

MEMBERS' NEWS UPDATE DECEMBER 2025



December 2025 marks the end of the first quarter of the twenty first century!! If you reflect on that moment when we crossed into this millennium, you may wonder, like me, where the time has gone. Much will have changed in all our lives and worlds since that moment but maybe, like me, finding u3a has given you many new opportunities, experiences and friends.

Gosport u3a celebrated its 30th birthday in August. Over the years the membership grew reaching a height of nearly 400 before the pandemic. During and after the pandemic was a challenging time and our membership suffered, understandably, but we kept going. Once again we are seeing the membership grow - thanks to some dynamic work on publicity over recent years (Thanks very much to Tricia). A brilliant initiative has been the introduction of the **Helpful Group** - spearheaded by Val Havard and Judy Foster. Val agreed to be co-opted onto the committee so she could be in touch with what was happening.

We currently have a strong committee with only one vacancy - for publicity. However the annual cycle of the committee will be moving towards the next year and we will be looking for new members to join the committee, as some retire from their roles. More about this in the early months of 2026. I hope you all have a peaceful, warm and healthy Christmas season.

THORNGATE MEETING



On Wednesday 3rd December Peter Greenaway returned and took us on a journey of time with his amazing collections of postcards and photos of Gosport over the last 100+years. We began at the harbour and travelled along streets most of which were difficult to recognise until Peter pointed out some particular surviving feature which enabled us to know where we were. We travelled through the period of the tramway then after when the streets were cleared of the tramlines. We became very aware of the devastation of the war in the 1940s when Gosport lost so many impressive buildings. It was interesting to see the many stages of the lakes then lido swimming pool and eventually to the car park of today. We travelled as far as Lee and could see how important the railway network in the whole area was until the 1950s – especially for the many military services based on the peninsula. So much to absorb! It was a real treat to hear Peter's passion as he shared his collection of photos and knowledge. A raffle, Christmas tipples and mince pies after!!



Our next meeting is on Wednesday 7th January when Angela Gould, the Coordinator for Age Concern in Gosport will talk about how the organisation provides support to Gosport residents. This will include how to access a range of financial benefits for over 55s.

NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

OUR INTEREST GROUPS – NEW ONES COMING

We are always keen to get new groups going. Initially you may just talk through ideas with other members but once you think you have a possible group there is a process to get it up and running within our overall programme. You should contact the Groups' Co-ordinator on the committee to share your group suggestion. She can then guide you through the process to gain committee approval and, importantly, their support to bring it to the attention of the whole u3a Gosport community. The website and this News Update are key vehicles to circulate group information as well as asking to talk about it at the Thorngate meeting.

We have had a few new groups start this year and there is actually one on Wednesday this week – see the entry for **SINGALONG GROUP** in the Groups section. There are other ideas in the pipeline for a **Military History** and **Bridge** groups – both at the early stages so look out for more information in the new year.

The life of a u3a is very much embedded in the range of Interest Groups members can join. Groups are led by members who have an interest they want to share or learn more about with a range of fellow members. Expertise develops within a group – it is often surprising what members can bring to a meeting of friendly, encouraging and empathetic members. Once a group gets going it can become very democratic, enabling many to help it all work. This is the essence of u3s ethos – a member's led organisation.

*Judith Ridley current Groups' Co-ordinator and **Fiona Meredith shadow Groups' Co-ordinator***

**WE HOPE TO ORGANISE A GROUP CO-ORDINATOR MEETING SOON – POSSIBLY JANUARY.
LOOK OUT FOR AN EMAIL**



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL, ST MARY'S ALVERSTOKE

Thank you to all groups and individual members who used their ingenious and imaginative talents to make decorations for the Christmas Tree Festival. Each tree is representative of what Gosport can offer residents and St Mary's at Alverstoke makes a stunning backdrop for this very magical festival and start to Christmas events. Thank you to Maggie and **HELPFUL** members who decorated the tree on Thursday this week.

