

E-Bulletin 18
February 2025

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Website: <https://chesterfield.u3asite.uk>



There will be a **Coffee Morning** on
Wednesday 5th February
from **10.15am – 11.45am**

There is a sign hanging over the street saying
The Saints Parish Centre.

It is in St Marys Gate, and the entrance is
down the left-hand side.

Refreshments will be available and you can
meet new members and chat with old
friends.

The **AGM** will take place on
Wednesday 5th March
from **2pm – 4pm**
at **Chesterfield Football Club**
(SMH Group Stadium)

1866 Sheffield Road, Chesterfield S41 8NZ

The ukulele and guitar groups will provide
musical entertainment after the AGM has
finished.



OTHER u3a BUSINESS

COPY DATE FOR E-BULLETIN 19 (APRIL 2025)

Please send all items for the e-bulletin to Jeanne Clark by email
newslettereditor@chesterfieldu3a.org.uk by **23rd March**.

The copy date for the March Newsletter is **8th February**.

OTHER MATTERS

If you are thinking of travelling with Riviera Travel, when you make a
booking and mention Chesterfield u3a, 10% of the total value goes
back to Chesterfield u3a

<https://www.rivieratravel.co.uk/> or call on 01283 901 085

WHAT THE GROUPS ARE UP TO

DISCUSSION GROUP 1

This photograph was taken at the Mayor's Parlour following an invitation by the Mayor at the CAMEO event. Refreshments were provided as well as a talk about the history of Chesterfield Borough and its mayor.



Roger Watts

GARDEN APPRECIATION GROUPS 1 and 2

This year talks will be held at The Ragged School, Markham Road, S40 1TA (below the library and bus station and opposite Ravenside shops) on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 2 pm. Doors open at 1.30 pm. Entrance fee is £3 which includes a free raffle. All u3a members are welcome to attend the talks.

20th February 2025: *Living with a National Plant Collection* with Don Witton who has spoken on a number of subjects in the past. Reviews say his talk is highly amusing.

20th March 2025: You may have visited Millthorpe Nursery and I am delighted to welcome Carl Leaman who runs it with his wife Deirdre to talk to us about *Starting a Nursery*.

Group 1 Coordinator: Irene Trevis, 07434 042215

Group 1 Coordinator: June Partington, 07580 543449

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Our winter talks are open to all u3a members. We meet in the library lecture theatre at 2pm, doors open at 1.45pm. £3.00 on the door.

Tuesday 4th February: Bob Massey's talk about *Muriel and Bert*

Bob is a historian with an interest in local history; he has taught at various universities and colleges around the country. As well as a member of local history groups, he is also a member of cinema, theatre and aircraft research groups, and industry organisations.

D H Lawrence describes Jessie Chambers as 'the chief friend of my youth'. As his childhood friend and first girlfriend, she played a pivotal role in his journey. Jessie was born on the 29th January 1887 and was a year younger than D H Lawrence. She was just eleven years old when her family left Eastwood to go to live at Haggs Farm, Underwood, approximately three miles away. Mrs Chambers invited Mrs Lawrence to visit them and the rest, as they say, is history.

Sandra Frost

SCIENCE GROUP

The next meetings are as follows:

Thursday 6th February: *Discovering the night sky* with Martin Bradley, u3a member and astrophotographer.

Thursday 6th March: Pamela Boulton on *Geological time, life on earth*.

David Hart can be reached through the Groups webpage

STROLLERS

The next walks will be on the following Saturdays:

1st and 15th February and 1st March

Sue & Brian Taylor, 07532 160 324, sue_taylor@live.com

UPWORDS

The next meetings are 5th and 19th February, and then 5th March.

Tony Clark, tony.clark1@btinternet.com

And now for something completely different . . .

A Christmas Meeting

I don't know if I've mentioned it, but I keep up links with another u3a that we made under the twinning programme that used to be run in the u3a Magazine, Third Age Mutters. This means I hear about what's going on in Crumbthorpe u3a in Crumbshire.

It surprises me that not everyone has heard of Crumbshire. People seem to drive through on the M666 without noticing the junctions for its principal towns. This could be because of the County's omission from many maps after records were lost in the great Parliament fire of 1834. Successive Governments have promised these will be restored, and a report is expected soon.

