

HAPPY NEW YEAR



- A word from the Chair
- Local group news
- Introducing 4 New Groups
- And much more....

Welcome to 2026!

....From your Chair - Toni Shaw



Happy New Year to all our members! I hope you all had a wonderful festive break and are feeling refreshed and ready for a brand-new year of learning, laughing, and living with our u3a.

We are hitting the ground running this January with a fantastic range of **new groups** to help blow away those winter cobwebs. Whether you're looking to improve your core strength in our new **Pilates** sessions or fancy a bit of fun and social competition with **Bingo**, there is something for everyone. Please be sure to **check the full list inside this issue** for all the new groups, details on start dates and locations.

Join Our Committee: Membership Secretary Wanted

As we look ahead to 2026, we are searching for a new **Membership Secretary** to join our friendly and lively Committee. This is a vital role, but you won't be thrown in at the deep end!

- Full training and support will be provided by the team.
- It's a great way to meet more members and help shape the future of our u3a.
- If you enjoy being organized and want to give something back to our community, we would love to hear from you.

Please do get in touch for an informal chat if you're interested.

chair@basingstokeu3a.org

A Special Thank You

Finally, a huge thank you must go to **Lyn** for pulling this edition of News Edit together. Despite a very busy Christmas and New Year period, she has done a brilliant job ensuring we all stay informed and connected. Thank you, Lyn!

Wishing you all a healthy and happy 2026.

Friends news

..... from members of the Excursions & Holiday Group

In October a coach, full of u3a members, went to **The Old Swan Hotel** at the Georgian town of **Harrogate** for a 5 day break.

The very same hotel that Agatha Chrisie stayed at for 11 days when in 1926 she mysteriously disappeared from the South of England. At one point 80,000 people were searching for internationally famous Agatha Christie.

The hotel is beautiful with good meals and within walking distance of the town. There were days out to York, Ripon and Fountain Abbey as well as a lovely trip over the Yorkshire Moors.

We stopped one afternoon for tea in a tiny village, where a friend of Joyce's lived whom she hadn't seen for 30 years! She came on board the coach and told us about life in the tiny village when they were snowed in during the winter. The local ladies served us homemade cakes and pots of tea in the old whitewashed chapel.

A couple of us booked an afternoon at the fully restored Victorian Turkish Baths with beautiful Moorish design tiles with a eucalyptus infused steam room, other chambers of varying heats and finally a plunge into a freezing pool. Relax, Heat, Plunge repeat, as many times as possible.

We were sad to leave but on the way back home we had time for some retail therapy at Bicester Shopping Mall.

An excellent helpful coach driver Matt, kept us amused and looked after us so very well.

Thanks to Joyce and her team from the Excursions and Holiday Group for a great action packed holiday.

Can't wait for the next one x



Submitted by Sue Cavell and Gloria Pateman.

Friends news

..... from the Hellenic Life Group



The Hellenic Life Group met on 18th December 2025 for a **Traditional Greek Christmas celebration** with carols, festive drinks and food such as melomakarona, bougatsa and galaktoboureko. Group Members also reviewed hand crafted cross-stitch and crochet pieces.



A wonderful time was had by all.



Group Leaders Joyce & Popi

Friends news

..... from the Needles & Pins Group

The Needles and Pins group had their Christmas Lunch on Friday 5th December. There were quizzes, games, a Christmas lucky dip and a raffle followed by a delicious lunch from food and desserts made and donated by our members.

Everyone had a great time.



Best wishes Bev and Tina

Friends news

.....from a member of the Line Dancing Group



Congratulations are in order for Debbie Straw, the group's highly qualified Line Dancing instructor, who recently did the IDTA Line Dancing President's Award 4 exam and achieved Honours with an impressive score of 98%. This accomplishment marks completion of Level 15, which is where Debbie has decided to finish on a "high".



Some of the awards achieved by Debbie.

The group's last class of the year was marked by the enjoyment of delicious Christmas treats and mince pies. Sincere thanks are extended to **Debbie and Brenda**, the group leader, for all their dedication and hard work throughout 2025.

Submitted by Lyn

Friends news

..... from the Creative Writing Group

Below is a link to the 2025 creative writing groups **Anthology**.

It is a collection of short stories and poems contributed by our members on the theme of Winter's Tales.

Our member Ross Thompson-Cooley, recorded his piece for the monthly podcast and it is added to the page on the website for all members to enjoy

<https://www.basingstokeu3a.org/creative-writing-podcast>

Group leader Guy Caplin

Friends news

..... from the Health & Wellbeing Group

A reminder that this month's **Health and Wellbeing** subject will be on improving Sleep. Thursday 8th 10-12 pm at Popley Fields Community Centre.

Group leader, Elaine Budd

Friends news

.....from the Rummikub Group



Our December Rummikub at Chineham was a lovely social occasion. We only played an hour of Rummikub, followed by our refreshments break of Christmas cake, mince pies, chocolates and tea or coffee.



We had a raffle and 2 quizzes. One on Christmas carols and the other happenings in the 60's, with prizes for the winning tables.

Rebecca from Christ Church kindly judged our Christmas jumpers and chose her favourite, presenting the prize.

