

Dates for your Diary

2025 Events

Members

November 19th Annual General Meeting at 10.45 in the Harlington, Fleet followed by The Monthly Meeting.

December 12th Christmas Lunch 12.00 -14.00 at Garrett's Club House, Queens Avenue, Aldershot GU11 2JL

Group Leaders' Meetings

March 26th Programme Checking at United Reformed Church

July 3rd Group Leaders' Lunch at Victoria Hall Hartley Wintney

Monthly Meetings 2025/26 - The Harlington, Fleet, talk 11.00 to 12.15, coffee from 10.00

Nov. 19th Following the AGM - Puccini Speaker: Richard Wigram

January 21st Hampshire & IoW Air Ambulance Service

February 18th British Humour and the Forgotten Art of the Picture Postcard 1840 to 1950's Speaker: Dr James Taylor

Visits 2026

January 31st Houses of Parliament

February 15th Birmingham Tattoo

Chat from the Chair

I hope all our members are enjoying being members of their various groups as the Autumn weather starts to set in. We are lucky that there are so many groups from Art to Zumba to keep us occupied as the weather changes for the worse. We are also fortunate to have a large number of trips to stately homes, gardens and the theatre etc. all organised by the Visits Team and the Rollers Group.

Although we are one of the larger u3a groups in the UK we could ideally still do with more groups to meet the national "target" of one Group for every ten members. These new groups could replicate an existing group which perhaps has grown too large or has a waiting list. Or, what about starting a completely new subject group?

Our website has a list of potential new subject groups. If there is one that is of interest you can contact the committee and we can advertise to see how many other members may be interested in joining. They can be easy to set up and we can provide lots of help and support to guide you.

Finally, please remember that it is our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 19 November 2025, followed by our monthly Meeting and a talk on Puccini, one of my favourite opera composers. More information on the AGM will be issued shortly. Please do come along!

Stephen Grosvenor

Christmas Lunch

Tickets are still Available. Join us for a festive lunch at the Garrett's Club House, off Queen's Avenue, Aldershot on December 12th from 12.00 until 14.00.

Choose from:

Lemon & Thyme Roast Turkey or (Ve) Wild Mushroom, Confit Garlic & Tarragon Wellington Plus - Roast Potatoes, Yorkshire Puddings, Sage & Onion Stuffing Balls, Pigs in Blankets, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower Mornay, Glazed Carrots

Traditional Christmas Pudding & Brandy Sauce or New York Cheesecake with Winter Berries

Teas and Coffees

Cost: £15.00, including a tip.

If interested please contact Diane Baldock on events@fleetu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meeting

Many thanks to Ruairi McNulty for his informative talk on the life and times of John James Audubon. This gentleman is the illustrator of The Birds of America. He was an ornithologist and artist who created life size paintings of some iconic American birds. When the book was finally finished it measured three feet by four feet and was contained in four volumes. A first edition was recently sold for \$12 million.

Our next meeting will be held on November 15th, where we will be welcoming back Richard Wigram, who will be talking about Puccini. Richard's talk will follow our AGM. Please come along to support your committee.

Phyllis Tuckwell will also be in attendance with their jams and other items. If anyone could bring along empty Bonne Maman jars they would be very appreciated.

Mark Goodwin

'Unexpected Legacy'

To mark the 80th anniversary of D Day, the Poetry Voices Group presented a programme of poetry and contemporaneous letters. Later this was recorded and appeared on the Fleet U3A website as a podcast.

An unexpected outcome was that I have accidentally become the custodian of the U3A Audio Kit (as in photo).

It takes five minutes to set up and maybe another fifteen to get it working to your satisfaction. No vast technical expertise necessary.

Rather than let it gather dust, maybe there's something from your group's activities you might wish to record in sound, not just in words and images?

I'll be glad to bring you the kit and explain my - very limited- understanding of how it works.

My contact details are in the Programme under Music Appreciation.



