

# MEMBERS' NEWS UPDATE NOVEMBER 2025



1995 to 2025



We are part way through the time of year filled with many events that for all sorts of reasons contain memorable and emotional moments as we adjust to the clocks going back. Last week was school half term and many of you will have had the company of grandchildren and the excitement of Halloween and Bonfire Night. Much gluing, sticking and pumpkin carving, followed by dressing up and then wrapping up warm for the cold evenings of firework displays.



This next week brings many more poignant thoughts to mind as we take part in our own way for our Nation's Act of Remembrance. Living close to Portsmouth, with all the military connections, many of us will have direct links with the Armed forces past and present.

We are welcoming new members every month and there are some ideas for new groups - look out in future editions. In this Update read about our involvement in Info Fest; the Craft Group's generous and fulfilling endeavours to make gifts for residents in a care home; things to look forward to as we approach Christmas; and maybe thinking about joining the Sea Dipping Ladies on a sunny winter morning!!!! *Happy Reading.*

*Kathy Parker*

## THORNGATE MEETING

On Wednesday 5th November, Nigel Gossop gave a talk entitled 'Untangling Christmas' or 'A load of Old Baubles'. As a self-professed lover of Christmas, Nigel's season starts on December 1<sup>st</sup> with the Advent calendar and finishes on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the Twelfth Night. He took us back to the origins of every custom and tradition we know and observe including :- Christmas cards (we send the most cards per person in the world); presents; Christmas trees; decorations; lights (the first electric lights went on sale in 1900); St Nicholas/ Father Christmas /Santa Claus; the chosen meat over the centuries – swan, boar for the rich and goose or duck for everyman then from the States came turkey; the Catholic recipe for the pudding with 13 ingredients representing Christ and the 12 disciples (this gave rise to the lucky charms to counteract the unlucky 13); the chocolate yule log (pagan origin from the burning of a great log for 12 mid winter days); mistletoe and many more.



The Christian religious event is centred on the birth of Jesus but many customs originate in the shortened days of a mid winter festival during pagan times – Roman and Saxon. Customs have evolved in different ways in other countries in Scandinavia, Europe and the US and some of these customs have been absorbed into our own in the UK. Nigel referred to the increased commercialisation of Christmas and finished his talk by suggesting we turn off the TV and settle down with Dicken's Christmas Carol, a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie.

***Our next meeting is on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December when Peter Greenaway returns with his second talk from his wonderful collection of Gosport Postcards. + Christmas refreshments!***

## NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

### CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Our u3a Gosport Christmas meal at The Castle is now fully booked but there may be cancellations so contact Maggie if you want to be on a reserve list. The Day Trips Travel Group are all set for their visit to Salisbury and other groups are planning their Christmas meals with their members. The Extra Mile & 5-6 Mile walking groups are continuing with their tradition of walking to their Christmas Lunch - meaning the drivers who have generously offered lifts all year don't need to drive. We hope lots of you are being inventive with ideas to create a decorated box for the Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's in Alverstoke. See the details below.

### INFO FEST AT THORNGATE

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October u3a Gosport had a table & display at Info Fest alongside local agencies and services providing information and support for over 55s. Val Havard was key to the overall success of the day when we were able to promote our u3a.



*'I think the 55+Infofest was a success thanks to George, Tinou, Geoff (a star of the Helpful Group), Judith, who called in to help set up, and especially Fiona who also set up, dismantled the display and talked to a lot of potential members.'* Val Havard, Helpful Co-ordinator



Our MP Dame Caroline Dineage has always taken a great interest in what u3a can offer local communities and especially people when they are no longer in full term work. She made sure she spoke to our representatives and allowed us to take a photo.

Dame Caroline Dineage DBE, MP for Gosport  
with Judith Ridley and Fiona Meredith



### TO ALL MEMBERS

### HELP US CELEBRATE GOSPORT u3a IN ALVERSTOKE



As we did in 2024, u3a Gosport will be decorating a tree in St Mary's Church, Alverstoke for the Christmas Tree Festival which takes place between Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December. We have invited all groups to represent themselves in a decoration to hang on the tree. However there may be crafters out there who do

not go to any Groups and would like to get involved. Our theme this year is boxes, any shape or form but must be about 5x4". Any material/medium is welcome, also any decoration with a Christmas theme. **The deadline is the end of November.**

Maggie Gavin Secretary

***Forgive the pun, but you can think out of the box***



## **GOSPORT u3a MEMBERSHIP CARDS AND THE ANNUAL MEMBER INFORMATION LEAFLET**

Tinou has been on a mission over the last month to ensure all members have received these documents. You may have seen her on her bike battling the elements to get them to as many of you as possible. She has a very few left to reach their owners. If yours is still outstanding – come to the Thorngate meeting or contact Tinou – see page 6.

