

u3a Update

saffronwalden.u3asite.uk Spring 2026

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enjoyed
Christmas

u3a
photography
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u3a

Welcome to our newly formatted Update magazine, created on a new programme called Canva because our old programme, Publisher, will soon cease to be supported by Microsoft - we hope you like it.

A lot has been happening in our u3a since the last edition of Update. As well as our very popular Open Meetings, we've held quizzes in November and February which were very successful; we had two Christmas buffets at the Golf Club which were sadly below the standard we've come to expect. We are now considering upgrading to a Christmas meal for this year, venue to be decided. Our choir performed at the EACH Carol Service and raised a record amount for that charity and, of course, some new groups have been created.

This year has seen a lot of activity so far with the inauguration of our new Film Club and our Activities & Taster Meeting when the public were invited to come and see what we do and possibly join our u3a - we signed up 13 new members. I would like to thank all the Group Leaders who gave their valuable time and helped with this annual recruitment exercise.

And finally a big 'thank you' to everyone who contributed articles and photos for Update.

Jim Dwyer, Chairman & Editor

Chairman's Report



Watch out for the hidden rabbit in this edition and search for the deliberate mistake. The crossword and other puzzles are waiting for you to solve - good luck!

Cover photo: a sea of primulas welcomes spring to Saffron Walden.

Membership Secretary's Report



Saffron Walden u3a is proving to be very popular, we now have well over 800 members and our numbers continue to grow.

Thank you to our existing members for renewing your membership and a warm welcome to all our new members.

Renewing your membership using our Beacon system is gaining in popularity despite some hiccups. This saves time for me and our Treasurer, but please remember to let me know if your contact details change so that we do not lose touch.

I hope you all enjoy your u3a activities in the coming months and look forward to meeting you at an Open Meeting in the future.

John Trueman, Membership Secretary

Wishing you all a sunny springtime! Our groups, and their leaders, are the heart of u3a - engaging in activity is what it's all about.

We are fortunate to have 46 groups, but I am aware that many have no current vacancies, and there may not be a group you are motivated to join. So - talk to me about starting your own group! It can start small, just a few like-minded people in your home, or you can hire a space and have more people, the only limits are your imagination and enthusiasm. Some suggestions are bird watching, board games, music appreciation, rusty orchestra, guitar group, walking football/cricket, science at home.

And don't forget that we have several monthly activities that you don't have to join - Open Meetings, Film Club, Quiz and some groups that do not have a number limit. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Mary Curtis, Activities Organiser

Activities Organiser's Report



Saffron Walden u3a Committee

Title	Name	Tel.	Email
Chairman & Update Editor	Jim Dwyer	07531 115160	
Vice Chairman & Activities Organiser	Mary Curtis	07708 588732	
Secretary & Venues Organiser	Susan Brown	07808 772774	
Treasurer	Steve Messenger	01223 890133	
Membership Secretary	John Trueman	01799 541288	
Speaker Organiser	Elaine Bewick	07821 542746	
Special Events Organiser	Sue Matthews	07426 802232	
<i>Non Committee</i>			Saffron Walden u3a Registered Charity No. 290670
<i>Website Manager</i>	Martin Hugall	01799 527805	

Open Meetings

Bowls Club doors open at 1:45 pm for a 2:30 pm start every third Monday of the month (except December).

Excellent talks, free entry, free raffle and free refreshments - maximum capacity is 100 members, we are not allowed to exceed this number.



