Winchester
November 2026

u3a learn, laugh, live



WELCOME to the **Winchester u3a newsletter**



The inbox for the last newsletter was somewhat empty and you got treated to a double page cover photo; this time the pages were full even before adding any photos to lighten the columns of print. Thank you! So some contributions have been shortened and a couple that weren't time-sensitive have, with the writers' agreement, been held over.

The cover shows the lovely display put on by a local church to mark Remembrance Day 2025. Recently, along with a couple of u3a members, I sang in a musical arrangement of the poem *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon, probably best known for the phrase "they shall grow not old", often used in Acts of Remembrance throughout the country. Alas, that is likely to be my final concert. As an early bird, I often feel too tired to leave the house in the evening and a choir where rehearsals go on until half past nine isn't really feasible for me any longer.

In contrast to such social gatherings, most u3a activities take place in daylight hours and we all appreciate that. It's a shame there is no local u3a daytime, proper four-part harmony choir. If any of you know a good conductor and competent pianist who might be up to the task, please let me know! *Vernon Tottle*

Charity number 1026342

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Cover photo - Ann Edwards

Chairman's letter



Many thanks are due to the u3a Committee members who helped to host the Regional u3a meeting held at Littleton Hall on 21 September as well as to any of you who have helped to distribute our new advertising leaflets in and around Winchester. I am delighted to tell you that one of our newest members, Andrew Bonner, has been co-opted as our Membership Secretary [because Myrtle has had to resign for personal reasons] and that Wendy Broadbent is willing to be nominated as our Groups' Secretary at the AGM in March. We are now keen to find a member who thinks they might enjoy the role of Speakers' Secretary. If you are interested or would like to find out more, please contact Nicola at speakersec@winchesteru3a.co.uk.

We are often asked to publicise research studies and trials to members and when we do so, the details can be found on the Home page of our website on the right-hand side - under the heading Research Opportunities for u3a members. Currently there is an opportunity to participate in two research projects, supervised by Leicester and Nottingham Universities. If you haven't already seen them, please do have a look.

At our monthly Littleton meeting on 8 December, we are trying something different this year: a Celebration of Winchester u3a. It promises to be a lively, varied, interesting and enjoyable afternoon indeed! Four groups are providing a display: Painting, Knitting, Mahjong and Wine Appreciation 3, and six groups are each preparing a short presentation of five to ten minutes.

The intended order of events is as follows:

Doors open at 1.45 pm. The ukelele group will play in the entrance hall to welcome members and there will be an opportunity to see the displays until the presentations begin.

Presentations from 2 - 3 pm: Science and technology, followed by Play Reading, Photography, Debating, Poetry and Contemporary Spirituality.

From 3 - 3.40 pm: tea, coffee, mince pies etc. will be available and there will be another opportunity to see the displays as well as to converse with other members.

I look forward to seeing many of you there.

With best regards to you all.

Ann

Cover photo

The display outside St John's church, Alresford for Remembrance 2025.

February 2027 edition of the newsletter

Any contributions, please, to u3aletter@gmail.com by Friday 15 January. Photos to accompany the text are always welcome.

Reading this newsletter online

Do you find the newsletter too small to read easily on a screen? On a laptop you can usually click on a + button to increase the size of the font. Alternatively, click on the three dots symbol (…) and look for "Fit to width". For a mobile phone, you could try turning the screen landscape and magnifying the image by spreading two fingers.

