

Dates for your Diary

2025 Events

Members

March 14th Inter U3A Quiz
Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney
14.00 to 17.00

April 16th Open Morning
The Harlington, Fleet
From 11.00 to 13.00

August 27th Group Enrolment for 2025/26
11.00 to 12.30

Group Leaders Meetings

March 27th Programme Checking
United Reformed Church Hall,
Fleet, 10.30 to 12.00

July 4th Group Leaders Lunch
Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney.
12.00 to 14.00

Sept. 20th Group Leaders' General
Meeting, Memorial Hall, Sandy
Lane, C.C. 14.00 to 15.30

Monthly Meetings 2025 - The Harlington, Fleet, talk 11.00 to 12.15, coffee from 10.00

Feb. 19th Horatio Nelson,
Britain's Greatest Admiral
Speaker : Dr. James Taylor

March 19th Blackbushe Airport
Past and Present
Speaker: Pete Vickery

May 21st The History of Hampshire Loca
tions that have inspired my
novels. Speaker Michelle Salter.

June 18th Gongoozling for Beginners, Life
on the Canals.
Speaker: Neil Sadler

Visits

March 21st Stoke Potteries - home of Pottery
Throw Down. Two night stay

May 2nd Beaulieu, BBC Gardens World
and Motor Museum

Sept 12th Kyren - 4 night visit

Sept. 26th Fawltly Towers Experience
(Fully booked - waiting list)

Possible Visits - if interested email Visits

July/August Buckingham Palace

November Magic Circle

Chat from Chair Elect

Our current Chair has asked me to write this month's "chat from the chair" as he continues to recover from his recent hip operations so I thought I'd start by introducing myself as I shall be taking up the reins as the new Chair in a few months' time.

Sue and I have lived in Fleet for almost 30 years. Our two children grew up here and attended local schools. I retired from full time work a few years ago but occasionally do a little bit of business consultancy when not helping out in Sue's doggy day-care business which helps me keep my "steps" up as I'm out walking dogs most mornings!

I was totally unaware of what the u3a was until I decided to learn how to get the most out of my camera and join a Fleet u3a photography course. This led to me joining an Introduction to Bridge class where I met Paddy. Within a few months she had persuaded me to join the committee as Group Liaison Secretary, shortly before the pandemic. A couple of years later I fancied a new challenge and volunteered for the webmaster role despite knowing next to nothing about building and maintaining websites. With John now standing down in the next few months I am looking forward to yet another new challenge in taking over as Chair.

Fleet u3a is one of the most successful u3as in the country. I am looking forward to working with the Trustees, both long serving and newly appointed, as well as Group Leaders and all our other volunteers to help continue to make our u3a successful in the future. I look forward to meeting many of you during the coming year.

Stephen Grosvenor Chair Elect & Webmaster

Please see Notice at the bottom of page 4

Bridge:

Do you want to learn new strategies on how to play? Do you want to practice play in a supportive environment? Then why not join our class on a Wednesday afternoon. **Liz Rougier and Dee**

For more information please
email u3aBridgePlay@outlook.com

Creative Writing

Eagle-eyed readers of the last newsletter will have noted Margaret Keeley's Christmas story was missing its ending and for this we have to blame some naughty elves. Be assured, the story ended happily with Mrs. Christmas doing a good job of standing in for Santa!

Our story this month comes from one of the newest members to our group.

Idle Hands by Catherine Holden

My Mum was always quoting: 'The devil makes work for idle hands'. I hated that phrase. Although looking down at the embroidery lying in my lap, I suppose he might.

It all started when I met Pete. My friend Maureen couldn't stop asking questions 'What was he like? When could she meet him?' Deep down I did not trust her so made excuses to put off the moment. Typical of her, she couldn't stand my having something for myself. Pete had chatted to me on the bus, he had asked me out, he liked me.

Just as I feared, from the first meeting Maureen had flirted outrageously and like an octopus with its prey she gradually smothered him and stole him from me. She was no friend she was an evil conniving bitch.

They had a whirlwind courtship and were married within six months. I was not asked to the wedding. I was at the church though, watching from the cubby hole behind the font, out of sight. I didn't blame him, I blamed her for bewitching him.