Though many Crumbthorpe members still refer habitually to "the wireless" and think Muffin the Mule represented the high point of British television, they are open to technological change, and none more so than Royston Bingley of the Science and Technology group.

Royston's bought a drone. He's also a photographer, so many of his fellow members have been shown his pictures from Crumbshire's highest hill, Crumble Topping. He's captured the dramatic furnaces and chemical flares of Olroyd's pie factory at Lower Crumbley ("the last pie you'll ever try!"). Village cricket matches at Crumbling in the Mire, the traditional Crumbwick Pasta Race¹ – Royston's given them all the FPV treatment.

Royston's drone is the top of the range ImageFli™ 3000 with 50 MP 1 inch sensor, ADS-B collision avoidance, RAW recording, and a built-in air fryer. I know this, because Royston has explained it to

¹ Rather like a pancake race, Spaghetti is traditionally used but the fastest times have been set with fusilli.

me. And to many other people. I may not have got it completely right about the air fryer.

The Friday walking group (Staggerers) has a tradition of at least one night walk, weather permitting, which, it being the North of England, it usually doesn't, over the Christmas and New Year period.

Ten of the group met on Christmas Eve for a short walk from Upper Crumbley, up the steep climb to Lower Crumbley², and on to Crumbley Foss. (5m, moderate, meet Olroyd's Pie Factory main gate OW 314159). There was light snow underfoot as Edie Armstrong led them past village shops and Oughthwaite's brewery, and turned up onto the open fell beyond the meerkat sanctuary.

A little before midnight, they reached Crumbley Foss. The waterfall shone in the full moon as the group poured coffee, in some cases fortified. Royston announced that he would launch his drone to photograph the group and the waterfall by moonlight. Arthur Eccleshaw said he was going to nip behind a dry-stone wall and might be some time. However warm, salopettes are not a good choice for the older walker.

Royston struggled a little with his controls. The 3000 is a tricky drone, especially when wearing mittens and after three cups of fortified coffee, but after a few exciting manoeuvres, the group saw the drone's red light stabilise a couple of hundred feet above them. Royston pirouetted the little machine to take photos from different angles and avoid including Arthur. To his surprise, Royston got a proximity warning of something else in the air, and Edie Armstrong, who cleans her glasses regularly, pointed out another red light in the sky, moving quickly towards them.

Seconds later, they heard a light bump, something that sounded like animals grunting and snorting, and a deep voice shouting in terms unsuitable for a u3a audience. A louder bump was followed by louder expletives. The drone light and the other light could be seen a couple of hundred yards away on the hillside. Confused grunting and snorting grew louder.

² Thought to arise from an ambiguity in Old Norse

Naturally the group investigated; Royston because of concern for his investment, and the others, who might have coped with the loss of the drone, out of curiosity.

The stream of obscenities continued and was found to be coming from an old gentleman in a red cloak, with a full white beard³, and John Lennon glasses. Some of the group thought they recognised him, and Doris and Maurice Norris thought they knew him from u3a regional meetings.

The pilot had calmed down a bit, though he expressed great annoyance with (expletive) amateurs who (obscenity) think they own the (quite serious obscenity) sky and get in the way of (really very serious obscenity) people who have to work on (less than seasonal expletive) Christmas Eve going about their legitimate (expletive which words fail me to describe) business.

The red light turned towards the u3a members and showed itself to be part of the face of a reindeer which addressed them, in much more composed, not to say urbane, tones, than those of the pilot.

"Please excuse my colleague," it said gently. "He has very recently had a serious accident and the views he has expressed cannot be taken to represent the corporate position of ElfCorps Inc. Please take my card". He handed Edie a smart business card which read:

Rudolph R.N.R, Deer LLM
Head of Corporate Transport
ElfCorps Inc
Ice Cave 51
Greenland 2412

"Regrettably", the reindeer⁴ added in its smooth and level voice⁵ "your drone has compromised the entire delivery schedule of ElfCorps Inc for the night of 24/12 to 25/12. We shall be taking action within Greenland jurisdiction and, without prejudice to any corporate position or issues which may come to light during litigation, we shall be expecting a ten-figure sum in compensation, based on that awarded by the negotiated settlement in the

³ Yes, it was he. Didn't see that coming, did you?

