

# MEMBERS' NEWS UPDATE

## AUGUST 2026



### FROM YOUR CHAIR

I have had a lovely couple of months visiting some groups and also going out on various 'Jollies'. Fiona and her Travel group had organised a trip out to the Watercress Line, based around Alton and Alresford, both of which I knew already. A lot of background organisation goes on to make the days out run smoothly and I am extremely grateful. Both towns are traditional 'market towns' and contain some lovely shops and pubs/eateries.

I am looking forward to the walks included with the Bus Beer and Banter Group in Cheriton - around the village and also based on the National Trust property at Hinton Ampner. We are so lucky to have the beautiful surroundings, but also people prepared to organise these events: thank you to you all.

Most groups now shut down for August and we will return having rested and enjoyed company - so have a good Summer, wherever and with whomever you are. There is no meeting at Thorngate in August so I look forward to seeing you on September 2nd for what looks like being a very interesting talk by the Co-op on The Fairtrade Movement. Don't forget, Bring a Friend and potential new members.

*John the Chair*

### THORNGATE MEETING Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July

So, you thought Portsdown Hill was just a stunning viewpoint and the site of a great burger van? Think again! In a fascinating talk by Nigel Gossop, we learned that there is a lot more to this geological feature, which runs for 7 miles to the north of Portsmouth.

We heard about the early days of quarrying; the various solutions for transport of goods and labour to & from Portsmouth; and the building of forts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

which led to destruction of a windmill and the relocation of Widley. The forts never really functioned as designed, but are now an equestrian centre and museum. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Portsdown Fair became established annually and over the following centuries the hill became a popular place for local people. Many tea rooms were established, to cater for the increasing number people walking, recreationally, on the hill, to enjoy the views and the clean air, away from the city below. There was much more in this talk about the historical significance of this very prominent feature of our landscape.

Nigel's research reflected his passion for our area and if you attended it was real treat.

*John Wright*

### NO AUGUST MEETING

***The next talk will be by a Coop representative on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September at 1030. We will learn about their 30+ year commitment to FAIRTRADE, pioneering 100% own-brand transitions for key items like coffee, tea, and cocoa. We will hear about the Coop's involvement in projects that support a fairer and more ethical world.***



## NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

### HELPFUL GROUP

**Anchored In Gosport Market on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June.** Fiona Meredith arranged for us to give out leaflets at this Market in Gosport High Street. With support from Helpful Group members, Natalie, Lesley, Julie and Dawn, it was a success, as we talked to a lot of people and gave out dozens of leaflets. It is fortunate we were at the June market as the Anchored In Gosport Market contract hasn't been renewed.

*Val Havard (Helpful Group Coordinator)*

### THE GROUPS' CO-ORDINATOR

Still feeling new to this role, I am aiming to visit all groups so I can get to know members better and have a fuller appreciation of all the things you do. Here are my reflections on some of the visits I have made this month

I dropped in on the **Archaeology Group** at the museum to find they have been exploring the architecture, social history and religious traditions of Ancient Orkney and Shetland, Ancient Ireland, and even civilisations of Central and South America. The discussion was lively, thoughtful and full of fascinating connections across cultures. The group continues to shape its own future topics, keeping everything fresh and member-led. From a small gathering of five or six in 2019, they've grown into a thriving group of more than thirty—helped along by Julie and Linda's steady enthusiasm and support. *Wonderful!!*

I also visited the **Knitting Group** and although I'm not a knitter, they made me welcome. They are friendly, supportive, and brilliant at helping newcomers start from scratch. The **Crochet** group is currently full, but they have offered to take in anyone who would like to crochet, so they will now become our **Knitting and Crochet Group**. In fact, one member was crocheting during my visit. All were happily helping each other with anything they were stuck on. It was lovely to witness such sharing, encouragement, and genuine camaraderie. I really did enjoy the visit.

I joined the newly formed **Creative Writing Group** for their first meeting in Your Space – a new venue we are using. Bill Kenway led an engaging session on different aspects of writing and members took part in a writing workshop. The presence of a published Gosport author, who was at Your Space promoting her new book, kindly offered a five-minute insight into her own writing and publishing journey. Bill has sent in his own report so you can read more on page 3 of this Update.

**What next?** I'm very much looking forward to visiting more groups in my role, and I'll share any updates as they develop. I have been approached about a couple of other interest groups and am looking into those. Watch out for the future reports — I may have more announcements. We are incredibly lucky to have such a wide range of interest groups, each offering something special to our U3A community.

