

LEEK u3a NEWSLETTER

July 2026

Dear Members

As I write this I'm just recovering from 3 days spent in York at the 2nd National u3a festival. About 1,200 u3a members from across the UK got together to socialise and share activities (some familiar, others not so). I'm not sure how often this event is going to happen - the first was in 2024 - but I would recommend you keep an eye on the National u3a website for announcements. This sort of event is a great way to make new u3a friends outside of our local groups. And if you've never stayed in university student accommodation, it can be quite an experience!

Keith Jones Chair, Leek u3a

Buildings security during the summer months.

Please can group leaders and members take extra care during the summer months when not all groups may be running to ensure that the buildings are securely closed when left unattended.

Please do not assume that the usual group will follow your own.

Please make sure that somebody takes responsibility for the keys when you are leaving - or lock the building up. This includes closing any open doors or windows.

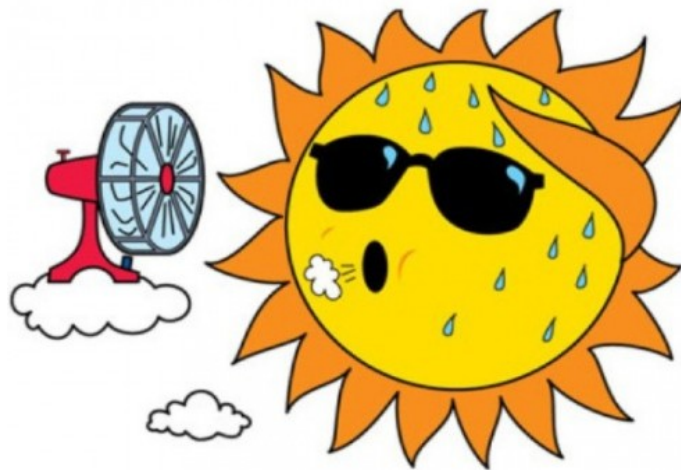
Leek u3a, Norton House, Fynney Street, Leek, ST13 5LF

u3a

<https://leek.u3asite.uk>

Summer meetings

I know that several groups scale back or stop completely during the summer because of holidays, childcare duties, etc.. Please remember that for many of our members, their u3a groups may be an important event in their week and possibly their only social interaction.



I would urge leaders to bear this in mind and if groups can continue (perhaps in a reduced or slightly modified form or with a different temporary 'leader') then that may be of benefit to some members.

If leaders have any questions, please contact the groups coordinator, Dawn Thomas.

Thanks,

Keith Jones

Health & Safety

Following the recent submission of risk assessments we have purchased some yellow floor cable protectors.

These are to be used when running cables across floors between equipment. Simply place them over any cables to minimise the risk of people tripping.

Thanks to everybody for keeping our wonderful spaces safe!

GROUPS

Groups with spaces...

The following groups currently have spaces
If you would like to join, please contact the leader.

African Drumming	Mah Jong 1
Appreciation of Science & Technology	Melodic Lines
Badminton 1, Wednesdays	Mixed Crafts
Badminton 2, Tuesdays	Needlecraft
Badminton 3, Mondays	Painting Watercolours
Badminton 4, Thursdays	Patchwork & Quilting
Bowls 3	Petanque
Bridge 1 and Bridge 2	Pickleball 2
Canasta	Political and Economic Discussion Group
Chess	Railway Modelling Enthusiasts
Cook the Book Club	Reading
Crib	Singing for Fun 2
Cross Stitch	Snooker
Easy Sequence Dancing	Spanish Beginners
Everyday Philosophy	Swimming
Family History 2	Table Tennis
Folk Ensemble	Tai Chi 2
Flower Arranging	Tennis
Gardening	Trad Folk
German	u3a Singers
Handicrafts	Ukulele
Happy Crafters	Walking (All Groups)
History Topics	Walking Netball
Italian Intermediate	Whittling and Wood Carving
Jazzy Folk	

Cook the Book Club

Leader: Helen Setnicka-Zambas, tel: 07505 131137
Monthly on a Monday, evenings 6:00 pm-9:00 pm
Meeting in members' homes

We choose a theme together, each member cooks their own dish fresh at home and brings it along where we serve up a gorgeous three-course meal to enjoy together. Relaxed, sociable and utterly delicious. We can accommodate most dietary requirements. Occasional cooking demonstrations or food-related trips out, as and when things come up.

