



## February 2026 Bulletin

As most of you know, Harpenden u3a was, in fact, one of the first u3a groups ever set up in England and although we are completely autonomous, we do have a National and Regional office to help with questions, queries and general advice if we ever need it. They also publish a Newsletter which they would like to share with all of our members. It details regional and national activities available to everyone. To sign up for this newsletter, please see the national u3a website.

Activities you might like to take advantage of are the free online talks available to all members. I'm definitely wondering about Laughter Yoga or perhaps Memoir Writing and those are only two from a very long list! You will find the full list of subjects for February and the beginning of March further on in this bulletin. If you want to find out more details and when they are, go to the online events page on the main u3a website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events#ONLINE-EVENTS>

Let me know how you get on and whether you participate.

**Judith (Acting Chairman)**

### Thursday Afternoon Talks

These take place on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 2.15 in the Abbeyfield Hall, above the Co-op in Southdown. Parking is in the Co-op car park but, WARNING, this is getting very full these days so we suggest you arrive in good time to find a space.

**Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> February** – Colin Smith, MD of Smith's Coffee in Hemel Hempstead is giving a talk on "**Coffee – from tree to cup**". Colin took over the family firm in 1979 and is a third-generation member of the Smith family. The business began as P M Smith, a family grocer in Mill Hill established in 1936. He is a roaster, supplier and international coffee expert and has many fascinating stories to tell.

He will bring along handcrafted artisan coffee varieties to taste and purchase. He will be donating his fee to St. Francis Hospice.

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> March** – Our Committee Member, Suheil Shahryar, is giving a talk on ‘**Artificial Intelligence**’.

### Members’ News

We are delighted to welcome nine new members –

**Chloe and Steve Fletcher, Tony Newby–Ricci, John Creaton, Maria Payne, Ako Barima, Miher Owen, Jane Frost and Geoff Bunce.**

We look forward to meeting you and hope you enjoy your membership.

We are also delighted to welcome back former member **Anthony Willis**.

### Group News

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

Following a successful visit to Flamstead, the next **Church and Pub Group** outing will be a visit on 20<sup>th</sup> April to St Mary’s Church Redbourn followed by lunch at The Cricketers Pub. If you would like to be included on the mailing list for this group, the contact details are in the Group page on our website.

We have started two new groups in the last month: A second Spanish Conversation group (**Spanish Chat**) and a **French Conversation Group**. If you are interested in joining either or both of these groups, you will find contact details on the website.

As our existing **Walking Group** is already full, we shall shortly be starting a new group. Further, more detailed information will be included in the next bulletin.

The **Exploring London group** is restarting after a short winter break with a St. Brides tour on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March For further information use the contact on the website.

The next **History group** meeting will be held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February when the subject of the talk will be “**The Anarchy 1135–1154**” by Malcolm Rainbow.

The March talk will be on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> March, when Viv Chandler will give a talk on ‘**The Three Sieges of Newark on Trent in the English Civil War and the effect on its inhabitants**’.

The **Bus Pass group, Gardening group and Weekday Strollers** are currently on hold until Spring or a change in the weather (Note: The Weekday strollers still meet for a morning coffee).

Lastly, the **Needlecraft group** is short of members. If you are interested in Needlecraft, please contact the group leader via the website.

### **Free Online u3a Talks – organised by the National u3a**

As promised by Judith in her opening remarks, below is a list of the online talks arranged by the National u3a for the next month and available free to all members. You can find more info and how to book them at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events#ONLINE-EVENTS>. This month you will find them halfway down the page, following the talks at the Interest Groups Online (IGO) Fair:

Tech for All – Innovations supporting disability and ageing; *How Do Medicines Work? Pain Relief*; Laughter Yoga; *Mindfulness and Meditation*; The Ghost in Literature; *Winter Warmers – live cookery demo*; Memoir Writing; *Can we use Chemistry to teach the body to heal itself?* Introduction to Cryptic Crosswords; *AI in Government*; How AI can save you hours when researching your Family History; *The New Space Race*; What we do with Lasers; *Novel Writing*.

### **u3a Festival 26**

This year's u3a Festival (previously called the u3a Summer School) will take place between Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> July and Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July at the University of York and will be a celebration of everything that makes the u3a so special.

There's a huge variety of activities on offer – here's a taster of what you can look forward to:

- Sparkling new ideas at talks on a wide range of subjects.
- Getting moving at a fitness workshop or in a sports tournament.
- Exploring your creativity with hands-on craft and art workshops.
- Enjoying live performances by talented u3a musical groups – or have a go at making music yourself.

The University of York has a beautiful campus with green spaces and a lake, fantastic sports facilities, lecture halls, and workshop rooms – the perfect backdrop for three days of inspiration and learning. There's on-site accommodation available too so you can go straight from breakfast to your first workshop.

Places are limited – book your tickets and accommodation now to avoid missing out. Tickets cost £18 a day, or £50 for a three-day ticket. The festival starts at 11am on Wednesday 1 July and ends at 3pm on Friday 3 July.

More information on the national u3a website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026>

## List of talks arranged for 2026-27 (Changes in Bold)

Date	Speaker	Topic
February 19 <sup>th</sup>	Colin Smith	"Coffee - From tree to cup"
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	Suheil Sharyar	A Talk on Artificial Intelligence
March 19 <sup>th</sup>	Colin Oakes	"London and its Museums"
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Creative Writing Group	A presentation by the Creative Writing Group
April 16 <sup>th</sup>	Morgen Bailey	"An Author and Editor's journey through the Publishing Industry"
May 7 <sup>th</sup>	Peter & Moira Hart	Reflections on Kitty Hart Moxon OBE's Story: "A Holocaust and Auschwitz Survivor"
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Alison Wall	"Plague Houses and Pandemics"
June 4 <sup>th</sup>	Art Appreciation Group	A Presentation by the Art Appreciation Group.
June 18 <sup>th</sup>	Alison Bourke	"Tunnel Vision; Stepping Through Time"
July 2 <sup>rd</sup>	Alan Smith	Poetic Presentation
<b>July 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Ron Koorm</b>	<b>"Fake news or Deceiving the Enemy"</b>
August 20 <sup>th</sup>		Summer Party at Plough and Harrow
September 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Clare Jenner	"Well Work Physio Ltd"
September 17 <sup>th</sup>	Philip McKinder	"An unexpected change in the Weather"
October 1 <sup>st</sup>	Sharon Torres	"Venice H <sub>2</sub> O"
October 15 <sup>th</sup>		AGM
<b>November 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Geoff Cunningham</b>	<b>"Palaces, Pavilions and Amusements – A day at the British Empire Exhibition 1924"</b>
November 19 <sup>th</sup>		TBA
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>		Christmas Miscellany
December 17 <sup>th</sup>		Christmas Party
<b>January 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Steve French</b>	<b>"The Spanish Civil War"</b>

All the above to be held in the Abbeyfield Hall commencing at 2.15 unless otherwise indicated.