

How to Use Your New Bishop Auckland & District u3a website

<https://bishopauckland.u3asite.uk/>

u3a

Bishop Auckland & District

[Home](#) [About](#) [Groups](#) [Events](#) [Members & Visitors](#) [Contact](#) [Local Interest](#)

[u3a Links](#)

Search ...



Bishop Auckland in the Land of the Prince Bishops

We've been through the University of Youth and the University of Life.
Now is the University of our Third Age.



Retirement is your time

What is u3a? Members have said: -

- It's where I share my interests
- It's a Youth Club for Seniors
- u3a keeps me fit and active
- I'm never lonely, never bored

Who knew retirement could be so much fun?
I laugh so much.

Pam Taylor
Web Editor
March 2024

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Introduction

Our new website went live around 1 pm on 1st March 2024. You will recognise some things from our old site but the new one has many more features and we can do very many more things than we could in the past. This website software has been developed by u3a volunteers and it is called u3a SiteWorks. It is based on open-source WordPress that is very widely used around the world but our developers have added bits to it so that it works better for us. This is particularly relevant to our groups and how we run them. The software has been tailored for us but in such a way that every unique u3a in the country can have a unique website as well.

The purpose of this document is to remind you about some general website concepts but mainly to give you information about where to find things on this new site, how to navigate your way around, and to introduce you to some of the lovely new features.

We couldn't produce blogs like this one below on our old site, for instance.

Beningbrough Hall October 2023.



Beningbrough Hall was built by John Bouchier in 1716, thought possibly to have

been designed by Thomas Archer it is now owned and run by the National Trust. It has recently reopened after a major refurbishment and the interiors glowed with the care lavished upon them.



To reflect the strong influence of Italy on Bouchier and the design of his house the first floor rooms contained an exhibition called 'Inspired by Italy' with atmospheric photographs of Venice and engravings by Piranesi whom Bouchier knew. The gardens were also an attraction with autumn fruit and vegetables in abundance.

[Why use our u3a website?](#)

Websites enable organisations like u3a to share a lot of information very quickly and very efficiently and enables their customers, we members, to access that information immediately. Our website saves money and saves time both for u3a and for us. You can also use the website to send free messages to a committee member or to one of your group leaders. You can use the website to check the date or time of an event or the cost and you can send a message to the group leader asking to be booked onto a talk or a visit without having to wait for Town Hall day and without having to queue when you get there.

[Our website for Prospective Members](#)

Our website is our shop window to attract new members. Every u3a needs a continual stream of new members. The new members of today are our Group Leaders and Committee members of tomorrow and without them our u3a has no future. No one wants to join a boring organisation so we want to make our website as informative and as interesting as possible so that our u3a is shown to be the vibrant and active u3a that it is.

What is a website and how does it work?

In simple terms you can think of a website like a book. A book has a front cover with a name, chapter headings, and pages of information.

- Below is the top section of the Home page for our u3a website. Think of this as our front cover.
- Across the top there is the u3a banner page with our u3a name. This is like the name of a book.
- Directly below are the blue-coloured navigation buttons and these are the chapter headings.
- By clicking onto any of these buttons you will find more pages of information, the content.

Alongside the navigation buttons is a Search box and if you enter a key word such as 'art' or 'walking' then anything on our website relating to those words will come up for you. Most websites have this feature but it is a new feature for us. Please don't try to read this tiny writing on the screenshots. You will be able to read the content more easily on the real webpage on your own device. The screenshots are only to make you familiar with the layouts.



The screenshot shows the top section of the u3a website. At the top left is the 'u3a' logo in white on a blue background. To its right is the text 'Bishop Auckland & District' in white. Below this is a navigation menu with links: 'Home', 'About', 'Groups', 'Events', 'Members & Visitors', 'Contact', 'Local Interest', and 'u3a Links'. A search box is located on the right side of the navigation bar. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image of a stone building with a tall spire, with the text 'Bishop Auckland in the Land of the Prince Bishops' overlaid. Below the banner is a light blue section with the text: 'We've been through the University of Youth and the University of Life. Now is the University of our Third Age.' To the left of this text is a photo of five people in colorful jackets walking on a path. To the right is the text: 'Retirement is your time' and 'What is u3a? Members have said: -' followed by a bulleted list of member testimonials. Below the list is the text: 'Who knew retirement could be so much fun? I laugh so much.' At the bottom left of this section is the text: 'Monthly Open Meetings' and 'Come along to one of our Town Hall meetings to talk to a few people and listen to one of our interesting talks. Our friendly team will show you around and tell you more to help you to decide if you would like to [Join Us](#).' At the bottom right is a small photo of a building.