We would like to wish all U3A members a Very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year

Chineham leaders. Gloria Pateman & Valerie Chambers



Friends news

.....u3a Ballroom Dancing

On Friday 12 December 2025, our U3A Ballroom Dancing Group met for our end-of-term **Christmas Dance**.



We were encouraged to wear something Christmassy and bring a plate of food for our buffet.

There was a lovely selection.



Members were able to put into practice all the new figures and dance routines they had learned over the previous weeks, months and years.



The music reflected the Christmas theme and, apart from the usual ballroom and Latin American tunes, also included some "party" dances. Everyone joined in the fun and had a good time dancing and socialising with friends.



Norman Wynn - Joint leader Ballroom Dancing Group

MONTHLY Meetings

Are held on the 2nd Wednesday of most months.

Popley Fields Community Centre at Carpenters Down, RG24 9AE

Usual timings are:

13:30 -Tea, coffee & biscuits time for chatting

14:00 – Presentation

15:00 – Q&A, tea, coffee & biscuits to finish.

Programme:

14 January 2026 – Guest Speaker - Roy Larken.

11 February 2026 – Guest Speaker - Ian Worley

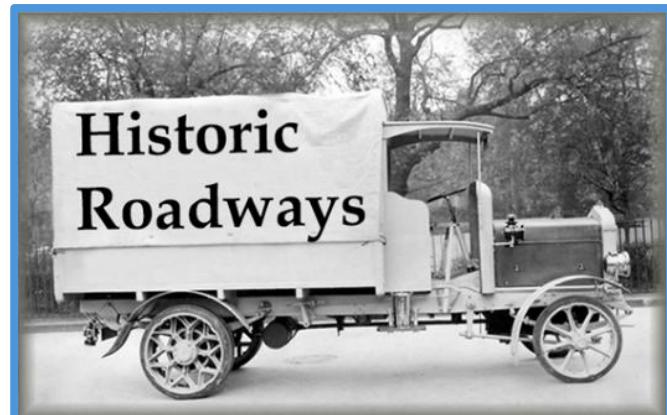
11 March 2026 - Guest Speaker – Russell Whitworth

Introducing Roy Larken – January 14 Speaker

All Aboard for History. London's Buses on the Home Front

Get ready to journey back in time with a compelling deep dive into the extraordinary story of the **London General Omnibus Company (LGOC)** and its pivotal role on the Home Front during the Great War.

Discover how the iconic LGOC buses, buildings, and infrastructure were dramatically transformed to support the war effort. Hear captivating accounts of staff redeployment and the crucial, groundbreaking role of women employees who kept London moving during a time of crisis. Learn how the LGOC executed a full and diverse mission in supporting the Great War, on the very streets of London. Our esteemed speaker, **Roy Larkin**, will take us on this engaging historical journey, lavishly illustrating his talk with **rarely-seen period images**—and yes, there's more to see than just buses!



Don't miss this chance to uncover a vital chapter of our history!

Contributions for 2026 News Edit's

We warmly invite **all members** to contribute to the 2026 monthly editions of our u3a News Edit. Your stories, whether serious or light-hearted, are what make our publication vibrant and engaging. We are keen to receive accounts of your activities, projects, group events, and photographs.

Information from **group leaders** is especially welcome, so please encourage them to get involved and share updates about their groups.

Please send your contributions to the News Edit team at pr@basingstokeu3a.org as soon as possible. While we appreciate early submissions, please note that the deadline is the **15th** of each month. We reserve the right to edit.

Remember, your newsletter relies on **members** to share news for fellow **members**.

Your involvement helps make our u3a community stronger and more connected.

Many thanks, Lyn Franklin - PR

New groups

.....starting this month



A huge thanks to our **new Group Leaders** for enabling us to start **four** new groups beginning this month, if you are interested please go onto the Members Portal to register.

Only Connect - every 3rd Wednesday of the month.

This group is for those that love quizzes and it will follow closely the format of the television programme of the same name. The key differences are that all teams will tackle every question and they may be a little easier.

Up to six teams take up the challenge of four rounds. Rounds one and two, the Connections and Sequences round respectively, each comprise of six questions.

Round three is the Connecting Wall with up to 10 points available and round four is the Missing Vowels with penalties for anybody giving incorrect answers!

Do you think you could beat the other teams?

Pilates - every Monday afternoon

Pilates is a wonderful exercise to improve balance and strength.

Our classes will be taught by Jo a fully trained Pilates instructor and is suitable for all abilities.

Chair and mat Pilates will be taught simultaneously.

Places for the group are booked 6 sessions at a time at an additional cost to the u3a membership.

Bingo - 4th Wednesday of the month

Calling all bingo lovers, this social bingo will no doubt be competitive, lively and a lot of fun. It's also very good for the mind.

Bridge for Beginners - every Thursday

Have you ever wanted to learn bridge, a welcome return of our 20 week course for people wishing to learn bridge. This feeds into the Improvers Bridge group that runs on a Monday afternoon.

- There are four additional groups and their respective leaders currently in discussion.
- If you are interested in or have a passion to run a group, please contact Elaine on [NewGroups@basingstokeu3a.org](mailto>NewGroups@basingstokeu3a.org), to discuss possibilities..

Interested in joining other u3a groups?

In order for current u3a members to **join various groups** you will need to log into the members portal: <https://u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?u3a=19&sc=GZQO> this will give you two options, to see a list of various groups available or update your own details