



October 2025 Newsletter

Chairman's Report

1. New Members joining in September 2025

We have had four new members join the Harpenden u3a in September, you are all most welcome:

- John Davis
- Carole Anne Cook
- Katie Chilton
- John Shrigley

2. October Talks

The 2nd October presentation was given by Sharon Torres, and the title of the talk was "The Royals of Monaco". This was a talk about the history and issues of the Monaco Royal Family. It was a very interesting talk that members very much enjoyed.

3. Annual General Meeting of Harpenden u3a Thursday October 16th 2025.

The Annual General Meeting will follow the talk by Fiona Lukas (London tour guide) exploring London's Underground including its Art, Architecture and Design.

The AGM will commence at 3.15 at the Harpenden Trust Hall.

I have provided all the relevant paperwork to the membership but for those of you who do not use email and receive this Newsletter by post, there will be copies available on the day. Please do join us. **Judith Moseley, Secretary.**

4. Treasurer required.

Just a reminder that Gillian Edward has sent her resignation from the role of Treasurer and we are hoping that one of the membership will come forward and take on the role. Please do talk to any member of the committee for further details.

Group Reports

Please note, for further information please contact the relevant group leaders by following [THIS LINK](#).

Church & Pub Group

The Church and Pub group will resume with a meeting on Wednesday 5th November at St John's Church in Southdown followed by lunch at the adjacent pub, The Engineer. The vicar of St John's will act as the guide and will outline the history of the church. The visit will start at 11:15am and run for about an hour at which point the group will walk for a minute or two to the pub. There is ample parking in both the church and the pub car park.

The church has an interesting short and varied history starting as a 'Coffee Room' in 1865, then as the 'Paper Church' from 1895 which later burnt down. The current church in St John's Road dates from 1908 with subsequent additions including the Lady Chapel and extended porch. Vicar Tim Vickers is well qualified to be a guide having studied archaeology at Cambridge and has worked in a museum prior to his ordination.



Church and Pub group visit, St John's church, Harpenden

The pub menu ranges from fish & chips to scampi, curry and noodles. Lighter alternatives include chicken wings, nachos, assorted filled baguettes and burgers.



The Engineer in Southdown, Harpenden

If you wish to attend please reserve a place by contacting Steve Gledhill. Joining instructions and details on how to book lunch will be sent to all applicants.

History Group

The next meeting of the History Group will take place on Tuesday 14th October. The meeting will as usual be held at the Randall Room in the Harpenden Trust Hall. A presentation will be given by Malcolm Rainbow and the topic is to be "The Indian Mutiny". All members are welcome.

The meeting will start at 2.30, but the room will be open for members from 2.00, but not before that time please.

The following meeting, on Tuesday 11th November, will have a presentation by Sharon Torres, with the subject being "Hannibal the Carthaginian".

On December 9th there will be the usual Christmas Quiz event.

Roger Thompson

Hot Issue Seminars (HIS) Group

After a summer break, we met again on Tuesday 23rd September to discuss what is meant by "The Good Society" and how we might move towards it. The intention of this seminar was to raise issues which would create an agenda for our future meetings this season.

We expect to be revisiting some favourite topics such as threats to democracy, managing climate change, the pros and cons of AI, freedom of speech, meritocracy and threats to world peace. The seminars will mainly take place on the fourth Tuesday afternoon of each month.

Two members of our group have moved on to other things, so we have vacancies. If you are interested in joining us please email me. Your membership commitment is to prepare for each seminar by reading the paper sent out by whoever is leading the session beforehand. Once a year you will be expected to lead a session by researching your chosen topic, writing a short introductory paper and presenting the main discussion points at the start of the seminar.

Over the last 6 or 7 years, we have had lots of lively discussions. Our members have varying political views and all we ask is that everyone listens carefully to each other's reasoned arguments and where there are differences we agree to disagree agreeably.
Chris Marsden - HIS convenor.

Music Appreciation Group

Despite several apologies for absence, we met as planned on 12th September

We enjoyed a surprising selection of music spanning Jazz, Classical, Folk, Rock and Electronic music, from the following artists: Linda Rosenthal, Hayley Westenra, Brian Eno, Steeleye Span, Miles Davis and Arne Domnérus.

We agreed to continue meeting on the first Friday of each month.

Our next meeting on the 3rd October will comprise of a Visit to St John's Church, Boxmoor for the Lunchtime Concert by "Jachana Piano Trio" (Violin, Cello, Piano).

On 7th November, We will meet again. The format of the meeting will follow the same format as our September meeting, to allow everybody to bring and share their selection of music.

