

u3a Newsletter

Longridge



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Welcome

TO THE LAUNCH OF YOUR LONGRIDGE U3A NEWSLETTER

A quarterly newsletter that gives you a voice and keeps you up to date with the latest news and views

Bringing Our u3a Community Together

This is the launch of our NEW newsletter, and we hope you enjoy reading about the Longridge branch. The focus is to bring the Longridge u3a community closer together. Communication is key in any organisation, and we hope to improve this further amongst our members over the months ahead. It is important for members to know what is taking place within the organisation they belong to. With the help of this newsletter, the Facebook group and the u3a website, as well as the many face to face meetings we have, we hope to keep everyone better informed, with all members able to share and contribute in a helpful and positive way.

Over the next twelve months the group aims to:

- feature aspects of the various interest groups, showcasing the best there is to offer.
- allow members a platform for information sharing and discussion.
- increase the membership.
- share information from local, network and national level.

Tell us what you are doing in your groups and share your stories. There will be regular features you might like to contribute to. We welcome everyone's input.

Notes from the Chair, Sally Maxwell

This year for the first time, at its annual public meeting, Longridge Council invited our u3a to talk about its place in Longridge society. I spoke about the Third Age as a time for people to enjoy their time after childhood, (first age) working life, (second age) and into their Third Age. The Third age can be a time to explore new or existing interests, to travel and spend more time with family. However, it can also be a time for loneliness as contact is lost with colleagues, depression as longstanding structures are stripped away, with health issues and loss taking their toll.

The NHS characterises **WELLBEING** as being based on:

1. learning new skills
2. acquiring new interests
3. being able to help
4. being part of a social network
5. mindfulness



All these elements pretty well sum up the u3a's purpose. Brain function is preserved by learning new skills and u3a is an answer to the false defeatist saying, 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks!' New interests lead to new social contacts and many lonely people have made new friends and enjoyed the companionship of like-minded people.

Being able to help by sharing skills, experience and knowledge as a convenor or at least a member of a group gives agency and value. Far too often 'old dears' are put into a passive role, but we break that stereotype by focusing on current activities, preventing us from dwelling on the past or concentrating on a gloomy future. 'My diary is full now instead of empty', is a comment often heard from u3a members.

Front photograph - The walking group meet for a walk and lunch at Hurst Green. They meet on the first Wednesday of the month around 10.00am. If you would like to be notified of future walks, please contact the Groups Coordinator on groupcoordinator4u3a@gmail.com or ask at the monthly meeting.

New Groups to Join

There are currently 24 special interest groups with this number growing all the time. A number of new groups started this year which include, Canasta, Photography, Food for Thought, Ukulele, Card Making and Walking. There are also new ones in the pipeline, so you can put your name down if interested. These are, Lunch group, Geography and Geology and German. Plans are also being discussed to have groups to attract more men. Some suggestions are, The last of the Brown Ale, (a take on The Last of the Summer Wine, Longridge style) Trains, Planes and Automobiles and Chess. If you are interested in joining any of these groups, please contact the group coordinator on groupcoordinator4u3a@gmail.com We would very much like to have your ideas on the type of groups you are interested in.



Click the link below to hear them in our Longridge u3a Facebook group. They sound amazing!

<https://www.facebook.com/100008069703936/videos/833619888292328/>

Members of the Ukulele group and the new Rusty Band group, playing at the AGM last September.



Member Numbers Up

There are currently 225 members of Longridge u3a. Numbers have slowly increased over the past 2 years since the Covid restrictions were lifted. The organisation is once again thriving with new members joining every month. The very successful program of speakers at the monthly meetings and the increasing number and variety of groups are just two of the factors for its success. However, the most important aspect in its ongoing success is the friendship. Longridge is a place known for being friendly and welcoming with new people mentioning the warmth they receive from everyone. New people are retiring and relocating to this area and are looking for new hobbies and friendship. We will all continue to have pride in the ongoing success of our organisation and watch how it grows over the coming months and years.

