

Wheathampstead u3a Newsletter – July 2025

Speaker Meeting – Memorial Hall at 2:30pm on Thursday 24th July 2025.

Our Speaker will be Paul Barwick, with a talk entitled “Gareth Williams and the Mystery of the Body in the Bag”

Paul is a retired Police Officer with 34 years of service focusing on National Security, organised crime and counter-terrorism. He is going to talk to us about the strange case of a spy for MI6 who was found dead in mysterious circumstances in 2006.

Afterwards, you are invited to enjoy tea /coffee and biscuits whilst you have a chat with your u3a friends and colleagues.

NB. Many thanks to Brenda, our amazing Speaker Secretary, who stepped in at a moments’ notice last month when our scheduled Speaker dropped out with only 20 minutes notice! Despite the stress of that news, and then the microphone playing up, Brenda delivered her own, off the cuff talk, about her life in teaching. Judging by the applause at the end, we all enjoyed it, so “thank you” Brenda.

***NB.** Car parking space at the Memorial Hall is limited, so if you are able to walk to the venue, or car share that would be really helpful.*

Coffee Mornings – The August one is scheduled for Wednesday 13th August, 10.30 to 12am, at The Swan. It’s great to be able to chat together and get to know each other better.

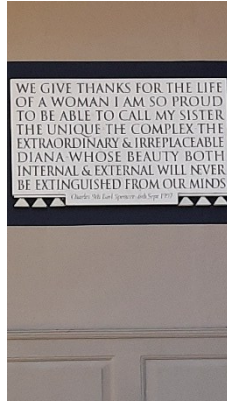
The cost of your cuppa is only £3 – (a bargain!) – so do come along and enjoy it in the company of your fellow u3a friends and colleagues.

As always, you are welcome to bring a guest if you would like to.

Outings News

The visit to **Althorp** last month was the biggest ever for our u3a – we had to have 2 coaches! We had a good journey but when we turned up at the coach entrance, the gate was too narrow for the coach to enter – it was clearly more suited to horse drawn coaches! Luckily, the main gate was wide enough (just!), We all enjoyed our viewing of the house - (so many portraits!) - and lovely grounds. The “Oval”, the lake, which surrounds the island where Diana was buried was very moving. A peaceful, protected location, with ducks on the water, shady benches around to sit on and contemplate and a memorial which said it all. Just enough. Perfect!





The next outing is to the City of **Ely on Tuesday, 19th August 2025** and as always, Chrissie and the outings team deal with these directly with members via email. I do understand however that there have been a few drop outs so **there may be spaces available**, should you decide you'd like to go after all.

The outing includes coffee in the Almonry, a conducted tour of the Cathedral and lunch. Afterwards you will have some free time to explore the historic city centre, with its independent shops and cafes. You may like to visit Oliver Cromwell's house or just enjoy exploring the waterside area, browsing antique shops and art galleries, and perhaps taking a walk along the river.

The cost is £55 - Contact <mailto:chrissie.chadney@googlemail.com>

Workshops

There will be no workshops in July/August, but they will resume again in September.

Invitations were sent out on 18th July for a Watercolour Workshop on Tuesday September 2nd – 2.15 – 3.45 – cost £12. If interested please contact Sue - <mailto:sue@hawkmail.co.uk>

We are in the process of organising a Sewing Workshop – using sewing machines - and we are still hoping to get an art group together. You will be contacted about these once details are formalised.

Groups

Group Convenors – We are trying to ensure that the details we hold on file for members are up to date and accurate. To that end, we'd be really grateful if group convenors could please help us by going into the Beacon system and just quickly checking that your group details are correct.

NEW – London Theatre Group – Exciting News !

You will have received an email from Chrissie a couple of days ago about this. If you love the Theatre, I'm sure you'll love this. I've been wanting to see Witness for the Prosecution for ages – maybe we'll finally get to see it.

Latin – a 2nd group is to start in September with Catharine Jessop as tutor.

Rewilding and sustainable Gardening – Anne Howie and Tessa Reason are going to be convening this group. It is planned to start it in September. They anticipate monthly meetings – venue to be advised. The idea will be to work to create spaces in gardens and across the village that encourage wildlife. The emphasis will be on “doing.”

Argentine Tango – A message from Gina Nolan - Argentine Tango Group Convener.

WE NEED A FEW MORE ENTHUSIASTIC NEW MEMBERS

You are invited to come and join and learn social Argentine Tango dancing. Basically we have a very relaxed 2 hour class (includes practise time), learning the authentic Argentine Tango, with social chatting & a cup of tea/biscuit too! The class is 3.30pm to 5.30pm on a couple of Mondays per month. Dates below for the Summer.

Monday 7th July, Monday 21st July

Monday 4th August, Monday 18th August

Monday 8th September, Monday 15th September

Then 6th Oct, 20th Oct, 3rd Nov, 17th Nov, 1st Dec, 15th Dec

We would love to have a few more people join us. We are on a couple of times a month, with the cost of just £10 per month. No need to come with a dance partner. We meet at Mead Hall (the WI Hall, close to Tesco), and there is free car parking in the public cark behind it.

