

Dates for your Diary

2025 Events

Members

- April 16th **Open Morning**
The Harlington, Fleet
From 11.00 to 12.30
- August 27th **Group Enrolment for 2025/26**
11.00 to 12.30

Group Leaders Meetings

- July 4th **Group Leaders Lunch**
Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney.
12.00 to 14.00
- Sept. 20th **Group Leaders' General Meeting, Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney 14.00 to 15.30**

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

- May 21st **The History of Hampshire Locations that have inspired my novels. Speaker Michelle Salter.**
- June 18th **Gongoozling for Beginners, Life on the Canals.**
Speaker: Neil Sadler

Visits

- May 2nd **Beaulieu, BBC Gardens World and Motor Museum**
- June 10th **Chartwell & Emmetts garden**
- July 16th **Buckingham Palace**
- Sept 12th **Kynren - 4 night visit**
- Sept. 26th **Fawlty Towers Experience (Fully booked - waiting list)**
- November **Magic Circle tbc**

Chat from The Chair

I am delighted and honoured to have taken over as Chair from John Gawthorpe who stepped down this month after three years in the role. John will be a very hard act to follow but I will try my hardest and I wish him all the best for the future. I'm sure we will all still be seeing him attending groups and monthly meetings in the future!

We have had a number of changes to the committee in recent months and I am looking forward to working with all of them and others to ensure that Fleet u3a continues to be a success. Please have a look at our website for contact details for all the committee members, and the last page of the newsletter.

As always, looking at this month's programme there is a lot going on. We are currently working on the 2025/26 programme and it will be going to press in the coming weeks. Again, the website will also be updated for all 2025/26 activities shortly.

Fleet u3a would be nothing without its members, especially its group leaders. As always, there are a number of them stepping down this year and I would urge members of their groups, or indeed anyone else, to please consider stepping forward.

Don't forget that there are a lot of events run by the U3a nationally from free online events to special interest groups, etc. Look at our "National u3a" page on our website to find out more.

Our annual Open Morning on 16 April is fast approaching. This is our main annual event to showcase our u3a and everything it does to attract new members. If you know a friend or neighbour who may be interested in one of our groups please do get them to come along!

If you have any questions on the above or any other aspect of our u3a please do contact me at chair@fleetu3a.org. I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can in the coming months.

Stephen Grosvenor

Reminder
The Fleet U3A Open Day is
April 16th 2025
This is held at the Harlington
Centre in Fleet
From 11.00 a.m. until 12.30 p.m.

New Updated Policies applicable to Fleet and District U3A can now be found on the Website.
Fleet.u3asite.uk

Creative Writing

Flying for Beginners by Dawn Greenwood

'Come on, then. Let's see if all my money has been well spent. Show me what you've got.' Barry tightened his seat belts and glared at his wife.

Colleen smiled at her husband. She finished applying her hand cream, before resting her hand on his and then brushing his face tenderly. 'Thank you so much for all the lessons, darling. I'm going to take you on the ride of your life.'

'Hmph! And that cream stinks. I smell like a flower shop,' he baulked at the sweet aroma of the lotion. She shrugged, dropping the tube back into her bag and slipping on her gloves, then taxied the little plane onto the runway. Barry looked around at the controls. 'I could have been brilliant at this, if they'd only let me. Bunch of jobsworths. And it wouldn't have taken me all this time to get qualified. Oh no! I'm a natural with motors. Cars, bikes, speedboats. Would have made an outstanding pilot.' Barry grumbled away. Colleen ignored him and sped down the runway, then lifted the Cessna into the air smoothly and began to ascend. 'See? Easy as riding a bicycle! You were obviously a very slow learner. Don't know why you wanted to do this. Could have had any number of luxury holidays with the money. We'd both have enjoyed that.'

By luxury holidays, Colleen was well aware that Barry really meant luxury *golfing* holidays. It had never occurred to him that she absolutely hated golf. He had never thought to ask. And she knew that he basked in the regard of his fellow golfers as he boasted how much he supported her in all her various hobbies. Mr bloody Generous. Never stopped him whining about the expenses all the time when they were alone, though. She levelled off. 'Okay, darling. Where shall we head for? Down towards the coast? Or shall we just stay local? As this is my first time up with you, I don't want to make you nervous.'

