

Dates for your Diary

2026 Events

- March 13th Inter U3A Quiz
Victoria Hall, Hartley Wintney
- April 15th Open Morning 2026 at
The Harlington, Fleet
- August 26th Group Enrolment for 2026-2027
Church on the Heath, Elvetham

Group Leaders' Meetings

- March 26th Programme Checking at United
Reformed Church
- July 3rd Group Leaders' Lunch at
Victoria Hall Hartley Wintney
- Sept. 25th Group Leaders General
Meeting

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

- 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
- May 20th The difficulties of Developing
Supersonic Aircraft, e.g.
Concorde
Speaker: Dr Graham Rood

Visits 2026

- February 15th Birmingham Tattoo
- Sept. 14th/18th Potters Resort, 4 day visit to
Hopton-on-Sea

Group Leaders - Attention Please Programme for 2026 - 2027

The template for the data collection for our next years Programme has been sent out to all Group Leaders. It would help me greatly if you could please complete the details as soon as possible and return to me at :

programme@fleetU3A.org.uk

Thank you, Sandy

Chat from the Chair

As we settle into the new year, I want to take a moment to celebrate with all of you who make our U3A such a lively, supportive, and enriching community. With over 1,800 of us sharing interests, laughter, and learning since our foundation in 1994, it's your enthusiasm and participation that keep our more than 100 interest groups buzzing and our friendships growing stronger. Many of you have already dived back into your regular groups after the Christmas break, whether it's tackling a tricky watercolour technique, perfecting a dance step, debating current affairs, or simply enjoying a stimulating walk with good company. If you've been thinking about trying a new group or even suggesting one, now's a perfect time—our committee is always ready to support fresh ideas that reflect what members want. Just look on our website to get some ideas for potential new groups and how to get started.

If you look at our "Dates for your Diary" list you will see a wide variety of activities coming up in the next few months in addition to the usual group meetings. None of this would happen without your involvement—as group leaders, volunteers or attendees. Your commitment keeps our U3A vibrant and welcoming, and I'm truly grateful for the energy you bring every week. Here's to a joyful, active, and connected 2026. With warmest regards and best wishes,

Stephen Grosvenor

Monthly Meeting

The January meeting gave us an opportunity to hear about the Hampshire Air Ambulance service. They are totally funded by donations - it was amazing to learn that they receive no funding from NHS nor the County Council or Local Authorities.

The Air Ambulance have a member of staff situated in the main 999 call centre and this person decides which of the calls they can add value to. Unlike an ambulance they have a Doctor on board and the paramedics have advanced training. We learnt about the call out procedures and the justifications for being flown to an appropriate Hospital. The same principles are now being applied to the car fleet that supports the Air Ambulance delivery care. After the meeting we held a collection and managed to raise £396.62p for HAA.

Mark Goodwin

Basic Spanish Group

Members of the U3A Basic Spanish class pictured celebrating end of term with an impromptu late breakfast / early lunch of olives, Iberian ham and Manchego cheese.

Antony Jones



Doesn't that look yummy. Ed

Phyllis Tuckwell Stall at the January Monthly Meeting

Thanks to everyone who helped us raise £86 at this event. Whether you provided items for sale like the handmade cards and beaded bracelets or made a purchase, your contribution is greatly appreciated. Thanks also to the lady who brought in some Bonne Maman jars. Having made lots of marmalade and chutneys for the sale, Linda is always looking for empty jars. The raffle was popular as always and was again won by a committee member. Congratulations go to Barbara Jones.

Many of you will be aware people open their gardens in the summer to the public to raise money for charity. If this is something you might like to do to raise funds for Phyllis Tuckwell, please give Linda a call on 01252 673846.

Margaret and Linda

MAG in 2026: just the same, yet so different?

Igor Stravinsky once said: 'The trouble with music appreciation is that people are taught to have too much respect for music; they should be taught to love it instead'.

I have often used this as a shorthand when explaining what MAG is about.