John Gawthorpe

Shorter Walks Group

The Group's October walk started at the Fleet Pond car park off Cove Road. We were fortunate that the weather was kind - dry and cool but not too cold or windy. John Mullin led us in a rough figure of eight around the environs of the Pond. We walked mostly through mixed woodland with bracken understorey. But we also walked along the Canal at one point and through the back roads of Pondtail. The Canal provided some beautiful reflections and there was a profusion of autumn colours in the bracken, fungi and deciduous trees. The walk was a good opportunity to meet and chat with new as well as longstanding members of the group.



Kerensa Pearson

The Film Set - Message From Yvonne (Farnham U3A)

Despite my best efforts there wasn't a screening in October. Dave Monk, the manager of the Reel Cinema, has broken his leg and while he has been away recovering there appears to be no assistant capable of putting together a programme that is not part of their commercial offering. At our last session he, the assistant, wouldn't let anyone in until 10.00 instead of 9.30 which just made the situation worse and frankly showed poor communication within the management of the cinema. My impression is that Dave Monk is the only manager they have. His sidekick, Dan, was probably on a break from college and unfamiliar with our arrangement.

Anyway, please pass on my apologies to your members. I have been in contact with Dave Monk, and he assures me that we will be back in business in November.

Yvonne Hockey

Visits

I need to catch up with you all regarding visits information. July was our visit to Buckingham Palace, which was enjoyed by everyone. When we arrived, the timing was perfect as we were able to see the end of the changing of the guards. Many of us then walked in St James Park to eat our packed lunch that I had recommended people take. A walk up 'The Mall' to begin the Buckingham Palace tour evoked memories of all the times we have seen Royal occasions on TV and parades coming down the Mall. This visit was a self-guided audio tour. After the tour we were able to sit down and have a cuppa then walk through the gardens to pick up the coach.

This Buckingham Palace visit was the last in our U3A year.

Our next visit was in September for our four nights stay to visit Kynren and surrounding areas. Unfortunately, I was unable to take this trip, but members were in good hands with Sue & Nick from the Visits team, who shared the itinerary. Feedback from everyone was the trip was excellent, super hotel & staff lovely Scott as our coach driver and interesting venues to visit. It was heartening to note that we had several new members, and other members who had never been on our overnight stays. I had so many messages during and after the visit saying thank you Carole, it makes it all worthwhile when it is appreciated. Nick, in last month's newsletter article for Kynren, kept praising me, which was lovely, but without the help of Sue & Nick taking it on the day it would have been exceedingly difficult. I have said before Fleet U3A are incredibly lucky that we have visits and we are the envy of local U3As, but without a good team, we could not do the number of trips that we do.

Covid has changed many things for booking overnights and visits. We are striving to find different and interesting venues all the time, and we are very aware of rising costs.

September saw our long-awaited visit to 'the Fawley Towers dining experience' at Heckfield. The meal was very good, albeit in being served late, which resulted in us arriving late home. The cast was funny with a compilation of the funniest episode of the tv show. After Basil's many misdemeanors, Sybil came around the tables to apologise to everyone. She had the most high-pitched annoying voice, 'Is everything alright?' she asked. Brilliant!

The next visit, in November, is to Woking theatre to see the 'Story of the Kinks' under the title of 'Sunny Afternoon'.

At the October monthly meeting we took bookings for the 'The Houses of Parliament', which is now very oversubscribed, so much so that we MAY do another visit soon. There are as I write, a few places for 'The Birmingham Tattoo' in February. Time is running out to secure a place as we must pay and confirm our numbers to the venue.

Now I am asking for YOUR HELP.

When a Beacon announcement is sent to you advertising a visit please respond to VISITS not to the Secretary (who has sent the message on behalf of Visits).

When paying by BACS (our preferred payment method, as we get charged for every cheque) pay promptly and inform Visits that you have paid, and that it has been paid into the correct account.