Group Details

ANYTHING CRAFTY: Last Friday 10:00 - 12:00 pm Group Leader's home

Group Leader: Sue Matthews - 07426 802232

ART: Tuesday 2:00 - 4:00 pm URC Hall

Group Leader: Jean Mead - 01799 501405

ART APPRECIATION: Friday 10:30 - 12:00 pm Bowls Club. Autumn & spring only

Group Leader: Linda Dyer - 01799 218759

ART TOO: Friday 1:30 - 3:30 pm URC

Group Leader: Kate Atkinson - 01799 521943

BALLROOM & SEQUENCE DANCING: Tuesday 9:45 - 10:45 am URC Hall

Group Leader: Pauline Palmer - 01799 502560

BOOK GROUP 1: First Thursday 10:30 - 11:30 am Café Cornell

Group Leader: Mary Curtis - 07708 588732

BOOK GROUP 2: Third Tuesday 10:00 - 11:15 am Café Cornell

Group Leader: Susan Brown - 07808 772774

BOOK GROUP 3: First Tuesday 10:00 - 11:15 am Café Cornell

Group Leader: Dominic Davey

BOOK GROUP 4: Third Thursday 10:30 am Café Cornell

Group Leader: Catherine Prentice

BOOK GROUP 5: Second Thursday 10:30 - 12:00 noon Café Cornell

Group Leader: Gilian Frost - 07814 669275

CHOIR: Second and Fourth Wednesday 11:30 - 1:00 pm Quendon Village Hall

Group Leader: Walter Poulter - 07766 330749

CRIBBAGE: Thursday 2:00 - 4:30 pm Fairycroft House

Group Leaders: John Trueman - 01799 541288

Christine Taylor - 01799 501886

DRAMA: Thursday fortnightly 2:00 - 4:00 pm Members' homes

Group Leader: Gill Williamson - 01799 524947

EASY RIDERS CYCLING: First Thursday 11:00 am

Group Leaders: Colin and Anne Taylor

ENJOY BAKING AGAIN: Third Friday 11:00 am - 1:00 pm Sept. to June, Bowls Club

Group Leader: Felicity Hey - 07816 832784

Group Details

u3a

EXPLORING CHURCHES: Second Friday April to October

Group Leader: Christine Hall

EXPLORING LITERATURE: Last Wednesday 2:00 - 3:30 pm Autumn & spring only.

Faircroft House.

Group Leader: Elise Collins - 01799 540316

FILM CLUB: Wednesday monthly October to March. 2:00 - 4:00 pm Bowls Club

Group Leader: John Trueman - 01799 541288

FOLK MUSIC: Friday monthly 10:30 - 12:30 pm Community Link

Group Leader: Betty Weltz - 07951 449557

FRENCH CONVERSATION 1: Monday 2:00 - 3:30 pm Members' homes

Group Leader: Joelle Doegar - 01799 501897

FRENCH CONVERSATION 2: Thursday 10:30 - 12:00 pm Members' homes

Group Leader: Isobel Jones - 01799 522552

GARDENING: Last Friday 2:00 - 4:00 pm Bowls Club

Group Leader: Marilyn Hemmings - 07788 544401

GERMAN CONVERSATION FOR BEGINNERS: Monday 11:30 am Members' home

Group Leader: Alex Reeve - 07951 885952

GYM FIT 1: Tuesday 11:30 - 12:10 pm Just Gym

Group Leader: Judy Hervey-Murray - 01799 543164

GYM FIT 2: Monday 3:00 - 3:40 pm Just Gym

Group Leader: Judy Hervey-Murray - 01799 543164

HAPPY HOOKERS CROCHET: Tuesday 10:00 - 12:00 & 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Group Leader's home. Group Leader: Sue Matthews - 07426 802232

HISTORY BYWAYS: Monday fortnightly 11:00 - 12:00 pm Baptist Church

Group Leader: Diane Tucker

INDOOR BOWLING: Contact Group Leader. Turpins Indoor Bowls (by Butler Centre)

Group Leader: Derek Ayres - 01799 521180

KEEP FIT: Wednesday 11:15 - 12:15 pm Baptist Church

Group Leader: Lynda Sawkins - 01799 521022

KNIT & NATTER: Monday 10:00 - 12:00 pm Group Leader's home

Group Leader: Penny Maystre - 01799 501262

LANDSCAPE & LITERATURE: Contact Group Leader

Group Leader: Alex Reeve - 07951 885952

Group Details

LATIN FOR BEGINNERS: Tuesday afternoons. Members' homes

Group Leader: Alex Reeve - 07951 885952

LINE DANCING: Monday 10:30 - 11:30 am, 12:00 - 1:00 pm URC Hall

Group Leaders: Rod & Betty George - 01799 584527

LUNCH CLUB: Various, monthly

Group Leader: Peter Cowper - 01799 527161

MAH-JONG 1: Wednesday 1:30 - 4:30 pm Little Chesterfield Village Hall

Group Leaders: Christine Greet - 01799 531732

Irene Bedward - 01799 528178

MAH-JONG 2: Thursday 1:30 - 3:30 pm Group Leader's home

Group Leader: Jess Grinyer - 01799 5034 / 07811 382541

MAH-JONG 3: Tuesday 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm Group Leader's home

Group Leader: Geraldine Plunkett - 01799 599159

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK READING: Thursday fortnightly 10:30 - 12:00 pm

At Members' homes.

Group Leader: Chris Salter - 07967 126045

NICE 'N' EASY FITNESS: Wednesday 12:30 - 1:30pm Baptist Church

Group Leader: Glennis Bourne - 07879 474017

OUT & ABOUT: Date & time to be confirmed with Group Leader.

