

## **June Newsletter 2026**



### **Welcome from our Chair, Sue Derrick**

It has been a busy spring with outings and visits both near and far. Almost one third of the membership enjoyed the coach trip to Abbotsbury for the Swannery and Sub -Tropical Gardens. The archaeology, church exploration and garden groups have also travelled far, and included in their extensive programmes' trips to Oxford, Butser, Northington and Fontwell. If you are interested in joining these groups, or indeed any of our groups, please make contact via the BHE&D email address, leave a message on our mobile or speak to us at the monthly meeting.

Looking forward, the next coach outing is in June to Savill Garden. This visit also includes a boat trip on the Thames from Runnymede. Waddesdon Manor, originally owned by the Rothschild family and now managed by the National Trust, is the venue for September. This spectacular house, built in the style of a French chateau, is well worth a visit.

Our speakers this spring gave informative and engaging presentations on three very different topics: Creating a garden from a French field, East Anglia being the possible venue for the Trojan Wars and the History of the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley. Thank you to Gillian Taylor, Will Wright and Ursula Pearce for their informative and engaging talks. Upcoming subjects are Hampshire Air Ambulance, St Petersburg and Bursledon Brickworks.

As mentioned at the April Members' Meeting, and following an approach by Bluebird Care, an organisation offering guidance for the care of those with dementia, a presentation has been arranged for 11am on Friday 26th June in Botley's Jubilee Hall. The talk consists of a speaker from the Alzheimer's Society and one from Wiltshire Farm Foods. This latter speaker gives guidance on those things many of us would not have thought important, such as food presentation and the colour of plates preferred by dementia sufferers. There are a few places still available and open to members who feel they would benefit from attending. If you are interested, please contact Geoff Warden ([ga.bheadu3a@gmail.com](mailto:ga.bheadu3a@gmail.com)).

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to thank those members who offered their time and experience following the Committee Social in March. Thank you for attending, and for your help in sharing the load. Thank you, too, to all those who have arranged trips, lunches, walks, written articles, poured tea and coffee, washed up and put out chairs and tables for the many activities in which we engage every month. Whether it be too hot or a downpour, enjoy the summer.

Best wishes, Sue Derrick

## Meeting speakers for this Summer

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

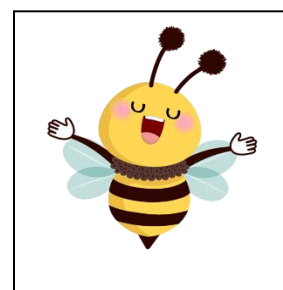
A wide and interesting range of topics are lined up for the next three members meetings:

- 10th June: Hampshire & IOW Air Ambulance
- 8th July: Bursledon Brickworks Museum
- 12th August: St. Petersburg

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## Membership update

Our membership figures have remained good for 2026. We currently have 182 members, with a regular number of around 90 attendees to the monthly Members Meeting. If you haven't renewed your subscription yet, you can still do so. See Linda Jeans at the Members Meeting or email us at the usual email address [bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com)



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## News from your u3a Interest Groups

Full details on all our group activities can be found on our website or by contacting Geoff Warden, the Interest Groups Co-ordinator. Email [ga.bheadu3a@gmail.com](mailto:ga.bheadu3a@gmail.com)

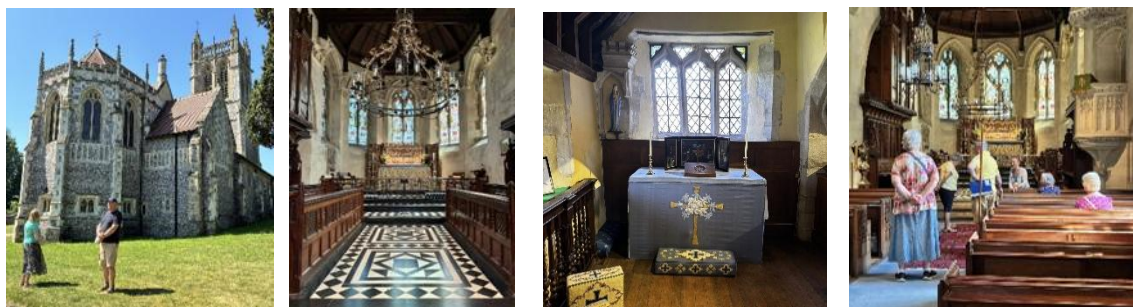
Below is a selection of pictures and reports from our interest groups. Please send your group updates for the September newsletter:

### Archaeology Group



In May members enjoyed a hot visit Butser Ancient Farm.