*Fiona Meredith*

**To contact any committee member go to the Contact page on our website**

**<https://gosport.u3asite.uk/contact/>**

**or find their email address on the back page of this Update**

## REPORTS FROM GROUP CO-ORDINATORS

### CREATIVE WRITING

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June we held the first full gathering of the Creative Writing Group; we had 14 attendees, including Fiona, the Groups Coordinator, a prospective u3a member, and myself. The morning went very well except that I had planned for two hours, instead of the actual hour and a half, so the session had to end a bit abruptly (I won't get that wrong again). The group kept the enthusiasm of the "set-up" meeting, with, I think, everyone enjoying themselves. We are planning to meet in August (unlike most other groups, it seems) and September, although I will be on holiday then. There's obviously going to be a bit of "settling in", but it felt good. '

*Bill Kenway*

*We had a very longstanding and enthusiastic Creative Writing group for many years but it finished sometime before Covid. It is great to see this revived – and with a new lease of life no doubt!*

### PICKLEBALL

Here are our U3A Pickleball Group league players after playing fantastic games at the local league on Sunday 28th June. Photo from left to right: John, Ernest, Susan, Peter and Mebs. Our intrepid team were 2nd (robbed by only 4 points). There is one more league fixture to be played in July.



To end the Pickleball U3A term on the 20<sup>th</sup> July we had a great game of Last man Standing or Killer as some call it for a very good reason. The whoops and cheers could be heard throughout the leisure centre as the game was battled out.

If you are interested in Pickleball we recommence on 7<sup>th</sup> September after the summer break. If you are not sure it's for you come and watch before you decide. Beware it is addictive!

*Jane Mc Ardle*

### LOCAL HISTORY

July's meeting proved very interesting as members researched "People who were born or lived in Gosport". We learnt about W. H. Fry, the Gosport surveyor who introduced Minton tiled road names around the town, Les Branon told us about the former owner of his shop who had a painting and plumbing business in Whitworth Road. Chris Newman explained how Jesse Jane White Mario, born in Ferrol Road, supported Garibaldi in his campaign to unify Italy. Julie Bennetts outlined the life of Roger Black, the athlete who lived in Western Way and achieved an Olympic gold medal. We also heard about the lives of sailors and airmen who gave so much for our country.

As there will not be a formal meeting this month we are having a garden party and quiz at Monckton Road on Tuesday 8 August.

In September we have invited Peter Greenaway to show us his old photos of Gosport.

*Liz Backhouse*

## TRAVEL – DAY TRIP GROUP REPORT

### WATERCRESS LINE ON THURSDAY 2ND JULY

Our Travel Group enjoyed a wonderfully varied and good-humoured day out on the Watercress Line, with plenty to see, do, and taste along the way. It was one of those outings where the pace was easy, the company cheerful, and every stage offered something different.



We began with the steam-hauled ride to Alton — always a highlight. The helpful and enthusiastic volunteer staff added greatly to the experience, sharing their knowledge with genuine pleasure and making everyone feel welcome. After arriving in Alton, some of the group returned to Ropley for a fascinating visit to the locomotive shed, where members were able to get close to the engines and learn more about the restoration work that keeps these magnificent machines running.

By way of contrast, our onward journey back to Alresford was by diesel train: a different rhythm, a different sound, and an interesting comparison to the earlier steam experience.

As has become something of a theme on our day trips, our little surprise in an envelope made another appearance — a small moment that always brings a smile and adds a touch of fun to the day. It was a day with something for everyone — relaxed, sociable, and full of small discoveries. The steam train was undoubtedly the star of the show, but the kindness of the volunteer staff and the easy camaraderie of the group made it a truly memorable outing.

*Fiona Meredith*

### BUS BEER AND BANTER AN EXTRA DATE

Bus Beer & Banter with the help of Fiona and the Travel - Day Trip Group have organised an extra trip to the Flower Pot Brewery Festival on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August. As well as enjoying the fun and delights of the Beer Festival at the Flower Pot Brewery, there will be 2 lovely walks led by Liz and Ian Backhouse. Great beer, walks around the charming village of Cheriton and coach transport – all for £20. It will be a cracking day out and there are still a few places left for any member of u3a Gosport. **Full information on the Travel Group webpage.**

*Contact Fiona Meredith - from Travel group webpage or committee role email on page 6*

### PLAY READING - AUGUST SESSION NOT SEPTEMBER

Do you have some time on your hands next month and would like something fun to do? The Play Reading Group is meeting in August instead of September - come and join us on Thursday 20th August at 1400-1600 in Roberts Room in the Gosport Museum. We will be reading "A Voyage Round My Father" by John Mortimer. You never know, you may enjoy yourself so much you might like to join our group! I hope to see you then.

