

Dates for your Diary

2023 Events

10th November Members Coffee Morning
10.00 to 12.00

Church on the Heath,

15th November AGM 10.45 The Harlington,
Fleet - entry from 9.45

1st December Christmas Lunch 12.30 to
14.00 Victoria Hall, Hartley
Wintney

Monthly Meetings 2023 /24 - The Harlington,
Fleet, talk 11.00 to 12.15, BYO coffee from
10.00

15th November Bridge Disasters - 1847 to
the Crimea Bridge 2022
Speaker : Alan Haywood
(this talk follows the AGM)

2024

17th January Guide Dogs for the Blind
Ann Bradford & Mel Phelhan

21st February Craftsman's Art & Music's
Measure
Speaker : Paul Bodiam

Visits

22nd November 'The Drifters Girl' at Woking
Theatre £50pp

Rollers

29th November Trip to Chichester cost
£25.00 p.p. contact Jenny Teagle

Fleet & District U3A - AGM

15th November 2023 at 10.45am

Please join us for this important event,
we need a minimum of 180 members to
attend.

Tickets for the Christmas Lunch - £8.00

These will be sold by Pam, Events Sec.,
at the AGM on the 15th November.

Chat from the Chair

As we approach our AGM, inevitably it is a time to take stock.

I now know what *pickleball* is, I've attended some truly excellent Monthly Meetings, and the groups I attend have gone from strength to strength. The only problem? There are simply not enough days in the week to do all I would love to do.

Thirty years after our founders signed up to the philosophy and precepts of the Third Age Trust, our 1700 members exemplify that desire to get involved and to participate, most recently summed up in the tag line '**Learn, Laugh, Live**'.

The bedrock of Fleet U3A is the willingness of people to give time, energy and expertise for others.

All of us are volunteers, and volunteering is a positive experience. I have to concede that not everything can be as enjoyable as the cakes Paddy brings to committee meetings, but many things come close. As a committee member I have gained a greater appreciation of what happens in the background to keep our U3A running. Not least all the work finding venues suitable for the needs of each group to run in comfort and safety. Beyond the Committee, research backs up what common sense tells us:

- Volunteers enjoy better physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- They increase in confidence.
- They gain new skills and valuable experience.
- They feel a sense of connection to others in the community.
- They gain a sense of fulfilment.
- They deepen their sense of purpose.
- They are more successful in counteracting the effects of stress, anger and anxiety.
- They develop strategies for overcoming challenges.
- They stay physically healthy.
- They find new friends.
- They connect with the community.
- They learn new skills.
- Above all they improve their mental health and wellbeing by reducing stress, combating depression, and providing a sense of purpose.

All for £14 per year.

See you at the AGM,

John.

Monthly Meetings

Fleet U3A Monthly meetings are going from strength to strength. Prior to the talk in October the small hall was packed with members chatting, eating biscuits, booking the Rollers trip to Chichester and buying goodies from Margaret and Linda in support of Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice. Margaret reported that they made well over £100 in aid of this very worthwhile charity. Thank you everyone for your generosity.

Fleet U3A is always keen to advertise local charities and signpost our members to events in and around Fleet so do let us know if you would like a table before any of our monthly meetings. Next month Fleet Lions will be selling their charity Advent Calendars at £5 each.

180 members and guests turned up to hear Neil Sadler tell us about his fascinating and often hilarious experiences as a police officer in Sussex. He took us down memory lane by playing theme tunes from several police dramas. I am pleased to say that we knew them all! Neil's talk was very well received, and several members asked me to book him again for another from his repertoire of talks. Watch this space...

Next month on November 15th it will be the AGM before the talk so the arrangements are slightly different: -

9.45 the small hall will be open for BYO coffee and biscuits supplied by us.

10.30 the main hall will open for members to take their seats.

10.45 the AGM starts, assuming we are quorate. We need 180 members at least in the hall.

11.15 the AGM ends, and our talk begins.

