

## MEMBERS' NEWS UPDATE FEBRUARY 2026



I recently saw the following observation on facebook

**30 days hath September, April, June and November. All the rest have 31, except February which has 28 and 29 in each leap year BUT ALSO EXCEPT JANUARY - which has 100!!!**

It has been a long, very wet and windy month which has been a trial for some of us getting to our monthly meetings. Our groups meeting outside - especially the walking groups - have soldiered on through the puddles and mud changing some planned routes, but wearing every layer possible. However, it is also obvious that many members have been keen to get back to regular group activities and the comfort of friendship within our community. A big **thank you** goes out to all your Group Co-ordinators who make things happen each month. In reading our News Updates, the committee hopes all members can appreciate and understand just what goes into making our u3a such a magnificent member led community.



*February is a shorter month. It is a time to look forward to Spring as the days lengthen and flowers bloom.*

### THORNGATE MEETING

On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February – Stephen Hoadley gave a excellent talk about the Spitfire whose home and legacy is embedded in local history especially Southampton. He talked through the 1930s period when the Spitfire was developed from Reginald Mitchell's brilliant designs through to the mass production vital for the war effort. We learnt about the bombing of the Woolston factory and the clever distribution of parts manufacture to avoid a future catastrophe. We learnt about Beatrice Tilly whose brilliant little device enabled the plane to be the acrobat we all know. We heard about the women who assembled the parts to create this legendary plane and the female Air Transport Artillery who flew the planes around the country to the squadrons waiting to be deployed, or to the repair factories after damage. There are many blue plaques and memorials around the Itchen, Woolston and Southampton to commemorate the achievements behind this iconic plane which we are lucky to see over our skies near Daedalus.



**Next Month** on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March, Richard Osgood MBE a highly regarded MOD senior archaeologist will give a talk about the mysterious **RAT ISLAND** which you see from the Millenium Bridge connecting Weevil Lane to Priddy's Hard.

***This talk has been recommended as 'NOT TO BE MISSED'***

### MEETERS AND GREETERS AT THORNGATE

Our display table at the entrance to Thorngate Hall is the arrival point for new or potential members. It is important that people are made to feel welcome and can be taken in and introduced to the registration table and other members who can make sure they are comfortable. Please consider signing up for one of our future meetings. You just need to be prepared to get to Thorngate a bit earlier . Ideally 2 at a time is helpful so one person can take a new member into the Hall.

*Contact Judith Ridley, Treasurer*

## **NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE**

In this section the committee includes important information to bring to the attention of all members. We hope this keeps you in touch and informed of developments and changes across the whole of our extensive u3a. Currently we are focusing on membership renewal; future budget planning; and the overall management of groups. We are also beginning to work towards the AGM when the committee will report on the year ending April 2026 and will appoint the committee for 2026-7. ***We hope to attract others to join us on the committee***

***SAVE THE DATE FOR THE AGM Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May IMPORTANT ISSUES TO DISCUSS***

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

To make our u3a viable we need a consistent number of members so we hope most of you will renew. The next membership year runs from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2027 with the fee this year of £30 as agreed at the last AGM. You can pay at the monthly meeting in cash or cheque **OR** you can pay by bank transfer at any time – see the members page of the website.

***An email sent in January to all members, gave notice and details of our new bank account.***

***PAST PAYMENTS ALREADY MADE TO THE OLD BANK ACCOUNT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED***

New membership cards will be available at the monthly meeting after your payment has been processed. ***There will be 1 more meeting on March 4th for in person payments.***

***Membership cards if you have paid by BACs or cash/cheque will be available at Thorngate.***

***Please remember to inform the Membership Secretary of any changes to your contact details – email, telephone, address, emergency contact.***

### **GIFT AID IS A MUCH APPRECIATED EXTRA INCOME**

Many members are already registered for Gift Aid but if you need to check your status, contact the Treasurer. Once registered it will roll on each year.

***Please note you must inform the Treasurer if you need to cancel your Gift Aid subscription.***

The Gift Aid form is available at Thorngate and on the members page of the website.