NEW MEMBERS MEETING

New member meetings are an important way we welcome new members and help them understand how our rather complex organisation works. They are held every 2 months – new members will get an invite. Dates for the 2026 meetings in the Discovery Centre are:-

MONDAYS at 1030 on 5 January 2 March 1 June 5 October 7 December

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



SINGALONG GROUP

Ian Orr has very quickly set up and run the first session of the Singalong group. There was a great response to the email sent to all members and 37 indicated they were interested. The group had the first meeting on Wednesday 3rd December 3rd at 2pm in the Museum. This first meeting was well attended. Singing included Doris Day, Beatles, Lindisfarne, Johnny Cash, ABBA, Beach Boys and - for the season - *LAST CHRISTMAS!*

'This is pure singalong joy! Each session features a laptop-powered lyric display and a playlist that spans the decades: from toe-tapping rock and roll, beloved musicals, and golden hits of the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, to the occasional modern tune (if we dare!). If it's got a melody and we can sing it, it's fair game.'

Ian Orr

CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP

We are a small group and would welcome new members. We meet on the first Monday of each month at 10.15 am. There is no meeting in December so our next meeting is on Monday 12th January at our new venue - The Methodist Church in Stoke Road. This past year we have discussed COP 29, Weather Through the Ages. Biofuelling the Future, Cleaning our Waters and much more. If any of this is important to you please come along and join in our discussions.



Pauline Potter



UKULELE GROUP

The ukulele group has been running for 5 years. (How time flies when you are having fun!) Some members joined the u3a solely to learn a new skill, but we invite any members to come along and give it a go, you will receive a very warm welcome. So why not make it your new years' resolution to try something new. Richard and Linda would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you all in 2026.

Richard and Linda

ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

The Archaeology Group is growing and attracting new members. If you like History we are sure you would find the group interesting. It is very interactive and even when technology lets us down, we have ways of making sessions fun. Thank heavens for tourists' t-towels - useful for a map of Orkney when we were talking about Archaeological finds there!! Julie and Linda would like to wish all the members a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a great NEW YEAR. See you in 2026.

Julie and Linda



LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

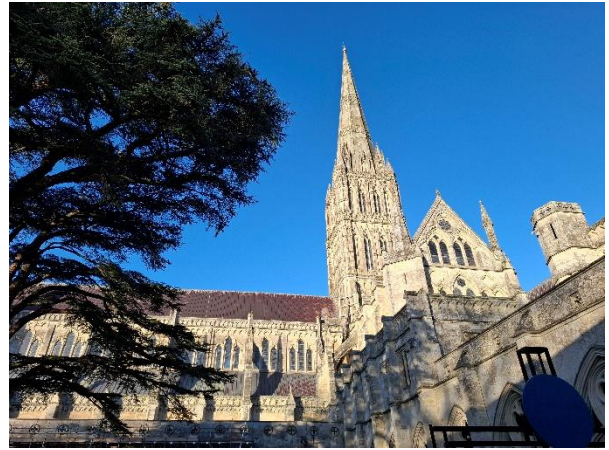
It has been pleasing to welcome six new members to the Local History group. Although we will not be meeting in December we look forward to seeing everyone again on Tuesday 13 January when we will be researching The History of Bridgemarky. Come armed with information about the area and memories of growing up in the newly constructed houses.

Wishing you all a very peaceful Christmas

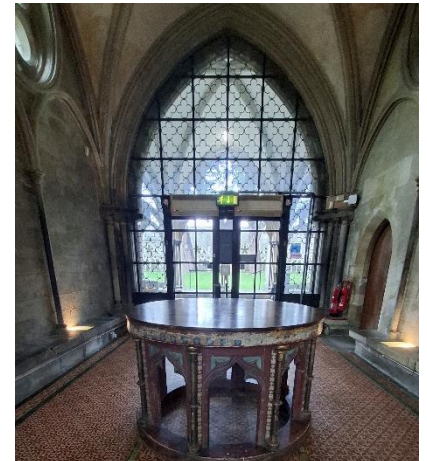
Liz and Ian Backhouse

TRAVEL GROUP - DAY TRIPS SALISBURY ON THURSDAY 4th DECEMBER

The outing to Salisbury was a great success. The rain and traffic at the start were all forgotten once we'd had a coffee, visited the conveniences and met our 3 guides in the magnificent cathedral. 800 years ago it was built over rivers – a fact I did not know, but was demonstrated by the plunge stick below the floor which came up



