

Membership milestone for our local u3a

Back in 1997, local residents, many recently retired, felt the need to establish a group that would help their adjustment from the world of work but also support a shared passion for lifelong learning. They all had hobbies and skills learnt at work that they felt able to share with others. They eventually formed a local branch of u3a, part of a national organisation known as the Third Age Trust.

None of the original group would have thought that just over 25 years later, the local u3a would grow to such an extent that it has just welcomed its 2,000th active member, Jenny Procter.

Jenny has recently retired after a 40 year career with Yorkshire Water, and now enjoys spending more time on hobbies including sewing, learning Italian, walking and dancing to keep fit. Living in Otley, she joined u3a specifically for the conversational Italian group. To celebrate the milestone of being the 2,000th member, Jenny was presented with flowers and a bottle of champagne at a recent group meeting held at the Wheatley in Ben Rhydding.

The current chair of our local u3a, Jacqui Wellbrook explained to the Gazette:

This is a great way to meet a new circle of friends and keep learning new things. Getting older is an opportunity for a new chapter in your life, not an excuse to hide away.

If you would like to follow in Jenny's footsteps, just search the internet for Ilkley & District u3a. Their website has links for information to well over 100 different interest groups meeting regularly throughout the year including Motorbikes, Book Clubs, Gym Classes, Architecture and Railways. There is also a range of talks, short courses and online presentations. The original concept of being a self-help organisation is still true with groups and activities organised and led by its own members.



Photo shows, left to right, Peter Mate, Deputy Chair u3a, Jenny Procter, the 2000th member, and Jacqui Wellbrook, Chair u3a.