u3a Bishop Auckland & District

[Home](#) [About](#) [Groups](#) [Events](#) [Members & Visitors](#) [Contact](#) [Local Interest](#) [u3a Links](#) Search ...

Bishop Auckland in the Land of the Prince Bishops

**We've been through the University of Youth and the University of Life.
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Retirement is your time
What is u3a? Members have said: -

- It's where I share my interests
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**Who knew retirement could be so much fun?
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Monthly Open Meetings

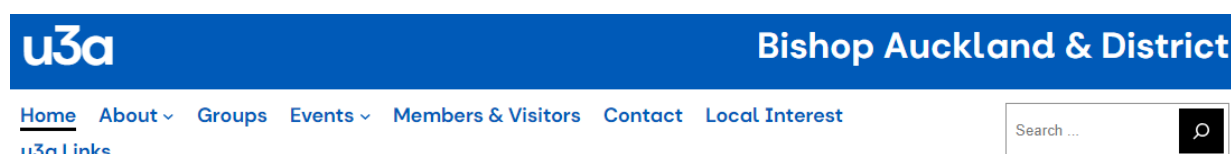
Come along to one of our Town Hall meetings to talk to a few people and listen to one of our interesting talks. Our friendly team will show you around and tell you more to help you to decide if you would like to [Join Us](#).

Our new u3a website

Let's get started and explore the website. Click on the link below to be taken to our u3a website home page. Use your 'back' button to return to where you were or use one of the navigation buttons described below.

[Bishop Auckland & District u3a](#)

I think that the first thing you will notice about our new website is the cleaner-looking layouts and the photos. Across the top of almost every page you will be able to see the main navigation buttons as below. This makes it easy to get back to the area you were in if you get lost when you are exploring. Notice that the About and Events buttons have a little arrow alongside them. That's because they each have a drop-down associated menu. By hovering over the main button the drop downs appear so you can select them directly. Our google calendar, for instance, is with Events.



[Where can I find things?](#)

You will find most things that you have used in the past in the same general area where they were before but they might look different and have more options. Your group pages are still in the Groups area and Committee details are still in Contact for instance. Below each page is summarised for you

Home page



Our Home page is like the book cover and designed to make people want to know more. The photos will change from time-to-time so it won't always look the same when you visit.

We can use a lot more photos with SiteWorks and have many different layout options. We can link to other pages. Where you see any word or string of text underlined and blue, this is the universal sign that this is a link (the posh name is hyperlink). By clicking on any of the links you will be taken to that page. On our Home page we have [Monthly Open Meetings](#) and [Our Interest Groups](#) as links direct to those pages.

Finally a lovely new feature is the Gutenslider that you can see at the bottom of the page where the photos display on a continuous loop.

About page

The About page is basically the old Welcome page but with a lot of new content.

The top two sections are about membership and reasons to join our u3a and the bottom two sections are about where to find information on our website and in u3a generally.

The third section talks about our website is a quick reference for you as you can click onto this page any time and use the direct links (hyperlinks) to get to where you want to be. This includes Groups, Events, the calendar, Contacts, and so on.

The bottom section is a little history about u3a in general and an introduction to the large range of regional and national events and activities that every member has access to.

The screenshot shows the website header with the u3a logo and navigation links: Home, About, Groups, Events, Members & Visitors, Contact, Local Interest. Below the header is a search bar. The main content area is titled 'About' and contains several sections: 'Welcome to Bishop Auckland & District u3a', 'Latest Notices' with a link to 'First u3a National Festival in Feb 2024', 'Why join Bishop Auckland & District u3a?' with a list of benefits and a photo of a group of people, 'More about our u3a and where to find information' with a list of details about meetings and membership, and 'The wider u3a' with the u3a logo and text about the national movement.