12.15 the talk and questions will have finished.

Please make sure you have enough time on your car park ticket to allow for the extra time this meeting will take.

Our speaker on November 15th will be Alan Haywood. Alan is a member of Fleet U3A and has kindly agreed to talk after our AGM. He is going to tell us all about Bridge Disasters over the last 170 years or so. As far as I know there have been none in Fleet although we do seem to have more than our fair share of canal, railway and motorway bridges. Please come along to support Alan.

I look forward to seeing you at 10 o'clock for BYO coffee etc., 10.45 for the AGM and 11.15 for Alan's talk on Wednesday November 15th at the Harlington.

Paddy Powell

Rollers

Trip to Chichester for Christmas, Wednesday November 29th

Leaving Cody Sports Club car park at 9.30am arriving back 6pm.

Cost £25 based on thirty people minimum, including coach and parking.

Accessible luxury coach with lift facility if you do not wish to use the steps.

Please be prepared to pay at the time of booking. Cheques preferable, made out to Fleet u3a or cash.



Jenny Teagle

Outreach Secretary

Creative Writing

Ask for Alex by Jill Low

"Hey, that's cool!" I said, once I'd opened the email. Ben looked up from his phone.

"What's cool?" he asked.

"My Aunt Jodie's invited us to stay for the weekend."

"Checking out the new boyfriend, I suppose." He grinned.

"Not that new. We've been together now for five months – and 24 days," we finished together.

"Seriously, though, what's so cool about Aunt Josie?"

"Jodie. Oh, she's loads of fun. We used to love going there as children - we'd beg Mum and Dad to let us go. I guess she made lots of time for us, took us places that kids like to go – but especially she'd give us challenges."

"Like cleaning the bathroom floor with your toothbrush?"

"Noo! Fun things. One summer we were spies, and she hid messages in dead-letter boxes, in trees and other places in the park. I learned to recognise different trees that year, as well as getting a prize at the end. Another year we did circus skills, and once we were aliens from another planet. It was fantastic!"

"So where does Jodie live and when's the invite for?"

"Kent. The last weekend of this month."

It was quite late when we got to Jodie's, so it wasn't until we surfaced for an enormous brunch on the Saturday that I was able properly to introduce Ben to my aunt. To my relief they got on well from the off, so at the end of the meal I wasn't at all surprised to hear the magic words, "Would you like a challenge?"

The challenge was a few words on a piece of paper: 'Go to No.27 and ask for Alex'.

"Number 27 where?" Ben asked.

"That's for me to know and you to find out. It's not raining but you'll need your coats." Her parting words were, "Have fun. Keep safe."

Jodie's road, and most of the roads on the estate where she lives, are too short to have a number 27, but looking at Google Maps helped us work out there were half a dozen or so likely roads very close by. When we reached the first Ben looked at me and gulped.

"What shall I say?"

"Ask for Alex. If it's the wrong house, apologise. I'll do the talking if you'd like." (This was an appeal to male vanity – seldom fails.) We rang the doorbell. No one answered.

"Should we come back later?" Ben whispered.

"No. Jodie's challenges are bombproof. When we get the right one, we'll know."

At the second house, the door was opened by a middle-aged man. "My wife's called Alexandra, but she's always known as Sandy," he told us. "Do you know her?"

"I'm sorry, I think we've got the wrong house. Very sorry to have bothered you, sir."

"Taken me away from the rugby," the chap complained, but Ben's into rugby and five minutes later we were on the verge of being invited in to watch the game.

"Time's getting on, darling," I said, and we made our escape.

At the next house the woman took one look at us, said "No thank you, I'm Church of England," and closed the door. Where number 27 should have been in the next road was a house called The Oaks. By way of contrast, the fourth house was dilapidated, with stained curtains and a bicycle frame in the porch. We didn't knock. We did get to meet an Alex at the next house, but as he was fifteen months old and asleep, he wasn't much use. Our final house was empty – no furniture and three estate agents' boards by the fence. We went back to Jodie's.