New members

We welcome the following new members from
Winchester: Shelagh Bird, Caroline Clay, Lisa and Richard Eve,
Jeanne Garnier Smith, Sylvia Giddings, Linda Nightingale, Lynne Proudfoot.
Kings Worthy: Susan Smith, John Wilson. Littleton: Kate Carslaw.
Alresford: Jonathan Carroll, Linda and Andrew Larsen.
Crawley: Denis Wellfare. Otterbourne: Amanda Carroll.
Colden Common: Sandria Elderfield. Hook: Karen Blakeley.
Bishopstoke: Anne Rosenfeld. Bishop's Waltham: Gwen Castle.
Itchen Abbas: Jilly Allenby.
Marion Schiesser

Our website can be found at "www.winchesteru3a.co.uk

Almost all the information there is freely available, but in order to contact the Group Leaders by phone, you will need the password, which is:
Have you visited the website recently? If not, you are missing out on a wealth of up-to-date information about our events and activities.
As well as details of the monthly meetings for the next few months, you can also find out what is happening in the national u3a through the recently introduced Latest Notices section on the home page. A new page has also been added in the Newsletters menu to give you the latest info on local community news. There is also a great deal of information to be found in the Interest Groups pages, which can be viewed in a number of ways: by category, by venue or by meeting day.
If you want to contact any of the groups, you can easily do this without even

leaving the website as there is a contact form in-built so that you can send a message to the group leader. You don't have to bother about email addresses as these are known to, and protected from misuse by, the website. You just fill in the contact form and the website will send your message to the group leader. To access the contact form, you just need to click on the group leader's name (shown in blue) at the foot of each group page.
Some u3as allow members to update their own group pages. Should we do this in Winchester? Please let me have your feedback on these topics and anything else about the website. You can do this via the contact form by clicking on my name on the Committee page, which is located under the About Us menu. This is also the method to use if you ever want to contact any other member of the committee.
I will put group reports received on the website.
Volunteers to help me with the website are always welcome. If you have basic word processing skills you will find this easy, and help is readily available. Please let me know if this would interest you.
Mike Holt

Forthcoming talks



Monthly talks at Littleton Memorial Hall, second Tuesday of each month.
Doors open at 1.40pm for 2.00pm start. We enjoy tea/ coffee and biscuits after the talk.

Tuesday 10 November - Swan: Portrait of a Majestic Bird by Dan Keel.
A local wildlife writer and photographer's celebration of the mute swan, Britain's most iconic breed, exploring the bird's significance across myth and history alongside vivid observations on its habits and habitats - including those on Hampshire and Berkshire's lakes and canals. The swan is both a lover and a fighter. A graceful angel and a clumsy oaf. Immortalized by artists over the ages yet misunderstood and threatened in the present day.



The mute swan, with its orange beak and aura of stately silence, is the breed we know best in Britain. Dan speaks up for the mute, displays photographs, and answers essential questions about the swan's nature and future.
Along the way, weaving his first-hand observations into the narrative, he shows us how swans have been portrayed in myth, art and culture for millennia, and how they have been venerated and imitated as well as harmed by humans. Does anybody still eat swan? Can a swan really break your arm? Does the King own them all? With an eye for the humour as well as the tragedy of the swan's story,
Dan lays out the facts, guides us to our lakes and riverbanks, and urges us to see these familiar creatures in a fresh light.

Tuesday 8 December - Celebration of Winchester u3a. See Ann's letter on page 3.

Tuesday 12 January 2027 - Don't Delay, Enrol Today: The Women's Land Army in Hampshire by John Lander.
Hampshire played a leading role in the selection, training and placing of "Land Girls" on the county's farms. Those recruited into the Women's Land Army (WLA) overcame many hardships to maintain Britain's food production in both world wars. Yet as the second World War drew to an end, they received less recognition than other groups that supported the war efforts. The WLA were demobbed in November 1950.



Tuesday 9 February - My Digital Legacy by Paul Day
"My Digital Legacy" is a thought-provoking exploration of how our online presence outlives us. In an age where digital footprints are permanent, this talk delves into the emotional, ethical, and practical aspects of making arrangements to manage our virtual selves after death; from social media accounts, emails, photos to digital assets. My Digital Legacy offers insights on preserving, protecting, and shaping the memories we leave behind in the digital world. Whether you're planning for your own legacy or handling a loved one's digital remains, this talk is a guide to navigating the evolving landscape of our online afterlife.