Meetings page

The screenshot shows the website header with the u3a logo and navigation links: Home, About, Groups, Events, Members & Visitors, Contact, Local Interest. Below the header is a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Meetings' and contains text about the monthly meeting, a photo of the Bishop Auckland Town Hall, and a section titled 'Prospective Members' with text about joining the group.

This page is associated with the About page. It contains information about our monthly meetings that used to be on the Welcome page. Moving it to a separate page gives the content more focus but also frees up space on the About page to attract new members.

The top section gives a little background about our Town Hall and describes the format of the meeting and how many of the Group Leaders are on hand to discuss future events and activities or perhaps to take bookings or payments for forthcoming events.

The lower part of the page is for prospective members visiting for the first time to reassure them that our Welcoming team will assist them.

Join Us page

The Join Us page contains similar information to that on the old Joining page with links to the application form for new members. As always it covers our membership year, how much it costs, where the money goes, and what is included.

There is a section for everyone about payments and gift aid although there is a much more detailed banking section for members only on the Members and Visitors page.

The bottom section is the link to our Beacon Portal as we had on Site Builder. Beacon is our membership management system, amongst other things. This is where you can log on and change your personal details such as email address or phone number if you want to.

Groups page

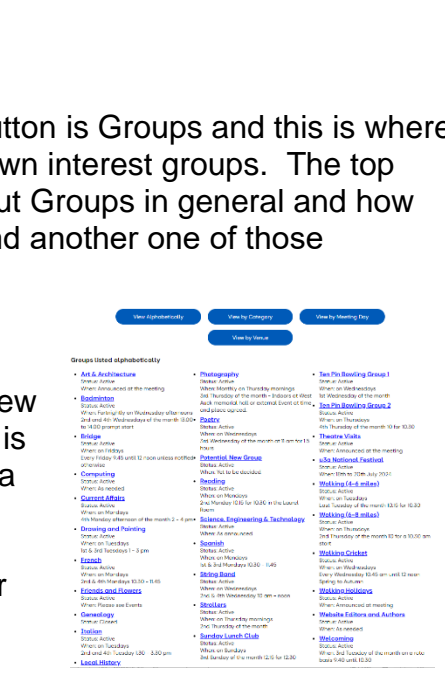
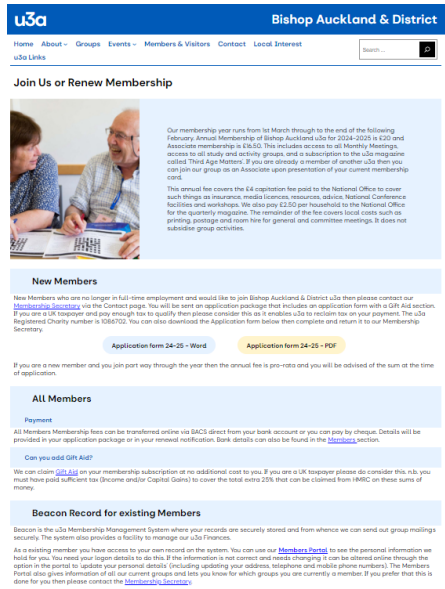


The next navigation button is Groups and this is where you can access your own interest groups. The top half of the page is about Groups in general and how they work and you'll find another one of those Guten sliders.

The lower part of the page is a list of our groups. The default view is alphabetical but this is where there has been a

big change. You are used to seeing the groups listed alphabetically but now you have three more display options. You can view them by category such as art or walking. You can view by venue and you can view by meeting day. You can switch between these views as often as you like just by clicking the button view you want.

The group name headings are blue and underlined and this tells you these are links. By clicking on any of the links you will be taken to that page. When you get there, you might click on more links to read more things that interest you but at the top of the page you will still find the top banner and the navigation buttons as you saw before. This should make it easy for you to find your way around and you can always click one of these main buttons if you get lost.



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Search ...

What you will find about each group depends on the type of group you are looking at

Groups with regular routines

We have some groups that meet at the same time, at the same place, at the same intervals and the structure of what they do on those days is very similar. These are groups such as Bridge, Poetry, Reading, and Bowling. Generally groups like this need only one page to describe their activities.