Read your programme book, page 5, where most of the Visits frequently asked questions can be found - such as: are non-members eligible to go on a visit? where, time and when bookings are taken; and where the departure points etc. are.

Group leaders and committee members are volunteers. Occasionally, you may receive multiple emails regarding a visit due to errors and /or changes; please read the messages, and perhaps reply where required as they often contain important information.

Remember you only have to look after your own communications, whereas we on the Visits Team are dealing with hundreds during our U3A year. Visits are always ready to answer questions that may not be included in the programme book.

I would like to personally thank Sue and Nick for their ongoing help and to all the members who over the years have supported Visits. To all the new members, welcome to Visits, which is NOT a Group and is open to all U3A members regardless of which Group you are in.

Finally, thank you for reading the above - we look forward to seeing you on the coach soon.

Carole Matthews Team Leader

The Psychology of Habits

The Exploring Psychology group discussed how habits are behaviours that become automatic through repetition, often triggered by a specific cue. This topic was built on the classical conditioning introduced by Pavlov, and operant conditioning principles researched by Watson, and later by Skinner.



Using everyday examples like having a biscuit with a cup of

tea, they identified how a habit could be formed by asking the following questions: What is the habit? What is /are the cue(s)? What is the automatic response? What is the reward? What are the negative conse-

quences of the habit loop?

Asked why we form habits, the group decided that habits free up mental energy (efficiency), we can be rewarded (a dopamine release reinforces behaviour), and repeated behaviours become easier over time (consistency).

Changing habits involved a lively discussion about the way to break a habit and form a new one. Each member identified a habit they wanted to change before the next session, and recorded how successful this was (there were mixed results when fed back at the following session!).

Could you be a group leader for another psychology group? There are plenty of people on the waiting list, and an academic qualification in psychology is not essential - just an interest in the subject. Other groups could be run purely as discussion groups, or a textbook could form the session plans. There is also a central U3A subject advisor for psychology who could help with numerous resources.

Please contact ellie.faulkner1@gmail.com if you are interested and have any questions.

Ellie Faulkner



Thursday Cycle Group

The Thursday cycle group meets mainly twice a month.

This 'academic year', we have had three leisurely rides going around Tweseldown & Hawley Lakes and to Hartley Witney with seven to eight cyclists.

If you would like to join our group, even if it is just a taster ride, or would like to know more; then please contact Stephen either on 07931730457 or

e-mail at stephenphillips100@hotmail.com

Stephen Phillips



Phyllis Tuckwell stall at the October monthly meeting

We were pleased to raise a total of £135 at this event. Our thanks go to everyone who either bought something or contributed items for sale. New this time were the necklaces and bracelets made by the beading group. These proved very popular as did Linda's jams and chutneys and we sold all of Anna's wild plum jam. We aim to be at the November monthly meeting with a similar range of items plus soft toys made by a talented friend and Christmas cards made by the card group. Not a fix, but once again it was a committee member who won the raffle. This time the winner was Paddy Powell. Congratulations to her. We will accept empty Bonne Maman jars, the ones with the red and white checked lids, for Linda's next batch of jams and chutneys.

Margaret Garrod and Linda Martin

Creative Writing

It's Complicated by Derek Gutteridge

Bert tried to stand but his head was going round like a drunk. He sat down, tried to focus his brain and found he needed to stay put. It was the third time in a week this phenomenon had assailed him, so he resolved to phone his GP and get an appointment.

The phone was answered by a sweet-sounding lady who spent several minutes telling him that if it was an emergency... or that staff would not suffer rudeness... or all phone calls are recorded for training purposes ... please hold on, you are number 15 in the queue.

