in walks do so at their own risk, and that the L&M U3A and walk leaders can bear no responsibility for accidents.

- Anyone uncertain about any point should contact the walk leader given in the Diary.
- Walks occasionally have to be cancelled when the weather is bad. If in doubt, it is advisable to contact the walk leader to check if the walk will go ahead. Weather or other considerations can result in a walk being re-routed although the meeting point is not changed.
- Although walkers usually meet at convenient points for car sharing, there is no guarantee that a lift can be given. Members requiring transport from the pick-up point are strongly advised to pre-arrange to share a car. (Where a walk actually starts from a different point than the rendezvous point, eg start in Lakes with final rendezvous point being in Carnforth, this is not usually necessary.) For car-sharing costs, please see "Transport" on page 6.
- For safety reasons, walks which attract less than four participants may not go ahead as an L&M U3A walk. However, if the individuals concerned wish to continue, they may do so as a private, non-U3A party.
- Difficulty levels of walks vary enormously, even within the different groups. The monthly Diary gives brief details. If there is any doubt as to the suitability of a walk, please contact the walk leader.
- Walking boots and waterproofs are advisable for most walks and absolutely essential for some.
- Walk leaders carry a basic first aid kit, but are not qualified first-aiders. On some more strenuous walks, a two-man emergency bivouac tent is also carried. Members should however ensure that they have with them sufficient warm clothing and any special medication or other items they may need.

L&M U3A GROUPS LIST

(usual number of meetings per month in brackets)

Our groups are the life blood of our organisation and are all run by our members acting as unpaid volunteers. As we are growing in numbers, new groups are formed on a regular basis. A few cease because they are not supported or have a fixed mission which has been accomplished. So the following list is only a snapshot in time.

Archaeology (1 with some trips)

Architecture (1)

Art and Antiques (1)

Art Groups:

Art Group (2)

Drawing (2)

Bird Watching

Full day in the field (1)

Half day in the field (1)

Basics (mainly indoor) (1)

Books

Book Lovers (Library group) (1)

Classic Books (1)

Bowls:

Crown Green (3 seasonal)

Short Mat (4)

Bridge (2)

Calligraphy (2)

Cards and Crafts (1)

Computing:

General (1)

Beginners (2)

Creative Writing (1)

Cryptic Crosswords (2)

Current Affairs 1 (1)

Current Affairs 2 (1)

Family History (1)

Film Appreciation (1)

Gardens and Gardening (1 seasonal)

Geology (1 with additional trips)

History (1)

Languages: (additional groups currently under consideration)

French: Post Beginners (2)

Improvers (2)

Conversation (4)

German: Relative Beginners (2 – 1 hour)

Translation (2)

Grammar and Vocab Development (2 – 1 hour)

Italian: Italian (2)

Latin Latin (2)

Spanish: Beginners (2)

Relative Beginners (2)

Advanced (2)

Meditation and Healing (1)

Music:

CD Recital (1)

Concert Visits (variable, approx 1 average)

Exploring Music (1)

Jazz (1)

Music Miscellany (1)

Opera (1 + visits)

Singing (2)

Numbers and Shapes (1)

(typically in groups of 6 sessions when Words is not active)

Philosophy (1)

Photography (1)

Playreading 1 (1)

Playreading 2 (1)

Poetry (1 – with intervals)

Pub Lunch (approximately every 3 months on a Sunday)

Research Group (*supports members undertaking local studies*)

Scrabble (2)

Science and Technology (2)

Table Tennis (4)

Tea Dance (1)

Theatre Visits (*Two groups – both irregular timing. One group concentrates on local events, the other on coach trips to theatres farther afield.*)

Trips and Holidays (*organised, occasionally for U3A members*)

Walking Groups:

Monday Walks:

Amble (1)

Easier (2/3)

Harder(2/3)

Fell Walk (1)

Tuesday Walk (1)

Thursday Evening Walk (2 seasonal)

Friday Public Transport Walks (1)

Saturday Walks:

Longer Walk (1)

Fell Walk (1)

Walking from Maps (*occasional short course*)

Wine Appreciation (*typically 4 per year*)

Words (1) (*typically in groups of 6 sessions when Numbers and Shapes is not active*)

Yoga (4)

THE AIMS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF U.K. U3As

The U3As in the UK are autonomous self help organisations run by the voluntary efforts of their members. All U3As are members of the Third Age Trust (a Registered Charity) which is a national support body. Many U3A's including Lancaster and Morecambe are also members of regional and local U3A collaborations giving their members access to study days, summer schools and similar activities.

Aims

1. To encourage and enable older people no longer in full time paid employment to help each other to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience.
2. To demonstrate the benefits and enjoyment to be gained and the new horizons to be discovered in learning throughout life.
3. To celebrate the capabilities and potential of older people and their value to society.
4. To make U3As accessible to all older people.
5. To encourage the establishment of U3As in every part of the country where conditions are suitable and to support and collaborate with them.

Guiding Principles

1. *Programmes*

- a) U3As offer activities which reflect members' wishes and which aim to satisfy the widest possible range of interests: educational, cultural, recreational, physical and social.
- b) U3As seek resources appropriate to their learning; from their own memberships; from the Trust's National Support systems; and from outside organisations, both local and national.
- c) U3As make use of new technologies as they become available.

2. *Purpose, styles and methods of learning*

- a) The pleasure of learning is a driving force in the work of U3As.
- b) U3As neither require nor award any qualifications.
- c) By sharing their learning U3A members help one another to develop their knowledge skills and experience.
- d) U3As arrange and support their own programmes as appropriate to their chosen learning activities.
- e) U3A members regard themselves as both learners and teachers.

3. *Funding*

- a) U3As are funded in the main by the subscriptions of their members. Funding from outside sources may be sought and is accepted provided there are no conditions attached which conflict with the aims and guiding principles
- b) Members undertake themselves, without payment, the many and varied tasks necessary to run their U3A. Usually, paid tutors are engaged only when special expertise is necessary to ensure the health and safety of members taking part in certain activities, and when U3As do not have an appropriately qualified member available.

4. *Reaching out*

- a) U3As take every opportunity to promote the benefits of learning later in life and the attractions and advantages of the U3A way of learning. They make membership available to the whole spectrum of older people in their community.
- b) Where possible, U3As keep in touch with members and former members who, for a variety of reasons, can no longer take part fully in U3A activities; in order to maintain their interest in learning and to offer friendly support which is a fundamental part of U3A life.
- c) As appropriate, U3As offer voluntary assistance in learning activities to educational and cultural bodies in their communities.
- d) U3As collaborate with institutions such as museums, galleries, libraries, other U3As in learning partnerships in which both U3As and the institutions themselves may benefit through research, advancement of knowledge and mutual respect for capabilities.
- e) U3As engage with local and national government departments and other agencies that formulate lifelong learning policies and practices in order to influence those that relate particularly to learning in later life.
- f) U3As are ready to collaborate with institutions undertaking research into ageing and the position of older people in society.

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