The screenshot shows the u3a website interface for the 'Bridge' group. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'u3a' and 'Bishop Auckland & District'. Below it are links for Home, About, Groups, Events, Members & Visitors, Contact, and Local Interest. A search bar is also present. The main content area is titled 'Bridge' and features a photo of people playing bridge. To the right of the photo is a logistics panel with details: Status (Active, open to new members), Group Leader (Fidel, Mo), Group Leader (Milly), Group email (bridge@u3a.co.uk), When (on Fridays), Venue (Every Friday 9.45 until 12 noon unless notified otherwise), and Cost (£4 per session or less). Below the photo is a paragraph of text describing the group's history and activities, followed by a paragraph about the club's facilities and a membership fee notice.

Take a look at Bridge for instance. The Bridge group page consists of a photo representing the group, a logistics panel that provides the detail about meeting time, place, group leader(s) and contact methods, and finally a description of the group.

The latter contains any special information about that group.

The content of the page will change occasionally.

Groups with varied routines and/or one-off events or activities

These groups, like French or Spanish, primarily fall into the regular group but have an occasional one-off event to share or a blog about recent activity. The Walking Holiday group has a one-off event and potentially a blog to share.

Here is what the French group page looks like. There is a photo and the logistics panel plus a description of the group as above. Below that is a table that provides a quick reference to class dates to make it easy for members. There are some photos on the page that represent things the class has discussed.

There are two blogs that describe special events that have taken place and clicking on the blue link takes you to more detail with more text and more photos.

The screenshot shows the u3a website interface for the 'French' group. It includes a navigation bar, a search bar, and a logistics panel with details: Status (Active, open to new members), Group Leader (Suzie), Group email (french@u3a.co.uk), When (on Mondays), Venue (2nd & 4th Mondays 10.30 - 11.45), and Cost (None if you're a member, £4 quarterly in advance). Below the logistics panel is a table titled 'French Session Dates for 2023-24' with columns for Date, Topic, and Location. The table lists sessions for October, November, and December. Below the table are two blog posts: 'Elephant in France' (23rd February 2024) and 'French 2023 Review' (21st December 2023). Each blog post has a 'Read more' link and a small image.

Groups with varied activities on varied days plus events and blogs

The screenshot shows the u3a website interface for the 'Art & Architecture' group. It includes a navigation bar, a search bar, and a logistics panel with details: Status (Active, open to new members), Group Leader (Gill and Dore), Group Leader (Dore and Gill), Group email (art@u3a.co.uk), When (Alternate on the 1st and 3rd), and Cost (£5 in advance per membership card costing from individual events). Below the logistics panel is a paragraph of text describing the group's activities and a 'Forthcoming Events' section with a link to 'Event: visit to Cambridge archive at the British Library'. There is also a 'Booking Required' section with a link to 'Bookings for the Cambridge Central Library'.

These are groups such as Art & Architecture, Friends & Flowers, Local History, S.E.T., Strong Band, Sunday Lunch Club, and the Walking groups. Their pages consist of the main group description, forthcoming events, and blogs.

As an example here is the Art & architecture page. The top part has photos relevant to the group with a group description and the logistics panel giving general group information such as contact method as before.


Below that is a list of forthcoming events.

n.b. To return to the main group page you can use your back button or use the navigation buttons at the top of the page.

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Field visit to Cambridge staying at the Holiday...



April 6th to 8th 2024 – the group's annual study visit, next year to Cambridge. The visit will include a tour of Girton college including its art collection, Kettle's Yard gallery and the Fitzwilliam Museum. On the outward journey there will be a break at Bolton House in Lincolnshire.

Event type: Study Visit
 Date: 5th April 2024
 Duration: 4 days
 Until: 8th April 2024
 Group: Art & Architecture
 Organiser: [Chris and Sally](#)
 Booking: Note that booking is required.

By selecting the blue link which is the title of any event you will be taken to a different page that provides more detail about that event. This particular event is a 4-day study visit to Cambridge. It is fully booked so details of timings, pricing, etc. are not showing but this is usually where you will find this information plus any links to the venues.

Below the events you will find the blogs. Groups that have these will usually have a banner heading such as the pyramids shown here and below that are links to previous events and activities.