Group Leader: Rod George - 01799 584527

OUTDOOR BOWLS: Friday 11:30 am - 1:00 pm Bowls Club. May to August only.

Group Leader: Peter Smith - 07875 658742

PHILOSOPHY 1: Tuesday monthly 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Members' homes

Group Leader: Richard Gilyead - 01799 510749

PHILOSOPHY 2: Second Tuesday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Members' homes

Group Leader: Peter Wright - 01799 516749

PHOTOGRAPHY: Second Monday monthly 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Community Link

Group Leader: Bronwen Woods - 01799 599950

PILATES 1: Thursday 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm Baptist Church

Group Leader: Ann Joslin

PILATES 2: Thursday 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Baptist Church

Group Leader: Irene Bedward - 01799 528178

Group Details

PILATES 3: Thursday (during term) 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm Baptist Church
Group Leader: Rob Garney - 07497 969229

PILATES 4: Thursday 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Baptist Church
Group Leader: Louisa Atherton - 07970 716677

PILATES 8: Tuesday 11:30 am - 12:30 pm Baptist Church
Group Leader: Christine Simpson

PLANT POWERED SKIN CARE: Thursday Monthly 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm GL's home
Group Leader: Anthea Salem - 07941 602957

PLAY READING: Third Monday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Group Leader's home
Group Leader: Gill Williamson 01799 524947

RAMBLERS: Thursday fortnightly 10:00 am Leisure Centre
Group Leader: Colin Potterill - 01223 834937

SCRABBLE: Thursday 10:00 am - 12:30 pm Members' homes
Group Leader: Bronwen Attenborough - 01799 524772

SPANISH FOR IMPROVERS: Wednesday 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm Group Leader's home
Group Leader: Jessica Reeve - 07881 953949

TABLE TENNIS: Wednesday 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm Widdington Village Hall
Group Leader: Ann Cousins - 01799 219072

TAI CHI 1 & 2: Wednesday 1)9:30 am - 10:30 am. 2)11:00 am - 12:00 pm Baptist Ch.
Group Leader: Angela Rowland - 01799 521192

THEATRE & TRAVEL: Third Monday Monthly 1:45 pm - 2:30 pm Bowls Club
Group Leaders: Christine Duffy - 01799 520173
John Martin - 01799 521504 (07803 197983)
Jim Dwyer - 07531 115160
Jean Little - 01799 513411
Dawn White - 07876 535677

UKULELE: Wednesday fortnightly 10:00 am - 11:30 am St Paul's Mission Hall
Group Leader: Mary Curtis - 07708 588732

WRITING FOR PLEASURE 1: Monday fortnightly 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Audley Court
Group Leader: David Broadley - 07944 660231

WRITING FOR PLEASURE 2: Tuesday fortnightly 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Members' homes
Group Leader: Lisa Mades - 07939 437191

Group Leaders: please check your details and advise the editor if there are any errors.

Theatre & Travel's trip to Oakham



13th November was a lovely day and quite mild for the time of year, ideal for a day out - which is exactly what our intrepid Theatre & Travel group had in mind. With excitement in the air, they set off for Oakham, a charming market town nestled in the heart of Rutland. As the coach meandered through picturesque countryside, anticipation grew among the travellers.

Upon arrival, the group was greeted by the quaint charm of Oakham, with its cobbled streets and historical architecture. But the priority was to find a coffee shop and there were plenty of those to choose from.

The centrepiece of the town is Oakham Castle, with its fascinating history and its Norman Great Hall. Inside, the group marvelled at the collection of ceremonial horseshoes, each one a testament to the castle's unique tradition. It is used today as a Crown Court and wedding venue.

Oakham also boasted a wonderful statue of the late Queen Elizabeth II which included the famous Corgis.

After exploring Oakham, our travellers were driven through more lovely countryside to Melton Mowbray, where they were booked in and were served a delicious lunch.

The day out to Oakham was more than just a trip; it was a celebration of friendship, discovery and the simple joys of travel - thanks to Chris Duffy who organised the day.

The top photo shows the Great Hall of Oakham Castle, built around 1180. It contains a unique collection of over 230 horseshoes donated by kings, queens and lords of the realm - as the bottom photo shows.

The beautiful statue of the late Queen Elizabeth II and her corgis is shown in the centre photo.



Christmas Buffet 2025



Our two Christmas Buffets on 1st and 2nd December at the Saffron Walden Golf Club were both well attended. Above we see members at the 2nd event getting into the Christmas spirit.