And after these talks: As ever, I try to get a varied mix of talks which I hope will appeal. Just a reminder that Chris and I will be standing down as the Speakers Team next March and hope that one, two or even more may consider taking over this role. It is useful to have a sounding board when choosing speakers. At present I have speakers booked up to and including May 2027.
Nicola Giles, Speakers Secretary.

Monthly talk reports

William Cobbett's Rural Rides

We were treated to a husband and wife (James and Christine Rowley) presentation on the life and works of William Cobbett. He was born in 1763 in Farnham and although travelling to France, America and Canada, he died just a few miles away from his birthplace in 1835. He started his career at a very young age as a bird scarer, progressing to a farm labourer with a stint as a gardener at Kew Gardens. He became a soldier and rose to the rank of sergeant-major and then settled into writing and became a gentleman farmer. Although most people associate him with Rural Rides, we learned that he had written more than 25 million words in the form of pamphlets, leaflets, books, newspapers and magazines, many on the plight of rural workers, which was the cause closest to his heart.
He spent time in prison at a time when 'complaining' about the government and the established status quo was considered sedition.
After five attempts, he eventually became an MP for Oldham in 1832 and continued to press for better conditions and rights for the common, especially, rural man.
We learnt of some of the things he was against - paper money as he thought its introduction would fuel inflation, mechanisation as he thought it would rob workers of their living and he abhorred cities and the Industrial Revolution.
The pub where he was born is now named *The William Cobbett* and there is a bust of him in Farnham Museum Garden.
The presentation was well-received by



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the large audience, so perhaps a few day trips to Farnham may be in the offing.
Wendy Broadbent

Stalking The Stalker presented by Hamish Brown MBE
Hamish is a retired Detective Inspector of New Scotland Yard and he has been awarded an MBE for his services to victims of harassment. He began the talk by telling us about his first investigation in some detail. It had been a case of anonymous 'stalking' by letter, some of which he read out to us, and it took a considerable amount of time and persistence for the perpetrator to finally be identified and brought to trial. Before 1997, stalking was not considered a crime per se and one of the first successful prosecutions for grievous bodily harm of the mind was a direct consequence of Hamish's personal effort and endeavour.
Stalking typically causes fear, anxiety, distress, and trauma for victims and has a substantial impact on their daily activities. It includes actions such as:
Following someone, watching them, or loitering near their home, workplace, or places they frequently visit.
Persistently calling, texting, emailing, or sending unwanted gifts and letters.
Tracking someone's internet use or hacking their accounts.
Contacting the victim's family, friends, coworkers, or children.
Posting false information online, impersonating the victim, or damaging their property.
The talk gave us all serious food for thought.
Chris Giles

Rhyme & Reason – Nursery Rhyme History - Susan Ackroyd
Susan travelled to the UK from her home near The Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia for a two month tour to do ten talks to various groups around the country; we were her seventh.
Susan has a passion for discovering the origins of nursery rhymes and when she retired, she decided to pursue this and her research lead to writing her book *Rhyme and Reason*. Some nursery rhymes are just that, but others are satirical comments on events in the time they were written. She covered rhymes from the 13th to 18th centuries.
Old Mother Hubbard refers to King Henry VIII wanting an annulment and it being refused, the Dog reference being Henry and annulment the bone.
Three Blind Mice refers to Bloody Mary; the three mice were the three



executed Cardinals. Mary Quite Contrary is Mary Queen of Scots. Turn Again Dick Whittington is based on a real person but made up 200 years after he died. Dick was held in high esteem and was a great philanthropist. He paid for 'The Long Toilet' to be built along the Thames; there were 128 seats, and flushing probably occurred when the tide came in! The pie mentioned in Little Jack Horner was the supposedly safe means of hiding valuables on a coach journey to fox the highwaymen. Jack Horner's own pie contained several deeds to confiscated lands and he helped himself to one of them.

Susan unwrapped a lot of history around the rhymes, too much to detail here. If you are interested in the nitty gritty, her book is to be sold in Waterstones shortly. Susan also has a podcast on her website, www.susanackroyd.com with five episodes so far that you can listen to for free. She loves to get feedback and is happy to answer queries.

