

## Hello, welcome to our Newsletter No. 112 for June, July and August 2025

**Copy deadline for  
newsletter 113  
Sept/Oct/Nov  
23rd Aug 2025**

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### A word from the Chair

Dear All

Well here goes, my first communication with everyone following my election as Chairman at the AGM in May .

Firstly, let me thank Don and Benny for the sterling work they have done over the years as members of the Committee and to Linda, Mike and Julie who retired as group leaders.

If we want our branch of u3a to thrive and continue to be an amenity that the local community values and uses, then you all have a part to play in making it successful and ensuring your committee take it in the right direction.

There is a suggestion box in the front of the hall at every monthly meeting or talk to a committee member or email me.

Constructive criticism as well as new ideas are welcome.

Without all the volunteers who give their time to be on the Committee or run an interest group then we will wither. I appreciate that there are many calls on everyone's time

from working longer, grandchildren duties and other interests.

We really do need someone help with organising the Jaunters' outings, working as a team brings in new ideas and shares the tasks. Judith, Sue and Rosemary are intending to carry on, albeit in a limited way, but really do need to have some help. If you are interested please chat with them to find out what is involved.

We are still looking for new committee members in particular a replacement treasurer for Pam Bushell to hand over to before she leaves in two year's time. Whilst Sally Lewis has taken up the post of Vice Chairman, she does not want to become Chairman so we are also looking for a new person who is prepared to take this on in the future.

With nearly three hundred members we are providing an amenity that local people want and we need to encourage more people to join and to ensure we meet members ever changing needs. At the same time, we have to also comply with the rules and regulations set by u3a and the Charity Commission.

We will be publishing the newsletter quarterly in future as a lot more information is disseminated by email nowadays. If you have anything that you think will be of interest and encourage more people to join, send it in and we may include it in the next issue.

We will need to increase our membership fees in 2027/8 to meet ever increasing costs.

Whatever activity you take part in I hope you get some fun out of it and make a new circle of friends.

**Roger Kemp**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

see also [sarratt.u3asite.uk](http://sarratt.u3asite.uk) for updates on meetings and events

Monthly meetings are in the Village Hall - Doors open from 10am.

- Remember to wear your u3a badge and to register when you arrive.
- Coffee from 10.10 to 10.30, then notices, then the talk from about 10.45 am.
- Note that we do our best but timings are not always exact!
- Please return empty cups/holders before the meeting starts.
- Sign out in the book if you leave early  
(in case we should need an emergency headcount).

June 4th • *Denham Film Studio* - Colin Richards

July 2nd • *The Crop Circle Mystery* - Andy Thomas

August 13th • *Tax Care and the New Guy*

(The programme may be subject to last minute change due to circumstances beyond our control).

You are invited to bring your own mug to the monthly meetings as it helps to save on cups but disposable cups will be available if you forget or do not wish to bring one.

Also bring your used stamps (separated into British/foreign) to put into the RNIB collection box (not printer ink cartridges as we have no means of recycling them)

### FORTHCOMING TALKS

**June** - Colin Richards from Watford and District u3a will entertain us with his talk about Denham Film Studio

**July** - Andy Thomas will talk about the fascinating mystery of Crop Circles, which may date back further than you think!

**August** - Tax Care and the New Guy, good practice on Estate Planning  
no sales agenda, no business cards, leaflets, or promotional activities'

### Further main meeting dates

June 4th

July 2nd

August 13th

September 10th

October 8th

November 5th

December 3rd

### BARGAIN HUNT?

For travel junkies like me, it will not have escaped your notice that "u3a Matters" is full of ads for firms which offer discounts to u3a members on holidays, trips and travel insurance.

Whilst as a matter of policy this Newsletter does not advertise commercial ventures, I thought that you might be interested to know that the firm marketing a river cruise in the magazine, which I had planned to book, was offering "a 10% discount to your local u3a". I mentioned this when booking (having already queried the cost of single occupancy of a cabin on an undersubscribed cruise a few weeks before departure). As a result our u3a received a donation via Head Office a few weeks after my return.

Always in search of a bargain and ready to haggle, I sometimes get surprising results if I mention u3a membership when renewing insurance, for instance.