wet, after we heard the water glug. The guides gave us so many quirky snippets that you would never know without their tours. But most of all, it was a real treat to walk beneath the cathedral's incredible lofty arches of beautiful masonry - truly awesome. The reflections in the beautiful font at the centre was further inspiration showing how modern additions have blended so well with the old. We saw the treasured, and best preserved, Magna Carta - 1 of 4 still in existence. It is displayed in the Chapter House where we passed the antique table which is reputed to have been where the workers were paid during the building of the cathedral early in the 1200s.



Many of us visited the Christmas Tree Festival in St Thomas' church not far away – a very different presentation to our trees in St Mary's. We heard local children and community groups sing. Others no doubt had a great lunch then some retail therapy in the many varied shops in the city. All back on board and the return was really not too bad traffic-wise. Thank you to Fiona for organising this first outing for her group (plus the Welsh cakes) and to Judith who helped her.

KP

*I can confirm that our next trip on **Thursday 2nd of April 2026** will be the **Military Museum and the Royal Chelsea Hospital** with a guided tour by a Chelsea Pensioner. The cost is £56 for coach and guided tour, The Military museum is free entry. This price is based on 30 attending the trip- if more attend the cost can reduce.*

Fiona Meredith

Contact meredithfiona@btinternet.com



DANCE GROUP



At our Christmas dance session we danced swing, jive and strolls to

- *Step into Xmas by Elton John
- *Jingle Bell Rock by Bobby Helms
- *Rock around Christmas Tree by Brenda Lee .

Our members should now be prepared for dancing at Christmas and New Year parties.

The group welcomed 2 new members this month. *Pat Luke*



PICKLE BALL

Our U3A Pickleball group goes from strength to strength and has attracted a few new U3A members over the past months. Our new members have told me they are pleasantly surprised with the number of activities our U3A has to offer and are looking forward to trying other groups.



Once again the Pickleball Group have entered a team into the local Pickleball League that's being played over the next few months. I'm sure they will have great fun and that you will join me in wishing them good luck.

Unfortunately, due to Pickleball popularity we are now full with a awaiting list. In the meantime if sufficient people would like to have a go at playing a game I'm happy to set up a separate coaching session at Gosport Leisure Centre, just send me an email.

Jane Mc Ardle



HISTORY GROUP

Dot and Linda would like to thank all the members of the History Group for their support over the last year. The group has grown not only in numbers but with enthusiasm. Dot and I are amazed every month with the interesting items members have brought to the sessions.

We would like to wish everyone a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR and we look forward to seeing you all in 2026.

Linda and Dot.

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

FOR THE DIARY



DATE/TIME	EVENT OR ACTIVITY	LOCATION
4-6/12/2025	Christmas Tree Festival	St Mary's Church, Alverstoke
11/12/2025	u3a Gosport Christmas Meal	The Castle
5/1/2025	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
Publicity	Vacant	
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

LEE CHORAL SOCIETY will hold its Christmas Concert **WINTERTIDE** at St Faith's Church, Lee on the Solent on Saturday 6th 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

Part programme at Trinity church afternoon concert on Sunday xx January

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.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS AT ST LUKE'S CHURCH, HASLAR. Thursday 11th December 7pm

And other churches of course

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

***The next News Update will be published on Friday 9TH January 2026
The deadline for contributions is Monday 5th January 2026 but earlier the better***



HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND ALL THE BEST FOR THE NEW YEAR 2026.

Kathy Parker, News Update Editor