## Church Exploration Group



The group enjoyed visits to St John's Church in Norththington and Kings Somborne.

## Events Cinema Group



Starting as the Screen Arts Group in October 2024 to attend world-class opera and ballet cinema screenings from the Royal British Opera/Ballet and the New York Metropolitan Opera, this group has continued to evolve and is now known as the Events Cinema group. This is partly because this matches Cineworld Whiteley's policy and partly because we wanted to widen our remit to include other forms of music and theatre.

This season stretched from October 2025 to May 2026 with members of the group enjoying nine performances ranging from the dramatic *Tosca*, the magical beauty of the ballet with *The Nutcracker* and *Cinderella*, to the visually sumptuous but more worldly look at life through the story of Eugene Onegin.

Along the way, we have welcomed new members to the group, both drivers and those no longer driving at night. We have assisted in persuading Cineworld to keep the screenings to an accessible-for-all screening room and organising a bit of time together over a light meal or snack beforehand definitely enhances the evening.

Although the opera/ballet season is now over until September, we have begun to look at other venues like The Berry Theatre in Hedge End to take us through the summer and keep life varied. Just ask to be put on the list for this group to be kept up to date on what is happening!

Pauline Willson

## Garden Visits



There have been some super garden visits this spring, including West Green House and Twin Oaks

## Smartphone Photography Group

Paul Haines, a member of the Winchester u3a, kindly came and provided four sessions on how to make the most of the cameras on our smartphones, how to create better pictures and tips on the best way to protect and save our precious images. We were also introduced to many of the functions we never knew our phones had, including how to enhance the colours and add text!



The album of all the group photographs can be found at <https://botleyu3aspg.myportfolio.com/march-2026>

## The Quizzing Group

Born on a wave of optimism following the victories of the BHE&D teams at the South-West Hampshire U3A District Quiz and the most recent Botley Twinning Association Annual Quiz the group continues to flourish.

We meet bi-monthly in the Jubilee Hall, Botley Centre, for a friendly session of quizzing in small teams. Members are invited to submit questions on a wide range of topics to the group co-ordinator which are then drawn out of a "hat" There is also a picture round running throughout the afternoon.

Nobody is sat in a Mastermind style black chair!

Teams enter local quizzes and members are invited to alert the group to any opportunities they find. At present it is not proposed to enter teams regularly in pub quizzes, although this could change depending on demand from members.

The most recent event we entered was the Friends of Botley School Quiz on 8th May where we did very well in the raffle, but not so well in the quiz.



When: Friday afternoon bi-monthly 2.30pm to 4.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, The Botley Centre.

2026 dates: 10th July: 11th September: 13th November.

The cost per session is £3 cash.

**Richard Smith** - [richard.smith1947@ntlworld.com](mailto:richard.smith1947@ntlworld.com)

Here are a couple of questions for you to try:

1. When did Vesuvius erupt and bury Pompeii?
2. Why has Eris Spears' name appeared on our television screens nearly 12,000 times?

Answers in the September newsletter. No Googling!

## **Walking Group Update**

The monthly walks which normally occur on the third Tuesday of each month continue to be popular with many members. Here are the pictures from the bluebell walk on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026.



If you would like to join one of Tony's walks, contact him either at the members meeting or by email at [tlutchford@gmail.com](mailto:tlutchford@gmail.com).

## **Wine Tasting**

The ever-popular afternoon Wine Tasting group held their latest meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> May in the Diamond Jubilee Hall in Botley. The theme this time was French wines along with a short quiz to name 18 famous French people. Many thanks go to Geoff Warden, ably assisted by Richard Smith.