*Tinou Neal, Membership Secretary*

### **NEW MEMBERS MEETING**

John Draper our Welfare Officer welcomed 8 new, or prospective new, members to a coffee morning in the Discovery Centre on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November. It was also attended by 2 committee members – Tinou Neal, Membership Secretary and Kathy Parker, News Update Editor. Those attending were able to talk about their interests and ask questions. They were a very interesting group of people who will bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to our groups. Some even had ideas for new groups which is brilliant.

Our membership is gradually increasing and these meetings are an important first step for many wanting to explore opportunities as they start a new chapter in their lives. It can be daunting to join new groups but we are sure Group Coordinators and Group Members will welcome the fresh ideas they bring.

**GROUP CO-ORDINATORS** Please make sure your webpage is up to date especially if you are unable to offer places to new members at this time. This is often their first port of call.

**The next New Member's meeting date is still to be confirmed.**

To contact any committee member go to the Contact page on our website or find their email address on the back page of this Update

### **REPORTS FROM GROUP CO-ORDINATORS**

#### **SEA DIPPING GROUP**



Sea dipping in October  
On a clear sunny day.  
Stokes Bay.  
4 of us braved The Solent.  
Exhilarating!  
Clears the mind.  
Lifts the spirits.  
Try it!

*Neena Vadra*

## CRAFT GROUP

Some time ago the Craft Group decided they would like to make things that were useful. We made contact with Embracing Age, a Charity which works with residents in Residential/Nursing Homes to ensure they are not forgotten.



We made links with Russell Churcher Court in Gosport who gave us a list of items that residents would like eg Zimmer Frame Bags, Blankets, Paper Flowers, Cushions etc. We delivered these items to the Home this month and residents were delighted to receive the gifts - we hope to get a photograph of the occasion.

The Craft Group received this certificate from Embracing Age.

A member of our Group also visited the Chat Afternoon at the Home and spent time with the residents.

*Maggie, Terry and Judy*

***The Craft group also had items they had made, on sale at Thorngate this week.***

## EXPLORING ART GROUP

The Group continues to explore many different Art genres and our last session was about Neon in the City. We are visiting Salisbury Museum to see an exhibition on Landscape Art in various mediums. In January we are visiting the Armed Forces School of Medicine to see the Botanical Drawings held in their archives.

*Maggie Gavin*

## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Despite a last minute change of date for our meeting in October, a loyal group of members turned up to explore The History of Gosport Breweries. We looked at the Clarence Yard naval brewery and cooperage sheds, Biden's, Blake's and Hobbs breweries and compared them to the more modern micro breweries that developed since the Millennium. Our meeting was followed by a walk around the White Lion estate to visit the site of Biden's Brewery, the Master Brewers House and the Sea Horse public house.

As our next meeting will be on Tuesday 11 November it seemed fitting to research Gosport in WW11. So many of our members will have heard their parents talking about this period or know of the damage caused by bombing. We look forward to a lively session where members recount these memories or talk about their research.

***There will be no meeting in December.***

*Liz and Ian Backhouse*

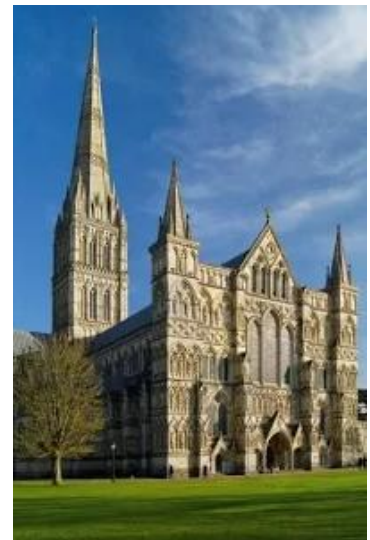


## **TRAVEL GROUP – DAY TRIPS SALISBURY ON THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

Thank you for all the responses to join us in Salisbury to help us ensure the trip can go forward. We have the numbers to fill the coach and it is booked. Thank you if you paid by the deadline set – Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November. If you have had to drop out we may be able to fill the places with those on the waiting list but those decisions must be made soon.

