

## *Dates for your Diary*

### 2025 Events

#### Members

**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

**January 21st Hampshire & IoW Air Ambulance Service**  
Speaker: Keith Douglas

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

**March 18th The Work of The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre**  
Speaker: Joanna Read

#### Visits 2026

**January 31st Houses of Parliament**  
**February 15th Birmingham Tattoo**  
**TBA Potters in Norfolk**

### Visits - The Kinks "Sunny Afternoon"

We enjoyed a morning shopping in Woking, the shops were busy with Christmas lights and decorations and singing animatronic reindeer in the centre and outside the centre giving a festive feel.

Plenty of choice for lunch before the show, Wetherspoon's was a very popular choice due to good value meals and drinks.

I even made an effort to find the War of the Worlds sculpture.

The Kinks - Wow! What a wild band, loud music, wild behaviour and certainly



wrote the phrase 'drugs, drink and rock and roll'. It was a real eye opener to someone who didn't follow them in the early days.

Their lead singer Ray Davies wrote so many songs that we would all recognise 'You really got me, Come dancing, Lola, Waterloo sunset and many, many more.

**Sue Dalton**

### Chat from the Chair

Firstly, a thank you to all our members who braved the short snowstorm earlier that morning to attend this year's AGM at the Harlington. I was delighted to be able to announce honorary life memberships to John Gawthorpe and Mike Rance, and Richard Wigram's talk on the life and music of Puccini was fascinating. We will be looking at starting some new interest groups next year. If you have a specific interest that is not currently catered for, please look at our website to see how you can help get a new group off the ground. It's not as difficult as you may think. We also have a long list online of potential new interest groups to give you some ideas. Learn something new in 2026!

Finally, I wish all our members a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you all in 2026.

**Stephen Grosvenor**



**Your Fleet U3A Committee  
wishes you all a  
Very Happy Christmas  
and  
Merry New Year  
As well as a  
Very Healthy 2026**



### Thursday Cycle Group

We had a couple of excellent rides enjoying the unseasonal autumn weather.

One ride was of about 11 miles via Crondall to Penn Croft Vinery, where nine of us enjoyed a cup of coffee, and some had a cake or croissant, before returning through Crookham Village.

The other ride was about 12 miles, in which six of us took on the challenge of the hills to the west of Crondall and stopping for a coffee break at Roke and returning through Dogmersfield.

Not all the rides are that hilly, so if you want to get back on your bike for a leisurely cycle, perhaps just a taster ride, and would like to know more; then please contact Stephen either on 07931730457 or e-mail at [stephenphillips100@hotmail.com](mailto:stephenphillips100@hotmail.com)



**Stephen Phillips**

### Fleet U3a Walking Football Group - Represented England 80 in World Cup.

This Fleet U3A group is now nearing the end of its eleventh year having first started in the Calthorpe Park school gym, before moving across the road to Hart Leisure Centre where we use the excellent facilities of Hart Leisure Centre including, as required, part of the all-weather pitch, an outside 5 a side 'cage' and the sports hall. Sessions start with a warmup of mobilisation and stretching, followed by skill improvement through small sided, not over competitive short games. As part of the after play 'warm down' we meet in the centre cafe for coffee. The group size is now at its maximum which includes an amazing nine octogenarians.

Recently two of our players, Adrian Bunting and Jack Tyler, represented England at the Walking Football (WF) Nations Cup held in Alicante. Given that there are hundreds of walking footballers in the country in the 79+ age group, we are justifiably proud that two players from Fleet were selected. This competition was organised by FIFA WF, as its first attempt to present a World Cup. In England walking football comes under the WFA who field representative teams at both regional level (e.g. SE) and national level, in different age groups for men and women. Thus, there is an England team at 50, 60, 70, 75, and since 1 August 2025, England 80 was formed and Adrian appointed as manager/captain having risen through the ranks at 70 and 75.



The newly formed England 80 team played its first international match on October 19 against the Republic of Ireland 70+ team. At very short notice just before this match Adrian was contacted by WFA and asked to provide an 80 team to fill a vacant place at the Nations Cup for 23-24 October. Jack was drafted in by Adrian to make up the ten players able to travel from the original fourteen-man squad.