Happy listening.

Nicola Giles.

News from groups

Men's Cooking Group has openings for 4 new members.

Originally it was set up for men to improve their cooking skills but we have always had lady members as well. In recent years, some people joined after losing partners, to make new friends and new menus.

We meet at 11.00 on the first Wednesday of each month, to cook a 2-course lunch together and then eat it together. We usually finish between 2.30 and 3.00. Because kitchen sizes vary, the number of members is restricted to 8 but this is enough to allow for one or two absentees while retaining viability as a Group. The Rota is also flexible so people can swap their dates if necessary.

The Host of the Month provides everything from coffee to the menu, the ingredients, wine and of course the kitchen. As an organisational model, this has worked very well. New tricks are sometimes learned with recipes that can be tried later at home.

If you would like to try your hand, we can arrange a "taster" visit. Our next session is on Wednesday 11 November in Kings Worthy.

Chris Scott

Railway Group – Famine followed by Feast in 2026

This highly successful group has now been running for over 12 years. It was "business as usual" for the group in terms of railway talks up to the end of May but then the planned meetings for June and July had to be postponed due to the weather and the extreme heat. These talks have now been re-scheduled for the New Year.

To partly compensate the membership for this quiet couple of months, it was decided that the group would organise three events for September and all of these were very well attended. For the first of these, we spread our "transport wings" and included various forms of travel: a steamship, two buses, a train, a catamaran and then a further train.



This exciting day trip started in Southampton where a number of members joined the SS Waverley at the docks. The lovely old ship raced down the Solent, benefitting from some nice weather, picking up further passengers at Portsmouth and then making her way to Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight where we as a group disembarked. From there it was a short walk to pick up our first bus to Newport. Newport bus station was bristling with activity and in no time at all we were on our second bus ride to Shanklin. From there it was another short, albeit uphill, walk to the railway station where we joined the Island Line service to Ryde Esplanade. The rolling stock on this line has fairly recently been upgraded with re-engineered vehicles from a previous existence working on the London Underground. Then, after a short time, we were ready to board the catamaran service to Portsmouth Harbour before returning by train to complete the circle.

One event down, two to go.

Many years ago, a visit to the Gartell Light Railway (GLR) was enjoyed by this group. This narrow gauge railway in South Somerset announced earlier in 2026 that this year was going to be their last. GLR started in 1991 and the bulk of the track runs along an embankment that originally formed a small part of the old Somerset and Dorset (S&D) Railway. The S&D, closed in 1966 as part of the "Beeching Cuts," linked Bournemouth with Bath. The GLR runs close to Templecombe Station and with a small number of open days planned before closure, we made sure we were there before it was too late. The rain threatened to put a damper on things but held off until the afternoon for

us. Let's hope they change their minds and we will have further opportunities of visiting this lovely railway. Twelve miles down the track is Shillingstone, home of the North Dorset Railway (NDR). With our proposed visit there last year sadly having to be deferred, we thought this was a great opportunity of "killing two birds with one stone" so, after enjoying ourselves at the GLR we moved on, although by then the drizzly rain had started to kick in. NDR is a standard gauge railway also along the old line of the S&D. There was plenty to see and do there as well as food and drink, although on this occasion the trains were not in operation.



For our 2026 meal and talk, this year we returned to the Winchester Racquets & Fitness Centre. After enjoying an excellent meal, David Small spoke to us candidly about his time working as a chef on the Royal Train. This was perfect for a group that loves both railways and food! There were mixed emotions for David just at that moment. Some of you may have heard that the Royal Train is due to be de-commissioned in March 2027. After working on this on and off over many years, there was an element of sadness over this for him. However, this does mean that David will now officially be able finally to hang up his overalls and retire!