We are looking forward to a great day in a beautiful and fascinating city. In case you need a reminder these are the pick up times and places.

Brockhurst Fort bus stop 9.05am (Fort side heading S to ferry)  
Ferry (Castle Tavern lay-by) 9:15am  
Waitrose, Stoke Road 9:20am  
War Memorial Hospital bus stop 9:25am



*We will be planning our next event for April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026. You may like to come and help us plan the day. Contact Fiona from the group webpage.*

*Fiona Meredith*



### **DANCE GROUP**

Our Dance group session in October had a Halloween theme and we danced the Cha Cha Cha and a Spooky Charleston to Ghostbusters music!!

It was a fun session.

Fancy dress first prize was awarded to Ian Driver and runner up to Jane Easterby. However Tinou's make up was brilliant!! It was a difficult decision for the judges.

*Pat Luke*

**PICKLE BALL** This very popular group has reached maximum capacity so a waiting list is set up. Jane is willing to consider setting up a coaching session so contact her if this would interest you while you are waiting. Visit the website page to make contact. *Jane McArdle*



### **IS YOUR GROUP DOING SOMETHING SPECIAL AT CHRISTMAS?**



Many groups are organizing their Christmas celebrations.

I hope you will let me know what you are doing and send some photos after the event

**To find out about any of our 47 groups visit the group section of the website.**

**Follow this link and scroll down to find the page for each group.**

<https://gosport.u3asite.uk/groups/>

**From each group's page you can easily contact the Group Co-ordinator**

## **DATES FOR THE DIARY**

<b>DATE/TIME</b>	<b>EVENT OR ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
3/12/2025	Monthly Meeting 1030	Thorngate Hall
4/12/2025	Travel Group Day Trip to Salisbury	Coach to Salisbury
4-6/12/2025	Christmas Tree Festival	St Mary's Church, Alverstoke
11/12/2025	u3a Gosport Christmas Meal	The Castle
5/1/2025 TBC?	New Members Meeting	Discovery Centre
7/1/2026	Monthly Meeting 1030	Thorngate Hall

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ROLE HOLDERS 2025- 2026**

Chairman	George Cantrill	Chair@u3agosport.org.uk
Vice Chair	John Draper	Vicechair@u3agosport.org.uk
Secretary	Maggie Gavin	Secretary@u3agosport.org.uk
Treasurer	Judith Ridley	Treasurer@u3agosport.org.uk
Beacon Administrator	Judy Foster	Beaconadm@u3agosport.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Tinou Neal	Memsec@u3agosport.org.uk
Groups Co-ordinator	Judith Ridley (TEMP)	Groupcoord@u3agosport.org.uk
Welfare Officer	John Draper	Welfare@u3agosport.org.uk
News Editor	Kathy Parker	Newsed@u3agosport.org.uk
<b>Publicity</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	
Speaker's Secretary	George Cantrill	Speaker@u3agosport.org.uk
Website Administrator	Jennifer Bellamy	Webadm@u3agosport.org.uk
Helpful Group Co-ordinator	Val Havard	helpful@u3agosport.org.uk

*Make direct contact with any committee member from the Contacts Page on the website  
<https://gosport.u3asite.uk/contact/>*

## **NON u3a EVENTS THAT MAY INTEREST MEMBERS**

**GOSPORT WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, LEAGUE OF FRIENDS** will hold their Christmas Fair on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1-3.30pm in the hospital.

**SPITHEAD ARTS** The last lecture for 2025 will be held on Tuesday 25th November at 7pm at Bayside School. The lecture titled **A Tudor Christmas** will be given by **Siobhan Clarke** who has worked for the Historic Royal Palaces for 20 years. Guests welcome £7. <https://spitheadarts.co.uk/>

**LEE CHORAL SOCIETY** will hold its Christmas Concert **WINTERTIDE** at St Faith's Church, Lee on the Solent on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December. Tickets £15 to include a drink at the interval. Music performed will be Charpentier's Messe de Minuit pour Noel and Wencelas by Bob Chilcott. See the website [www.leechoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.leechoralsociety.org.uk)

**GOSPORT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** will hold its annual Christmas Fayre on Sunday 7 December 2025, 10am-2pm at Thorngate Hall. Funds raised for the Association Building Fund.

***Thank you for all your contributions – keep them coming!!***

***The next News Update will be published on Friday 5<sup>TH</sup> December.***

***The deadline for contributions is Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December but earlier the better..***

*Kathy Parker, News Update Editor*