What I would now add is that we encourage our members to open their ears to unfamiliar forms of music. There is more than enough music, well known or little known, in the classical music genre to keep MAG going for years. Yet, influenced by a new cadre of members willing to share their own enthusiasms, over the last year or two MAG has broadened the range of music played.

The upcoming Spring Term programme is a great example.

True, we will start the term with a reflection on those composers for whom '26' is an anniversary year, and we will finish with some lesser-known works by classical composers. In the interim, however, we will learn about Lionel Bart from Alan Grace, Tim Peters will share 'barbershop' music, Chris Heal will talk about 'birds' and the Appletons – Barry and Wendy – will play more from their collection, in which gems from West End musicals feature prominently.

It has never been easier to promise 'something for everyone'. Do come and join us, leaving your concerns and cares at the doorstep, for afternoons simply listening to and exploring music.

John Gawthorpe

News from MOTO 1

As the New Year begins, it was with some surprise that I realised that MOTO 1 was eight years old this month. What began with five of us meeting in the Harlington Café [which no longer exists] on a Wednesday in January soon morphed into a group of about 40 ladies. As I perused my register I realised that nearly half of my present membership who joined within the first few months are still with me!

We have had several meeting venues including Ancells Park through Covid, but are now happily settled into our meeting place at a local pub.

I am extremely lucky to be the group leader of an amazing group of ladies. Over the years our activities have grown out of their particular interests be it reading, crafting, gardening, walking, outings, or just a good old natter over coffee or lunch. Different people step up to organise these activities for which I am very grateful.

I think what I am most proud of is our fundraising efforts which take place at our annual garden party where the afternoon tea rivals the Ritz. Over the past five years we have raised about £1000 for Phyllis Tuckwell – a charity close to the heart of many of our members.

We are looking forward to see what 2026 brings our lovely group

Heather Ryder

Creative Writing

Not That Way! By Dawn Greenwood

'No!!' howled Janet as she stood up and spotted Peter up ahead of her. He had turned left and was setting off down Mossy Lane. Samson, with a look of delight on his straggly face, needed no further encouragement. With a yip of excitement, he shot off down the track and out of sight.

Janet, tying the poo bag and storming off after Peter, called 'Samson! Here boy! Look what Mummy's got!' She glared at her husband. 'Honestly Pete. You know we never go down this track. It's not known as *Muddy Bottom* for nothing.' Peter decided to bluff it out. 'Oh, don't get your knickers in a twist, Jan. We've had no rain all week. The creek will probably be dry by now.' Janet didn't grace such an unlikely hope with a response as she set off down the hill. Peter walked briskly along to catch up with her. She chose his arrival to give three sharp toots on her whistle. Peter tried not to grimace at the shrill pitch. Unfortunately, his was the only response to the summons. Samson remained absent without leave. 'Bloody dog!' Pete followed the track around a corner and stopped suddenly, Janet barreling into him. 'Oh' Further words failed him. Janet stepped around him and gazed down at the horror before them. Even she remained silent for a moment, although Peter took no relief from that, since he could see the colour flooding up into her face as she surveyed the scene.

The ditch was not dry. It was half filled with stinking, black mud. The lack of recent rain merely meant that it had evaporated into a viscous tar-like goo. In the centre of this hellhole was a large, shaggy black mound. Its only discernible feature was a slowly wagging black tail as Samson wallowed happily in the mire. Despite having been deaf to all recall, the dog was delighted to spot his humans come to join him in his idyll. With a joyous woof, he leapt from the mud and came bounding towards them, oblivious to their appalled faces and shrieks to 'Stop!' as he launched himself at his daddy. With a grunt as 35kg of filthy retriever landed on his chest, Pete was thrown backwards and landed in a puddle of his own. Having cleaned his tongue on Pete's prone face, Samson jumped up and ran back to Janet. 'Sit!' she yelled. Amazingly, he chose to obey that one, though not before he had enjoyed a good shake, leaving Janet pebble-dashed with grime and nearly as drenched as her husband. Fuming at the injustices of mud-seeking-missile dogs and thoughtless husbands, Janet reached for the lead to constrain one of them when Samson jumped backwards and returned to the ditch.