*Tinou Neal*

## **FRENCH**

### **Debrouillons-nous en francais (Lets get by in french)**

We are a small enthusiastic group of varying abilities who meet fortnightly by video conferencing (Google Meet) on Thursday at 1000.

We welcome new members, just come and listen if you are at all apprehensive. Very suitable for francophiles. We cover a variety of topics. History, geography and culture of France.

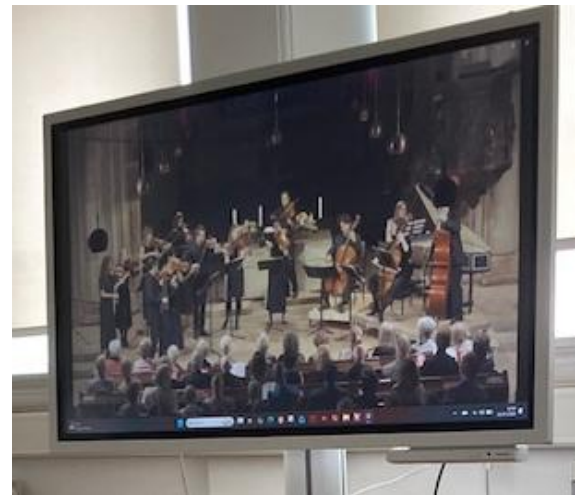
We have recently discussed the recipe for Clafoutis which you can also find on the BBC food website (Raymond Blanc) and also the first crossing of the channel by balloon by a frenchman in 1785. Please email [richardf.lovett@gmail.com](mailto:richardf.lovett@gmail.com) or tel 023 9258 5194 for further information. To join all you have to do is provide your email address and we will do the rest.



## **CLASSICAL MUSIC APPRECIATION**

As our June meeting was cancelled due to the hot weather, we combined the topics of Mozart and Beethoven at our July meeting. This proved to be an enjoyable afternoon exploring the works of two of music's most well known and prolific composers from the classical era, including concertos, symphonies, sonatas and choral works.

For our next meeting in September we will be exploring the works of women composers from any era. If anyone would like to join us, please contact me via the link on the website. *Sandy Richardson*



## **U3A MEMBERS PLAY CROQUET**

A Croquet match has taken place between residents of Abbeyfield House in Privett Road and some of our u3a members to commemorate Abbeyfield's national 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I - John your Chair - was disqualified because i accidentally hit a ball twice!!!! We hope there will be more matches in the future. We may win ....

*John Draper*

**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              |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 28/08/2026         | BB&B to Flower Pot Beer Festival & walks.         | Coach outing          |
| 2/09/2026 at 10.30 | Monthly Meeting- Story of the Fair-Trade movement | Thorngate Hall        |
| 26/09/2026         | Michaelmas Fayre, Alverstoke                      | St Mary's Church Hall |
| 5/10/2026 at 1030  | New Members Meeting                               | Discovery Centre      |
| 7/10/2026 at 1030  | Monthly Meeting – Sinking of the Bismark          | Thorngate Hall        |
| 7/12/2026 at 1030  | New Members Meeting                               | Discovery Centre      |
| 14/12/2026         | u3a Gosport Christmas Lunch                       | The Castle Tavern     |

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ROLE HOLDERS 2026 - 2027

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

Committee members aim to check emails each week. If your enquiry is urgent and you don't get a reply, or if the post is vacant, contact another committee member. Committee members may place an 'out of contact' message e.g. if they are on holiday so if your email is urgent contact another committee member.

*You can also 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 u3a member Averil Branson is a published Author. Her latest book 'Windmills of my Mind' is now available on Amazon. It is a collection of short stories with twists, turns, & surprises in every story. Quirky, unpredictable, & full of character, Windmills of my Mind is a journey through imagination where no two stories are quite the same. We wish our u3a member every success with her book.



**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 4<sup>th</sup> September 2026  
 The deadline is Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026 but earlier the better - to guarantee your space**

*Kathy Parker, News Update Editor*