For Sunday lunch, Jodie proposed taking us to the King's Head, but took an unusual route along the High Street, blaming road works. She did the same on the way back. Ben was in the back.

"There's a bar there called number 27!" he shouted. "I bet that's it!"

Jodie pulled into the nearest bus stop and let us out. Inside the bar, I sat at a table while Ben went to ask for Alex. He returned with our drinks and a small package.

"Do you think it's drugs?"

"No – look." Behind him on the wall was a notice.

'All workers need hard hats. Forgotten yours? Just go to the bar and ask for Alex. Have fun. Keep safe.'

Inside the packet were three condoms.

Cheers, Jodie!

Visits - Potters Exploits

Fleet U3A did themselves proud on our 'all- inclusive trip to Potters' in Norfolk. Not quite Olympic standard but oh my, gold medals no less!

Everyone should have had a medal for being a really good example of friendship and caring along with lots of laughter and fun.

Three of the group had severe walking problems did this stop them getting around? ...no. Did this stop their enjoyment? ...no.



There was something for everyone and those not sporty or able to participate in more strenuous activities there were craft sessions and various daily quizzes, Carole Noad our U3A quiz master, would have had a field day! The 'programme' started at 10.00am and there were sessions for every form of dance, salsa, barn, line, ballroom and even Morris dancing. Keep fit, gentle exercises and there was a gym and beauty parlour.

Golf, pitch and putt, and crazy. Swimming enjoyed by so many of the group with a plunge pool as well. Table tennis and curling, short mat bowls and ten pin bowls, held in the sports hall. Nordic walking was a new event for everyone, as was using a Segway.



'The SEGWAY Intrepids' including the group leader!!! When I sent this picture to my son he said better than a zimmer frame!

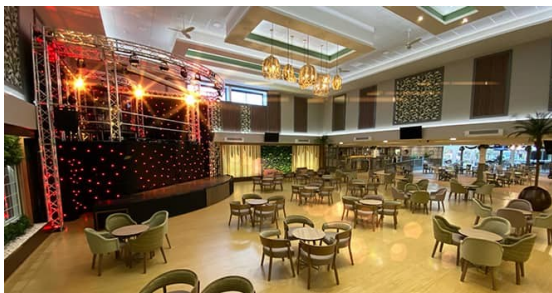
This was advertised as a bowls break, with everyone having the option of entering a team. No one did but we had two sessions for those interested in having a go, with three u3a coaches to hand to advise and help. Watch out U3A bowls, think you may have new people next year, the same with Pétanque. Every year the 'World Indoor Bowls' competition is held in January at Potters and having looked at all the 'rinks' you can see why. All the equipment for any of the activities was available from golf tees to bowls, bats, racquets, guns and bows and arrows. Snooker, Pool, darts and believe it or not arcade machines. Soft play as well for the children, we didn't try that! I am sure I have missed out on telling you about some of the activities.

Every evening there was entertainment in the 'Palms Theatre' first-class entertainment of west end standard. The special effects, costumes singers and dancers, not to mention the 'live 'band' were 'fab- u- lous', as Craig Revel Harwood says. The first show was 'Born in the USA 'with songs merging into one another seamlessly, so many that we all knew from Motown to rock and roll had the audience enthralled from beginning to end.

The artist represented were Diana Ross, Neil Diamond, yes sweet Caroline was the song, Prince, Stevie Wonder, Sinatra, and Aretha Franklin these were only some of the many artists represented.



The next evening was a 'scary night' as all the songs were representing Halloween, 'Bat out of Hell' being one of them, not such a long show but after, in the Garden room the music continued, with the band, as it did most evenings with singers until late when supper was available from 11.00pm.



'A night of Variety', really was. The compere was very good, not only did he have a lovely singing voice, but he was a bit of a comedian and involved the audience, with some barracking.