Argentine Tango dance class with practise time to authentic Argentine Tango music. This type of dancing is improvised - both musicality and movement. It is intended for social dancing. The core of this dance is stability, movement & pauses. (This means it is not stage tango - which is choreographed and contains lifts)

Everyone welcomed to join. No need to bring a dance partner.

Authentic Argentine Tango for social dancing taught. This dance is often called "the walking dance" for good reason. There is no need for any previous dancing experience.

Every session will include basic steps and technique, including hints on how to improve connections, posture, balance, musicality. Over time, different dance figures will be introduced. But most of all, everyone will progress on their own Tango journey, in their own time. And in a social and supportive environment.

Some people will be perfectly happy with enjoying moving simply to the music with their dance partner, others will wish to challenge themselves and be keen to try new things. There is no right or wrong way. The aim is to enjoy learning to dance with any Partner to the music within the Tango Community. Over time, all aspects of Argentine Tango will be covered, including dance etiquette, dancing on a social dance floor, enjoying local Argentine Tango Tea Dances.

There is no need to be concerned about needing to "miss some Mondays" as different aspects of the Argentine Tango will be regularly repeatedly taught over the months.

The 2 hour Monday Classes will include space for relaxation for you all to build up a beautiful local Argentine Tango Community in the heart of Wheathampstead

The cost for each session will cover the cost of hall hire and tutor fees, coming to £76 per

week. therefore the cost to each person will be £5.00. This will be paid monthly as £10 - either direct to the Wheathampstead u3a bank account or as cash on attendance to the convener at the venue

We are aiming to keep this Argentine Tango class open on every FIRST & THIRD Monday of every calendar month. But occasionally we need to change the date if the Hall isn't available. (Like this September).

All these classes will be cover different aspects at beginners level. So no need to panic if you are unable to make them all. Please spread the word to others, as it would be great to have a few more join us. We will be a great Tango Community locally at this rate. Anybody is welcomed. They just need to join the u3a to come along to these Monday afternoons. Total bargain!

If you are interested please contact Gina - <mailto:gina@twilightmilongas.co.uk>

Supper Club – The next Supper Club evening is at the Cross Keys in Gustard Wood on Tue 29th July at 6.30pm.

Anyone can join the Supper Club. The idea is that Members take their turn to find a venue, negotiate a price and organise the evening for the others, with occasional meetings from time to time to discuss future venues/organisers. Members are emailed with details of each meal and an invitation to be included.

Social Events

Picnic on the Meads – Yes! We're doing it again! It will be on August 8th and you will receive your invitation with full details in due course.

You just need to pack up a picnic and a chair (or blanket if you can still manage to get up from one) and meet us there. We'll have some music so if you feel the urge to cast off your inhibitions and "dance like nobody is watching" in the open air, you can, or if you prefer just to chat with your fellow u3a members that's fine too. Look out for an email from Dexter via Beacon.

Village Day – In complete contrast to last year when we had to battle with the elements to get the gazebo up, this year, the sun shone and we had a bit of a heatwave! The English weather – never predictable!



We had a lovely day and we were really pleased that lots of our members came and did a stint on the stall, rather than it just being the Committee manning it.

One of our members, Vivienne, won the “Guess the Weight of the Cake” game and later shared the cake with her neighbours.

came and had a go at our “Cornhole Game”, including a bee and a couple of fairies!

It was a good day for our village, with representation from many of our local businesses, organisations and charities and plenty of entertainment to enjoy. A brilliant effort by all the organisers – well done to them all.

Lots of people also



Fom the wider u3a –

London Region of u3as has organised a series of guided walks and visits to Museums and Galleries which may be of interest to some of you. These are led by qualified guides, take about an hour and a half to 2 hours and cost £10. They have sent us a list of what is available for September and October and you can access it via this link

<mailto:https://lru3a.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Sept-and-Oct-programme-2025-pg-16-JuneRWv2-2.pdf> Book with them direct if you would like to attend.

As an example, there is a walk in Hampstead Village “So Exclusive it’s twinned with itself” described as follows –

MEETING PLACE : Hampstead tube station at 14.00 (Northern Line) Suggest participants consult the TFL Step free tube guide.

Description Standing atop a hill with commanding views over London and only 15 minutes by tube from Central London, Hampstead has been home to artists and intellectuals for centuries. John Constable, H.G. Wells, George Romney, John Keats, Robert Louis Stevenson, Ricky Gervais, Daphne du Maurier, John Le Carre and Glenda Jackson have all made their

marks on Hampstead. Winding lanes, narrow passages, eclectic architecture and the open expanses of Hampstead Heath make this a very special village in the heart of London.

Proceeds in aid of The Teenage Cancer Trust.

Other, None-u3a stuff - but nonetheless important!)

Hertfordshire National Gardens Scheme – For July and August Open Gardens details and dates, please see the attached flyer.