**Sue Bussey**

[ NB Friends Extra is a benefits website exclusively for u3a Friends, providing access to a wide range of offers, discounts and additional services. Friends can make savings on well-known brands, shopping, travel, days-out and more. Friends Extra is exclusively available to anyone who signs-up to receive the u3a Friends Newsletter. [u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter](http://u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter) ]



Ramblings on Chorleywood Common and Langley Park



[Well done ladies for colour co-ordination with the rhododendrons! Ed]

## RAMBLES

### Wednesday June 18th

Meet in the free Car Park in Ducks Hill Road Ruislip at 10.00am. Ducks Hill Road is the turning on the right after passing the main entrance to Mount Vernon Hospital in Northwood, the Car Park is on the right hand side by the traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing. The 4 mile walk will take us through Ruislip Woods and round Ruislip Lido.

### Wednesday July 16th

Meet at Primrose Hill Recreation Ground Car Park, Kings Langley WD4 8HZ at 10.00am. You need to get a ticket from the machine for 3 hours free parking. From Chipperfield come down Vicarage Lane, straight across into The Nap and bear right along Waterside then left into Water Lane and left again into Primrose Hill and the car park is a short way along on the left. From the Watford or M25 direction turn right by the church into Church Lane then right into Water Lane and then follow the previous directions. The ramble is nearly 4 miles and goes through the Bedmond area.

### Wednesday August 20th

Meet at 10.00am on Sarratt Green opposite The Boot PH for a 4 mile walk via Church End and Sarratt Bottom.

Dates for these and future rambles are now on the website [sarratt.u3asite.uk](http://sarratt.u3asite.uk)

**Don Sutton**

## South East u3a Forum's Summer School 2025

Monday 1st to Thursday 4th September 2025 at the University of Chichester

I have been to two or three of these summer schools, in Birmingham and Nottingham and found them a delightful opportunity to study a topic of my choice in a pleasing surroundings as well as a chance to meet other u3a members from different parts of the country. It is altogether a very stimulating four days with excellent meals and good entertainment in the evenings. I have run an Italian workshop three times at previous u3a Summer Schools and will be doing this again in September this year in Chichester. This workshop is mainly based on speaking and listening skills to practice and polish your use of Italian in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. We shall attempt to use Italian most of the time while we take glimpses of Italian life, art, music, film, history and culture.

(Italian and Spanish are the third most popular languages studied by u3a learners. Many members have learnt German and French at school, meaning their level of knowledge and use is often at a higher level than those tackling Italian or Spanish, many of whom start from scratch.) This Italian workshop is for those who have reached an intermediate level (B1/B2)

Now that we are all travelling more and many of us have holiday homes and/or children who marry and live abroad, there is a positive motive to be able to communicate better in other languages. Some of us are simply drawn by the charm of the Italian language and the fact that our own history is rooted in that of this beautiful country.

Information about the topics to be studied can be found at [southeastu3aforum.u3asite.uk](http://southeastu3aforum.u3asite.uk) - if you are interested make your enquiries as soon as possible because some of the topics are already full, or you may be able to join a waiting list.

**Heather Westrup**

## THE WALKING GROUP

In "A Shropshire Lad" A.E.Housman wrote of the blossoming cherry tree:

...And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

In the u3a we all, sadly, have considerably fewer than fifty Springs left, so even less room to enjoy that fleeting miracle of the bluebell season. For our two April walks, therefore, about the woodlands we did go, to Whippendell Woods - the first as the early bluebells were appearing, and two weeks later the glorious full-on saturation! We also found a profusion of Coralroot (cardamine bulbifera), nationally fairly rare, but at home in the soil of the Chilterns. By early May, even on Ashridge, the bluebells had mostly faded and the season was over, a short-lived joy!

After three weeks of sunny walks we had replaced our winter boots and anoraks with lighter wear, and were thus taken by surprise in late May by a morning of unbroken rain which put a literal damper on a beautiful walk from Ashley Green, through fields of blue-green wheat, waving barley, delicate pea shoots and flowers, and carpets of ox-eye daisies. As we peeled off our wet socks and thought of hot showers, we were comforted to know that our gardens were enjoying a good soaking too!