If you would like to join us or need any further information about this active, friendly group then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

John Richbell

Social Cribbage group - monthly on Wednesday afternoons

We have a lovely small group of members who enjoy this game on a regular monthly basis and although we have no more capacity to welcome new members to our group because of lack of available space in our house, we wondered if there would be enough interest from other U3a members to start up another small group?

If anyone is interested perhaps they could email me; however, it would mean someone volunteering to host - again, perhaps you could indicate if you have the room/capacity to host two tables of four members or even one table of

four members. If this were the case I would be happy to mentor and teach the game until the group could function on their own.
Jacqueline Warren

The Ukulele group play in a big hall in Weeke, so we always have room for newbies, beginners or experienced. Our numbers are approaching 20 in total, depending on holidays, hospital appointments, grandparent duties etc, etc. We can now confidently play more than 100 songs.
Please come along & join us, the Uke is easy to learn and great fun to sing along with.
Taff Powell

Stage and Screen Outings
This group is for u3a members who enjoy live music, theatre and arts screenings from Covent Garden, the National Theatre and the Met. Twice a year, we email members a programme of possible theatre visits and screenings so they can choose the events that interest them. We also meet occasionally for lunch, giving members another opportunity to get to know one another. We are planning a WhatsApp group where participating members can suggest outings and easily arrange to attend together.
We try to avoid money changing hands, so whenever possible we identify a row with a lot of seats and arrange to book individually. We meet up in the foyer beforehand and enjoy each other's company in the interval.
The current 2026 and early 2027 visits:
Manon- The Ballet Everyman Cinema Winchester 12 noon Tuesday 3 November
Giant-The Play Everyman Cinema 12.30pm Tuesday 24 November
The Nutcracker Everyman Cinema 1.00pm Thursday 10 December
Blood Brothers Theatre Royal 20/21 January tbc
Beyond the Barricade Theatre Royal Sunday 10 January
Gordon Buchanan (wildlife photographer) Theatre Royal Wednesday 3 February
Fairport Convention Theatre Royal Friday 12 March
Looking further ahead, we are also interested in several musical spectaculars at the Mayflower in Southampton: Cats and Hades Town in April, and Starlight Express in September 2027.
Jill North & Jean Crispin

Gardens Group



Our friendly u3a Gardens Group starts organising visits in February with a meeting of members at the Golden Lion Pub, Winchester. We arrive clutching our copies of the current year's yellow National Open Garden Scheme booklet for Hampshire. We will have had time (hopefully) to mark up gardens we would like to explore. By the end of the meeting, we have a monthly schedule for the year of dates, gardens and members who have volunteered to organise their choices and lead a visit. Each visit requires good organisation between us and the owners. On average 10-25 members sign up to a visit that usually ends with a very pleasant gathering for lunch at a local pub.

In spite of drought and hosepipe bans, the gardens we've wandered through this year seem to have coped with the heatwaves fairly well. This was evident when we visited Brick Kiln Cottage in Herriard, Alton, which proved very popular. One of us said that 'in a troubled world, what a joy it was to walk its green and dappled pathway on a glorious Thursday morning'. Clearly a very special two acre garden with, amongst other delights, its woodland path, pebble garden, bug palace, shepherd's hut and a traditional cottage garden filled with herbs. Eco-friendly methods used there attract wild animals, butterflies, birds, bees and other insects.

The Bridge Cottage garden in the small picturesque village of Amport was a sheer delight. The owners gave a talk about what they had achieved in the ten years since moving there, followed by their excellent guided tour. The bold, close, colourful, mixed planting scheme along the banks of the crystal clear stream that runs beside the Cottage, is strikingly beautiful. The stream is fed by the garden lake, which itself is fed by natural springs and the River Test. Wildlife is attracted to the lake and fish are often caught and eaten by otters and herons. The tour ended with the owners offering very welcome tea and coffee with delicious home-made cakes.