Here is the link to the Members page of the u3a Gosport website where you can access all the above information <https://gosport.u3asite.uk/renew-your-membership/>

*Tinou Neal Membership Secretary & Judith Ridley, Treasurer*

### **DO YOU KNOW A MEMBER WITHOUT ONLINE ACCESS ?**

All our communications are by email via the internet but a few members do not have on line access. As a reader of this **News Update** you may know members who are in this position. Perhaps you already help them by printing it out for them. ***Thank you!***

However, there are 2 places where members can access the internet for free. Our News Updates are placed in the Members Section of u3a Gosport Website. ***No password is needed.*** Members can get the Update printed for a small fee.

- 1. Gosport Discovery Centre.** Computers are available on the top floor with some help to get you started. (you could bring a friend along to help you.)
- 2. Your Space 51-52 High Street, Gosport.** A government funded project to support residents in many ways including trainers to help with computer skills so people can get on line. Unfortunately, this brilliant project may only last until the end of March – ***so go there soon and see it – you may need to make an appointment if you want some help.*** See page 6 for contacts.

## OUR MONTHLY MEETING AT THORNGATE

In the last edition we alerted you to our concern about the drop in attendance numbers, in relation to the cost of the monthly meeting at Thorngate. We may have to raise the member contribution. We will keep you informed but hopefully we can persuade more members to come along. The talks are very varied you never know what you will learn.

## GROUPS' CO-ORDINATOR

A meeting was held for Group Co-ordinators on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January. It was well attended by these hardworking and committed members who are at the heart of u3a. There were some good discussions chaired by Judith, who has balanced managing two enormous roles of Treasurer and Groups' Co-ordinator. Fiona Meredith, as a relatively new member with lots of enthusiasm, has been shadowing the Groups' Co-ordinator role and hopes to take it on after the AGM. **THANK YOU JUDITH** for your perseverance and hard work in this role for several years.

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

**NEW GROUP PROPOSALS** Any member who thinks they have an idea for a new group which would interest members should contact the Groups' Co-ordinator – still Judith Ridley (email address on page 6)

## MILITARY HISTORY GROUP

We're exploring the possibility of launching a brand new Military History Group, and we'd love to know if there's enough interest to get it off the ground. The proposal has come from Stephen Harvey who has kindly offered to coordinate the group.

An informal meeting to help shape what it could become will be held at the Vine Café, Stoke Road, on Wednesday 11th February 10:30am

If you have an interest in military history—whether broad, specific, or simply curious—please join us for a chat. Your input will help decide the direction of this exciting new group.

**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**

## A SEASONAL POEM FROM A MEMBER



Dear Mother Earth please awaken now  
Re-light the world and show us how  
In the misty dark and frost this morn  
New life and inspiration can be born  
The sun's thin light through Winter's barren trees  
Relentless earth, wet, cold clay below  
Surviving birds peep through the mulchy leaves  
Sighs in the air from aeons long ago

Icy crackle 'neath courageous feet  
White patterns on grass carpets pierce the  
gloom  
And on the freezing cloak that comes to greet  
The harbinger's brave call to herald noon  
There is a light, a promise shown, unveiled  
A flame ignited in the wintry sky  
A hope elucidating, giving strength  
To stirring life and seeds and Spring's first cry.  
Nature wakes again when all is dead  
Snowdrops dance a little path of bliss  
Bright little flowers defy the steely ground  
And earth is blessed by Nature's gentle kiss

*Derry Rose*

## REPORTS FROM GROUP CO-ORDINATORS

### WORLD FOOD GROUP

At our December meeting we watched a short Indian film about relationships in modern India. This was followed by an American supper of Indian food.

*Neena Vadra-Edwards*



### SINGALONG GROUP – Exciting News!

Our Singalong Group has become so popular that we've officially outgrown the Roberts Room at Gosport Museum. What a wonderful problem to have!

**From Wednesday 4th March at 2:00 – 3:30pm, we'll be moving to a fantastic new venue: Holy Trinity Church, the beautiful church right on the waterfront at Gosport Harbour.**

The new space gives us plenty of room to grow, welcome new members, and sing with even more gusto. Even better, Ian has invested in new software to improve the sound system—no more adverts interrupting us—so we're hoping he can fit in even more songs for us to enjoy together. If you've been thinking about joining, this is the perfect moment. Come along, lift your voice, and be part of something joyful.