Finally, on the u3a "education" front, most of us now have plant and birdsong recognition apps on our phones, and our monument of the month (April) was the memorial to Edward Hyde Villiers, 1846 -1914, 5th Earl of Clarendon and owner of The Grove Estate, which can be found on the edge of the Music Trail at The Grove.

### Frances Ashley



**Online Learning Events -Just a few of the forthcoming events available free to u3a members, find lots more at [3a.org.uk/events/educational-events](http://3a.org.uk/events/educational-events)**

Bridge; What's It All About? Friday, June 20 · 10 - 11:15am

Discover the joy of playing Bridge in this introduction to the game, and find out how to play online, with u3a Bridge Adviser, Steve Carter.

People and Places along the Silk Roads Friday, June 20 · 2 - 3:30pm

Join traveller Alan Freeland as he takes us from Xian, the ancient capital of China, to Venice along one of the many Silk Roads.

Unseen Universe: a safari through the invisible world of microbes Friday, June 27 · 2 - 3pm

Discover the surprising ways in which microbes shape our lives and how they may help tackle many of humanity's most pressing problems.

Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: The Man Who Tested Parachutes Tuesday, July 1 · 10am - 12pm

The remarkable story of headteacher Charles Agate who secretly held a WWII parachuting record.

An Introduction to the Arts and Crafts Movement Monday, July 7 · 2 - 3:30pm

An examination of the Arts and Crafts movement and the legacy of the movement in today's World

## GARDENING GROUP

Monday 9th June - The Gardening Group coach visit to the National Trust property, Mottisfont, near Romsey in Hampshire has just a couple of spare places, see Janet at the main meeting on June 4th if you are interested in joining us. One of our group has been to Mottisfont in the last few days and reported that the roses look and smell wonderful!

Monday 7th July – by special arrangement with Sarah Nicholson we are planning a morning visit to her garden Cedar House near Wendover. We may be able to accommodate a few more passengers. This is by car share.

Monday 18th August – Chenies Manor, we hope to organise a morning visit by car share to see the dahlia display. Cost £8. If you want to go please see Janet at the main meeting as we need to complete a booking form soon to confirm the visit, if it is to go ahead.

Monday 8th September – Coach trip to Borde Hill Garden near Haywards Heath, West Sussex. Cost will be £28 to include the coach and entrance. The journey time should be under 2 hours. Payment required by 2nd July at the main meeting.

That will complete our plans for trips out this year and we will commence indoor meetings on the second Monday of the month.

Further meeting dates for this year will be in the Village Hall

13th October speaker tbc

10th November - speaker Kay MdHugh from Church Gardens Harefield will tell us her family's story, how they have spent 25 years restoring a derelict walled garden. We hope to follow up by arranging another visit to this wonderful garden next year to see the changes made since the last time we were there.

8th December events tbc

After the conclusion of the AGM in May those who attended were able to enjoy a relaxed social event giving the chance to chat with friends, followed by an excellent quiz devised by Don with themes based on some of our interest groups. We would also like to thank the growers, sellers, and buyers at our annual plant sale, which raised £124.85

I have just learned the hard way that if you are growing shrubs or small trees, such as acers, in pots, that it is a good idea to check the pots every year and make sure that the drainage holes are not compacted with roots and maybe even turn the plant out for an inspection. It has taken me many hours over several days to release a favourite acer because the tap root had filled the single small drainage hole and the tree was drowning. The tree has been in the same pot for years and my attempts to extract it without breaking a very strong pot caused damage to the roots, it was impossible to get it all out. It has been repotted in a plastic pot to find out whether or not it will survive.....

### Janet Taylor

If you are looking for a garden to visit during the summer the Manor at Hemingford Grey, near St Ives Cambridge is a delight. Pam Litton and I were there a couple of years ago when the flag irises were in full bloom and we were treated to a fascinating house tour which included seeing some beautiful patchwork quilts, hand made by author Lucy Boston. We were reluctant to leave! Unfortunately it is not suitable for a full u3a visit from our branch (no coach access and limited facilities) but it is well worth a visit. See the website for information about house tours and the garden [greenknowe.co.uk/patchworks](http://greenknowe.co.uk/patchworks)

if you are interested in encouraging more birds into your garden you may like to read this blog which has lots of advice on how to make your garden more bird friendly [capitalgardens.co.uk/blog/planting-a-bird-friendly-garden/](http://capitalgardens.co.uk/blog/planting-a-bird-friendly-garden/)

My roses are coming into flower and this beautiful example, 'Perfect Harmony,' is a lovely, fragrant memento of our trip to Savill Garden last year.