Moving on to Medstead on a hot July day, 16 of us visited Church House, which was built around the 1860s. It now has ample parking space, always a

big bonus! We were given an interesting talk by the present owners, who took over the property in 2015. They had inherited a professionally landscaped, but then run down and neglected, one acre garden, which they decided to keep to its original design where possible. We then had a tour leading us through the many low cut hedged pathways opening out into a large lawned area. This lawn was edged with long, curving, broad mixed herbaceous borders, closely planted and colour themed with mature trees, shrubs and creepers all included in the huge variety of plants. A robot lawnmower is used to mow the lawn, often set to do its job at night time: a gardeners dream! The delicious tea, coffee, and choice of cakes served in the shade at the end of our tour were very welcome.

In September we met up at West Green House in Hook, Hampshire. We had a particularly interesting talk about this 10 acre woodland garden, which includes a lake and some very old trees. It is a combination of a National Trust owned freehold garden and a privately-owned house on a 99-year lease from the National Trust. The owner of the house maintains and develops the garden with help from a band of local volunteers. This year she exhibited a garden at the RHS Chelsea Garden Show winning a Silver Gilt. It was brought back root and branch and is now planted in Wood Green, where it can be seen by visitors to the garden.



The garden itself has a minimum of 14 different areas including a Japanese Garden, Five Bridges Walk Garden, the Edible Hedge, Orangery and Theatre Lawn, fruit and vegetable gardens to name but a few. Surprisingly, the garden was very green, great for a hot day's dappled summer walk of interest with well laid low hedged paths and routes. We didn't see many flowers on our visit, probably due to drought conditions. There has been interest in a possible return around tulip time in the Spring.

No two gardens are ever the same, thanks to the vision, enthusiasm, interest and love that the owners pour into creating their masterpieces. The fact that they work so hard to open them for the public to visit and to raise money for The National Open Garden Scheme, shows much dedication to both the gardens and the charity. It is a wonderful effort and we benefit greatly, not only from what we see and learn from the visits, but also being able to donate to a good cause.

Together, we heartily appreciate the generosity of the owners, who welcome us with their exceptionally good tea, coffee, home-made cakes and biscuits and, of course, their beautiful English gardens.

Rosey Prentice & Pat Dowdell

Art Appreciation



"Midsummer Dance" (c 1896) by the Swedish artist Anders Zorn was chosen for our summer theme of Festivals. This depicts a traditional Swedish Midsummer celebration in the village of Morkarlby in the province of Dalarna. In the background to the right there is a maypole with a Swedish flag at the top. The dancers are wearing folk costumes. In a house with a red gable, the first morning light is reflected. Zorn donated a maypole to Morkarlby each year.

Another Swedish painting, "Portrait of girls before festival" by Carl Larsson (1853-1919), was also considered. This shows two young girls in their finery, and concentrates particularly on faces and hands.

Monet's "La Rue Montorgueil, à Paris, Fête du 30 Juin 1878" is an elevated view of the street decked with flags, rendered in detail, for the National day. In 1880, 14 July was adopted as the French National Day.

"The Bacino di San Marco on Ascension Day" is an oil painting by Canaletto, executed around 1733-1734. It captures the vibrant annual festival of the Sposalizio del Mare (Marriage of the Sea), where the Doge's ceremonial barge, the Bucintoro, sailed into the Adriatic to drop a ring into the water. The red and gold barge features prominently in the picture, with gondolas and other smaller boats, with many eager onlookers.

"Waiters' Race" (1975) by Nicholas Monro consists of 4 life-sized waiters, in

emerald green fibreglass, running whilst carrying trays. Their tail coats fly out behind them and one of them is almost performing a somersault as the coffee and croissants on his tray remain miraculously balanced. Typical of Monro's ability to capture movement, this work once caused my wife, son and me to spontaneously and independently convulse with laughter when unexpectedly encountering it as we turned a corner at the Hayward Gallery. Waiters' Races began in Paris in the early twentieth century, and have been held in several other places since, especially New York, Chicago and, occasionally, London.

