

March Newsletter 2026



Welcome from your Chair, Sue Derrick

The early part of the year has gone well, most outdoor groups finding sunshine despite the gloomy forecasts.

Gardens seem to be a constant theme as Spring approaches. The garden group will follow the stunning display of snowdrops and crocus at Down House in February with an 'awayday' to Denmans Garden in West Sussex. Members' outings to Savill Gardens and Abbotsbury Swannery and Subtropical Gardens are already well supported. Gillian Taylor makes a return visit as our speaker for March when she will illustrate how a field around her home in Mayenne has been transformed into a tranquil summer retreat.

Our February speaker, Graham Short enlightened the audience on his life as a micro artist. To engrave the Lord's Prayer on a pinhead, or Nothing is Impossible on the edge of a razor blade, Graham must be excessively calm. He achieves this by working in the early hours of the morning and taking medication to slow his heart rate. Dedication to his art indeed.

The walking and strolling groups are looking forward to continuing their ramblings in the countryside, and for those who wish for a short 20-minute constitutional, a new group, Walk 20, starts in March. Details of this group can be found later in this newsletter.

Following the January planning meetings, various groups have set up their visits for the year. Coming up in the next couple of months are museums in Oxford and Dorchester, Boldre and Kings Sombourne churches, St. Cross Hospital and Maiden Castle, all places ready for eager explorers.

The monthly programme can be found in the events section on the website: <https://botley-hedge-end.u3asite.uk/events/> .

Best wishes

Sue Derrick

Meeting speakers for this quarter

Members meetings take place on the second Wednesday in the month at 1.30pm in the Market Hall, Botley, SO30 2EA.

A wide and interesting range of speakers is lined up for the next three members' meetings:

- 11th March Gillian Taylor Magic in the Mayenne
- 8th April Will Wright The Trojan Wars: West Turkey or East Anglia
- 13th May Ursula Pearce History of Netley's Royal Victoria Hospital

Membership update



Following the February 2026 meeting our membership achieved the astonishing number of **200** members. Well done everyone and thank you all for your support and contributions that make us a thriving and interesting group.

Membership renewals are due in April so see Linda Jeans at the group meeting or email us at the usual email address.

A look at our Interest Groups

Whilst we have a solid core of Interest Groups which have been running from the first months of our branch formation, we do have a range of groups that appear to have run their course. But, on a positive note new ones spring up all the time, reflecting our members' wide and varied interests.

There are 30+ groups active at the moment and they operate in a variety of ways. Some groups, for example, the Cinema Screenings of Opera, Ballet and Theatre, occur when a suitable performance is scheduled. The Art Appreciation Group looks for relevant and stimulating exhibitions as and when they happen.

Many of the groups meet monthly or twice a month. Many meet in members' homes, others hire venues in the area.

Membership of these groups varies enormously from a total membership of eighty in the ever popular Walking Group to the six who meet regularly to share their interest in Heraldry. The Walking Group has given rise to the less demanding "Strollers" Group and is shortly to be

joined by a Walk 20 Group.

We have two separate Book Appreciation Groups and are just introducing a third group who play Mahjong.

One encouraging development is the way some of the groups manage to share the organisation and planning of events between the members, here I am particularly thinking of the very popular Church Visits, Garden Visits and Archaeology Meetings. The committee feels that this is a very positive move and would like to encourage more members to take on the role of organisers, if only for one meeting.

Geoff

River Hamble Boat Trip



Petanque at Burridge



Stonehenge Visit



Solent Sky Aviation Museum Visit



The new Walk 20 group

A new walking group, 'Walk 20', is starting this March. It is for those people who find our other two walking groups go a little too far, but who would still like to begin the day with a little exercise and a chat.

The walks will be during the better weather, on the third Friday of the month, from March to September. Fear not, the '20' refers to 20 minutes, not 20 miles!

Venues are all local. At the end of each walk there will be a chance to rest and chat over a coffee in a nearby café.



If you would like to join this 'walk and talk' group and have not already signed up, please make contact via the usual members' email: bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com

Looking forward to seeing you this March for the inaugural 'Walk 20'.

Committee Succession social event

As mentioned at a recent members meeting, in order to ensure our u3a group thrives we need keep our committee fresh and able to provide new ideas. We are holding a 'meet the committee' social event on Monday 16th March in the Botley Masonic Hall for members to find out what is involved in being on the organisational side of things.

If you have a skill which would help the group or are interested in joining the committee, please speak to us at any members meeting. You can also text on 07865 825380 or email us via the Botley, Hedge End and District website [enquiries page](#).



The committee in action!

Our new banner

We are delighted to show you our new banner. This will help us promote the group at local events. Our thanks go to Lin Jeans who organised this.

If you hear of a community event taking place this summer and think it would attract the kind of people who would be interested in joining us, please let us know and we will rustle up someone to go along and sing our praises!