We hope you will agree that the first half of this year has produced a fabulous range of group activities but remember to let us know what events your group is planning for the second half and send pictures when they take place so we can include them in future editions of the newsletter. You can send them to [carol.hussey@hotmail.com](mailto:carol.hussey@hotmail.com)

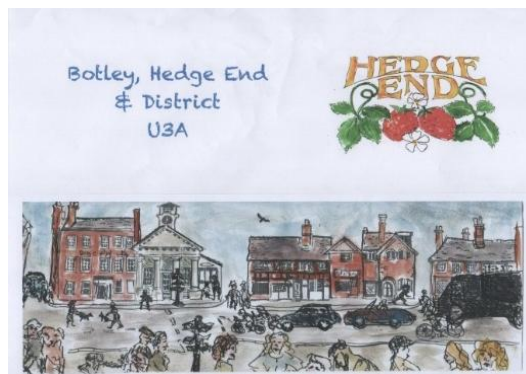
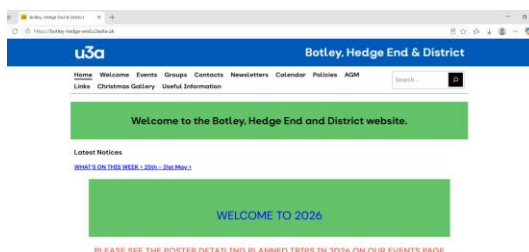


This collection of group activities is just a selection of things taking place in our u3a. It is you the members who make our group a success, but we are always looking for volunteers to step up and help, even if it is just arranging one trip or event.

If you can help, please speak to your group facilitator, any committee member or send an email to [bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com)

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## u3a Website



Our website continues to deliver an excellent source of information about everything we do. If you think there is anything which could be added to enhance the site or make it more user friendly, please let us know.

We are always keen to receive any pictures you have of your u3a activities that could be added to the gallery page. Please send them to us at [bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com)

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## Coach Outings and Visits



Savill Garden July 2024

The return trip to Savill Garden on 30<sup>th</sup> June is now full, but the information for a fabulous September outing will be announced at the July Members Meeting and will be shared by email to members. Watch this space!

Here's a clue to our destination: Created in 1874, with just a taste of France, we enter a world where art, history and nature meet! If you haven't worked out where we are going, see Sue's welcome on page 1.



By popular demand, Mike Toomey is arranging more of the Hamble River boat trips to take place in July and August.

Dates and times will be provided at the June Members Meeting along with a sign up sheet.

**BOTLEY, HEDGE END & DISTRICT U3A**



## Heroes of the day!

On Thursday 30th April, fifty-one members took the trip to Abbotsbury Swannery and Sub-Tropical Gardens.

The coach had to go to Bridport before turning onto the B3157 to Abbotsbury, a designated route for coaches as all other roads are not suitable or large enough for them to get through. We entered Abbotsbury where the road narrows and as we rounded the bend into the village met a double decker bus coming towards us. Neither vehicle could pass! I went to speak to the bus driver who was going to reverse, but as we talked two cars tried to overtake the bus, finding themselves completely blocked by our coach. I sent them down a gravel track until we were past. We finally made it to the Swannery, but I did wonder what happened to the two cars I sent up that gravel track!



At the Swannery we had an opportunity to feed the swans and walk among them. One nest had nine babies who, that morning, took their first venture into the water. One smaller cygnet had trouble getting back into the nest. As one of the wardens came to help, 'daddy' swan came back on full alert, wings fully out and hissing! Dad was held back with a stick as the cygnet was safely dropped back into the nest.

We boarded the coach and left the Swannery for the 15-minute drive to the Sub-Tropical Gardens, where most of us had lunch before walking around the garden, which had some wonderful plants, trees and shrubbery.



The journey home was a lot less adventurous than going with everybody having a very good and enjoyable day.

### Day Trip Dave



We all enjoy the fabulous venues that David finds for us to visit, but if you know of somewhere that would make a great day trip, please send us your suggestions. Ideally, up to one and a half hours travel time away, with members sharing travel by car.

If you have a good destination in mind and would be happy to arrange a 'one-off' event, please let Geoff know, either at the next members meeting or by email to [ga.bheadu3a@gmail.com](mailto:ga.bheadu3a@gmail.com). Advice and help on how to organise a trip is available.

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## Tea anyone?



The Tea and Talk events at The Pinkmead Bistro and Tearooms are on hold at the moment, but as soon as they are back on the agenda, we will let you know. See the website for details.

### Summer dates:

Coffee mornings continue to take place through the summer.