Join us on Facebook



Longridge u3a Facebook group was launched in December 2022. This is a private group for Longridge members only. To join, type 'Longridge u3a' in the search bar and request to join. Please answer the questions and agree to the group rules and you will be admitted. We hope this group will provide a safe and supportive space for members to share activities and improve communication with one another. Happy sharing!

Longridge u3a AGM

The Longridge u3a AGM took place on 5 September in the Civic Hall. This is when all the previous Trustees step down, nominations are made and new members are appointed. All members of the committee are volunteers and they work on behalf of the members to ensure the charity runs smoothly. Committee meetings are held monthly in the Heritage Centre allowing reporting, updates, the sharing of information and planning. Trustees can only serve for a maximum of three years at any one time and a total of 9 years altogether. Therefore, the committee is always looking for new members to join each year to keep our u3a going.

Restarting after lockdown, all the members needed to step down leaving the organisation at risk of closing, but luckily the current committee stepped up and we are still here. To avoid this problem recurring in the future, the committee is being very proactive in recruiting new members. In September we said goodbye to Jean Hill and Sandy Fog who have done a brilliant job as Speakers Secretaries making sure we were all entertained at the monthly meetings, with their role being replaced by Amanda Lawrenson and Joy Marsden.

We also welcome Anne Haworth who has taken on the role of secretary with Pat Gardner changing roles to publicity along with Barbara Griffiths, a position that has been vacant for the past 2 years.

We would love to hear from anyone interested in joining the committee to become a Trustee or committee member as there will be vacancies coming up later this year. Many of you have gained lifelong skills that would be greatly valued, allowing a positive contribution to be made for our lovely organisation. It is also very rewarding to see your initiatives put into place for the benefit of everyone. So have a think about it, talk to one of the committee members or maybe come along to one of the committee meetings to see what happens.

It's all good fun!

Focus On - u3a Food for Thought Group

The Food for Thought group (FfT) was formed in April 2023. Its members like to go to eating places trying new foods and experiences, but also want to talk about anything to do with food. It is limited to 14 members, with a few "reserves," as most restaurants cannot accommodate more than 10 or 12 people and members' homes can't take more than 8. We meet at 12.30pm on the 3rd Friday of the month. So far, we have visited a couple of pubs, an Italian, Greek and Indian restaurant, a cocktails bar and a member's home. We have plans to go to a tapas place and another member's home event during Chinese New Year.

Each member takes turns in choosing where we go, incorporating discussion or an activity about food. We've had a couple of very interesting food quizzes, talks on how to make cocktails (and we tried a few) and the use of local ingredients for a meal at home. We not only eat but we learn about food, ingredients and other cultures too.



Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year falls on Saturday 10th February 2024 and the year of the Dragon will begin. Although modern-day China follows the Gregorian Calendar, the Chinese New Year and other festivals are governed by the traditional lunar calendar and will be celebrated by Chinese all over the world. The Chinese New Year (or Spring Festival) falls on different days in the months of January or February. It lasts for 15 days with each day having some significance attached to it.

The Chinese Zodiac

The Chinese Zodiac, or shengxiao (shnng-sshyao) meaning 'born resembling', is represented by 12 zodiac animals. In order they are the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. Each new year is a new animal year and people born in that year are said to have some similar characteristics to the animal and each other. As the year of the Rabbit comes to a close, the year of the Dragon begins. The dragon is special in the Chinese zodiac because it is the only mythical animal and represents strength, health and good luck. More Chinese babies are born in the year of the Dragon than any other year.

The Chinese are very superstitious about the first few days of the New Year when every day must be observed accordingly and are associated with good luck and WEALTH and certainly no cursing or swearing.

The first day of the New Year is the day for visiting parents and praying to the ancestors. Lots of nibbles are consumed! No sweeping or cleaning (hooray!) as you might sweep away good fortune. Most people do not cook or use knives and they eat the vegetarian "chai" which is very delicious.

The second day is the birthday of all dogs, so give your dogs a treat! The visiting goes on, friends and more relatives. I think most modern Chinese stop at day two with the third day reserved for recovering.