St. John's Ambulance Defibrillator Course January 2026



Ever wondered what to do with the contents inside those green and yellow boxes attached to the public buildings in our villages? The boxes are home to defibrillators, devices used to give an electric shock to the heart in an emergency.

In the hands of our engaging tutor, Michelle, twenty-eight u3a members were taken through the procedures required to use a defibrillator to restart the heart of a casualty who had stopped breathing.

Each defibrillator pack contains clear diagrams on where to place adhesive patches for conducting electricity from a battery to the heart. Once attached, initiating the shock is automatic and safe for the operator.

Michelle gave reassurance and much confidence to the group as she answered our many questions as several members took the opportunity to use the dummy defibrillators available.

If you missed this CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and defibrillator session or would like to have a refresher, we hope Michelle will be back for another course towards the end of the year.

Queen by Moonlight



Last year a group of our u3a members attended the 'ABBA by Moonlight' concert in the Itchen Valley Country Park. So much fun was had that many of them are looking to go to the 'Queen by Moonlight' concert being held at the same venue on Friday 17th July. For this event members book their own tickets. Full information on how to do this can be found [here](#).

Coach Outings and Visits



The trip to Abbotsbury Swannery and Subtropical Gardens on Thursday 30th April has fifty-one members travelling on the coach, plus three members by car to see this colony of over 600 mute swans: Fingers crossed this number may be increased with a flurry of newborn cygnets. The cost of this trip is £42.

Our visit to Savill Garden with a river trip is taking place on Tuesday 30th June. Twenty members have confirmed their places already. Book now to secure your place. The garden tour will be followed with an afternoon cream tea river boat trip along the Thames. The cost for this trip is £64. Please make enquiries with Dave to reserve your place.



Trips lined up for the autumn include Waddesdon Manor in September and Polesden Lacy in November. The details for these events will be announced at members meetings later in the year.

Day Trip Dave

Tea up anyone?



Spring dates:

Our coffee mornings continue through the spring, including the afternoon Tea and Talk group who meet at the Pinkmead Bistro and Tearooms on the first Thursday of each month, 2 - 4pm.

The dates are:

The Hillier Garden Centre Café, 10.30am:

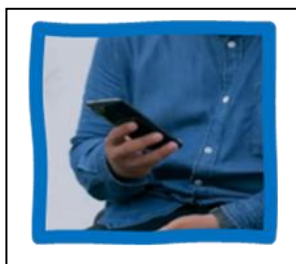
- Thursday 5th March
- Thursday 19th March
- Thursday 2nd April
- Thursday 16th April
- Thursday 7th May
- Thursday 21st May



Haskins Garden Centre Café, 10.30am:

- No coffee morning in April due to the early May Bank holiday
- Monday 11th May

Need to contact us?



Don't forget: if you need to contact us direct, you can always send us a text using our telephone number 07865 825380.

Someone will get back to you ASAP.

Meet our members!

There is an opportunity in the Newsletter for you, as a member, to tell us more about yourself. The featured member this edition is new member Anne Corbin.



My name is Anne, and I joined U3A late last year as I was looking to expand my social circle and make new friends.

I have a little dog called Beau who is great company, a real treasure, and I feel blessed to have him.

I'm sure as I continue my journey with U3A my life will expand in many ways.

I look forward to meeting you all.

If you would like to tell us about yourself and your experience of the Botley, Hedge End & District u3a please send your feature, around 150 words long, and a photo to carol.hussey@hotmail.com and we'll include it in a future newsletter.

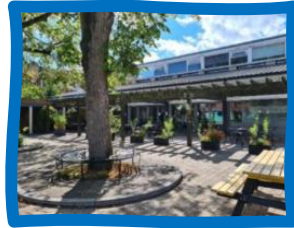
Book your place for the u3a Festival 26

The u3a Festival 26, taking place at the University of York, is an opportunity for fun, learning and making new connections. There will be opportunities to share your skills and learn some new ones in a series of talks, workshops and activities spanning sports, music, art and much more. Drawing on the experience, enthusiasm and talent of u3a members, the festival is a wonderful celebration of the creativity within the u3a movement. Full details can be found [here](#).



South East u3a Forum Summer School

Monday 7th September to Thursday 10th September 2026 University of Chichester



The prices for the 2026 summer school are:

- En-Suite Accommodation £390.00
- Standard Accommodation £360.00
- Non-Residential with dinner £220.00
- Non-Residential no dinner £175.00

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. Also, the evening entertainment is included, available on campus each evening at 8.00pm.

The list of confirmed courses will be available on the South East u3a Forum's website at the end of March. Bookings will go 'live' at 11.00am on Friday 8th May 2026.

Full details can be found at <https://southeastu3aforum.u3asite.uk/2026-2/>

Botley, Hedge End and District u3a

We are a fully inclusive group, happy to offer events and friendship to all.

Full details of all the activities taking place with the Botley, Hedge End & District u3a can be found on the website, by emailing bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com or see our Facebook page for more news.



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