There was a Mr & Mrs competition on stage with audience volunteers, this bought the house down as the questions were good to start with and both the couples got the answers correct, like, where did you first meet? and what was your first date? Gradually it all went down- hill when the question was, 'What would your wife take on a desert island? Then the wives were asked how they rated their husbands comparing them to trees. Strong Red Woods, Bonsai, or a Christmas tree! Hilarious, I won't explain the answers here though.

The last evening was called 'Simply the Best' with music highlights from the most requested musicals . The rendition of 'Nessun Dorma' made your spine tingle and Rachel who sang classical as well as popular music was a knock- out! We think both may have been classically trained. The duet of Les Misérables was really moving, by these two artists.

Potters has been rated as the 'Best UK Resort' and the show started off celebrating 103 years of history. Herbert Potter, a solicitor's clerk, won £500 in a newspaper competition, this was all he needed to fulfil his dream of a 'holiday camp' that was in huts and not under canvas.

Over the years his vision has been expanded to be a 5* all inclusive resort, which lives up to its reputation, and star rating.

Our all-inclusive really was, as the only money needed was for the nightly bingo session which proved very popular with prize monies in the hundreds. Apart from medals, awards were given in the form of wine for quiz winners. All-inclusive also meant everyone, regardless of age or ability, was catered for.



We elected to eat in Gallery restaurant as the main one resembling a cruise ship, had the capacity to seat 600. Our round tables of eight were just right and the service and choice of menu was the same. With three

choices of starters and mains, all waiter service, and a carvery and a self- service hot meal every day. A hot desert and a choice of cold deserts or cheese and biscuits. Bearing in mind this happened at lunch time as well! Also we had the late supper to look forward to, if needed. The food was of the highest quality and with the numbers involved it must have been a mammoth task for the chefs to feed such an 'army' of people.

The accommodation was in brick-built bungalows with central heating, white fluffy towels and toiletries, hair dryer and hospitality tray. The TV had a Potters channel so if you didn't want to watch or take part in the theatre or Garden room activities you could watch it from your room. As a group, single rooms were limited, but a big thank you to all those who shared a bungalow bathroom, with separate bedrooms. It was lovely to hear people say their morning cuppa was shared with their roommate. These 'sharers' only met at the booking desk or on another outing for the 1st time. I now know new friendships have been made.

On the way to Potters, as promised, we stopped for a visit in Colchester. Britain's first Capital City, in AD 49, in the reign of Claudius, The Garrison Fort was built on the original Roman temple. Many of us found the fascinating free museum 'Holy trees' set in beautiful grounds next to Colchester Castle, which is still an active garrison.

On the way home due to the storm, we decided not to have a planned stop as flooding was severe across Suffolk. We did however stop in Ipswich at Christchurch House, which is a free museum where we had stopped before and it has a small tearoom. Next door was the church run community café, which did the trick for a quick bite and comfort stop even the coach driver came in and ended up with homemade shepherd's pie. Due to bad weather and road conditions, we arrived home about 5.30pm.

This trip was a first for Fleet U3A, and everyone enjoyed it. Two ladies joined us from Ash as the take up from Fleet was poor, the good news is I think they are joining Fleet. They were full of praise for our members who made them so welcome, but then, our overnight stays are always supported by nice friendly people.

We all look forward to another overnight stay somewhere in 2024 along with our day visits.

We hope to see you on the coach in 2024.

Carole Matthews

Bowls Group 2

This group is now offering **Short Mat Bowls**, during the winter months, at Crondall Bowls Club. We meet in Crondall every Tuesday between 10.00 and 12.00. Bowls and tuition are available, if required. There are some vacancies so if you are interested please contact **Jenny Keyte** on 07759248998

Fleet U3A Website

**Keep up to date with all our activities,
News, Events, Visits Monthly
Meetings on our website
www.fleetu3a.org.uk**

COMMITTEE



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**PLEASE AVOID TELEPHONING MEMBERS
BEFORE 9 a.m. OR AFTER 5 p.m.**