News from the Art & Architecture group

Below you will find memories and photographs of recent events and activities.

[A Film Morning: 'The Truth About Art – Animals and Gods'](#)
 24th November 2023
 Two films by Waldemar Januszczak which sought to challenge commonly held opinions about the depiction of these subjects in art. The first looked at animals from Cave paintings in France [...]
 Read more

[A Visit to Beningbrough Hall, York](#)
 6th October 2023
 Beningbrough Hall October 2023
 Beningbrough Hall was built by John Boucher in 1716, thought possibly to have been designed by Thomas Archer it is now owned and run by the [...]
 Read more

[A Talk and Guided Walk on the History and Restoration of Hardwick Park, Sedgfield](#)
 15th September 2023
 Hardwick Park is one of only two designed landscaped in the historic boundaries of County Durham (the other is at Gateside). Designed by James Paine for John Burdon in the [...]
 Read more


[Guided visits to the Oriental Museum, Durham University](#)
 19th May 2023
 A guided visit to the Oriental Museum was set up for May 2023 but proved to be so popular that a second date had to be arranged.
 Read more

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A Visit to Beningbrough Hall, York

Beningbrough Hall October 2023.



Beningbrough Hall was built by John Boucher in 1716, thought possibly to have been designed by Thomas Archer it is now owned and run by the National Trust. It has recently reopened after a major refurbishment and the interiors glowed with the care lavished upon them.

To reflect the strong influence of Italy on Boucher and the design of his house the first floor rooms contained an exhibition called 'Inspired by Italy' with atmospheric photographs of Venice and engravings by Piranesi whom Boucher knew. The gardens were also an attraction with autumn fruit and vegetables in abundance.

Selecting the Beninborough Hall blog will give you this page with text and photos that describe the visit.

Note that this complements our Link magazine that has more text but perhaps only one or two photos. With SiteWorks there is no limit to the photos that can be used for an event or blog.

Here is one of the Science, Engineering, Technology group blogs. This one is about the trip to Beamish last summer with the Photography group. There are 21 photos on this page to remind those who went of the good day out they enjoyed and to show others what they missed! Other pages have Gutensliders or a mix of gallery and Gutenslider.

Take a look at the various group pages and enjoy seeing what they do. It might inspire you to join another group or perhaps tell a friend you think would enjoy such things and perhaps encourage them to join our u3a. Many of our new members come from referrals from people like you and I.

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Beamish Living Museum

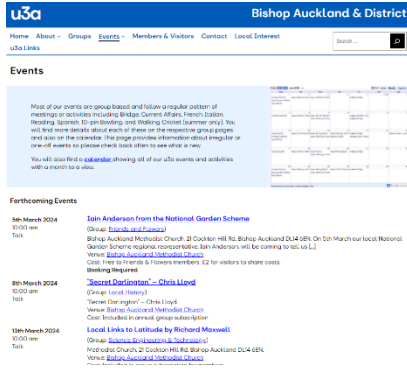
In July 2023 a number of members made their way, either alone or in the company of others, to Beamish. This visit was to the Beamish Living Museum to see the restoration of the place and the way the Beamish people lived in another part of the area in a former town. The visit was a great success for all those who went.

Over the Beamish group a number of photos were taken during the visit. It is the Beamish Living Museum. From the left members were able to see the interior of the Beamish Living Museum. The visit was a great success for all those who went.

Below is an 800x800 resolution photo gallery of the Beamish Living Museum and the various restoration projects. If you did not capture the photos you wish to see please contact us.

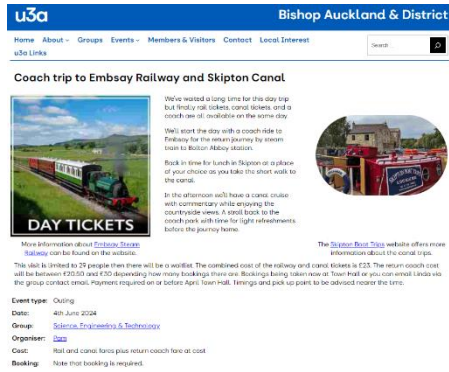


Events page



The next navigation button is the Events page. This lists events just as our old website did but we can add so much more information now as each event is a link and by selecting it you are taken to a new page.