Barry responded as she expected. 'Nervous? Me? Of course I'm not nervous! Let's go South. We can take a look over that new golf course near Chichester.'

'Ok, darling.' Colleen climbed further and headed south. Barry continued to grumble about how much her pottery wheel and kiln had set him back, before she had lost interest. Then the tennis lessons. 'This flying better be something you stick at.' Colleen ignored him. Of course she had lost interest in the pottery, at the same time as she had bored of Julian, her very hands on pottery tutor. Oh, the things that man could do with those hands! Still, he'd started to get too clingy, so she had dropped him along with the pots. Clive at tennis had been a very different affair. She still marvelled at his stamina. Unfortunately, he really was a one trick pony (well, two, if you counted the tennis) so he had had to go. And now – she smiled to herself – now there was Adrian. The multitasking pilot. She had been a very quick learner, but those lessons just kept coming. She couldn't see herself ever tiring of Adrian. As Barry continued to nag, she slipped her hand into her pocket, withdrawing a pillbox. Without looking down, she flicked it open. Barry's drone stopped instantly, as the sound of wasps hit his ears.

'What's that? I can hear wasps!' Barry swung around in his seat as the wasps flew across the cabin towards him. 'Get them out of here!' He shrieked, batting his hands at the insects.

'My goodness! How ever did they get in here?' Colleen expressed surprise. Barry flailed wildly in his seat, further infuriating the wasps until he squealed like a stuck pig as one landed on his cheek. Panicking, he smacked at it, then howled.

'It's got me! Open the window! Pull over!'

'We're in a plane, silly. Don't panic. You have got your EpiPen, haven't you?' Barry lunged into his jacket pocket, then his trousers.

'It's not here! Ughh' His voice became hoarse as his face and throat began to swell. His breathing became laboured and he clutched his chest. 'What? Where?' He rasped, his skin becoming clammy.

'Don't worry darling, not long now.' Colleen continued to fly south until Barry fell quiet. She then turned the plane, and headed back to Adrian, radioing ATC to tell them through her raging sobs that there had been a terrible accident.

Dawn Greenwood

N.B. The Fleet U3A Committee changed at the AGM in November. For the latest list of Committee Members with their roles and contact details please see our website fleet.u3asite.uk the Committee list in the Programme is now out of date.

Our Cycling Groups need new leaders

I have been leading the two U3A Cycling groups for fifteen years, having taken over from the pioneer of Fleet U3A cycling, Terry Klashka in 2010. I am now 82 and my health and strength are slowly declining, so new leaders are needed from September this year. I still hope to continue riding but no longer feel up to organising and leading rides regularly.

As a new leader you will have a free hand to decide when and how often your group will ride and how far you will ride. You can lead all the rides yourself or ask group members to take turns in leading rides. As you will not be collecting venues fees, there is not much paperwork. You need to keep your group details up to date on the Fleet U3A website and Beacon, design and risk-assess the rides, and keep a register and list of emergency contacts, in case a rider is ill or has an accident during the ride. You can lead your group yourself or have a joint or deputy leader.

I will be happy to give you details of all my rides and, if I am up to it, reconnoitre them with you during the summer.

This is how I organise the rides, but you are free to do it your way. I have two groups, one on Wednesday morning and one on Thursday morning, both meeting at the Canal Wharf Car Park in Reading Road South. We ride for two hours, including a coffee stop halfway through. Rides are between 10 and 12 miles at a gentle pace. Each group does five rides per term. There can be a mixture of paths, and quiet roads. I have up to sixteen people on my mailing list but like to keep the group to a maximum of ten for safety reasons and out of courtesy to other path and road users. I send an email out on a Sunday evening and the first to apply get a ride.

I really do hope that Fleet U3A Cycling can continue in September. If you can help, please contact me by phone on 07973787218 or email on nickkeeley@hotmail.co.uk, or come and chat to me at the Open Morning on 16 April 2025.