'Oh no, not again! Bad dog! Samson, come here!' She roared as she approached the ditch. 'Pete! You need to get him.'

Peter braced himself for another helping of cold wet gloop but, as he got closer, he saw that Samson was not alone in the mud. 'Samson? Have you found yourself a friend, buddy?' Samson jumped back out and was followed by a creature that resembled a child's pencil line drawing of a dog. Skinny and shivering, the black shape shook to reveal spots of silver under the muck.

'Oh! You poor little thing! You are freezing!' Janet pulled a scarf out of her bag and wiped the little dog down as she gazed mournfully at her rescuer. A lead was slipped on and the owner's mobile number dialled as Peter carried the runaway back up to the main path, Samson walking quietly alongside.

As they approached the car park, a woman came rushing to greet them. 'Delilah! Oh, my poor sweet! Wherever have you been?' Delilah leaped across into her outstretched arms as the owner turned to Peter and Janet. 'Thank you so much for finding her! I'm Susie, by the way. However can I thank you? She's been gone hours!' She looked at the pair. 'But you must have had a dreadful job getting her back. You are both filthy!' Janet smiled graciously, acknowledging the gratitude. 'Actually, we can't take all the credit. It was Samson who found her.' Janet beamed at her heroic boy.

'No need to thank us - we were glad to help.' Pete smiled as a very grateful Susie put Delilah safely into her car and drove off. 'Just as well we went that way after all.' Janet couldn't disagree. **Dawn Greenwood**

Would you enjoy playing the Recorder ?

If you think you'd enjoy playing the recorder (descant, treble, tenor, bass) in a small friendly, relaxed group, and can play to a reasonable standard with music (around Grade 2-3 level), please let us know! A potential new group, starting in September, we would meet on the 3rd Thursday monthly, 10.00 - 11.30 a.m. in Fleet.

Please contact : ellie.faulkner1@gmail.com.

Ellie Faulkner

Exploring AI – A New Group

Artificial Intelligence is everywhere. Some people are curious, some cautious – and some are actively pushing the boundaries of what these tools can do for their own projects, learning and creativity.

We are forming a new group, “AI Explorers” for members who already have some hands-on experience using AI and who enjoy experimenting with what these tools can do. And also to investigate the bigger picture of how AI is changing the world.

It's impressive all the different ways U3A members are already using AI: composing music, devising quizzes, planning holidays, researching family history, managing their diary and new ways of researching the web that beat Google. It's also being used for things like creating custom greeting cards, being a personal IT help desk, and much more. Whatever your particular interest, come and share what you've discovered and then learn from everyone else's explorations.

Here are the initial thoughts on how the group might work:

- We're aiming for a group of around 12 people, meeting monthly for two hours.
- Each month, a different member would get to showcase how they use AI, what they achieved, and what they learned along the way.
- We'd also dedicate time to debating the broader impact of AI - the good, the bad, the risks and the safeguards. Group members would take turns investigating topics to help inform these discussions.
- Another objective will be to find ways to help the wider Fleet U3A community embrace AI. This could mean running training or education sessions, writing newsletter articles or seeing how AI might help with some aspect of the running of our local U3A.

If this whets your appetite, please drop me a line with your interests and any initial thoughts, or suggestions you have: michael.g.butcher+AI@gmail.com



French Improvers

The start of another year with French Improvers. We had a very interesting Autumn term and we learnt a lot of new (to us) information about tenses. Many of us learnt French in the ‘Good Old Days’ and it has evolved quite a lot! Remember all those lessons learning how to conjugate the future tense... Most of the time now, especially in conversation the French use the ‘Future simple’ which translated says ‘I am going to...’ - It's a lot easier but it still takes a bit of getting used to. Anne, our paid tutor, always comes up with interesting exercises to get us using the new information – although we are all trying to improve our speaking of French, we have found that it helps to do some written exercises (probably to do with age). Each half-term we normally have a theme. Themes have ranged from travel to money. We normally have a bit of a feast at the end of the Christmas term and play some wordy games – last term we were translating names of singers and groups whilst sharing the delicious food that everyone brought in. We are a friendly group and support each other – it really doesn't matter if you make a mistake or ask for help. If you don't understand, it's guaranteed that someone else has got the wrong end of the stick as well! If anyone would like to try out a session with us, please feel free to contact me.

trish.g.semmens@outlook.com

Trish Semmens

MOTO 2

We have had a great start to 2026. We've already enjoyed skittles and crazy golf. Further activities now include go karting, more skittles, crazy golf, three trips to the Mill at Sonning for various events and the usual coffee and lunch meet ups. We have planned to book a river boat trip from Runnymede and a summer day trip out. Whatever people suggest they would like to do!