I'd sent her a little gift. I hope she'd appreciated the thought and effort I'd put into it. It had taken me ages, each stitch embroidered with hatred from deep within me. The words 'whore betrayer' angled artistically to perfectly fit the frame; the blood red stitches stood out from the white 14 count aida. I was very pleased with the finished piece. I'd never seen myself as arty, but here I'd produced an impressive piece of work.

On the birth of their first child, I sent her another little card. This time I stitched 'Spawn of a whore' in lovely baby pink. I heard that when she opened the envelope she broke down.

Two years passed. I saw Maureen in town, another child on the way. I popped into the haberdashery shop and spent an enjoyable hour carefully choosing thread and aida. This time I went for yellow, after all I didn't know if it was a boy or a girl and people always said that yellow would do for either. I really enjoyed stitching, it was so relaxing seeing the image take shape. The devil actually looked good in yellow, surprising really as he is usually portrayed in red. I did wonder whether to do the horns in red, but thought that was a bit obvious. So, yellow devil it was, but I compromised with a blood red frame. Effective? Definitely!

I heard that she cried when she opened it.

It is so true what they say, children do grow up really fast. I sent their mother a card on every one of their birthdays. I sewed snakes and cockroaches. Through tiny coloured stitches I depicted accidents which can happen to children when mothers are not very careful. I never had a 'thank you'.

I watched my family from afar. I think she knew I was watching, I hope she did. She wasn't so sure of herself anymore, she grew smaller. She had not aged well, so many lines and she was only 40. She shouldn't worry so much, worry lines are very ageing.

It turns out she was ill – who knew! Well, she's gone and I'm ready to step in and take care of the family that should have been mine. At the funeral Peter approaches me, I smile, no hiding in the church on this occasion.

'How dare you show up here, you evil bitch!'

I looked at him, what was he saying? I didn't understand.

'I love you.' I say, 'I have always loved you. That woman tricked you with her whiles and charms, stole you from me.'

'She didn't steal me, I loved her from the minute I saw her. I knew I couldn't get close to her easily, so that was where you came in. I used you. I never liked you. I used you to get close to Maureen. You are nothing to me and you never were.'

I stare at him. What was he saying? His voice was reverberating in my head, but the words didn't make sense. Then the words stop going round and I listen to them inside my head and I understand.

I watch Peter striding into church. He does not look back. All those years I thought it was Maureen and all the time it was him who was evil. I feel a trip to the sewing shop coming on.

Catherine Holden

Group Leader Margaret Gerrard

Introducing our Vice Chair

Hi, my name is Mark Goodwin, and I recently moved from Knaphill to Ash with my wife, Nicky, and dog, Toby the lurcher, where I enjoy doing woodwork in my large workroom at the bottom of the garden.

I joined Fleet u3a last September after deciding to increase my bridge playing from once a week at Crookham Street bridge club.

I helped to start up the Crookham Street club approximately 20 years ago with William Richmond. I then took over running it when William moved away. We play on most Wednesday evenings the exception being the first Wednesday of the month when the WI hold their meeting.

The main reason for joining Fleet u3a bridge club was because a lot of players from Crookham were already members and they said how friendly the majority of players are.

I was invited to join the committee and after careful consideration agreed. I was subsequently appointed vice-chair, replacing Paddy who was stepping down. I can be contacted via mlwgoodwin@yahoo.com

Regards Mark

Ukulele Groups

2024 was a busy year for the Group Leaders Committee with new Beginners in September, some have already 'promoted' themselves into Improvers, and Improvers moving on to Players. The songbook has grown to 144 and I know there are more in the wings that we want to add.

The Concert team were in demand again with 21 charity concerts being performed by the time we did the last one on 20th December. Already there are 14 booked for 2025. It takes a lot of effort to arrange all these: liaising with the organisers, selecting who will perform from the 20 plus concert team, choosing



the songlist, making sure everyone knows where to go, what time to be there and compering. This is ably performed by Ray Llewellyn who, despite his recent hip replacement operation, continued to perform his duties with his normal enthusiasm.