Nick Keeley

Members on their own (MOTO) Groups

Earlier this year, the Group Leaders of the three MOTO groups (Heather Ryder leader of MOTO 1, Jackie Bignall of MOTO 2 and myself, GL of MOTO 3) got together and agreed to arrange a skittles match for the members of the three groups. We saw this as not just a good social event, but as a way of increasing co-operation between our groups and getting the chance for members to meet with others across the whole MOTO community in Fleet U3A.

So, on the afternoon of Saturday 8 March, twenty-five of us met in the skittle alley at the Frog and Wicket pub in Eversley. We started with a match with members of each MOTO group playing as a team, and later mixed up the teams, to form three teams that had people from each MOTO group, to encourage them to get to know each other better. We also had rounds with everyone playing only for themselves individually. The whole event was a huge success, with lots of fun, banter and laughter through the afternoon, and very positive comments on how much we all enjoyed the day. In fact, we now have another date booked at the end of April at the same venue for a return match.



Terry Collier, Group Leader MOTO 3



[Pickleball group update](#)

The pickleball group continues to be very popular – we are back up to fifty members now, playing on six courts at the Hart Leisure Centre on Monday afternoons. When the group started in September 2023, we were all absolute beginners. Since then, many of the original members have improved their game enormously and are very competitive.

However, this can be somewhat overpowering to new beginners, so we have split the courts into three



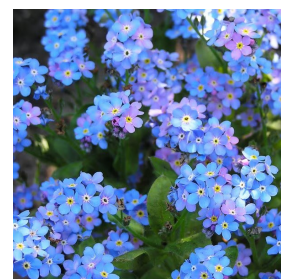
levels – Beginners and those enjoying gentle games, Medium level players and the More competitive players.

Two courts are currently allocated to each Level. Individuals are encouraged to move between levels during the session so everyone can play with others at the level they choose. This makes for more even and enjoyable games and seems to be working well.

David Lawes

[Dementia - Can you help with valuable research?](#)

Back in 2025, my mother passed away after suffering with dementia for the last eighteen months of her life. I regularly ran the Fleet 10k and began to use this as a vehicle to raise money for the Alzheimer's Research charity. With my permission, they passed my name to the related charity Join Dementia Research who were looking for volunteers to take part in the many scientific research programs trying to find ways to alleviate this horrible disease. Over the years I have filled in several questionnaires tracking my health and lifestyle as I age but nothing very involving. Many of the studies were looking for volunteers already diagnosed or showing strong signs of dementia.



Recently I was introduced to a study running at Reading University looking into the effects of specific foodstuffs on the memory in older people. In particular I signed up for a study on effects of taking broccoli stem extract. This year in mid-March, I went along to the university to meet the researcher and check if I met the criteria for the study. After a blood check, I was accepted, and I spent an hour or so completing more questionnaires about diet and lifestyle as well as giving a larger sample of blood (but much less than an armful). I was given a supply of broccoli stem extract capsules to take every day for twelve weeks before returning for a final debrief. It is not taxing but I do feel I am contributing to a useful study.

The researcher, Abigail Davies is hoping to recruit forty-five people to the study but currently only has fifteen participants signed up. If you would be interested in contributing just a little of your time to this study, she would be very pleased to hear from you and you will have the satisfaction of being part of the massive push to understand the processes of the brain and eventually find a cure for dementia.

You can contact her at: abigail.davies@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Mention Fleet u3a and my name as an existing participant. If you wish to give me a call first (evenings are best) to discuss my experience so far, you can telephone 01252 613148 or email DCLAWES@yahoo.co.uk

David Lawes

2025 Inter U3A Quiz Challenge

Did you know that the Inter U3A Quiz Challenge has been running since 2011?!

2025 saw two teams from Fleet, Always InQuizitive (winners of the 2024 Fleet Quiz Challenge) and Fleet Gentlemen, compete against 8 other teams from the Northeast Hants and North West Surrey U3A network.

