

Wheathampstead u3a Newsletter – February 2026

Speaker Meeting

Thursday 26th February – Marford Hall, 2.15 for 2.30

Our Speaker this month is Mike Ruff and he will be talking to us about stories and songs from the Music Hall.

For ten years Mike was a part of Music Hall duo Allcock and Brown, during which time they travelled all over the country and appeared in venues large and small. The background to those performances provided the starting point for this talk which will include quite a few songs you will be encouraged to join in with (and, no doubt, sing all the way home!)

Mike is also a full-time musician, dance caller and teacher, although he is trying to retire! The theory is that he can then spend more time as a speaker and author. adding to his various books on traditional English Dance.

As always there will be refreshments afterwards and we will have a table especially for new members and/or anyone who has come by themselves and just fancies a chat ... we really love meeting everyone.

NB. *We are still collecting used **printer ink cartridges** for recycling – we'll put the bag on the registration table. It's bright pink so you won't miss it ... (no prizes for guessing who got the job of making that one! – Me, of course, the original pink lady!!)*

Please note that there will be no March Speaker meeting. Instead, 26th March will be aside for our AGM and our popular “Meet The Groups” event.

The AGM is your chance to vote in the Committee, to hear (short) reports on how our u3a is doing and to have your say on – well – whatever you want to raise.

“Meet The Groups” is where each group sets up a display showing what they are all about (some with tasty nibbles to tempt you to stay and chat) and Annabel will have the groups noticeboard to interact with, where you can see what new groups we have, what groups are trying to set up, add your name to any groups you might like to join and start off a list for anyone interested in a new group you’d like to see started.

Who knows, you may find a new interest to add to your portfolio!

There will be refreshments and lots of u3a friends to talk to. What’s not to like?

Coffee Morning

Wednesday 11th March – The Swan, 10.30 – 12.00 - or later for those who decide to have lunch there afterwards – truly yummy food and very reasonably priced! You can bring friends too if you wish. A nice way to while away a morning in good company.

Outings

The Snowdrops at Anglesey Abbey visit on the 25th is imminent. Just looked at the weather forecast and it should be warm and sunny! – Yay! But take your umbrellas just in case!

The next outing is to Strawberry Hill House and Petersham Nurseries. If you’re interested watch out for the invitation email and reply pronto! Our trips are very popular and often go from “invitation” to “sold out” in a matter of days (hours sometimes!)

Groups

Garden Visits – A good number of people have expressed an interest in getting this group up and running again (it closed during Covid). Whether you just fancy an occasional stroll around a nice garden in the sunshine or just want some ideas for your own garden, this could be for you. It could include lunch, a picnic or afternoon tea or whatever you like!

Annabel organised a get together for those who expressed an interest, but only 5 people turned up, so nothing was decided. All it really needs though is a Convenor, just to oversee everything and that is not an onerous task. You'd just need to set up an email or Whatsapp group and it could practically run itself. You'd all be able to communicate to suggest venues/dates and travel arrangements and confirm who is going and where to meet etc. (Maybe also arrange an initial meeting to get some ground rules established like how often/time/travel type etc and a brainstorming session on possible venues so you have a list) You could take turns in organising visits either as one or in pairs. Obviously it would be up to the group members to determine how it works. Come on people – we're so close with this and it'd be such a shame to let it founder now.

Workshops

Two summer treats coming up for those who like a challenge.! We are hoping to run some lawn bowls sessions at Batchwood and some canoe/kayak/paddleboard sessions at Stanborough Lakes. These will be during the June to August period and Sue Hawkins will be sending out more information in the next few weeks.

Maths Dance – Well, we all wondered what this was all about, and some of us are none the wiser, but the first session has taken place and was enjoyed by all. It is led by the lovely Shanti, who brought Bollywood dancing

to one of our Christmas events and then ran a Bollywood workshop for us so it had to be good didn't it! Here are a couple of photos –

“Hands up who knows the answer to this one? How big? Looks like fun!



There are 2 more sessions to follow, so if you're interested get in touch with Sue Hawkins <mailto:sue@hawkmail.co.uk>



Social Events

Quiz Night – 27th March

You've all been loving our quiz nights and you've all enjoyed listening to Tony Tuttons talks, and dancing to his band at one of our events so, we've combined the two and this will be a music quiz presented by Tony Tutton. There will be a fish and chips supper (with a veggie option of course) courtesy of Harpenden's award winning fish and chip shop – Gregory's. We should be in for a fun evening, so swot up and look out for the invitation email. Which should be coming out soon.

U3a Festival, York

You might be interested to hear that Jan Parkes and 2 others have signed up to the u3a Festival in York 1st to 3rd July. The programme is still to be released but there is usually a variety of lectures, walks and social events. Have a look at the National u3a website for full details – perhaps you might like to go too?

<mailto:https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026>

Wider u3a

Here is a link to the February u3a Friends Newsletter.

There's an interesting Photography challenge, a survey on what the u3a means to you (with a chance to win a £100 John Lewis Voucher), News of the u3a Festival and much more

mailto:https://mcusercontent.com/656ad5962b370cc9e2731d1ed/files/be160494-1001-b861-10f6-cb9bd6dac1af/Your_u3a_Bitesize_Friends_Newsletter_February_2026.pdf

Other Local News

Once again Harpenden is running a Seniors Fair showcasing local services and activities for older people. Have a look at the flyer below –



Supporting
the people of
Harpenden
since 1948

SENIORS FAIR

Wednesday 1st April
10.30am - 1.00pm

Showcasing local services and activities

Over 40 organisations attending including charities,
voluntary & commercial organisations and social activities.

Refreshments available

(donations to Rennie Grove Peace Hospice)

FREE ENTRY

Come along & discover what's available at:

**The Eric Morecambe Centre,
Rothamsted Park, Harpenden.**

Supporting Our Community

Contact us today



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