We sometimes have a few spaces available and all are welcome, both men and women. There will surely be one of the four MOTO groups which will suit you if you want to make friends and get out and about!

Jackie Bignell

[The Future of the Harlington](#)

There is a Fleet Town Council (FTC) residents' meeting on Tuesday March 10th at 7pm in the Harlington. At this meeting plans will be announced as to the Future for the Harlington and interim plans for continuing their programme. So it may be of interest to our membership and the Group Leaders who use it.?

At the FTC residents' meeting the council want to trial an electronic tool to send out polls and request questions, live at the meeting. It's called *Slido* and it requires a smartphone. The town Clerk is going to send me a simple explanation of the tool so we can prepare our members who may go to the meeting. I will give an explanation of how the tool works at the next Monthly Meeting on Wednesday March 18th. **Paddy Powell**

[Interest Groups Online](#)

Interest Groups Online (IGO), is an online u3a community that brings people together to learn from each other. Whether you want to learn a new language, join a book group, start a study group in a subject of your interest or share your creative skills with others... there is something for everyone.

Annual membership is £12, covering the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. If you join after 1st October, the fee is reduced to £6.

An online fair is running on 11-13 February with the following taster sessions from ten IGO groups. It is open to u3a members and non-members alike. Learn about Creative Writing, Exploring Progressive Rock, Sign Language, Fusion Tai Chi Gong, Local History, Intermediate Recorders, Dance Exercise, Setting up a New Group, Canva, Early Women Doctors. **Diane Baldock**

The link is : www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/interest-groups-online

[Visits](#)

On Saturday 31st January, a coachload of 50+ (that's numbers and age!) set off for a tour of the Houses of Parliament. Everyone was there early, for which many thanks, so we got away sharp, ahead of time. The journey there and back was swift and smooth, so thanks to our intrepid driver Scott. And for January the weather was kind to us – no rain!

The visit comprised of an audio tour of both Houses, which took about 2 hours. The tour was both informative and fascinating and the time flew by. To walk in the corridors of power, to stand at the despatch box where so many great leaders (and a few clowns) have stood before, was to feel part of history. To see in real life those parts of the building that are so familiar to us on television was very interesting. There was also so much more to see that doesn't feature on television such as various meeting rooms, offices, committee rooms and the voting lobbies. The artwork, sculptures and the buildings themselves were very impressive.

In the House of Lords, we were able to glimpse current papers for debate, one being about the behaviour of a peer!

Following the tour, we were free to spend the afternoon as we wished until our departure at 5pm. Some toured Westminster Abbey, some walked to Trafalgar Square, and some avoided getting caught up in a demonstration in Whitehall.

But back to the tour. Personally, I came away with a greater understating and appreciation of the Houses of Parliament and the work done within it, as well as the history that has got us to where we are today.

Nick Andrews



Christmas Lunch

Whilst I'm sure that some of you enjoyed Christmas events within your groups, around 80 members enjoyed the excellent Fleet u3a Christmas lunch at the Garrett's Club, Aldershot with several people saying how much they'd enjoyed the event. A Christmas table quiz kept people amused and some of us learned a few new facts. For example there were originally eight reindeer Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner & Blitzen from the poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas", Rudolf did not appear until 1939 in the song "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer".

Diane Baldock



Group Leaders & Members
Important
We are now paying for all booked sessions at the majority of venues. If you have to cancel a session please be aware that you will still have to pay the venue for that session

COMMITTEE & EMAILS



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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.

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