*Fiona Meredith for Ian Orr*

### CINEMA GROUP

Exclusive film screenings at the Reel Cinema Fareham takes place on the 2nd Thursday of the month. They are organised by Kathy Kanji of Solent u3a, for members of other local u3as in our area. See the Cinema page on our website for further information.

**To attend you must register your interest by email to Kathy.** To do this go to the Cinema Group Page on the website and click on Kathy's name. Complete the email box and request to be placed on the email list. You will then receive monthly film details to book your place.

**Thank you to Kathy Kanji for organising this.** Details of forthcoming films are as follows:

12th February - "Fackham Hall"

12th March - "Kangaroo"

### LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

At our next meeting on Tuesday 10th February we have invited Pam Braddock, from Gosport Museum Archives to talk to us. She is going to bring artefacts to show us and also explain the ways in which the items are catalogued and conserved. The Archives hold a rich collection of newspaper articles, maps, paintings, ceramics and items linked to Gosport's history. It should prove to be a most interesting afternoon

*Liz Backhouse*



## 5-6 MILE WALKING GROUP

Our first walk of 2026 was in the Locks Heath area. 14 members took part. We were all glad to get out and enjoy walking in the countryside even though the ground was extremely wet and muddy in places. Good walking boots and waterproofs were definitely required.

Walks take place on the 3rd Friday of the month. Group members are sent an email

with a description of the walk so they can decide if the walk is suitable for them. Our next walk on 20th February starts at Bishops Waltham.

*Linda Clachan*

## CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group has received some lovely letters of thanks from the Russell Churcher Court with photos of the residents enjoying their gifts. We told you about this in the November Update and some of the gifts they had made were displayed at Thorngate. The Craft group are very productive and talented – have a look at their excellent page on the website.



The Gosport Story is due to be on display in Gosport Museum and Art Gallery this month. The collage and storybook is made up of squares designed and produced by local residents and community groups.

Members of the Craft group were involved in this beautiful collage project by making a square representing what Gosport means to them. Among them Judy Foster chose Stanley Park; Maggie Gavin created Stokes Bay; and Pam Braddock depicted Leesland Park. There may be others from our imaginative Crafters. The stories written by contributors and compiled into the book are very worth looking at, so do pop in this month.

From March 2<sup>nd</sup> the display will go to The Alverbank Hotel



## TRAVEL GROUP – DAY TRIPS ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA ON Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April

50 members have signed up which is the maximum. Thank you to the members who have paid promptly. If you have not done so and want to go please pay to secure your place. It will help Fiona be confident about the viability of the trip. If you are interested and have not signed up contact Fiona to register your interest – there may be spare places nearer the day.

Contact Fiona Meredith [meredithfiona@btinternet.com](mailto:meredithfiona@btinternet.com)

**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
2/03/2026	New Member Meeting 1030	Discovery Centre
4/03/2026	Monthly Meeting 1030	Thorngate Hall
1/04/2026	Monthly Meeting 1030	Thorngate Hall
2/04/2026	Travel Group Trip to Chelsea Hospital	Coach trip
6/5/2026	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	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

**SPITHEAD ARTS** The next talk entitled **Masterpieces of 20th Century Photography by Barry Venning** is on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February at Bayside School. A prompt start at 7pm. The talks are very varied and are always extremely well presented by experts in their field. Guests welcome £7. <https://spitheadarts.co.uk/>

If you decide to join the £7 will be deducted from your annual membership of £50 for 10 talks.

**YOUR SPACE at 51 High Street, Gosport.** Free help to use your phone, tablet or laptop. Contact Karen 07725 480889 or Will 07856062179

*If you know about any events in the local area, that you think may be relevant for our u3a members please let Kathy know the details for inclusion here.*

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

***The next News Update will be published on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
The deadline for contributions is Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 but earlier the better***

*Kathy Parker, News Update Editor*