They had a tremendous time playing on the Spanish coast in a marvellous three stadium facility, playing three national teams at 70+ and one 50+ team (Singapore). A win against Holland 2-1 was the highlight, followed by draws against Japan, Singapore and a mixed Australian (men/women) team. Another England team 'Kick Out Cancer' also played who were all male 50 to 65 and had a history of cancer but were very fit and inflicted their only defeat. Adrian says England 80 are planning for 2026 to play against Holland, Jersey, Scotland, Cyprus and probably a re-match against the Republic of Ireland.

Although our WF group is now at capacity with 32 members, which is really as many as can be accommodated, we do operate a waiting list for new members. It is important to note that all levels of ability are welcome. You needn't have played competitive football before. A number of social activities are also organised throughout the year. If you are interested in joining you can pop along and see us in action on Thursdays 9-00 am to 10-30 am, having fun kicking a ball around in the sports hall.

**Peter Buck, Group Leader Walking Football Men**

## A form of Mind Sport?

Golden Girls rubbed shoulders with Golden Balls, the Groundlings greeted the Quizly Bears, and Always Inquizitive acknowledged A Bridge Too Far.

Eager at the thought of the half time Cream Tea, twelve brave teams entered the **2025 Quiz Challenge**. Quizmaster Brian once again demonstrated his silky skills: compiling a set of questions offering regular encouragement to the majority whilst – on occasion - absolutely stumping the very best.

Amongst regular participants it is well understood that coming up with the correct answers is the easy bit. Nothing to it.

The challenge lies in persuading the five other members of your team of your brilliance. It may indeed be defined as a form of Mind Sport, but the frantic scribbles and hissed interventions have to be experienced to be believed. Perhaps the most poignant moments are reflected in the expression of a successful quizzier whose correct answer had been roundly dismissed by five team-mates.

Organisers – who do a brilliant job – reassure me that no blood was spilled this year...

Always Inquizitive displayed a truly remarkable breadth of knowledge (*I can't believe there were many lucky guesses around that table*) and justly go on to represent Fleet at Regional level.

But for the (eleven) also rans, it was very pleasing to see the gallant runners-up justly rewarded too.

If your group has not yet got a team together, you're missing out on a great experience (and a marvellous Cream Tea.)

**John Gawthorpe, Groundling**



## Tai Chi

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A new study from Harvard University has revealed that one fitness activity above others is more beneficial than walking or jogging. And no, it's not swimming. Pilates and yoga are wrong guesses, too. Rather, it's another ancient practice that promises to enhance our physical *and* mental well-being, helping us stay in shape longer. The study was talking about Tai Chi, the Chinese martial art - initially developed for combat and self-defence - that involves slow, gentle movements, physical postures, a meditative state of mind, and controlled breathing. Harvard's research notes that *"this form of exercise is especially beneficial for those over 60, as it's not necessarily about how many calories you can burn or how fast your heart rate can go: it focuses on improving balance, strength, and mental clarity instead. While having its roots in self-defence, practising it is more about how it can help your body: it is an art that is gentle on the joints, and holding the slow positions helps to reduce the risk of falls, enhancing flexibility too, as well as boosting mood and overall well-being"*. According to one of the researchers in the study, Tai Chi has a positive effect on ageing. *"The movements help with responsiveness and coordination, and improve memory and concentration thanks to the calming - yet complex - positions and routines. The lack of high impact is another reason why it is suited to the older age group."*

2025 has been a year of change for the four groups as one of our tutors left after the summer term. However, we have been extremely fortunate in being able to recruit a highly experienced teacher to take their place. The Tai Chi classes continue to flourish and remain as popular as ever. It remains difficult to meet the increasing demand for places, although we have done well this year. There is a need for a new beginner's class in 2026 so if there is anyone who would like to take this on - volunteers welcomed! The tutor takes the class and you support him; we would give you plenty of help.

**Ken Molyneux-Carter**

## Creative Writing

### A Christmas tale or don't mess with Rudolf by Alan Grace

Rudolf reached for his pain killers: "It's no fun getting old – look at me, droopy antlers and my nose is turning grey." Also, he heard some of the elves singing "Rudolf the grey nosed reindeer is going to collect his pension soon."

He had been No. 1 in Santa's present delivery service, however, last year Santa had taken a dim view of the presents going to the wrong addresses.

Rudolf's excuse "People keep moving and my special reindeer iPad could not keep up with the changes."

