

# MEMBERS' NEWS UPDATE MARCH 2026



In comes March and the meteorological start to Spring. Snowdrops are over but daffodils, celandine, primroses and even violets appear in the hedgerows while the dormant trees are waking up. We see signs of the magnolias coming into bloom and a host of other trees bursting into blossom.

We start this edition with an appeal to you all.



*A message to all members from all members*

## **Wednesday 6 May 2026 - is the date in your diary?**

For our member-led u3a, this date is important as it is our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**, to be held at Thorngate Halls. Come and find out how we have fared over the past year and to look forward to the coming year. Your opportunity to ask questions!

As a charity, there are some legal obligations. Importantly, we must have enough members attending for the AGM to be quorate and to be able to make decisions. Voting is only by attendance at the meeting so please come to ensure that u3a Gosport can continue.

In addition, u3a Gosport must legally have at least a Chairman, Treasurer and a Secretary. However, these volunteer roles cannot do everything to make our u3a thrive, so we also need a Membership Secretary, a Beacon administrator, a Groups Co-ordinator, a Vice Chair, a Website administrator and a Publicity officer. Additionally we value the caring service of a Welfare Officer and the News Update Editor keeps everyone in touch all year.

This year we must elect a new **Chairman, Vice Chair and Secretary** and we need to vote for a new **Groups Co-ordinator and Publicity Officer**. The other Committee members are prepared to continue next year.

It would also be wonderful if more members would come forward to shadow existing committee members. This gives the 'shadowing' member a chance to find out what a particular role entails; help out if the committee member is unavailable or needs to share the tasks; and then decide if they would be willing to take over the role in future years. This has worked extremely well this year, with Fiona shadowing Judith (our Treasurer) who, in the face of no volunteers, had taken on the second role as Groups Co-ordinator. It has worked beautifully and Fiona is now willing to put herself forward to be elected as the next Groups Co-ordinator.

Thank you especially to so many of you who already make our u3a successful - committee members, group co-ordinators and all those who 'muck in' when needed. But .....

**Your u3a Gosport needs you - all of you!**

*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*

## **THORNGATE MEETING**



On Wednesday 4th March, Richard Osgood MBE a highly regarded MOD Senior Archaeologist gave fascinating a talk about the mysterious 'RAT ISLAND' – its official name is Burrow Island. It belongs to the MOD and is off limits to the public. In 2014 storms led to erosion exposing human remains which the police and MOD investigated. Plans were made for a more thorough excavation to further understand the remains and the historical context of their burial site. Exercise Magwitch (interesting link to Great Expectations) was launched and a 4 day dig happened in May 2017. Richard Osgood talked us through who was involved, the way bodies were found and the conclusions drawn so far. He explained that burials were in wooden coffins – many in the Christian, East to West, orientation. Although it seems likely they were prisoners on the many prison hulks in the harbour, he felt that the burials reflected decency and respect. About 40 bodies have been recovered so far and are in storage. The site will continue to be monitored especially for the possibility of further weather erosion exposing more bodies – there may be many more. Richard obviously has found this a deeply moving project and he said there will be plans for reburial of bodies found, at a later date.

This is a link to a page on the website which has photos and more information.

<https://www.strongisland.co/2018/05/03/uncovering-secrets-burrow-rat-island-portsmouth-harbour-exercise-magwitch/>

***PS Although the webpage is related to Portsmouth and Southsea Culture, Richard specifically acknowledged that it is a Gosport Story!!!!***

**Next Month -on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April, Dr Cheryl Butler** – celebrated historian - Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Honorary Fellow of the University of Winchester . She returns again this time with the story of the Earl of Southampton and the travelling Players. Another talk to enlighten us in the rich legacy of history found in our area.

## **NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE**

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Membership renewal is going steadily but there are still many members who have yet to pay their fees. After the meeting this week when many of you will have paid, I will be reviewing the situation. If yours is outstanding look out for an email in your inbox. It will contain all the details you need for renewing your membership to our brilliant organization.

The deadline is Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March – and while we have a short period of 'grace' to continue being a member of any group your membership must be up to date. It is easily managed on line with details on the website. <https://gosport.u3asite.uk/renew-your-membership/>

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

Thank you to those already signed up.

*Tinou Neal Membership Secretary & Judith Ridley, Treasurer*

## REPORTS FROM GROUP CO-ORDINATORS

### MILITARY HISTORY GROUP – A NEW GROUP

An initial meeting was held on 11<sup>th</sup> February at the Vine. It was well attended and some good ideas for how to take the group forward were shared. So it is going to start in March. There is a page on the website already.

First Meeting: Wednesday 11th March morning 10:30 till 12noon

Then: Second Wednesday morning of the month 10:30 to 12noon

Location: Roberts Room, Gosport Museum

*No meeting August and December*

Our topic will change each month on Military History. Contributions are warmly encouraged, though you're just as welcome to join us for the interest of the subject and to listen in.

Contact Stephen Harvey via the link on the Military History page

[https://gosport.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/military-history/](https://gosport.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/military-history/)

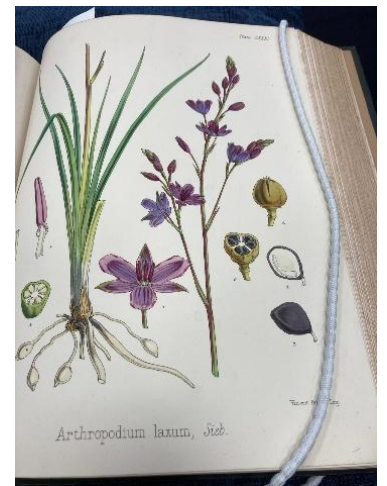
### EXPLORING ART



The Exploring Art Group recently visited the Naval School of Medicine where they were able to see the fine botanical drawings held in the collection. During the visit they also had a

tour of the Museum with its artefacts and books relating to the history of medicine over 500 years.