Our Harmony Choir performed at the annual Carol Service for EACH at the Baptist Church on 16th December raising an amazing £1376 for the East Anglian Children's Hospices - a record high.



Lunch Club



The Luncheon Club would welcome new members. It is an informal group that meets monthly, normally on Wednesday or Thursday, at different pubs and restaurants around the district for a social lunch and chat trying out different menus. Each month an email is sent out to members with details of pub date and menu.

Members reply by email on whether they wish to attend and menu choice so that a pre-order can be sent to the pub. Payment is direct to the pub on the day.

We started with a traditional lunch at the Coach & Horses, Newport in September and followed it with an Italian lunch at the Red Lion, Great Sampford in October with Christmas lunch at the Axe & Compasses, Arkesden - then in January at the Crown, Little Walden. We aim to try as many different cuisines as possible and hope soon to take in Thai and Turkish.

The Nutcracker

And to round off the Christmas season, our Theatre & Travel group visited the Royal Albert Hall on 30th December to see **The Nutcracker by Tchaikovsky**. This particular production was especially adapted for the Royal Albert Hall stage and it was mesmerising. The orchestra was situated above the stage and the sound was perfect, the dancers were perfect too and the colours had everyone spellbound. Our coach driver drove us home via the Christmas lights in Oxford Street and Regents Street, the photo shows a crowded Regents Street.

If you would be interested in coming along with us, please contact me, details are on page 8, we look forward to meeting you.

Peter Cowper, Group Leader



The Art Group



The Tuesday afternoon Art Group has enjoyed another term of creativity! Working in various media including watercolour, pencil, acrylics and collage - we have interpreted the subjects of a programme which has included 'Weeds', 'Autumn', 'Looking Up', a Tunnel Book and 'By the Light of the Moon'. Members have also enjoyed contributing to the Festival of Angels and Stars held in the United Reformed Church at Abbey Lane by producing ten banners on that theme.

Gill Howe

Film Club

The **Film Club** opened its doors for the first time in January and is planned to run once a month during the winter months, October to March, to show some old classic films.

Our venue is the Bowls Club in Abbey Lane. It is free to all members - bring your own ice cream and popcorn. The film screened in January was 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' starring Audrey Hepburn and George Peppard.

The second film screened was 'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers' shown in February and the March film was another classic 'Casablanca'.

John Trueman



Anything Crafty

The **Anything Crafty Group** are shown here making up 3D Christmas Cards in December.

We do a different craft every month but the ladies especially love making cards. Our next project will be Felting.

Sue Matthews, Group Leader



Crochet's 'Happy Hookers'

The Crochet 'Happy Hookers' crocheted blankets for Radwinter Road Hospital - here we see the second batch. We gave them the first batch last autumn and the staff were very happy to receive them - and even asked for more. Any donations of wool would be greatly appreciated. Just contact me, my details can be found on page 7.

Sue Matthews, Group Leader



Ballroom & Sequence Dancing

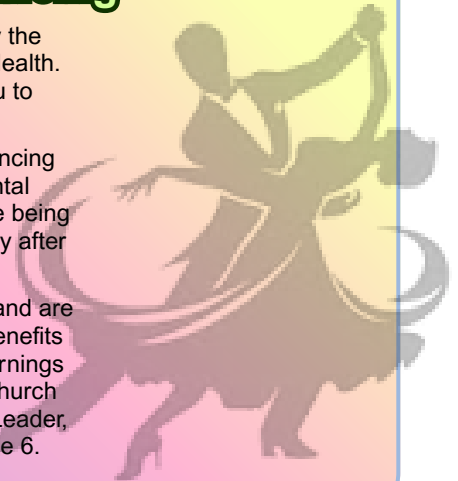
It is now well accepted that Dancing is probably the best form of exercise for Physical and Mental Health.

Sequence and Ballroom dancing will help you to maintain a positive attitude.

The u3a members who form the core of the Dancing Group are all recognisable by their positive mental attitude, alertness and physical bearing, despite being "baby boomers" and being born during or shortly after World War II.

If you are searching for a friendly social group and are eager to learn a new skill involving the above benefits then join us for a taster session on Tuesday mornings between 09.45 am and 10.45 am at the URC Church Hall in Abbey Lane. Please contact our Group Leader, Pauline Palmer - you will find her details on page 6.

Ian Lawson



Theatre & Travel Coach Pick-up Points:

Thaxted: Guildhall

Saffron Walden: Thaxted/Peasland Road

The Common (Next to Car Park entrance)

Station Street (by B&R Carpets)

Swan Meadow Coach Park

Newport: Coach & Horses Pub or Bus Stop opposite Dorringtons

Quendon: Village Hall

EasyRiders Cycling

EasyRiders Cycling group goes from strength to strength, now going into its eleventh year.