However, changes were happening at the North Pole.

Donner and Blitzen had already moved on because once Donald Trump had expressed an interest in Greenland, they bought a B & B in the area hoping the American reindeer would move to be close to the action.

As for the others, they had joined the Lapland Singers and their latest hit *Show Me the Way to Go Home* was riding high in the charts.

Rudolf decided to visit the reindeers' office. Ignoring his rollator given to him by the elves, he moved slowly towards his destination, and he thought, "I used to cover the whole world in one night! Now look at me."

Once inside he headed for his computer and switched on. Prancer, the group's "techie" had collated all the notes and letters sent to Santa and Rudolf over the centuries.

Rudolf could still recall the letter sent by a young Corsican boy in 1780. "Dear Papa Noël, please can I have the whole world. Yours Napoleon Bonaparte."

Then he looked under L and up came London 1940 and a note. "Dear Rudolf, could you stay a few moments longer at No. 17? Yesterday we were bombed and we have no power, so I cannot find the presents I bought for Mum and my sister and the light from your red nose might help me to find them."

He moved on to Leningrad in 1942 and a little girl's note. "Dear Grandfather Frost, we have no food. Please can you help and look after my Daddy who is away in the war."

On to a letter from America and something completely different. "Dear Rudolf, I want to sing but my friends tell me it would help if I stopped wiggling. Oh, by the way, if you have a spare guitar in your stores, I would be most grateful. Yours Aaron. P.S. I really must change my name, do you think Elvis would be better?"

So many memories for Rudolf.

"How Santa manages I will never know. I know he has Mrs. Claus to help but he never seems to be in a hurry."

Suddenly Rudolf's mobile phone rang. "Rudolf, I know you have retired but I need your help. Our whole operation is being scammed. I have just had a note that says: unless we send all of the best presents to the following addresses, the scammers will make sure Christmas is cancelled."

Rudolf thought for a minute. "Santa, you know the broken toys warehouse? I think it still contains some of the Victorian skunk bombs. These were the best stink bombs in existence. The smell could linger for up to five years in a house and roughly the same on a person. What I suggest is, we ask the low-flying specialists among the reindeer to drop a couple of skunk bombs down the scammers' chimneys. After that, they will be so busy trying to get rid of the smell, they will not have any spare time to continue scamming. So, I think you can say this would be Game, Set and Match to Santa Claus."

**Alan Grace**

## Modern Jive

We are now coming up to our fourth year anniversary of the Jive class, which is great. The class is as lively as ever and it sure does brighten up the winter with people often smiling and laughing in the class as they dance.

I always love it when some of my pupils have gone to other events and danced the night away. That is the great thing about Jive in that you will regularly hear music with the right beat and you can happily dance away. As always more people are welcome to join us, we are particularly looking for more leads if you'd like to give it a go.



**Kevin Druce**

### Shorter Walking Group

On a dreary, wet, discouraging afternoon, it's astonishing to remember that only yesterday the weather was gloriously clear, cold but sunny and perfect for walking. We set off from the carpark by the canal opposite the Barley Mow. The carpark was very busy but when we set off the group that Annie Beunier and Chris Mundy led was fairly small. The ground was frozen underfoot so that the muddy bits were firm. We turned to our left out of the car park and were treated to beautiful sunshine with very little wind making the canal mirror-like in places and showing the remains of the autumnal colour to advantage. Once at the pond we spotted various waterfowl and even, we thought, a great white egret, though none

of us had binoculars to confirm the sighting. On our way back the group split, some making a detour to St Mary's Church, Winchfield and others completing the circuit without diverting. The latter group spotted a kingfisher darting along the canal - a happy ending to a delightful walk.



***Kerensa Pearson***

### A Month in the life of MOTO3

MOTO stands for Members On Their Own, whose aim is to help people who now find themselves alone to meet others also on their own, and be able to do things together.

Every month our group has a meeting, followed by lunch, several coffee meets, a weekly pub quiz night, dinners, Sunday lunches, walks together, often with their dogs, and a book club.

This November, we did a number of other activities together. Early in the month, one of our members organised and booked a Murder Mystery evening, where during dinner, a group of actors played out a murder, and each table had to work out who the murderer was and their motive. Our MOTO3 group got the right person who did the dastardly deed, but came up with the wrong reason, so we did not win the prize!!

