

MEMBERS' NEWS UPDATE OCTOBER 2026



A beautiful picture capturing the changing season taken by Tony Stephens, one of our Extra Mile Walkers, in the New Forest on September 23rd. Our early Autumn weather has been fabulous and a real treat to enjoy after having to cancel some of our walks in the heat of July.

FROM YOUR CHAIR

What a wonderful Summer we have had, with some lovely trips out, either alone, or with family or friends. A lot more people are going for the Staycation mode of holidaying and we can find real beauty-spots on our travels. Welcome Home, if you have been away and as we settle down for the Autumn.

We have had a lot of interest in u3a and our membership is slowly rising. We have been at events where membership leaflets have been given out and that is beginning to show results. Our membership and what we offer is attracting new members and we can ALL do our part to bring friends or family along to meetings.

This is a busy quarter and I sincerely hope that you enjoy your membership and encourage others. See you around!

John Draper

THORNGATE MEETING Wednesday 7th October

On Wednesday this week David Bickerton told one of the most dramatic stories of WW2 - **The Pursuit and Sinking of the Bismarck**. He covered the full chronological details from the sinking of HMS Hood at the Battle of Denmark on May 24th; through the endless pursuit as Royal Navy ships hunted the Bismarck all over the North Atlantic; to its final sinking on May 27th. The crucial torpedo attack by Swordfish biplanes from HMS Ark Royal rendered the Bismarck unable to steer allowing Navy ships to move in and hammer the crippled ship with thousands of shells. Tragically the rescue mission was cut short with the report of German U Boats approaching. This was a personal story by David as his father was involved – and survived - but for us today it brought home the brutality and horror of what so many of our parent and grandparent generation lived through.



NEXT MONTH – Wednesday 4th November - Domestic Technology – Stephen Hoadley returns with another nostalgic talk when he reminds us of the excitement of the 'new' technology that became must haves not so long ago!!

NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

PROMOTING OUR U3A AT THE MICHAELMAS FAYRE

The weather was perfect and there were a lot of visitors. Gosport u3a had a very good stall thanks to our Treasurer and everyone who helped set it up. There was a table selling items made by the Craft group. Some of the Helpful Group assisted manning the stall, and everyone spoke to a lot of people, so we should be welcoming more new members after that very successful event.



Our Chair John Draper and Groups' Coordinator were pleased to welcome,

the **Mayor of Gosport Kirsten Bradley**, and the **Rotary Club President Ray Drake** to our stall.

This month we will have the opportunity to promote Gosport u3a at **55+Infifest held at Thorngate on Friday 16th October 0930-1300**. This event aims to connect adults aged 55+, relatives, and carers with local services, activities, and support organizations. It features free refreshments, free tea/coffee, and free tombola entry. Do come along and see what a significant role u3a Gosport plays in our town. Contact me if you are able to help out by manning the stall. See committee contact list on page 6.

Val Havard

GROUPS ARE ALWAYS CHANGING - WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED

The most up to date information of our range of groups is on our website. Last month we attached the September version of the Group's Chart showing the full range of all Interest Groups at that time. We hope you found it useful to be able to see the whole picture. We plan to produce this at least twice a year to keep you up to date.

From next month at Thorngate meetings we will have some copies of this chart for any member unable to access the internet. However we think it is not necessary to make it a general hand out so a printed copy can be available for a contribution of 50p to cover the cost of printing.

There are already changes happening to our groups which are listed below in the Groups' Coordinators report.

GROUPS' CO-ORDINATOR REPORT

After being away on holiday for two weeks, I'm looking forward to getting back out and visiting our groups throughout October. Although I haven't managed many visits recently, there is still plenty of news to share.

IMPORTANT GROUP CHANGES

Knitting & Crochet A big thank-you to Jan Almond, who is standing down as Coordinator after running this friendly and successful group with such dedication. We are delighted that Margaret Wallace has kindly agreed to take on the role. Thank you, Margaret, for stepping forward — we wish you every success.

New Group: Photography A new Photography Group is about to begin. An informal meeting was held on Monday 5th October at The Vine, 10:30am, to gauge interest and discuss how the group will work. 22 attended with great interest and enthusiasm. It aims to start in December - look out for more information next month.

Philosophy The Philosophy Group has decided to take a short break. They fully intend to return stronger than ever, and anyone interested can still contact the Coordinator in the meantime.

Painting The Painting Group resumes in October and will meet at Your Space on the fourth Thursday at 10:30am.

Climate Change are meeting again - this time in Your Space in the High Street. They are keen to attract some new members

We will continue to list changes in the Update each month and these changes will also be updated on the website.

Meet & Greet Boards at Thorngate

At every Thorngate meeting, please take a moment to look at our Meet & Greet boards. Our Coordinators have been working incredibly hard creating colourful, informative posters that show off the wonderful variety of our groups. This is an ongoing project, and any new information or updates from your group can be added at any time. We will also be looking for photographs, so please keep snapping away — we want these boards to reflect the energy, friendliness, and creativity of Gosport u3a.

Contact me - Fiona Meredith on anything related to Group management - email on Page 6 or website

NEW MEMBER MEETING

It was, as always, a pleasure to welcome new and prospective members to the meeting on Monday 5th October. We answered any queries and chatted about how our u3a works; how the fees are used; and the wonderful variety of groups we have. 9 prospective new members joined us and several completed their membership forms. The next meeting is at 10.30 on December 7th in the Discovery Centre.