Phil Beavis

Needlecraft Group

We have had 2 members leave us recently for legitimate reasons (We haven't fallen out with either of them!) and now have vacancies for 2 people. We meet at each other's homes on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month.

Any type of needlecraft is fine. We do embroidery, counted cross stitch, one of our members does a type of patchwork (there was a photograph of this in an earlier Newsletter) or anything you would like to do in needlecraft.

Please contact Anne Stephens giving your details and telephone number and I will get back to you soon.

Reading For Pleasure Group 1

Our latest book was "Here and Now" by Santa Montefiore. It deals with the painful subject of memory loss leading to dementia in a compassionate way.

The story is set in a small, rural village. The central character is Marigold, who is a pillar of her local community, runs the village shop, and is also devoted to her family. Her husband potters around in his shed, her elder daughter returns home after a love-affair turns sour, her younger daughter seems rather immature, and her sharp-tongued mother has recently moved in.

Marigold manages them all with great tact and kindness until the memory lapses start to occur and become too obvious to ignore.

It was heartening to read how her family and local people rallied round to support her.

Reading For Pleasure Group 2

We're currently making our book selections for 2026, including novels as varied as "The World of Blandings" by PG Wodehouse; "Gabriel's Moon" by William Boyd and "Babel" by R.F. Kuang.

Our next book for discussion in October is a classic, "Persuasion" by Jane Austen. Published in 1817, six months after her death. It relates the love story of Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth. Following a broken engagement, the action moves from Bath to the seaside town of Lyme Regis. As usual, Austen's witty dialogue dissects the lives of the gentry in the Regency. Will there be a happy ending?

Science and Technology Group

Our September group meeting had around 20 attendees including some new members. The speaker was Keith Hoffmeister a member of the Chiltern Society who described the construction of HS2 using a wide range of projected photographs showing the building across the Chilterns and the Colne Valley Regional Park. Keith has been taking photographs at a number of locations since the HS2 plans were first announced in 2010.

The tunnels and bridges are amazing engineering feats – it was fascinating to learn something about the construction of this enormous railway project.



Science and Technology meeting with our speaker Keith Hoffmeister.

Next meeting at the Plough and Harrow

Peter Lord from Wokingham u3a will speak to the group on 15th October, his subject will be "The Fediverse" which is a collection of social networking services that can communicate with each other. A more friendly title is "Alternatives to mainstream social media".

The talk will briefly describe the history of social media, where we are now and some of the concerns users raise. He will then examine the "Fediverse", how it works and related sites. Finally, he will cover instant messaging and search engines. It poses the question "Is the Fediverse the future of social media"? Questions and discussions will be encouraged.

November Meeting

On 19th November group member Peter Wilson will give a talk titled "Ham Radio Explained – It's not CB". Peter has been an Amateur radio (radio ham) enthusiast for over fifty years. First licenced in 1974 he has experienced many aspects of this fascinating hobby. Starting out with an old, converted taxi radio with a very simple aerial on the roof, culminating many years later by talking to orbiting spacecraft!

Whilst there are some obvious similarities between Ham radio and CB (they both use radios), Peter will explain the differences between the two. He will go on to explain the many different modes of operation open to the enthusiasts and if the situation allows he hopes to give a live demonstration by erecting an aerial in the pub garden and hopefully talking to other radio hams around the World.

Science and Technology attendance

All members of Harpenden u3a are welcome at all our meetings. There is no need to book. A nominal contribution towards room hire will be requested from guests. Harpenden u3a Science and Technology meetings are normally held on the third Wednesday of the month at the Plough and Harrow in Southdown. Address: 88 Southdown Road, Harpenden, AL5 1PR. Meetings start at 10:30 am. Entrance to the meeting room is via the rear doors from the garden. There is plenty of parking in the pub car park. Attendees are invited to stay for lunch from 12 noon.

Scrabble Group 2

We have received enquiries about joining the Scrabble group. Currently the Scrabble Group is full. If you are interested in joining a second Scrabble group, please contact Brian Ball, Group Coordinator.

Walking Group

We were lucky with the weather twice last month. At the start of September the sun shone as we explored the beautiful Gade Valley around Great Gaddesden.



Then, a fortnight later, the forecast strong winds abated enough for us to enjoy a route from Sandridge via Jersey Farm and Heartwood Forest. Despite September being a favourite holiday month for those of “the third age”, we had good turnouts for both these very different walks.



Weekday Strollers

Our next stroll will be a slightly extended stroll around Redbourn Common meeting at the Cricket Club car park on Friday 24th October at 10.30.

There will be plenty of opportunities for refreshments afterwards.

Put the date in your diary, now!