Hart Rotary Senior Citizen's Christmas Party at the Victoria Hall in Hartley Wintney

The Players Group is well stocked now but we do have spaces in the Improvers Group. Our current Beginners should be moving to Improvers by the end of the Spring term meaning the new Beginners Group will not start again until after enrolment in September. Beginners need no previous musical experience and we have a collection of loan ukuleles to get new members started. All that is needed is enthusiasm and by the end of the first session everyone will be able to play and sing a couple of songs.

The Fingerstyle Group is growing with regularly 15 or more attending. Some of the recent scores include Tango Argentin, The Girl from Ipanema and a clutch of Hawaiian traditional tunes. A new challenge for 2025 year is Carlos Santana's Europa. Anyone interested in learning such fingerstyle playing techniques can contact Brian Anthony bganthony@btinternet.com

Mention In Dispatches - from our esteemed Chairman John Gawthorpe....

At the last AGM we asked members present to fill in a feedback form, along the lines of 'What Went Well' and 'Even Better If'. Ten groups attracted praise by name: I'm pleased to tell you that Ukulele was one of them.

This means so much to us as it means our committee approach is working, and that all the behind the scenes efforts are operating as well as we hoped.

Richard Fielding RHJFielding@aol.com

Ably supported by Kevin Fox, Tim Cansdale, Geoff Dee, Ray Llewellyn and Bernie Dembowski

Visits - Magic of Motown Christmas Party

With Christmas on its way, what better way to celebrate than a Motown party!

Our destination was Shepperton (not Detroit!), with the Holiday Inn Hotel nestled amongst a Swan Sanctuary and a Marina. Anyone at this point thinking of T



Rex (Ride a White Swan) was on the wrong coach! The venue was very busy with many other local u3a groups in attendance. That meant a bit of a queue for coffee and a mince pie but before long we were all sat at our tables to "Get Ready" for a Christmas Carol singalong followed by Motown songs. The singer and keyboard player were excellent and they quickly developed a good rapport with the audience.



And it wasn't "Just My Imagination" but from the get go, the place was jumpin' so much so that we were almost "Dancing in the Street". We then had a fun quiz prior to a delicious three course festive dinner although the less said about the late change for those having the vegetarian option the better. A charity raffle draw followed and then a prize for the best dressed guest. Did I mention it was 60's/70's fancy dress?! We were fully represented in the final but just missed out on the prize.

With that it was back to the dance floor which was packed and then carriages at 3pm. Thanks to Steve from Hodge's coaches who got us there and back safely and on time. And many thanks also to Carole and our fellow Visits team members for helping Jenny and me lead our first trip.



A really good day out and an excellent start to the Christmas festivities. There was plenty of Christmas spirit, with everyone there determined to have a good time and so it proved!

Nick and Jenny Andrews

Exploring Psychology

Would you be interested in finding out more about leading a Psychology group? The Exploring Psychology group has been running for four years, with enthusiastic members, but there is a long waiting list for places. Another group (or two!) would help to alleviate this.



We cover a wide variety of topics once a month, and the group is discussion and activity-based, with members doing their own research before each session. This means that an academic background in Psychology would not necessarily be required to run a group; an interest in the subject or relevant job experience (eg nursing, teaching, counselling etc.) would be fine.

Each U3A runs their Psychology group differently. For example, several follow a GCSE textbook, which gives a good structure for further discussion. Other groups invite speakers or use media (youtube / news articles / scientific articles) to initiate discussion.

I'd be happy to help with resources and welcome any questions you may have. There is also a central U3A subject advisor for Psychology, who can provide resources and help.

Ellie Faulkner

Important Notification

The Fleet u3a Committee changed at the November AGM. For the latest list of Committee Members with their roles and contact details please see our website fleet.u3asite.uk or the last page of our Newsletter.

The list in the Programme is now out of date. Alan Jones Programme Sec.

Monthly Meetings

Thank you to all those who turned up for the rearranged Monthly Meeting in January and apologies for the late notice about the change of date.

Richard Wigram treated us to an excellent talk about Sullivan and Gilbert. It was fascinating to hear about Sullivan and Gilbert separately and to discover they did so much work individually before becoming the partnership we all know about. Richard's depth of research is amazing and the snippets of contemporary evidence he gave us were extraordinary.