The wide ranging, age appropriate (no 21st century pop or Kardashians questions!) were set by Brian Proctor, who also acted as Quiz Master.

It was a closely fought contest, with Woking2 in 2nd place and Alton and Overton in joint 3rd, and our very own Always InQuizitive winning for Fleet. Fleet have won the cup on four occasions now, so hold the honour of the most wins.

We all enjoyed the cream tea provided by the catering team at half time and the raffle raised £186. Thanks to everyone involved in setting up, running and taking part in this very successful event.

If you think you could represent Fleet next year, why not enter a team into the October Quiz Challenge and see if you can beat Always InQuizitive!

Diane Baldock, Events Sec.



U3A QUIZ CHALLENGE - 14th MARCH 2025

TEAM SCORES

TEAM NAME	Joker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
ALTON	3	16	18	36	18	14	18	16	20	18	16	190
ALWAYS IN-QUIZITIVE	3	16	18	36	18	16	20	18	20	20	18	200
ASH	3	12	10	32	12	11	20	20	14	10	8	149
FLEET GENTLEMEN	3	14	16	36	10	16	20	14	18	14	18	176
GUILDFORD	6	12	20	20	16	14	40	16	18	12	20	188
MILFORD AND GODALMING	4	14	20	18	36	14	12	18	16	20	16	184
OVERTON	3	14	18	36	18	12	20	18	18	18	18	190
WOKING 1	9	10	16	18	20	14	16	12	16	40	12	174
WOKING 2	8	14	18	16	18	14	20	20	36	20	18	194
YATELEY AND DISTRICT	10	14	16	18	16	14	16	18	20	14	32	178

Monthly Meeting

On Wednesday March 19th a record audience of 208 members and guests listened to Pete Vickery, from the Blackbushe Heritage Trust tell us about the airport in past times and their project to restore one of the first airliners to fly from Blackbushe, an old Viking aircraft. The aircraft had been much maligned in its day, misused and sadly neglected in its old age and then left to moulder on an airfield in Austria. It is now back in Blackbushe and being lovingly restored as part of a fledgling museum on the airfield. I think we were all rooting for the aircraft by the end of Pete's talk.

Pete says that if you would like to join the restoration group or just visit the airfield to see the work in progress, please contact him at the Heritage Trust and he will be happy to arrange a visit for you. team@blackbusheheritagetrust.com

On Wednesday April 16th there will be no Monthly Meeting because it will be our annual Open Morning. This is our, 'window to the world!' and our chance to show the people of Fleet what we do in Fleet U3A. We do need you to spread the word to your neighbours, friends and family so that they can see all that we have to offer to any adult with time on their hands in the daytime. Please spread the word and invite everyone you know anytime between 11.00 and 12.30.

Our next monthly Meeting will be on May 21st and the topic will be another one of local interest. Author, Michelle Salter, will be telling us how she uses the history and locations of Hampshire but particularly Fleet and Church Crookham as inspiration for her novels.

This is my last article as Monthly Meeting Secretary, so I want to thank you all for your loyalty and support over the last four years and for making our meetings so friendly, lively and successful. I particularly want to thank the MM Team who set up in the Harlington, welcome you all, support any visiting stall holders, man the jigsaw and book swap table, collect used stamps, greet visitors, smile at everyone and clear away before the talk starts. Our Monthly Meetings would not be possible without them.

I wish Mark Goodwin every good wish as he takes over the best job in our U3A, Monthly Meeting Secretary. Rest assured we are planning another excellent programme of speakers for September 2025 to June 2026.

You will not be surprised to learn that I now have another role. I am taking over as Publicity Secretary and my first job is to shout from the rooftops about our wonderful U3A. I am relying on you even more to spread the word and bring guests to the Open Morning on April 16th, 11.00 to 12.30. Thank you,

Paddy Powell

Short Walking Group

The Fox and Goose at Greywell was the meeting point for the eight of us from the short walk group. We went at a leisurely pace and noted the bat roost in the disused tunnel on the Basingstoke Canal and brown trout in the chalk streams. We called in at Greywell Church and made a there-and-back detour to the nature reserve. The weather was ideal: overcast, but dry and mild. Many thanks to Annie Beunier and Chris Mundy our leaders for the day and to Sally Mullin our group organiser.