On the theme of Family, we looked at "Fisherman's Farewell" by Christopher Wood, "Monument to Thomas White and Family" in Wanborough Church, "The Bellelli Family" by Degas, "The Family of Jan Brueghel the Elder" by Rubens and "Las Meninos" by Velazquez.

Members also visited the Scottish Colourists exhibition at the Winchester Arc. This excellently curated exhibition showed how the works of Samuel Peploe, Francis Cadell, G L Hunter and John Ferguson were influenced by Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and, in turn, influenced some later painting.

Anyone wishing to join the group would be most welcome to call

Keith Hatter

Science and Technology Discussion

Our meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the afternoon at Shawford Springs Care Home, Otterbourne Road, SO21 2RT. As the average attendance is about eight members, we would welcome possibly three new members to join the group. We take turns in presenting a topic of interest that may have appeared in the news, the press/magazines, or about a research topic. Occasionally we have a meeting involving short talks on miscellaneous topics that are easy to develop, usually generate lots of discussion, and provide members confidence in presenting talks.

Forthcoming Meetings & Talks

9 November: "Early Communication Technology"

14 December: "Irrigation, Salinity and the role of Drainage"

2027 Meetings

11 January: Dr Sally Brown will give a talk on Coastal Management.

8 February: Short talks on topics of interest which include Correlation between metabolic rates and age", "Ferranti Series (computers)" and "Update on NASA' & ESA DART Mission"

Recent talks included one on "Using the Sun and Stars to aid Ship Navigation".

For many centuries stars have been used for navigation purposes. Our predecessors, relying on the Earth's rotation and their understanding of time, used the apparent motion of the Sun and the stars to navigate the Earth's surface. The invention of the chronometer revolutionised time keeping, providing a daily accuracy of one second and position accuracy to within one nautical mile (1.852km).

Today we are dependent on satellite navigation systems and in particular the Global Positioning System (GPS) which provides Position, Navigation, and Timing services. Reliance on GPS has exposed us to fake and/or misleading information, which stimulated alternative methods for position determination, including the use of the potential Pulsar Ship Navigation (PSN) system which does not rely on satellites. Pulsars are the end product of dying/exploding stars; the Crab Nebula pulsar being a classic example. They are rapidly rotating neutron stars which emit pulses of radiation across the whole electromagnetic spectrum at their spin frequency in much the same manner as a lighthouse.

A PSN system can act independently or provide a 24x7 backup for cruise ships, maritime freight transport and military ships. Using an atomic clock with microsecond accuracy, simulations show that a four pulsar-based system provides position accuracies of around half a nautical mile. This means that calculated positions are solely dependent on the accuracy of the ship's atomic clock for pulsar timing measurements.

For further information please contact me on

Janusz Adamson

Allotments



Come and Grow with Us at a Stanmore Allotment!

Do you enjoy spending time outdoors, meeting friendly local people and growing fresh fruit and vegetables? Our welcoming allotment group in Stanmore would love to hear from you.

Each spring, we come together to decide what to grow, choose our seeds and organise the compost, fertiliser and other supplies we'll need. Some of us also start seedlings at home, ready to plant out when the weather is warm enough.

We meet on Wednesday mornings, sharing

the jobs and enjoying the time we spend gardening together. There's something for everyone, from sowing and planting to caring for our crops and harvesting the results. There is, of course, some weeding and digging along the way, but the rewards make it worthwhile! During hot, dry spells, we organise a watering rota to keep everything healthy and thriving.
Whether you're a confident grower, a complete beginner or simply someone who enjoys fresh air, good company and being part of a friendly team, you'll be very welcome.
Our allotment is conveniently located in Stanmore, near the railway, and includes a large fruit cage and a small greenhouse.
We currently have space for two new members. If you'd like to find out more and enjoy the pleasure of growing together, please contact me.
Clare Johnson

Two different walks around Twyford

All members of the u3a Walkers Group 3 enjoy passing through the countryside and villages that are scattered around in our area of Hampshire. But our members do not always agree as to what is meant by a "good walk." Some love to include open, undulating hills. But others may not! A slightly slower walk preferred? Or maybe including a path alongside a river, or passing through a wood, could be more enjoyable options.