The February FfT Meeting

The seventh day of the New Year is auspiciously 'everybody's birthday', Renri, the day human beings were believed to be created and coincides with the FfT group meeting. This will be celebrated in a member's home with some 'must have' foods to bring good luck and wealth.

Some of the foods served will include dumplings which are boat shapes like gold and silver ingots: Spring rolls which get their names from the Spring Festival and look like gold bars: Noodles which are always eaten and signify longevity - just don't cut them if possible: Mandarin oranges and tangerines which are usually exchanged when you visit relatives and friends and signifies luck - their Chinese name also sounds like GOLD.

To end these examples (of which there are many), the word 'fish' in Chinese is in the word 'surplus' and this has led to fish symbolizing abundance and hope for surplus in the coming year and makes fish dishes the perfect candidates for Spring Festival celebration.

MunLing Shields - A Chinese Singaporean

Spinach and Nettle Soup (serves about 8)

At the October event last year, we were treated to June Parker's fantastic soup. It is not only delicious and warming on a cold day but also all the ingredients were sourced locally. June had very interesting information about the ingredients, the sources/suppliers all being as local and green as possible. Here is the recipe, courtesy of Rob her son, if you would like to try your hand at making it. At this time of year, you could substitute the nettles with more spinach, flat leaf parsley or Chinese celery (more leafy and lovely tasting leaves) or any greens you fancy.

Ingredients

300 ml milk
300 ml double cream
400g grated white potato
300g young spinach leaves
300g young nettle leaves
1 large onion, finely diced
6 tsp nutmeg
6 tsp flour
3 tsp celery salt
2 cloves garlic or 2 tsp garlic paste
300 ml vegetable stock
Some butter for frying



Method

Blanch the nettle and spinach leaves, drop into cold water to stop them cooking further and retain their colour.

Squeeze them to dry before chopping finely.

Fry the nutmeg, celery salt, and garlic for a minute in a generous amount of butter before adding the onion.

Cook to translucent and add the flour, stirring vigorously.

Add the stock to deglaze and mix well before adding other ingredients.

Hand blend until desired consistency.

Simmer on very low heat for 30 mins to allow the potato to cook and the soup to thicken.

Taste and add more stock if required.

Enjoy!

Alphabet Survival Guide

Following on from Dame Esther Rantzen's article in the last edition of TAM magazine, I thought we could do our own A-Z of survival to publish in subsequent newsletters. What are the most important life lessons you have learned in your accumulated years of wisdom. Do you have any strategies, observations, thoughts or discoveries that could help someone in their life. It can be serious, funny or just made up. You can choose as little as one letter or do the whole way through from A-Z.

C
B
A

It would be good to cover the whole alphabet so think about the unusual letters like X and Z too. If you have a little story to go with the advice, all the better. You do not need to have your name published if you would rather not; just say when you send it, and it will be published anonymously.

I'll start you off with **Z is for ZEST!** I have discovered this is something everyone should have in their life, if only from time to time. You only need a small amount as it can sure pack a punch. To get your supply, join the u3a!

We look forward to receiving your replies. Send your survival guide to publicity4longridgeu3a@gmail.com or drop it off at the next monthly meeting.

Step Back to the Past

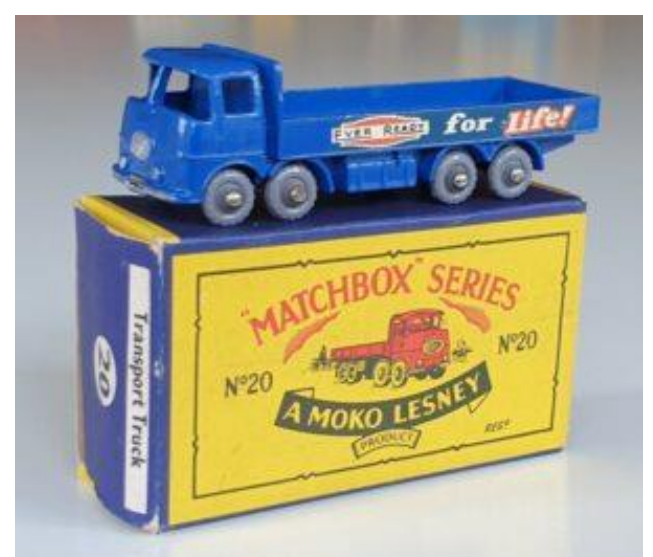
If you did not make the monthly meeting last November, you missed a treat. Roy Cauldwell stepped in at the last minute to entertain us with a step back to the past. He took us down memory lane to the 1950's and 60's in a talk entitled, 'Those were the Days'. He took us back to our school days and jogged our memories on the type of houses we lived in, with the lack of basic facilities like washing machines, fridges, and indoor toilets. Our regular deliveries of milk, pop and vegetables and not forgetting the coalman.

