

THE GREAT CHARMER



We are delighted to confirm that Tony Harris will be the guest speaker at our Annual General Meeting on 23 July. This time he is going to appear as Margaret Thatcher which, for those of you who are wondering, happens to be an anagram of the heading at the top of this page. Further details are inside.

JULY 2025

Thoughts from the Chair

Dear Members

This will be my final article as Chair in our News Edit. I joined the committee in November 2022 and assumed the role of Chair in July 2023. Throughout this period, our u3a has experienced continued and notable growth. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my fellow Committee members, Group Leaders, Star Helpers, and the many dedicated volunteers whose commitment has contributed significantly to these achievements. Your time and efforts are deeply appreciated. The new committee will be confirmed at the AGM on 23 July.

Having relocated to Basingstoke in 2022, I have had the pleasure of meeting numerous new friends through the u3a. While our motto remains "Learn, Laugh, Live," it is complemented by an equally important value: "Link up with Like-minded People." I hope that many of you have also had the opportunity to form meaningful connections with others who share your interests and passions.

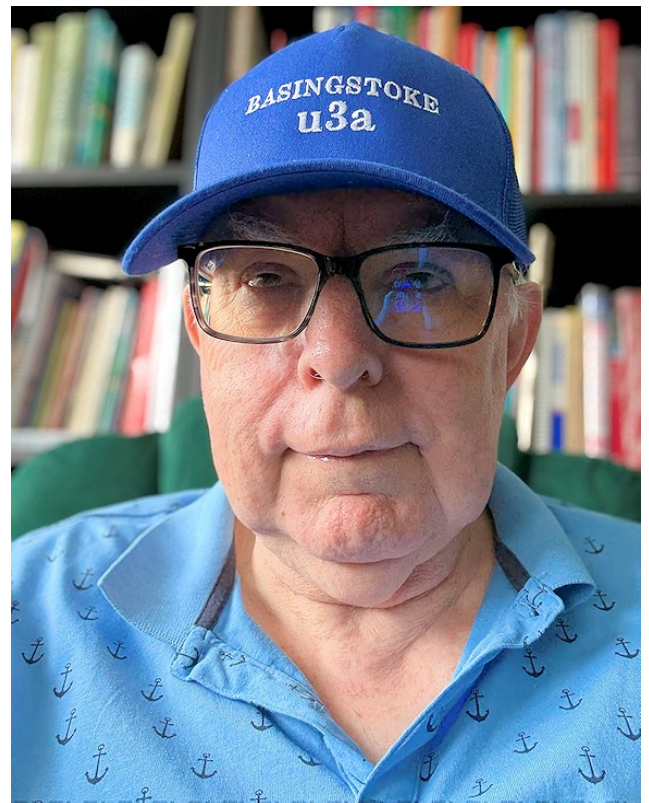
In June, I attended both the picnic at Hatch Warren and the fete at Chineham, where I observed our talented line dancers perform. These occasions provided wonderful opportunities to see members enjoying themselves and fostering community spirit. I extend special thanks to Janet and Richard Field for organising the goody bags at the picnic and to Carol Grant for managing the refreshments.

As previously mentioned, our Annual General Meeting will take place at Queen Mary's College on 23 July, commencing at 2pm. We are pleased to welcome Tony Harris once again—one of our most esteemed speakers, well known for his engaging presentations at previous AGMs. As an accomplished comedian, raconteur, and actor, Tony specialises in historical talks delivered in costume with exceptional wit. This year, he will appear as Margaret Thatcher, offering insight with his trademark humour. His performances have consistently received outstanding reviews, and I encourage members to attend.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our u3a. Although I will be stepping down as Chair, I am taking on the role of Leader for another Group and look forward to continuing my involvement with you all.

Wishing everyone an enjoyable and comfortable summer.

Paul



JULY 2025

Our 2025 Annual General Meeting

Our 2024-2025 AGM will be held on Wednesday 23 July in the **Main Hall, Queen Mary's College, Cliddesden Road, Basingstoke RG21 3HF**. Refreshments will be available from 13:30 and the meeting will start at 14:00.

After the formal meeting has ended, we will be treated to a performance by the wonderful Tony Harris. Many of us have been lucky enough to see him before, and this time he will be appearing as Margaret Thatcher. This promises to be another memorable afternoon!

Summer picnic

Our *Picnic in the park* for 2025 was held at the Hatch Warren Community Centre, and yet again we were blessed with good weather for the afternoon.



We will spare her blushes, but one member was kind enough to send our chairman the following message the next day:

"I just want to thank the Committee for all their efforts to help make the picnic on Wednesday so enjoyable. And of course the weather helped.