John Draper and Terry Hunter

u3a GOSPORT CHRISTMAS LUNCH Monday 14th December

ALMOST FULL- contact Maggie ASAP. *email contact on page 6.*

To pay by BACs: **Bank details are:-**

GOSPORT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE U3A Sort Code 08-92-99 Acc No 67480139

If you are paying by cheque - make sure cheques are made out to U3A GOSPORT

REPORTS FROM GROUPS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Our Climate Change group resumed after a five month break. We now have a new venue which is "Your Space" in Gosport High Street from 10.30 - noon. Refreshments are available for a donation. Our next meeting is on Monday 12th October when we will discuss the future direction of the group so if you have any ideas regarding topics relating to climate change you will be made most welcome.

Pauline Potter

CREATIVE WRITING

This month, I was away on holiday, and a group member Mags Mayhead very kindly stepped up to the podium to support our writing group.

The subject was settings, how to define how you use them in your story, and how they interact with characters. Talking of Characters, next month, we'll look at this crucial topic: how to develop them and what factors influence their behaviour. Also, how do you treat characters in non-fiction? Thank you Mags for taking the reins and keeping our new group going last month - I look forward to hearing all about the session.

Are you a complete beginner at writing, or an active writer in either or both fiction and non-fiction? Why not come along to our group session on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (next one is 20th October), hear our thoughts and, if you wish, share work.

Bill Kenway

FIRST URBAN WALK TOUR TO SOUTHAMPTON

On Friday 2nd October Eve Henty took a group of nine of us on a fascinating tour of Southampton Old Town. She and Jennifer Bellamy had carried out visits to explore the city and discover evidence of its rich and varied history, from the defensive walls to the development of trade and the importance of the port. I had not realised how complete the town walls are – apparently the third best preserved in the country!! We walked around the walls and wove in and out of the remaining old streets discovering some truly beautiful historic buildings. I think we all had our eyes opened to the depth of the city's historical culture which is many do not see beyond the immense modern infrastructure of the city centre.



This is the 14th century Medieval Merchant's House – tucked away in Old Southampton. English Heritage restored it and has limited opening times. Thank you, Eve and Jennifer, for this new group, and for a great, but informative day out.

Kathy Parker Group Member

STAR GAZING

In October, the Moon is doing its usual dance across the sky, and at the beginning of the month, on the 6th, in the morning, it will be partnering with Jupiter in the morning sky. (*You may have seen this already!!*) By the end of the month, it will have changed partners; on the 23rd & 24th it will be near Saturn. When Halley's Comet visits us every 76 years, it leaves bits of itself behind. These form the Orionids Meteor Shower, and it reaches its peak on the night of the 21st. All of these can be seen with the naked eye; no special equipment is required. Why don't you come and join us on the 4th Monday (26 October) at 10:00 in the Vine to talk about what you've seen and what to look out for in November.

Bill Kenway



LET'S GET BY IN FRENCH

Debrouillons-nous en français

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.



Recent topics have included

- The most famous French sailing ship Belem, its original, and now again, its current name. Built in Nantes 1896. At various times:- British and Italian owned; kept at IOW during WW11; came to London for Queen's 60th anniversary; repatriated to France in 1979; and declared a historic classic monument in 1984.
- For gourmands we learnt about Cheesecake au cassis and Galettes au tourteau.

For further information email me from our group page on the U3A website and I will get back to you

Richard Lovett

LOCAL HISTORY

The Local History group will meet at Holy Trinity Church, Gosport at 2pm on Tuesday 13 October. John Draper has kindly offered to give us a guided tour of this historic building. So we are looking forward to hearing about the Handel Organ, the many monuments within the building and the changes that have occurred since the church's consecration in 1695.

Liz Backhouse

EXTRA MILERS IN THE NEW FOREST



It was a truly beautiful walk – pigs on pannage, horses, donkeys and glorious Autumn sunshine. Sadly a bad outbreak of equine flu has affected livestock in the Forest- we viewed from a distance and washed our boots when we got home.



NOT ALL REPORTS NEED TO BE WRITTEN BY THE GROUP LEADER

If you have particularly enjoyed an event write just a few words – but let your Leader know what you have written. Unless you say I will add your name at the end of the entry.

**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
16/10/2026 0930-1300	55+ Info Fest	Thorngate Halls
4/11/2026 at 1030	Monthly Meeting – Domestic Technology	Thorngate Halls
2/12/2026 at 1030	Monthly Meeting – This is our u3a Christmas	Thorngate Halls
7/12/2026 at 1030	New Members Meeting	Discovery Centre
14/12/2026	u3a Gosport Christmas Lunch	The Castle Tavern
6/01/2027 1030	Monthly Meeting How to dispose of Domestic Rubbish	Thorngate Halls

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ROLE HOLDERS 2026 - 2027

Chairman	John Draper	Chair@u3agosport.org.uk
Vice Chair	Vacant	
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	Fiona Meredith	Groupcoord@u3agosport.org.uk
Welfare Officer	Terry Hunter	Welfare@u3agosport.org.uk
News Update Editor	Kathy Parker	Newsed@u3agosport.org.uk
Publicity	Geoff Piper (<i>non-committee</i>)	Publicity@u3agosport.org.uk
Speaker 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
Co-opted to the committee	John Wright	

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 Museum and Art Gallery (GMAG) is delighted to announce the return of **Open Art** for 2026. This is an exhibition of local submissions in response to the title, **Our Gosport**, and will run from 10th October to 5th December.

Lee Choral Society. Magnificat – A Concert for Advent. 28/11/2026 7pm Tickets soon. See the Website
<https://www.leechoralsociety.org.uk/on>

Spithead Arts Society The next talk '**Clarisse Cliff – The Doyenne of Art Deco**' by Viv Lawes on 27/10/2026 at 1855 for prompt start at 1900. Visit the website <https://spitheadarts.co.uk/>

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

The next News Update will be published on Friday 6th November 2026
 The deadline is Monday 2nd November 2026 but earlier the better - to guarantee your space

Kathy Parker, News Update Editor