So we decided to have TWO separate walks on 8 October. Both starting at Twyford's St. Mary's Church.
The morning had the longest of our two walks (7 miles), but it allowed six members to progress along the Monarch's Way, climb upwards up onto Twyford Down and turn north to continue across the Hockley Golf Course (signs alongside the official footpath displayed warnings of possible "flying golf balls!")
A marvellous view across St. Catherines Hill and Winchester was our reward. Then back downwards to St. Mary's Church. Several packed lunches were consumed at the churchyard.
Onto to the shorter afternoon walk (just over 3 miles), and a different set of walkers joined us (two of the morning's walkers did indulge themselves with a second trip!)
This walk crossed the fields to Shawford, travelled alongside the River Itchen to the Compton Lock, and continued further upstream to the M3 – the path

passes beneath this busy motorway (very noisy!). Then back over the Water Meadows to Twyford.
Rather a good day. Two different gangs of walkers, different terrains, different distances walked. Therefore, more members enjoying activities – that is what the u3a is for!
Mark Brown

Proposals for new groups

Games group

I would like to find out if anyone is interested in forming a small games group. This would be for board games and other simple games, not standard playing card games, probably meeting Tuesday morning.
If anyone is potentially interested, please let me know before we go any further.
Bob Allen

Another wine group

Wine Appreciation 3 has been meeting monthly since last year. We are now at capacity suggesting that we have created something people genuinely want to be part of.
We are however keen to have a waitlist of potential joiners as people do come and go in any group. Also, if the other wine appreciation groups are full, we can at least see by having a waitlist if there is a nucleus for a Wine Appreciation 4.
Harry Mycock

Code deciphering group

Alas, only two members sent me a decoded answer to the puzzle in the last newsletter. (Well done you!) So there won't be a new group on that front.
Vernon Tottle

News from outside Winchester u3a

South East Region Networking Event

On 21 September, u3a trustees from all over the south east region gathered at Littleton Hall for a day of training and exchanging ideas. Winchester u3a committee rallied round to host the visitors and manage refreshments throughout the day.
Sally Ingledew and Jackie Wiggins, our representatives on u3a Council, were both present and had organised the speakers. In the morning, Kate Cowan, Head of Information and Advice, gave a talk on u3a insurance cover. Not the



most exciting topic you might think, but when things go wrong, it's good to know that the office staff are there to manage cases and the relationship with the insurance companies.
The big takeaway for me was the impact of successful claims on the whole organisation; premiums go up and further restrictions are made on u3a activities. Currently, nothing airborne is insurable. Luckily, I don't have any immediate plans to set up a Skydiving Group, but if in any doubt about what is covered, the advice is always to check first! There are measures we can take to keep u3a insurable. This means having a checklist to show we have thought ahead and done what we can to mitigate risks, and we report any incidents that do occur. If you are panicking at this point, checklists and incident report forms are both available on the Winchester u3a website.
In the afternoon, Russell Whitworth gave an entertaining talk on AI for u3as. There is always something about AI in the news, and the audience varied widely in their experience of AI and their views on it, as you would expect. Some u3as are saving a lot of time by getting AI to write policy documents, produce minutes of meetings and construct courses on all sorts of topics.
I came away feeling that I had learnt something and met some interesting people. How very u3a!
Jean Crispin

Letter to the Editor



Dear Sir,
I'd love to go on a u3a group coach tour to the Castles and Gardens of the Ardennes area of Belgium and hope that many other members would enjoy doing the same thing. Great Days Travel offer this sort of holiday for groups of like-minded people, picking us up from Winchester and taking us to our hotel and to all the sights for about £1,100 per person. As a first step, would any members at all interested in joining a coach tour of this sort, probably sometime in 2027, please indicate their enthusiasm by emailing the newsletter editor on u3aletter@gmail.com.
Clive Boot