As at January 2026 we have 22 members and can take a few more. We ride on the first Thursday of each month, meeting - often at a handy café - in time for an 11:00 am start. The 'peleton' on each outing is usually 10 - 12 strong with a mix of assisted and self-propelled cycles.

A typical distance is 22 miles, though this varies with the seasons. A relaxed pace is used to allow riders to enjoy the scenery and the social aspect of

cycling. All rides include a pub stop for lunch, we usually arrive back about mid-afternoon. Most routes are within Essex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk or Cambridgeshire though we have gone further. For example, we have circumnavigated Rutland Water.

The photograph shows fourteen EasyRiders about to saddle-up after enjoying a pub lunch al fresco at Stebbing.

If you are interested in joining the 'gang' please see our contact details on page 6.

Colin & Anne Taylor, Group Leaders



Ramblers



Soaking wet, boots caked in mud - but still smiling! Our intrepid Ramblers carry on whatever the weather. On 22nd January they walked 4 miles approximately in the Great Sampford area led by Peter, 5th from right in the photo. Here they are taking a well-earned rest at St Mary The Virgin Church in Little Sampford where some interesting old graffiti was spotted around one of the Church entrances.



Activities & Taster Meeting

We held our **Activities & Taster Meeting** at the Bowls Club on 27th January when members of the public were invited to come and see what we do, and to hopefully join. We signed up 13 new members. Refreshments were organised as always by Mary Curtis, husband Alan and Susan Brown (pictured).



The Cribbage Awards



Cribbage is an old English card game and it is believed that the game was “invented” early in the 1600s by Sir John Suckling, an English courtier, poet, gamester and gambler, as a derivation from the game Noddy. While Noddy has disappeared, Cribbage has survived, virtually unchanged, as one of the most popular games in the English-speaking world.

Our Cribbage group is now in its tenth year and meet regularly every Thursday afternoon to play for two and a half hours in pairs, 4 player, or individually in groups of 2 or 3. There is of course a tea / coffee break with biscuits and sometime cake when it is someone’s birthday.



Anthony Webber, a founder member of the group who is sadly no longer with us, donated a shield for the winner of our cribbage league. This year’s winner was Luise Roberts who was presented with the shield at the annual prize giving lunch held at The Coach and Horses in Newport. There is also a league table for the Duck Stakes. A duck is awarded to the player in each session who has the most no score hands. This year the trophy was jointly won by Judith Lewis and Tony Marks.



There were also prizes for the most 24s scored in one hand, won by Judith Lewis. A star prize to Geoff Collins who scored a 28, only one away from the maximum possible 29 in any one hand.

John Trueman, Group Leader



Photos from the top: winner of the Tony Webber Shield Luise Roberts. Duck Trophy joint winner Tony Marks. Geoff Collins best score of 28 - all presented by Jo Trueman. Winner of the most 24s and joint winner of the Duck Trophy Judith Lewis.



It's a Photography Knock-out!

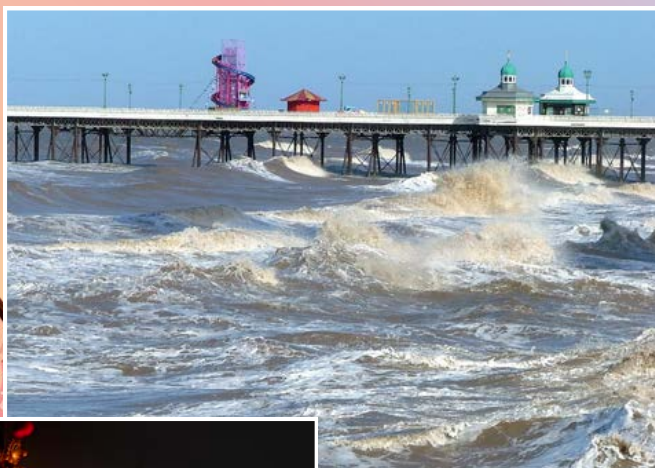
Our January **Photography** group meeting included a light-hearted “Knockout” competition, where each group member was asked to submit anonymously their five best photos. At the meeting these photos were all compared in random pairs. Everyone voted for their favourite from each pair, and the successful photos went on to the next round until we chose a final winner.