Helen, the group leader, will help plan and coordinate each session with you, to put together a three-course spread from our chosen theme. Think of Helen as your kitchen companion, there for tips, ideas and moral support. No pressure, just pleasure!

Please contact Helen if you are interested in joining.

An Appreciation of Science and Technology

Leader: Peter Calder

Mondays, 9.30–11.00am, Norton House, upstairs

Starting September 2026, date to be advised



A collaborative discussion group, with a focus on science and technology from all countries and cultures - building our knowledge through the history of major discoveries, exploring new scientific breakthroughs and looking at emerging technologies such as AI and related innovations. Group members will be able to contribute, along with guidance from the leader, discussing different topics each week, chosen by the group.

Please sign up in Norton House.

Melodic Lines Group

Does anybody out there want to learn to play a keyboard and read music? Our little group would love to have someone else on board. The loyal members that attend will be only too happy to help a new person learn.

They each bring a small keyboard to the group but I have a spare one that I can lend to people during the group session. If you would like to give it a go please ring Carol Burmeister on 07975 579620. We meet at 9.15 am at Norton House on Fridays in the large downstairs room known as the Belfield Room. If you are unsure, just turn up and watch what goes on, without commitment to join. I would only give you tasks appropriate to your experience, so do not worry at all. We have a lot of fun and everyone chips in with questions and comments.

MODEL RAILWAY ENTHUSIASTS GROUP



**£3.00
ENTRY**
Under 16's FREE
CASH ONLY
EVENT

Saturday 17th October 2026

10.00am – 2.00pm

Watson Centre (Southbank Street, Leek)

Everyone Welcome! • Refreshments available



The Norton House Trust



Many u3a members in Leek do not realise how fortunate we are to have ready-made premises in which to hold our activities.

This came about following a bequest of the property in the late 1950s, which specified it should be used as a centre for the use of older people. The property was administered until 1993 by Leek Town Council. When the council stepped back, the Norton House Trust was formed to manage the property and to honour the wishes of the original benefactor. The trust built on this in 2014, by fundraising to buy the old Red Cross building next door, which is now known as the Watson Centre.

Of course, inheriting and buying property is only part of the story! A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to manage and maintain the two buildings and this is what the Norton House trustees effectively do.

The biggest source of income to the trust is the annual rent that u3a pays for use of the buildings, but the trust always welcomes additional revenue and one way is to hire out the rooms in periods when u3a is not using them, for a nominal hourly fee.

The Watson Centre has a capacity of around 50 and is suitable for parties, dance and music groups, club activities & AGMs and small promotional events. It is available for one-off bookings at weekends, as well as some evenings.

There are also three rooms in Norton House, with capacities between 12 and 40, which are available for hire from 4pm onwards most days and on Saturdays at any time.

Please pass on this message to anyone you know who could be interested in using these facilities.

To enquire about booking the first contact is **Brian Bogie on 07514 429318, email**

brianbogie54@gmail.com

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A Walk In The Countryside - By Janice Richardson

A walk in the countryside isn't just footsteps on a path - it's the land opening its quiet door and letting you wander through its thoughts. It's the soft-spoken hour when fields loosen their shoulders, when the sky stretches wide like a sheet fresh from the line, and every creature becomes a small, living punctuation mark in the sentence of the day.

Walk softly now

*I have been waiting for you.
Let your steps fall gently
so you can hear me -
not with your ears
but with that quiet place inside you
that still remembers how to listen.*

Breathe in

*That is the scent of soil
that has held roots, rain, and centuries.
It knows more beginnings than endings
and it asks you to trust
that you, too,
can begin again.*

Close your eyes

*Feel the wind on your cheek.
That is my way of touching you
without taking anything.
I move past you
to remind you that nothing stays
and nothing needs to.*

Walk a little further

*Let the path guide you.
I shaped this path long before you came
and I will hold it long after you leave.
Your only task is to be here
in this moment
exactly as you are.*

Now stand still

*Let the sky open above you.
Let the earth steady you.
Let the wind loosen what you no longer need.
You are not lost, you are not late.
You are not behind, you are simply walking
through a world that has always known your name
and has never once asked you
to be anything but present.*

Breathe again

*And when you are ready
walk on.
You are part of me.
You are never walking alone*