*Maggie Gavin*



### SINGALONG GROUP – We have moved!!

We're delighted to remind you that the Singalong Group is now established at Holy Trinity Church, Haslar Road, Gosport PO12 1HL. We meet on the first Wednesday - 2:00 – 3:30pm. We have had our first meeting there in March. The acoustics are wonderful, and the architecture adds a real sense of occasion to our afternoons.

If you've joined us before, you'll know how popular the group has become but we had some teething problems in the Roberts Room. The new venue solves all of that, and we're excited for what it will bring. A special thank you goes to Ian, our group coordinator, whose personal investment in the software has ensured we can focus on the music. Each session includes not just the songs we all know and love, but also Ian's little stories about the artists and the era – often taking us right back to our youth. If you think you may be interested - come along, lift your voice, and enjoy an afternoon of music, memories, and good company.

*Ian Orr & Fiona Meredith*

### CROCHET - APPEAL FOR MEMBERS

**OUR GROUP IS LOYAL AND SMALL BUT WE COULD DO WITH SOME NEW MEMBERS**

Contact from the group page on the website

## **PLAY READING – New Venue**

This group will be relocating from Gosport Museum to a Member's home. Existing members will be contacted by email giving them full details of where this is.

'I need to ensure there are enough copies of the play we are using - Ayckbourn's "Absurd Person Singular". We have great fun though putting on accents or silly voices is not obligatory! You might like to give us a try.' (Tinou)

*The next session will be on the Thursday 19th March at 1400.*

If there are other members interested in this group and wish to give it a try, contact the Group Coordinator from the group page on the website.

The web page is being updated so as Tinou is coordinating the transition she is an alternative contact – use her Committee email address – see page 6.

## **5-6 MILE WALKING GROUP**



The Group once again enjoyed an, at times, very muddy and wet walk on 20th February starting at Bishops Waltham.

Our walk leaders Shirley and Eve did a number of recces prior to the walk to gauge the viability of a large group walking the sodden paths and tracks. While we could not avoid all the mud they made a very good job of getting a group of twenty walkers to the finish point without mishap.

That the walk finished at the Hampshire Bowman pub, where the Landlord had kindly let us use their car park was an added bonus.

*The Group is now full. Please contact me through the website if you wish to be placed on the waiting list and I will contact you when a place becomes available. Linda Clachan*

## **WALKING THE EXTRA MILE**

17 of our group also had mud and boggy fields to contend with on our 9 mile circular route including the Chichester Canals last week. Surprisingly we actually avoided rain, but were delighted to find primroses and violets in abundance on the banks, plus the tell tale greening branches on a willow tree by the canal.



*Walk Leaders Kathy Parker and Chris Newman*

## **PAINTING GROUP**

This is one of our most successful groups with some long term faithfuls. However due to falling attendance, we are resting the Group for the moment as we consider a move from painting for pleasure to a different format. Ideas so far include watching online demonstrations and experimenting with different painting mediums each month.

If you would like to get involved and have more ideas please email Judy at [beaconadm@u3agosport.org.uk](mailto:beaconadm@u3agosport.org.uk) or Judith at [groupcoord@u3agosport.org.uk](mailto:groupcoord@u3agosport.org.uk)

*We are indebted to Roger Pike, master painter, who has led the painting group for over 25 years, Roger will of course continue to bring his painting expertise to a new group.*

*See the Painting Group page on the website – it has examples of the wonderful work members have been producing.*

## **SEA DIPPING**

We had our first dip in 2026 last week. It was exhilarating and great to be back in the water!

If interested in giving this group a go, please contact Neena via the group page on the website. [nvadra@yahoo.com](mailto:nvadra@yahoo.com). You will not regret it.'

*Neena Vadra*



*(Photo from October !!!!)*



## **ALLOTMENT GROUP**

As the weather is showing signs of improvement, we are looking forward to the new season on our allotment. We have vacancies for one or two new members at the Rectory Allotment. The growing season will soon be in full swing so enthusiasm and ability to cope with planting, growing and weeding will be much appreciated. Please contact Sandy Richardson - Group Coordinator via the group page on the website and we will be happy to show you round.

*Sandy Richardson*

## **ARCHAEOLOGY**

At our meeting in February we enjoyed an interesting talk delivered by Jane Walker who told us about the murder mystery surrounding 50 Viking burials discovered on the ridgeway in Dorset whilst a new road was being built. Thank you Jane, we were all enthralled.

*Julie & Linda*

**To find out about any of our 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
12/03/2026	KANGAROO - Solent u3a Film	Reel Fareham
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

**GOSPORT MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY** new Exhibition – **COLOURS** - photographs, artefacts and everything to do with how we and other animals see, create, and use colour.



**THORNGATE HALL CLASSIC FILMS** Thursday 12 March 7.30pm A special screening of Buster Keaton's Classic - Sherlock Jnr. Accompanied on the Compton Theatre Organ by Micharl Woolridge. There will be an introductory talk to precede the film

**SPITHEAD ARTS TALK** – 'The Men who made Menswear' on Tues 24 March <https://spitheadarts.co.uk/>  
If you decide to join the £7 will be deducted from your annual membership of £50 for 10 talks.

**BRENDANCARE COMMUNITY HUB** is supporting Ovarian Cancer Awareness month this March with a coffee morning on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 10 -11.30 am to raise funds for a Cancer Charity. The community hub is situated opposite Spinnaker View and next to Alec Rose House. It would be lovely if U3A members were able to support this good cause.

*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 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2026***

***The deadline is Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 but earlier the better - to guarantee your space***

*Kathy Parker, News Update Editor*