All in all a lovely day and nice to catch up with other members.

Please pass on my thanks."

JULY 2025

News from our groups

Health and Wellbeing

For the June meeting, the Health and Wellbeing Group was visited by Georgi Welch from Alzheimer's Research UK. She gave a fascinating presentation with the key message of love your heart, stay sharp and stay connected. Whenever possible follow a Mediterranean diet, a message we also heard at the Gut Health session in May.

She outlined that dementia is the umbrella name for several symptoms and diseases. It is important when getting a diagnosis that you find out the type of dementia that you have: examples were given and explanations of their impact – *frontotemporal dementia, vascular dementia, Alzheimer's, dementia of Lewy bodies*.

We also covered Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI): symptoms are memory loss and thinking problems which are mild but still noticeable. Many people live with this issue and it is more likely in women as the drop in oestrogen during menopause has an impact. MCI is not linked to other types of dementia, but it is important to have it checked to ensure it is not actually one of the other types.

Genes and risk factors are the main causes. Genes have a 50% chance of being passed on from parents but the risk of developing one of the diseases is relatively low.

Risk factors

There are currently 14 known risk factors, and we investigated each of them. The first was particularly interesting for the grandparents amongst us.

- **The quality of education** in earlier life – we had an interesting discussion on whether mobile phones cause dementia. There is no known direct cause, however the use of mobile phones by young people will have an impact on their interaction with others and their informal education will be impacted.
- **Social isolation**
- Ensuring your **hearing** is tested yearly and that you wear your hearing aids.
- It is important to have your **eyes** tested every year. Get any cataracts treated quickly.
- **Depression**
- **High cholesterol**
- **Physical inactivity**
- **Traumatic brain injury**
- **Obesity**
- **Excessive alcohol**
- **Smoking**
- **Diabetes**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Air pollution**

As yet, the link between gum disease and dementia is not proven.

Drugs currently available only help with the symptoms. However, there is good news! There are two new drugs in early stages of trial that deal with the plaque build-up in the brain, but they are not available on the NHS yet.

It was reiterated by Georgi and a lady in the audience that you need to be pushy and persistent in getting the diagnosis and seeing a specialist. This can mean the difference between low-level symptom management drugs from your GP and stronger drugs that may keep the disease symptoms at bay longer. Some clinical trials are also available.

The next Health and Wellbeing group will be on 10 July and will cover diabetes.

Elaine Budd

Cycling

Alistair Craig sent in two links to a wonderful story about one of our members, Lin Osborn.

Lin celebrated her 80th birthday by cycling 80 miles in one day for the Ark Cancer Centre at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital. The Centre treated Lin last year for mouth cancer, which had left her critically ill.

The first link is to an item which appeared on the BBC News website in mid-June – [click here](#) to open it. The second is to an interview Lin gave online to *That's TV Hampshire* which is now available on Facebook, and [here is the link](#).

Lin was accompanied on her trip by fellow members of our cycling group Alistair Craig and David Curtis.

Congratulations and well done to all concerned.



Square dancing

The square dance group will break for the summer. The last dance session of the current u3a year will be on 17 July, and we restart on 4 September.

We hope to attract new members for September, so come along and give it a go!

Margaret Graham

Line dancing

The Line Dancing class was invited to do a demonstration at the Sherfield Fete on 14 June. 25 members of our classes agreed to perform and on the day a few extra joined us. We performed three dances and then invited people in the audience to join in with three more dances. We were surprised that a lot of people joined us and seemed to really enjoy the experience. Luckily the weather was kind and it was dry but not too hot.



We all had great fun and a few days later Natalie Lerner told us a lot of money was raised on the day and thanked us for performing. A good time was had by all and we had great support from members of the Group who didn't want to dance but still cheered us on.

Brenda Austin

Vacancy for Independent Examiner

Ray Wilshaw has done an excellent job over the last six years acting as an independent examiner of our accounts. Because of other commitments, Ray now has to step down from this role. We therefore have a vacancy, and an opportunity for one of our members to step forward.

The independent examiner's role is to review the U3A accounts prepared by the Treasurer and confirm that they match the records kept on Beacon, which should in turn be supported by various vouchers and bank statements. It is not an audit.

The accounts consist of an Income and Expenditure account, and a Balance Sheet. There are no accruals.

This is not an onerous task, as it only requires a few hours once a year, and now all the records are on Beacon it is very easy to extract and sort data if necessary to see how the final accounts figures are derived.

While no formal accounting qualification is required of the Examiner, there is a requirement to sign off a Charity Commissioner's report form CC16, so a practical understanding of accounts is necessary.

Please email the Chair on chair@basingstokeu3a.org if you would like to discuss this role.