It was very interesting to hear the different views on each photo, and lively voting was often evenly split, requiring a “casting vote”! The winning photo was “Blackpool Pier” taken by Susan Brown (below). The runner-up photos were by Judy Ang and Brian Eastcote (bottom).

At the end each person revealed which photos were theirs and where they took them. Many photos were taken locally or around the UK, but there were also photos taken in Canada, the USA, Japan and China!

Everyone enjoyed the competition and we agreed it should become an annual event, as an addition to our regular monthly challenges to take photos on a particular subject, and talks by members or visiting speakers. Our group always welcomes new members at any level who enjoy photography, and no special expertise is needed. Contact details on page 8.

Hugh Herdon



Ukulele

The Ukulele Group meet every other Wednesday and enjoy playing together, socialising, and having fun. We all agree that playing the ukulele is one of the most joyous things we do, we've met new people and made lifelong friends, and playing music with others is good for our memory, mental health, and dexterity.

At our sessions we play and sing a selection of songs from our ever increasing repertoire - anything from Buddy Holly to ABBA, the Undertones to Miley Cyrus, and sometimes learn a new song suggested by any of our group members. No song is safe from the "ukulele treatment"!

New members are welcome, you just need a ukulele (or you can borrow one for a while), enthusiasm, and the motivation to practice. It doesn't matter if you haven't played before - you will be well supported and you'll soon catch up.

A small group of us regularly play at community events, care homes, retirement complexes, and the dementia café. We accept donations for charity and last year were able to give £570 to the Alzheimer's society and the Forget-Me-Not Café.

If everyone played ukulele the world would be a happier place!!

Mary Curtis, Group Leader



u3a

New Testament Greek Reading Group

John 3 :16

Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλὰ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

This month our group is celebrating meeting for 2 years (we started in March 2024). There are at present 8 members. We are currently looking through John's Gospel, and this is provoking some good discussions. After 2 years we have reached chapter 12, so we're not rushing!

We are still open to new members of all levels, including complete beginners – we are all learning together. We meet fortnightly on Thursday mornings in members' homes, so there are no fees to pay apart from your u3a membership. The gifts of home-baked bread and home-made jam make attending the group even more attractive!

Please get in touch with me if you might be interested, contact details are on page 8.

Chris Salter, Group Leader

The Mah Jong 3 group meets on a Tuesday afternoon at 1.30 pm in Wimbish. Mahjong is a game, similar to rummy, which originated in China, which involves assembling sets of beautifully decorated tiles into different hands. Played in groups of four people the winner is the first to lay down a completed hand. It is a game of rituals and traditions and can be fast paced.

I learned Mah Jong while I lived abroad and was very pleased to learn - on my return - that there was a group that met regularly in the village where I was living. Some of the members, like me, have been playing for several years but others are fairly new to the game. It doesn't matter what level you are on, though, as it can be anyone's game on the day - with players using skill and strategies (and sometimes a little luck) to outwit their opponents.

It is a fun and sociable afternoon. While concentration is needed during the game, we find time to chat between games and enjoy a hot drink before starting. It is two hours a week when we can exercise our memory,

Mah-Jong 3

concentration, and problem-solving abilities while providing an opportunity for social interaction. What's not to like!

We are at the moment at full capacity but the membership numbers do fluctuate. If you are interested in joining the waiting list, please do not hesitate to get in touch - our contact details are on page 8.

Jill Kirby



Keep Fit



What do you get if you put 15 ladies aged approximately 60 to 85 in a church hall with some popular music and large colourful rubber bands? Answer - US!

We are an enthusiastic group of ladies who have come together to shake every part of our body and stretch and strengthen what's left in an effort to live a healthy life.

Marlene our teacher is very experienced in dealing with groups such as ours and is extremely knowledgeable about all things ageing. She punctuates our classes with helpful tips and techniques to help us fulfil a healthy lifestyle such as encouraging us to walk just that little bit faster into town to get our heart rate up; how to get up from the floor, and also gives us healthy eating tips.

We have a couple of three minute dance routines in our class which we attempt with great enthusiasm but frankly not much technique, which are

extremely good for our brain agility as well as our bodies.

As a testament to the enjoyment we get out of these classes many of the ladies have been attending for about 10 years and lasting friendships have been made.

We take part in a couple of the many charitable events that our teacher Marlene organises each year, which mainly involve us dressing up in colourful outfits. The next event in March requires us to be as sporty as we can with our outfits and Marlene's husband has been given the honour of choosing a winner.

Our class, which presently consists of about 15 regulars, is very well attended and always has a waiting list. We are encouraged to put as much or as little into our exercises as suits us. An hour of fun, a little bit of sweat, and many lasting benefits.