He gave everyone an opportunity to talk about their memories, but it would be good if we could continue this theme as a regular feature.

We can all share similar stories of how we grew up, what school was like, what we ate for tea and where we went for our holidays. Who has a story or a photo they could share with everyone. Maybe a picture of your school days or an important life event. Get your photo albums out and see what you can find. We would love you to share your stories and photos which I'm sure everyone would love to see and hear.

Let's hope Ray will be invited again in the future for a trip down memory lane part 2.

Send your stories and photos to publicity4longridgeu3a@gmail.com or drop them off at the monthly meeting.



Monthly Meetings

We have a wonderful programme of speakers arranged for 2024 at the monthly meetings. These are held at the Civic Hall on Calder Ave in Longridge on the first Tuesday of the month, starting at 1.45pm. All members receive the program with the Christmas card but do remember to invite friends and neighbours to join us, especially if they are new to the area. Speakers last year certainly drew the crowds with 60 to 80 members regularly attending. There will always be a friendly smile and a cup of tea (or coffee) waiting for you. So, see you there!



Lets Celebrate

This year will see Longridge u3a celebrate its 10-year anniversary. The very first meeting was held on 29 January 2014 with an aim to set up an organisation in order to make new friends, enjoy life and stretch minds and bodies with a range of activities. The plan has surely worked as 10 years later, Longridge u3a is a thriving community brought together by the goodwill of volunteers and the driving force of the groups and members. Without the commitment and enthusiasm from everyone, there would be no Longridge u3a so we must all come together and make 2024 a year to remember. A sub-committee has been formed to put together a programme of activities throughout the year and we want to involve as many members as possible.

The first date for your diary is:

Saturday 18 May 10.00 am to 4.00pm at the Civic Hall

This is a day to come together to publicise the variety of activities on offer to all members.

Invitations will be sent to local MP's, Councillors and representatives of other local organisations, as well as people of Longridge and the surrounding villages. to join us on this special day.

Please start to think about how to showcase your group or the monthly meeting; it may be a stand, an exhibition, a demonstration, a PowerPoint presentation, a discussion - the possibilities are in your hands.

So put on your thinking caps and let us have your ideas; we would love to hear from you. Talk to a member of the committee or contact the secretary on secretary4u3a@gmail.com

Bring a Friend

The Longridge u3a Annual Coffee Morning will be held on:

**Friday 15th March from 10.00am to 12.00md
at Christ Church on Berry Lane**

Bring a friend and enjoy a free coffee and cake. It is a chance for non-members to find out about the u3a and see what is on offer. We would love to see you there.

Longridge u3a Trustees and Committee Members

Chairman:	Sally Maxwell
Vice-Chair:	Elaine Green
Treasurer:	Monica Draper
Secretary:	Anne Haworth
Groups Co-ordinator:	Andrew Seed
Membership Secretaries:	Jenny Doran & Joyce Westwell
Speakers' Secretaries:	Amanda Lawrenson & Joy Marsden
Webmaster:	Reg Draper
Publicity & Newsletter Editors:	Pat Gardner & Barbara Griffiths

The meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month starting at 2.00pm at the Heritage Centre, next to the Station Café.

Contact Us:

Email:	Secretary : secretary4u3a@gmail.com
	Group Coordinator: groupcoordinator4u3a@gmail.com
	Publicity: publicity4longridgeu3a@gmail.com
Website:	u3asites.org.uk>longridge
Facebook:	Longridge u3a