Mid month, five of us went to Istanbul for a long weekend. We managed to go to the Grand Bazaar, avoiding the temptation to buy any of the gold, diamonds or carpets, although one of the group did buy a kilo of Turkish Delight. We also visited the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, and took a boat trip on the Bosphorus river. A lovely city, and a magical weekend.

Later in the month we held a pub skittles match, and were able to invite our friends from MOTO2, and also from the new MOTO4 group that was launched in September.

I believe that in a wet, miserable month, we managed to brighten up the lives of many of our members. If you are on your own, or know someone who is, take the first step and get in touch with one of the Fleet U3A MOTO groups. I know that Di Smith, who launched MOTO4 has places available, and she would welcome new members. You can contact her at [di.smith@live.co.uk](mailto:di.smith@live.co.uk)

***Terry Collier MOTO3***

**Phyllis Tuckwell Stall at the November Monthly Meeting**

We raised £210 at this event, and our thanks go to everyone who visited our stall and contributed to this impressive total. Our thanks also go to the beading and card making groups and craft group member for donating items for sale. For the third time in a row it was a committee member who won the raffle. This time it was Di Smith. 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. We plan to be back again next year, but in the meantime, we wish you all a Happy Christmas.

**Margaret Garrod and Linda Martin**



**New Pilates Group - Group 7**

A new Pilates group has been formed to start in January on Wednesdays from 11.45-12.45 at the Guide Hall, Basingbourne Road.

It is called Pilates 7. We still have a few vacancies. If you are interested, please contact Jennie Phillips at [jenniephillips@hotmail.com](mailto:jenniephillips@hotmail.com) who is temporary Group Leader. Dianne Godby will be Group Leader from January. Her contact details are :-

[dianne.godby@gmail.com](mailto:dianne.godby@gmail.com) or 07840 109612

Please note that Helen Bellamy is now Group Leader for Pilates 2. Her contact details are :-

[helenbellamy@aol.com](mailto:helenbellamy@aol.com) or 07711 117224.

**Reminder From Editor**

***You are all reminded that your submission, to the next Newsletter, is due on Friday the 23rd of January 2026. Contributions from All Members are welcome. You don't need to be a Group Leader. Ed.***

**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.***

**COMMITTEE & EMAILS**



Chair & Webmaster	Stephen Grosvenor	<a href="mailto:chair@fleetU3A.org.uk">chair@fleetU3A.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:webmaster@fleetU3A.org.uk">webmaster@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Vice Chair & Monthly Meetings	Mark Goodwin	<a href="mailto:vicechair@fleetU3A.org.uk">vicechair@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Secretary	Anne Smith	<a href="mailto:secretary@fleetU3A.org.uk">secretary@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Treasurer	Neil Morley	<a href="mailto:treasurer@fleetU3A.org.uk">treasurer@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Membership Sec	Anne Morley	<a href="mailto:memsec@fleetU3A.org.uk">memsec@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Group Leadership Liaison & Beacon	Alan Jones	<a href="mailto:groups@fleetU3A.org.uk">groups@fleetU3A.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:beacon@fleetU3A.org.uk">beacon@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Venues Sec	Barbara Jones	<a href="mailto:venues@fleetU3A.org.uk">venues@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Newsletter & Programme	Sandy Redman	<a href="mailto:news@fleetU3A.org.uk">news@fleetU3A.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:programme@fleetU3A.org.uk">programme@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Events Sec	Diane Baldock	<a href="mailto:events@fleetU3A.org.uk">events@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Outreach Sec & Enquiries	Jenny Teagle	<a href="mailto:outreach@fleetU3A.org.uk">outreach@fleetU3A.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:enquiries@fleetU3A.org.uk">enquiries@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Minutes Sec	Julie Lysaght	<a href="mailto:minsec@fleetU3A.org.uk">minsec@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Publicity Sec	Di Smith	<a href="mailto:publicity@fleetU3A.org.uk">publicity@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>
Hon President	Paddy Powell	<a href="mailto:president@fleetU3A.org.uk">president@fleetU3A.org.uk</a>

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

**Fleet U3A Website**

**Keep up to date with all our activities, News, Events, Visits Monthly Meetings on our website [fleet.U3Asite.uk](http://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.**