Val Hoenes

Enjoy Baking Again

Enjoy Baking Again - and we definitely are!

This class started in September 2025 with the intention of encouraging people who had always enjoyed baking but had not got family or friends to share cakes, biscuits, pastry, pies etc with, for whatever reason. No great fun in baking just for yourself - and certainly not an incentive to try new recipes or methods. So it was extremely satisfying to have the response the class achieved - and to see how, in only six months, the class has evolved and developed.

As Group Leader I had never wanted it to be me standing at the front of a class and delivering a monologue. Not much chance of that, it turned out, with the baking experience, curiosity, skills and liveliness of the class members! We have a theme each month to bake for, then bring it along to the Bowls Club where we introduce it, then sample and discuss

each other's contribution. My, but there has been some fantastic baking! We started by including a short talk, the first one being the History of Domestic UK Baking, but now it's often the members who speak to the group so we have had Sour Dough technique, and Ingredient Awareness / Free-From recipes, amongst others. Plus the calendar of themes has been tweaked to include subjects that will challenge us - we eagerly anticipate flops and triumphs with the Yeast Baking month!

There will be a different theme for each month of the 2026 - 27 schedule, mostly suggested by the current members. This is a very well-attended class, but if there is demand, a second class might be a consideration.

Please see page 6 for contact and other details.

Felicity Hey, Group Leader



Our theme for January of this year was chocolate, and here we see the excellent results.

Mah-Jong 1

Mah-Jong is played with a set of 144 engraved or painted tiles. The oriental associations lend the game a certain mystique, however basic practices can be learnt in a short time and it is not unusual for a beginner to do well.

Our first u3a Mah-Jong group started in 2011 with just four members meeting in a member's home. By 2013 the group had expanded to nearly 27 players. From the start we agreed to follow the rules of the British Association of Mah-Jong and recommended the book *Know the Game: Mah-Jong* to help new members learn the game.

Thanks to the generosity of our hosts and players, we raised more than £800 for the Home Farm Trust, a national charity supporting people with learning difficulties. We now meet at Little Chesterford Village Hall, which provides plenty of space and parking for our current group of around 20 members.

There is always a friendly atmosphere with lots of conversation, and we enjoy "bring and share" lunches at the end of each term (see photo of our 2025 Christmas Bring & Share lunch) - sometimes even celebrating Chinese New Year thanks to one of our members. You are welcome to visit and watch a game, but there is a waiting list at the present time. Details of all 3 Mah-Jong groups appear on page 8.

Irene Bedward



Royal Chelsea Hospital

It was a beautiful February day when 43 T&T members visited the Royal Chelsea Hospital - our Chelsea Pensioner guide was Ray and he gave us an informed tour of the grounds and the rooms.

The Royal Chelsea Hospital was founded in 1681 by King Charles II, and houses about 300 Chelsea Pensioners - retired

soldiers who dedicated their lives to the defence of the realm.

The Chelsea Pensioners live comfortably within the walls of Sir Christopher Wren's architectural masterpiece and enjoy access to many facilities and services designed to meet their needs and enhance their quality of life.



Dingbats - can you work out these well-known words or phrases?

ROBBERS

POT
0000 0000

Henry
bored

XQQME

02yrrow

EVER
EVER **Friday**
EVER
EVER

Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 14th April

HOLIDAY - Cotswold 2 night break

Monday 20th April

OPEN MEETING - Derek Adams talk 'Lee Miller 20th Century Woman'

Tuesday 12th May

HOLIDAY - Sidmouth 3 day break

Monday 18th May

OPEN MEETING: Mel Byron is a 'Comedian'

Saturday 30th May

OUTING - Shuttleworth Air Show

Monday 8th June

HOLIDAY - Harrogate 4 night break

Thursday 11th June

OUTING - Brooklands Motor and Aircraft Museum

Monday 15th June

OPEN MEETING - Peter Batty talk 'Band of Sisters'

Wednesday 1st July

OUTING - Maidstone, Kent

Thursday 16th July

HOLIDAY - Kent 1 night break

Monday 20th July

OPEN MEETING - Fran Sandham talk 'African Animal Encounters'