Kerensa Pearson



SE u3a Forum Summer School

Monday 1st – Thursday 4th September 2025 at University of Chichester



The dates for 2025 are:

Wednesday 12th March 2025.- Course list and details will be posted on the Forum website by mid-day

Thursday 10th April 2025.- Bookings will go 'live' by mid-day

The courses are now finalised. Below is **the list of 13 courses** we will be offering in 2025:

AI – Artificial Intelligence

History - Roman

Italian - Intermediate

Latin - for Roman Britian & Beyond

Mah Jong - Intermediate

Mathematics – People & Paradoxes

Memory, Perception & Thinking – how it normally works well, but can go wrong

'Operatunity' - Opera Appreciation

Patchwork - Beginners

Philosophy - Introduction

Poetry – Australian poets

Walking – A Coastal Delight

Yoga – Mat, Standing & Seated

The costings for 2025 summer school are as follows:

Residential - En-Suite £405.00	Residential - Standard £375.00
Non-Residential with dinner £240.00	Non-Residential no dinner £180.00

The residential prices include accommodation, all meals and refreshments offered at break times and a 'Welcome' drink on the first evening, with a 'Farewell' drink on the last evening, both prior to dinner.

There will also be entertainment on campus, each evening, which is included in the pricing for summer school. But, if you would like to attend the theatre on the Tuesday evening, this comes at an extra cost – ticket price to be released after Chichester Festival Theatre has released their seasonal programme and we know what is on offer.

Full information on all aspects of this Summer School can be found on the South East u3a Forum's web-site; [please use this link - 2025 - South East u3a Forum](#)

All images are from Summer School 2023



I am a trustee on the SE Forum which is a U3A charity running a Residential U3A Summer School every September in Chichester. The dates this year are Monday September 1st to Thursday September 4th. The flyer attached to this newsletter gives all the details you need to find out more. I went as a visitor last year and was very impressed so I will be booking to attend the whole event this year. Why don't you join me? **Paddy**

NB All Members of the U3A can attend the Summer School - Editor

Visits

Wow! The queues were enormous to book for Buckingham Palace and there is now a waiting list. Thank you to all who came prepared with ALL the information needed to book a place, membership no. contact no, email and how they were paying. Many paid by cash and this was in an envelope with all their details on, this was really helpful. Obviously, the Beacon e mail finally got through to members! The interest list made interesting reading. Several members said I have put my name down for a place. The interest list tests if a trip is viable. It is NOT a place on the trip. Fifty percent of those on the interest list went on to book on the booking day. I managed to get a larger coach and book extra tickets after the monthly meeting. **PLEASE READ THE PROGRAMME BOOK FOR VISITS**, all the booking details are there.

The interest list for Salisbury Cathedral Flower Festival was poor and will not now be happening. The interest list for the Magic Circle, in London in November, looks promising so watch out for a Beacon email.

On that note, Visits does not have access to all members details, so our Fleet U3A Secretary, Anne Smith, sends Visits announcements out on visits behalf. With a Newsletter, Monthly Meeting, and Beacon emails, members still say they didn't know about a trip. Any ideas would be most welcome of how to get the message out to members. Part of the problem appears to be NOT reading the emails regularly, and correctly. Check your spam box and please read all emails to the end.