There was a lively buzz in the small hall over coffee, tea and biscuits as you all caught up with one another after the Christmas break. The visits table was mobbed, and much interest was shown in all the exciting trips the team have planned for us. Thank you for the used stamps in the collection box, I shall pass them on to support Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice.

On February 19th we have Dr James Taylor coming to us for the first time and his talk is entitled 'Horatio Nelson: Britain's Greatest Admiral'. 2025 marks the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Dr Taylor will tell us about the extraordinary life of Vice-Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson through period drawings and prints. He will describe how Nelson was a charismatic character beloved by his men afloat but lampooned ashore for his relationship with Lady Emma Hamilton.

The arrangements at the Harlington are as always:

- 10.00 for chat, coffee, tea and biscuits in the small hall
- The visits table in the foyer from 10.00
- Fleet U3A Welcome table will also be in the foyer (Guests are always welcome)
- The book and jigsaw swap table will be in the small hall
- The box for collecting used stamps will be in the small hall and at
- 11.00 the talk will be in the main hall finishing at 12.15 after any questions.

The Monthly Meeting team looks forward to seeing you on February 19th.

Paddy Powell

Visits

Visits as usual have been beavering away to plan visits for 2025.

Hopefully you will all have read and digested the Kynren visit planned for September 12th, 2025, there are still a few places left including singles. We will be staying at the 4* Jacobean Redworth Hall Hotel in Bishop Auckland, a stone's throw from the Kynren site, for 4 nights.

Our visit for a fun evening at Highfield Park, Heckfield a 'Fawlty Towers dining experience, with Manuel, Sybil and of course Basil, is now on Friday 26th. This is fully booked and has a waiting list.

A Beacon announcement has been circulated to ALL members for the above trips.

On May 2nd a return, by request, to Beaulieu 'Gardeners World,' will be on sale in February.

Visits are struggling to secure bookings that are reasonably priced and interesting.

A BIG THANK YOU, to all you lovely members who support visits and for filling in the AGM form, 'of what Fleet U3A did well/and suggestions. Visits came out top!!

Many of you know we now have Nick & Jenny Andrews on 'the team', who are doing a sterling job. Along with Sue Dalton who is more experienced three trips under her belt! Visits are in a very good place.

I Thank all three, you are lovely to work with XX

Nick led the Motown trip on 10th December, and I look forward to reading his write up on the trip, along with any members comments. A big thank you again to all the members who entered into the spirit of Motown by dressing up, you did Fleet U3A proud.

Before I close, can I PLEASE ASK that you read to the end any email that are sent out by the team, and read our visits page in the programme, where many questions can be answered.

Non-members are NOT eligible for any visits and All of our trips include coach travel drivers tip and parking. PLEASE NOTE Visits have their own bank account, so if paying by BACS please ensure it goes to the correct account, ask for details. There will be no receipt, but we do ask that YOU notify visits that you have paid. SIMPLE.

The whole team wish you all best wishes for good health and continued friendship through 2025.

Carole Matthews



Shorter Walking Group

In December, the group enjoyed a 3.3 mile walk led by John and Sally Mullin in the Hawley Lake area. There was a mince pie break half way round and some locals had decorated a tree, so we had a festive background for our photo. We then adjourned to the nearby Crown and Cushion pub for further chat and refreshment.

Margaret Garrod

Strollers into 2025

You could be excused for thinking Strollers have disbanded. Mistake, huge mistake.

The group is expanding, with partners in Odiham and Yateley u3a's. The clue is in the name. Strollers is a group of like-minded folk who enjoy a gentle stroll in the fresh air. Stoic strollers are not put off by the weather.

Since my last report, back in the Autumn last year, strollers have been blown round by gusts, soaked by unexpected heavy showers, warmed by watery sunny spells and invigorated by the bracing chill of the January 6th stroll seeing in 2025. (pics Included). The continuous chatter keeps spirits high.



We stroll around Elvetham Heath. The area meets the different needs of the members. Leisurely strolls round the green or longer strolls into the Country Park with paths around the lake and beyond.

The start and finish is at The De Havilland Arms which continues to do us proud. The coffee and biscuits are ready with the ever present welcome. It provides the perfect end to the morning allowing us to dry out, warm up and catch up on even more gossip!!