Wednesday 12th August

SHOW - Lord of the Dance

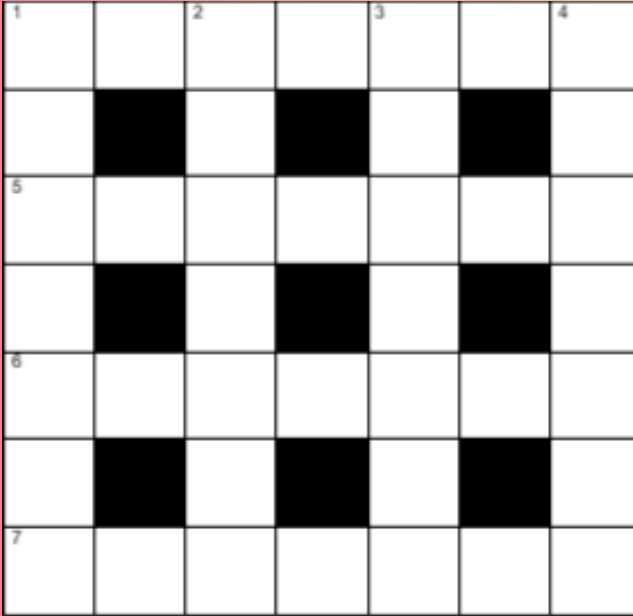
Monday 17th August

OPEN MEETING - Alison Wall talk 'History of Kensington Palace'

Tuesday 18th August

OUTING - Thames Barge cruise

Crossword



Clues Across:

1. Go back now and reorganise the tree rat.
5. A knee pin has abbreviated this hostelry manager's title.
6. The candle that Bert lit looked solid, but it broke quite easily.
7. Shut them when you want to cut out the dins, wow what a pain.

Clues Down:

1. Can a wino bar produce a natural spectrum?
2. When you tighten a rope it can get right up your tin nose.
3. You must plug in and turn on to achieve your role etc.
4. The first pro step is putting the icing on the cake or a roof on a house.

Answers

These are the answers from the last issue (autumn 2025):

The hidden Donald was on page 15 sneaking into that Isle of Wight holiday. He was spotted by Penny Lawson (& The Choir), Christine Taylor, Dolores Clew, Tessa Bird, Elise Collins and Margaret Dawson.

The deliberate mistake was on page 20, the headline said 'White' but of course it should have been 'Wight'. Those who found this were Christine Taylor, Dolores Clew and Elise Collins.

The Dingbats were from left: 'Forgive and Forget', 'One Step Forward and Two Steps Back', 'Pride Comes Before a Fall'. These were worked out by Mary Curtis, Christine Taylor and Robin Strube.

The Cipher was just one letter ahead in the alphabet, the clue 4 should have told you that word was 'u3a' so the phrase read 'The u3a is here to stay'. The brainboxes who worked that out were John Martin, Christine Taylor, Margaret Dawson and Robin Strube.

What's wrong with this picture? The girl's hair is blowing the opposite way to the trees and leaves. This was seen by Penny Lawson, John Martin, Christine Taylor, Margaret Dawson and Robin Strube.

The 7 letter Crossword answers were:

Across: 1. Trapped, 5. Arrange, 6. Hurried, 7. Reneged.

Down: 1. Teacher, 2. Auroran, 3. Panting, 4. Dreaded.

Well done to cruciverbalist Robin Strube for solving correctly.

Notice Board

Update

The deadline for the next edition of Update is 23rd September 2026. Please send your Word documents and photos to the Editor.

Remember
to visit our
website at
saffronwalden.u3asite.uk
for all the
u3a news

If you know of a u3a member who feels isolated or lonely, please contact any Committee member - contact details are on page 5.

SOME PUN FUN

Lance isn't a very popular name these days, but in ancient times men were called Lance a lot.

I ordered some A4 paper but it arrived as cardboard, I wasn't happy so I sent them a very stiff letter.

People often call me a boring old mushroom, but I'm actually a fun guy.

Two ants playing football in a saucer, one said to the other "we need to up our game cos we're playing in the cup next week".

I know an ex-soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray, he's a seasoned veteran now.

A man fainted on a Ferris wheel, paramedics on site say he is slowly coming round.

The tea-leaves really lost their tempers at being used twice, they could hardly restrain themselves.

My girl friend keeps painting me in black and white stripes, I wish she'd stop badgering me.

I didn't think orthopaedic shoes would help with my problem, but I stand corrected.

U3A TERM DATES 2026/7

Summer Term

13 April - 20 July

Half-term: 25 May - 29 May

Autumn Term

1 September - 18 December

Half-term: 26 Oct. - 30 Oct.

Spring Term

4 January - 25 March 2027

Half-term: 15 Feb. - 19 Feb.

u3a

u3a Update

Notices

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- Errors and omissions excepted
- The Committee tries to keep in contact with all members but it is not always possible to do so. This may be due to illness or other incapacitation
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