### LONDON OPEN GARDENS 2025

A reminder: On Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 June 2025 over 100 secret gardens in the city will open exclusively for the London Open Gardens event. A weekend ticket gives access but must be booked in advance. RHS Affiliated Societies (as the Gardening Group is) enjoy £5 off adult tickets with code RHSGROUPLOG2025 (£19 plus booking fees instead of £24). Find info at [rhs.org.uk/garden-inspiration/gardens-we-love/secret-urban-gardens](http://rhs.org.uk/garden-inspiration/gardens-we-love/secret-urban-gardens)

## ENGINEERING HERITAGE

### April Meeting

We welcomed Rudi Newman back to present his lecture entitled "Railways Round the Chilterns – A Historical Journey".

The counties of Hertfordshire Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire have long played a major part in national history. It so happened that the band of Chiltern Hills were directly on the routes of 5 major companies' routes to the North and Midlands. These were: the Great Northern, the Midland, the London & North Western, the Great Central and the Great Western. From 1838 to 1925 some 45 networked railways were built here (many of these were branch lines which now sadly no longer exist).

In the presentation we had a pictorial guided tour of many of these lines, stations and engines. A tremendous amount of research obviously went into this very interesting talk by Rudi.

### May Meeting

Our visit this month was to the Science Museum specifically to see the Energy and Climate Change exhibition. This was held on the top floor well away from the bustle of the ground floor! This was a very well presented and thought provoking display with several interactive exhibits which were fun to play with!

In the afternoon we visited the Museum's amazing Imax Theatre to watch "A Beautiful Planet" in 3D. All of this was filmed by the astronauts on the International Space Station with the most wonderful shots of the Earth from Space. In the daytime filming you would think that the Earth was uninhabited but looking at the night filming you can see so many areas of light from towns and cities from around the world. Only 2 borders can actually be seen, one between India and Pakistan, the other between North and South Korea. It was staggering to see such a mass of lights in South Korea and then almost all darkness in North Korea with just small pinpricks of light to discern the capital Pyong Yang.

Also to see the astronauts work inside and outside the Space Station and the incredible camaraderie of the crew made up from different nationalities (American, Italian and Russian) was quite inspiring.

There are so many changing or new exhibitions at the Science Museum that it is always worth a visit with the Imax being an extra attraction.

Thank you Mike for organising this for us it was a great day out.

## Sheila Malin

PS you can get free entry to both the Natural History Museum in Cromwell Road and the Science Museum in Exhibition Road, round the corner from each other, perhaps a good idea to book on line to save queuing during busy periods.

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Remember the website [sarratt.u3asite.uk](http://sarratt.u3asite.uk) has the capacity to display more information and pictures about group activities as well as listing forthcoming events. Help to keep it up to date!

**Beacon**, the national database is used by many u3a branches, keeping the data secure and separate for each u3a. We maintain your data and send emails via Beacon in order to keep costs down. If the newsletter is not reaching you call Penny on 01923 776143 and she will be pleased to get your details updated. If you don't have access to email, arrangements can be made to post the newsletter to you in return for a small administrative charge to cover costs - speak to Penny.

**Copy for newsletter no 113 Sept/Oct/Nov should be submitted to the Editor Janet by 23rd August 2025. It would be lovely to have input from some of the other groups, and it doesn't have to be from the group leader. If you have any comments about the newsletter or items you would like to see contact Janet at [j.taylor0402@ntlworld.com](mailto:j.taylor0402@ntlworld.com)**

Please remember to take photos of your u3a activities which we might be able to use on the website or the rolling screen or in the newsletter. Some 'action' photos would be welcome and try different perspectives sometimes. If you take pictures of people please check that you have permission as it is assumed that any u3a members shown in photos submitted for the newsletter or the website are happy to be included.