Bert held on and eventually spoke to a human being who said his GP, Dr Gordon, was on holiday, could he call back later or make do with a locum. The locum would telephone Bert tomorrow or.... oh, you want to see him today. They agreed a time and Bert arranged with a neighbour to appear at the surgery five minutes before, then waited twenty minutes to be ordered to "the brown door". The locum was young, well dressed, pleasant, gave Bert an inspection, looked at his computer record and noted a large number of pills prescribed for heart pressure, kidney problems, doubtful liver, irritable bowel, bladder weakness, arthritis, and diabetes.

'It's your ears. They're blocked ... affecting your balance ... no, we don't syringe any more ...take some olive oil drops for a week followed by sodium bicarbonate drops, which will make your ears fizz. Sorry, no prescription ... buy them at the pharmacy.'

The locum tested Bert's blood pressure and tutted. It was jolly high.

When Bert got home, he found a letter from the surgery telling him that following a blood sample taken two weeks ago, he was being referred to a Dr Din Din Amadi, a consultant, who would telephone him next day between 11 and 12 o'clock. Bert took an immediate dislike to Dr Din Din as it reminded Bert of school meals, gristly meat, lumpy mashed potato, and dumplings that would be lethal if fired from a Battle of Waterloo cannon. The letter also confirmed that Dr Din Din worked for a private healthcare company and not the surgery.

The following day, Dr Din Din phoned and proved to be a woman with a cultured voice that sometimes flattened its "A's". She spoke at Bert, rather than discussed his health, and told him she would give him a new drug. Bert was able to ask about side-effects. He would be sent details by email and she rang off. The consultation had lasted barely five minutes.

No email came.

Bert contacted the surgery to complain. A voice told him that if it was an emergency... or that staff would not suffer rudeness... or all phone calls are recorded for training purposes ... please hold on, you are no. 17 in the queue.

Dr Din Din was unavailable, so her nurse telephoned and promised to send Bert the information. A twenty-one pages pamphlet arrived. Bert noticed the drug manufacturer advised against taking other blood pressure reducers (Bert was currently taking three pills a day for that purpose) and he could reduce the number of drugs that controlled his diabetes, while the new drug increased the likelihood of him catching urinary infections.

Bert wrote again to the surgery expressing his concern as no one had given him directions in line with the advice from the manufacturer. Dr Gordon remained unavailable, Dr Din Din did not reply, the locum stayed quiet but, after two weeks, the pharmacy, attached to the surgery, sent an email asking him to talk to them.

He rang the pharmacy who denied that the surgery had referred him, so he rang the surgery, who could find no record they had referred Bert to the pharmacy. Two boxes of the new drug, each with 56 pills, were delivered to Bert's house.

Bert has dripped oil and bicarbonate of soda into his ears, they did fizz, and he had to use cotton wool in his ears to prevent bits coming out on clothing, pillows, and cushions. Bert's head no longer goes round but he has now gone deaf.

He picked up the phone to call the elusive Dr Gordon, dialled, and realised he could not hear anything.

Derek Gutteridge

Recorder Group - Possible New Group

Playing for fun, this group would be suitable for recorder players who can read music and have some experience playing the recorder at a reasonable level. Descant, treble, tenor and bass recorders welcome. The proposal is to meet monthly for Ninety minutes.

Anyone interested should contact

ellie.faulkner1@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed Please

Calls and Visits is part of the **Good Neighbours Network** and they are looking for people who can befriend isolated people both Male and Female. If you enjoy a chat, and can also listen, then this might be for you.

If you are interested then call the Team to explore how you might help and for further information.

You can contact **Calls and Visits** on **07795 931062** or email them at callsandvisits@gmail.com

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.

Library Service

Hampshire County Council has a '**Home Library Service**'. If you, or anyone you know, finds it difficult to get to the Library then this service is available.

For an application, or to apply on line, search for

Hampshire Home Library Service or speak to the local librarian.

Once you have completed the application your local Library will contact you to understand what your reading preferences are. A dedicated volunteer will be allocated to choose and deliver your reading material.

This service is free.

COMMITTEE & EMAILS



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