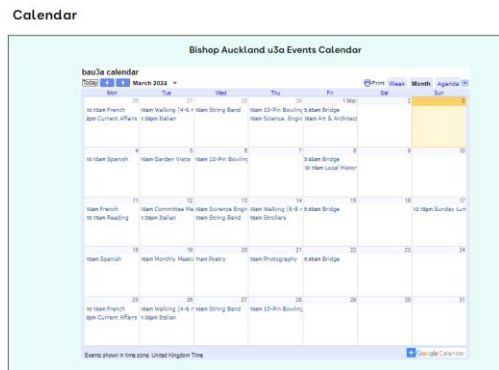
Up above you saw an Art & Architecture study group event page. Here is the event page for the S.E.T. field visit to Embস্য steam railway and Skipton canals in June.



Being able to use the SiteWorks website Events and blogs like this means no extra software is needed and no need to send attachments on mails as everything can be viewed right here.

Calendar page

The calendar is the same one that you have been using for the last few years on the old website. There is a link to it from the top of the Events page but you can also access it from the navigation button in the drop-down Events menu.



Please note that web pages often display differently according to the device they are being viewed on and the software that is used on that device. It also depends on how someone is holding the viewing device. If a phone is in portrait mode (longer top to bottom) then the calendar is legible but a little squished up whereas in landscape mode (wider side-to-side) the entries are clearer. The calendar view on SiteWorks is exactly the same as it was before.

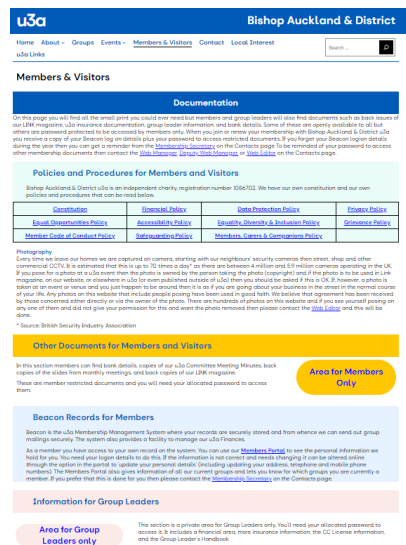
Members & Visitors page

This page is a combination of the old Members page plus all of the documentation associated with our u3a so most things can be found in one place.

At the top of the page are our policies and procedures. The next section is for Members only and gives you back copies of slides, committee meeting minutes, Link magazine, banking details, and an old photo gallery. Directly below you can access your Beacon record with your logon.

At the bottom is a section for Group Leaders only. This includes the GL Handbook plus items such as insurance and license details.

Both Members only and Group Leaders only areas are password protected and you will be sent the password separately.



Contact page

The Contact page needs no introduction as it is very similar to the one you have been using for the last few years but with a more attractive layout. Click on the job role links as usual and you will get a customised contact form to complete, as before.

Local Interest page

The Local Interest page replaces the old Odds & Ends page. How often have you heard other u3a friends say that they wish they had known 'so-and-so' event was on as they would have liked to go? This page is a summary of local attractions and events with a STOP PRESS for dates coming up. You don't need to miss the Food Festival this year because you didn't know it was on. I'll try to keep this section up to date but please do remind me if I have missed anything – Web Manager via [Contacts](#) page. Please note that there is no commercial gain to us or to any organisation that is mentioned on this page and it is purely a member service.

u3a Links page

The final navigation button brings you to the u3a Links page. I wonder how many of us realise just how many Regional and National events and activities are open to us as members of Bishop Auckland & District u3a.

Despite Jackie's wonderful updates it is sometimes hard to find information so this page is general top level webpages while Jackie's mails take you directly to the subject links.

The top section of the page is a mirror image of what can be seen on the About page.

The pink headed section is about National opportunities and they include member stories, the brand centre, free learning sessions, competitions, podcasts, subject advisors, national events (York Festival for instance), online learning, research projects, interest groups online, and more

The yellow headed section is about Regional meetings, events, and networks.

Note that selecting any of the links on this u3a Links page takes you offsite to another u3a website and you will need to navigate you way back to our website.