Carole Matthews

Caroles observations

I have been reading a very interesting book 'Noble Ambitions' the rise and fall of the country house. Many of the houses and estates that we have either visited or heard of have an interesting history of being schools/commercial, hospitals, to name a few. The National Trust rescued many properties, but so many have been lost. Chatsworth, Longleat, Blenheim Palace, all survived by the skin of their teeth. Parts of the estates land were sold off, and this enabled the houses to continue, but it still wasn't enough. In the early days NT charged 2s 6p per person, many privately owned estates followed suit. A visitor to Chatworth was most put out that sheep were grazing on the front lawn, on an U3A visit this is still the case. Many of the houses sold off furniture and pictures and various valuable items, to try and keep up appearances, so when crunch time came the properties were devoid of many historic items. We have a second visit coming soon to Beaulieu, what a history that has. In the 1960s Beaulieu was the first to stage an outside jazz festival all was well for nearly 10 years, but it all ended when Trad jazz fans rioted against Modern Jazz fans. Acker Bilk, Jonny Dankworth to name but two. At the opening to the public in 1952 lord Beulieu had an idea to display the family car for 2/6 pence entrance fee as it would show what living in a stately home was all about. This was the beginnings of the National Car Museum.

Many Americans bought houses, Paul Getty the richest man in the world at the time bought Sutton Place and had telephones installed in some of the guest rooms. Due to the phones being abused by tradesmen, business and calls back to family in the USA, he fitted locks on them and installed a 'Public' telephone box in the grounds. One day's telephone bill was £110, in the late 1950's: imagine what that would be now.

Four hundred homes were lost in the 1950s and by the 1960s a further three hundred. Chatsworth, one of the largest estates, sold Hardwick Hall. At a 'Christie's Auction' of silver, paintings, furniture and nine very important other pieces was not enough to save Chatsworth. The final death duties levied in 1958 were not settled until 1967, and the interest was still being paid off for another seven years.

Woburn Abbey opened its doors to the public in 1955 with the Duke of Bedford conducting the tours and family members answering questions in the rooms that were open. Lord Bath of Longleat had the idea to have lions. Jimmy Chipperfield, of circus fame, met Lord Bath in 1964. After numerous debates in Parliament 1966 saw the first safari park opened outside Africa. There is so much to write about this book, space won't allow.

I will finish by quoting American 1950 guidebook 'Here's England' author Ruth McKenney . 'Cricket is not dull, and avoid coach trips all costs. A small crack over the back of the neck with a heavy blunt instrument can produce (and much more cheaply) the same sensation as a day in the company of Thirty Six fellow victims seeing Stratford, Warick, Kenilworth, Broadway, and Tewkesbury Abbey. Tomorrow Chester and the lake District. One of the most pitiful sights of an English summertime is the bus load of tourist descending in the twilight at a dreary commercial hotel'

Fear not members there will be no crack over the back of the head, our overnights stays are in lovely hotels, and we have fun laughter and the friendship of other members. Look forward to seeing you on one of our trips.

Carole Matthews

Poetry Voices

Poetry Voices have been suspiciously quiet of late. Especially considering last year's Christmas programme, followed by a podcast around Easter and our WW2 D-DAY tribute programme **In Their Own Words** last summer. This was our special contribution to the 80th Anniversary Commemorations, focusing on people in this area. We were pleased to raise £320 for SSAFA through exit donations at the otherwise free programme.

So, what on earth have we been doing this year, do I hear you ask? Well, we've looked at poems from early times to modern, 'toured' the British Isles, often with nods to occasions ranging from Burns' night to St Patrick's and St David's days, floated our boats with 'sea' themed poetry and considered how the poets crafted their memorable, often poignant, pieces.

We wanted to offer another free 'sharing' event this summer BUT even though there will be commemorations marking the end of WW2, given the conflicts and strains of today's world, we felt we needed **Reasons to be Cheerful!** Then we realised we do have a very good reason to be cheerful - Fleet and District U3A's proper coming of age - 35 this year! Definitely worth celebrating! 35 years in which to **Learn, Live, Laugh** and we do.

So it is that we find ourselves creating a celebratory programme with poems of hope, optimism, positivity and just plain fun! We've found a lot to make us smile and even got our heads together to create our very own acrostic poems!

We hope to share these smiles with you when we present our anthology programme in May. Watch out for more information in the next newsletter.

Christine West

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.

Group Leaders - Important

We are now paying for all booked sessions at the majority of venues. If you have to cancel a session will you please let Barbara, the Venues Secretary, know a.s.a.p. as she can then try to avoid paying for the venue on that occasion.

Fleet U3A Website

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