The dates are:

#### The Hillier Garden Centre Café, 10.30am:

- Thursday 4th June
- Thursday 18th June
- Thursday 2nd July
- Thursday 16th July
- Thursday 6th August
- Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August



#### Haskins Garden Centre Café, 10.30am:

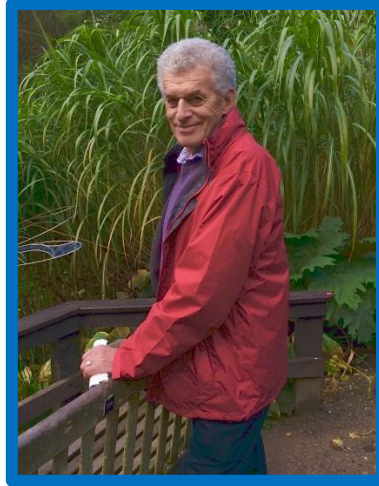
- Monday 1st June
- Monday 6th July
- Monday 3rd August



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## Meet our members!

Continuing with the introductions from your fellow members, please meet David Martin.



Hello,

My name is David Martin.

About two years ago I saw a rabble gathering in Hatch Grange for a walk. These looked like my kind of people. Mind if I join you? I asked. After an hour with Sue, I was hooked on the U3A's quest for adventure.

I live in West End, play with the Southampton Ukulele Jam and run a small walking group for past scouting friends.

I love gardening and local history.

I am a life member at Hampshire Cricket and a season ticket holder at the St Mary's Stadium. I have glaucoma and can't drive so the U3A outings and visits I particularly enjoy. Plus, I do feel obliged to join in the wine tasting!

David

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](mailto:carol.hussey@hotmail.com) and we'll include it in a future newsletter.

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## **Knit and Natter makes the news again!**



Iain Cassidy's u3a friends' newsletter on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026 included the details of our very own Knit and Natter groups activities:

### **Knitting for Ukraine**

Botley, Hedge End and District u3a's knit and natter group have been using their monthly meetings to make items for displaced people from Ukraine. The group knit squares - perfect to do while having a chat. These are then sewn together to make lap and single bed blankets. This is an amazing example of the huge contribution u3a members can make to their community just by sharing their skills and talents.

The group continues to expand the scope of their projects. These adorable rabbits went off to Ukraine to provide comfort for children affected by the conflict.



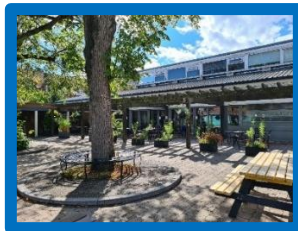
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## **South East u3a Forum Summer School**

The South East u3a Forum Summer School 2026 takes place at The University of Chichester from Monday 7th September to Thursday 10th September 2026.

Predominantly this is a residential event, though day visitor places are available.

Course places are filling quickly but there are still a few left.



See the website <https://southeastu3aforum.u3asite.uk/2026-2/> for full details.

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## Marathon Mike



It was in 2017 when I ran a marathon for the first time on a hot day in Brighton. I found it quite a struggle and said afterwards that I would never do that again.

But here I am in 2026, nine years older but clearly no wiser, standing at the start line of the London Marathon. I'm here because my name was picked from the hat for one of Hedge End Running Club's allocated places. A chance to run in this iconic race was something I couldn't turn down.

Twenty-six miles and 4 hours 39 minutes later, the finish line is a very welcome sight. I've been running on willpower for the last few miles and I don't think I can run another step. The noisy and enthusiastic support from the crowd, which lines the route from start to finish, and includes some friends and family, gives me that extra lift. Having printed my name on my shirt, there's a chorus of 'come on Mike', 'keep going Mike', 'you've got this Mike' the whole way round. Altogether an unforgettable experience.

I decided to use the opportunity to raise money for the Mountbatten Hospice in West End and I'm pleased to say we have so far raised a total of £770. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

### Mike Toomey



Mike crossing the finish line

Well done Mike! We all admire your achievement.

If anyone would like to contribute to Mike's fundraising, here is the link to his [JustGiving](#) sponsorship page.

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# Missing out?



Don't forget: you can always catch up with our u3a events and see the pictures from our group activities via the Botley, Hedge End & district u3a Facebook page. You will find a wonderful range of photographs. This group is only accessible to our members, so images are not available to the public users of Facebook. It is a superb way of seeing what is going on in our u3a group.



## Botley, Hedge End & District u3a



We are a fully inclusive group, happy to offer events, friendship and learning 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](mailto:bhedistrict.u3a@gmail.com) or see our Facebook page for more news.



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