Our Christmas Lunch was another great success (pics included.) 21 members, excellent food, very attentive service, thanks Ian once again.

Thank you so much my stroller friends for your continued support and friendship.

Strollers meet fortnightly, on Mondays at 11am, in De Havilland car park.

The next stroll will be on February 17th. New members welcome.

Jenny Teagle



Rollers went to Mottisfont on November 28th

Yes, "the show must go on." Without me, that's exactly what it did.

I must begin by offering my enormous thanks to Linda P, Linda N and Jane T who stepped into the lead on the day. Without their willingness to take on the GL role I believe the trip might not have gone ahead. So, many thanks to those who sent me feedback, without which, I would have found it difficult to compose a report.



Having had only positive comments, I think the messages below give an excellent insight to the day.

'Despite the unpleasant weather judging from the laughter I heard and the smiles I saw we DID enjoy ourselves'.



'What a lovely trip we had today. The house and decorations were really beautiful. Your deputies were superb and made a good decision to come home an hour earlier. The wind was quite sharp, so it was too chilly to walk round the gardens, at least for some of us'.

'My friend Pat and I really enjoyed the trip today and the weather stayed dry!'

Lovely trip, Mottisfont was magical...great group of people...think everyone enjoyed it'.

'Nice to be driven in comfort with no worries'.

'I will certainly sign up for more trips'.

'Carol and I enjoyed the coach trip to Mottisfont Abbey. The coach driver was very helpful to us all, especially getting off and on the coach'.

'We started with a coffee to look at the information we had been given and then went in the house with our timed ticket. What a beautiful sight met us, with Christmas decorations and presentations on the story of the Nutcracker! It was superb! We also learnt a lot about the history of the house.'

We followed this with a delicious lunch and hot chocolate in the restaurant.

We visited the winter garden which was laid out with decorated Christmas archways amongst some rare trees.

It was time then to board the coach after some time in the well stocked shop!

I would like to thank Fleet U3A for allowing us from Yateley U3A to join the trip. You were very well organised and hospitable. We would be very happy to join future trips!'

'It has been a really lovely day! We are on our way home and it has been just for a day's visit.

'It was a lovely house to look round with all the amazing Christmas decorations based on the Nutcracker theme. It was also very cold outside, so we departed on the coach back home 3pm!' Sue CG

'A wonderful day at Mottisfont, thank you for your invitation from Fleet u3a. The day was dry, and Jill and I also had an invigorating walk along the river and gardens. Nutcracker was delightful, quite enchanting'.
Odiham u3a

The day went well, thank you to my deputised GL's on the day.

Jenny Teagle

Gentlemen's Discussion Group

On Friday 24th January ten members of the Gentlemen's Discussion Group had an excellent organised three hour private tour of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Our guide Ian Pattison gave us lots of information including the history of the academy from its founding right up until the present day. The buildings and setting are spectacular in scale, mostly built from the early 19th century through to the early 20th century. Among the areas we visited were the Indian Army Memorial Room, the Royal Memorial Chapel and the Roman Catholic Chapel. A thoroughly interesting and informative visit and highly recommended for those U3A members who have not yet been to RMAS.
Alan Jones



The group plus guides standing on the steps of the Old College where the Sovereigns parade is held each year.

South East u3a Forum Summer School '25
Monday 1st to Thursday 4th September
at University of Chichester.

The course list and details will be posted on the Forum website on 12th March. Wide variety of courses including mahjong, walking poetry etc. This is open to all u3a members.
Forum Website: 2025 - South East u3a Forum

We now have 360+ Fleet U3A members in our private Facebook Members Group for contact and discussion between members. This is a Private Group for members of Fleet U3A only, you are encouraged to join.

Fleet U3A Website

**Keep up to date with all our activities,
 News, Events, Visits Monthly
 Meetings on our website
www.fleet.U3ASite.uk**

Find us on Facebook

Find us on Facebook - Fleet U3A has its own Facebook Members' Group, our Facebook page can be found by entering "Fleet U3A" in the search box at the top of any Facebook page. You can then request to join our private Members only group, you will be asked for your Name and Membership number.

COMMITTEE
EMAILS



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