⁴ Yes, that reindeer. Did you think an ambitious cervine with grudges about bullying was going to be content with a once-a-year gig as a navigational aid?

⁵ Think the late Alan Rickman but with a bit more menace

comparable case between ToothFairy Göttingen AG and E. Musk StarLink.”

Edie is Crumbthorpe u3a treasurer. This is not necessarily a good thing. It is true that Edie was the Olroyd Professor of Difficult Sums at the University of Crumbthorpe. There are only three people in the world who know more that Edie does about the maths of networks, and one of them is mad, but, like her, they may have long ago abandoned the need for accurate elementary arithmetic. Nevertheless, Edie had worked out what was going on. She knew that u3a third party insurance might not cover the cost of a Christmas present for every child covered by the ElfCorps Inc Stocking Terms of Service⁶, damage to sleigh, personal injuries to Santa and to elves, several of whom had appeared from the back of the crashed vehicle and were feigning severe whiplash.

Santa glared at the reindeer. “Corporate law will not sort this one out,” he bellowed. “There are billions of (regrettable epithet) children and they’re our priority.” The reindeer clearly did not agree, and the elves were beginning to mutter sullenly. With annoying calm, he reminded Santa that ElfCorps’ priority was the financial security of the elves and reindeer who were its shareholder base, which was threatened if deliveries failed. Of course, ElfCorps cared *deeply* about the children, but its responsibilities to them were those defined by contract.

Edie, bringing common sense to bear, asked whether the sleigh could be righted and resume its journey. This was Santa’s preference, but there was clearly some damage. Santa called for an elf with big glasses and a row of pens in his top pocket⁷ and told him to run a level four diagnostic.

Lights flashed and after a minute or so a synthesised voice announced that the sleigh could not fly, because the quantum computer⁸ had been stressed in the collision and crash landing, and it could not access the client database.

⁶ 487 pages and, for reasons fully compliant with corporate law, written in ancient Mayan.

⁷ OK, we were thinking Jeff Goldblum

⁸ Elves have been using quantum computers since the Middle Ages. You need high technology if you’re going to clear years of backlog in a shoemaker’s shop between dusk and dawn.

Edie, even more than the other three people in the world, one of whom was mad, recognised the problem. It was navigation. The number of possible paths between the homes of all the present-receiving children is immense; yet Santa must take the most economical to finish his labours during the night. Earthly mathematicians called this the 'Travelling Salesman Problem', and there was no known general solution.

Edie looked at the elf's computer. Fortunately, elf devices match the person reading them, so she quickly adjusted to the operating system – Chimneys 2024 – and looked at the navigation algorithm. Edie is a genius, though you wouldn't want to be driven by her in an environment with hard objects, and she realised at once how to solve the issue. Working quickly, she altered lines of code and, after a little while a box appeared on the screen saying

Navigation Network Corrected: Continue to Navigate:

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Santa, restored to genial mode, hugged Edie. The elf who looked like Jeff Goldblum joined a group hug. Rudolph was not pleased⁹, but feigned good grace and prepared to resume the journey. Santa thanked Edie again and handed her a bottle with a sticker "ElfCorps Inc Premium Corporate Gratuities" over an Aldi label. In a cloud of snow and sparkles, the sleigh took off and the last the walking group heard was Santa crying "Ho! Ho! (strong but jovial expletive) Ho! and Arthur Eccleshaw returning from behind the dry-stone wall and asking if something had happened.

The walkers picked up the rather bent drone and set off down the hill, still wondering at what they had seen. Edie had an ethical dilemma. What she had seen on the elf's computer gave her the solution to one of the greatest outstanding problems in maths. This could win a million-dollar prize, but Edie did not want money, nor credit that was not hers. Nevertheless, she made sure that she left a note of the solution that would be easy to find when the niece who was her executor cleared out her work papers.

David Hart

⁹ He must stay aggrieved for the sequel