

Dates for your Diary

2024 Events

- 15th March** Inter U3A Quiz, 14.00 to 17.00, Victoria Hall. Hartley Wintney
- 17th April** Open Morning, From 11.00 The Harlington, Fleet.
- Monthly Meetings 2023 /24 - The Harlington, Fleet, talk 11.00 to 12.15, coffee from 10.00**
- 20th March** The National Trust
Speaker David Hunt
- 15th May** The Bobby Scheme: Cyber Crime,
Speaker Phil Atkinson
- 19th June** A Beginning, a muddle and End : where do novelists get their ideas?
Speaker Bobbie Derbyshire

Visits

- 16th May** Hever Castle WAITING LIST
- 21st August** Chevenage House, Beverston Near Tetbury, Gloucester.

Dates for Group Leaders

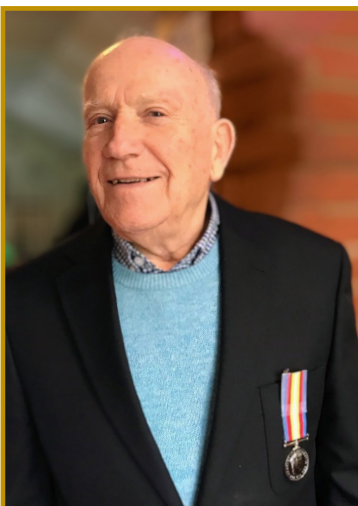
- 28th March** Programme Checking 10.30 to 12.00 at United Reformed Church
- 5th July** Group Leaders Lunch followed by the GL's General Meeting. 12.00 to 14.00 and 14.00 to 15.30 at Victoria Hall Hartley Wintney

Chat from the Chair

To my surprise a strong theme emerged in the February newsletter, Carole (from Visits), Nick (from Spanish) and I all separately urged members to step up and step in. A month later I am very pleased to report on success: people have volunteered to take on key tasks, so the headache for the Trustees has eased slightly. We hope our collective efforts will enable Fleet and District U3A to celebrate its 30th birthday, in 2034. Yes, I fear I inadvertently misled many of you in February – luckily not our eagle eyed founder Chair – into thinking the organisation is ten years older than it truly is. Last time I penned a chat in late February, we were emerging from a period of record – breaking dry weather. A year on, we are coming out of one of the wettest Februarys on record. You never can tell; we are certainly living through uncertain times. One sign of the times is the way, in order to complete so many important transactions, there is an expectation that we all have a smartphone on which the necessary apps are installed and well understood. This can prove quite a challenge. (In my case I frequently curse the fact that wherever I try to park my car, the owners of that car park have chosen not to use one of the four or five apps I have already downloaded!) It has been suggested that a possible title for a new U3A group might be 'Getting the best from your smartphone'. Is there anyone among our members who would be willing and able to lead such a group? I'm pretty sure there'd be a demand. I will, if the Editor permits, dwell a little longer elsewhere on the excellence of the speaker at February's monthly meeting, but as Chair what I hear most frequently from our members after a monthly meeting are reactions on the lines of 'I was in two minds about coming, but I'm so glad I did'.



John Gawthorpe, Chair



John Davis
Wearing his
Nuclear Medal

Congratulations to John, one of our Fleet u3a members. John Davis has just been awarded a 'Nuclear' medal for his service on Christmas Islands in the 1950s.

John took part in the Nuclear Testing and the Nuclear Medal has just been issued after all these years.

Our thanks go to Ian Stephenson for letting us know Ed.

Monthly Meeting

The re-introduction of the free tea and coffee compensated somewhat for the length of the queue for the Visits Team, the dreadful weather, and the unusually full car parks.

Most of the audience of 162 enjoyed that familiar treat before taking our seats to hear Paul Bodiam's talk 'The Craftsman's Art and Musician's Measure' - lines from Francis Pott's 1861 hymn 'Angel Voices Ever Singing' – taking us through the development of the guitar.

An IT professional, Paul's passion is for stringed musical instruments, which he repairs, plays and even builds from scratch. His year-long construction of a ukelele from scratch was the subject of a series of illustrated magazine articles.

He brought with him several different instruments, illustrating how stringed instruments evolved. He played most of them for us, singing an appropriate contemporaneous song to match the instrument. (No, Henry VIII could not have composed Greensleeves.)

We learned the significance of the Middle Eastern short-necked stringed instrument, the oud. We observed how similar it is the lute, all the more so when you consider how 'El oud' might be mis-heard or mis-remembered as 'lute'.

Our monthly meetings are a chance for us all to hear an enthusiastic speaker describe an interest or passion in a way to make it accessible and appealing to all.

Paul asked the his speakers Fee be donated to "Dementia Support Hampshire & IoW" (<https://www.mydementiasupport.org/>).

The next date for your Monthly Meeting diary is March 20th, when David Hunt will speak on 'The National Trust.' David is a volunteer for the National Trust and specialises in giving talks about the charity. I am sure many of our members are also members of the National Trust so will be interested in finding out some history and behind the scenes stories about the organisation. If you are not yet a member, come along to find out about local National Trust properties that you might like to visit. Guests are always welcome at our monthly talks. We merely ask that they sign in at the Welcome Desk in the foyer.

Please remember that there is no need to BYO hot drinks. The Harlington staff have planned to serve us tea or coffee in the small hall at Monthly Meetings from now on. There will be no charge to you.

The usual timings will apply;

10.00 meet in the small hall at the Harlington for biscuits, chat, coffee or tea

10.00 the Visits table and Fleet U3A welcome desk will be in the foyer

10.45 the main hall should open for you to take your seats by 11.00

11.00 welcome and the talk in the main hall

12.15 the talk and questions end so please make sure you have enough time on your parking ticket (Victoria Road car park allows for more than two hours parking.)



Paddy Powell

Tai Chi Group

The link between Chinese Dragons and Tai Chi In this Chinese year of the Dragon, it was interesting to look for links between Chinese Dragons and Tai Chi. Chinese dragons are portrayed as mythical, magic beasts, who have power over weather and water, such as rainfall, waterfalls, rivers, and seas. They have no wings and their ability to fly is mystical, however, it is also said that they fly by 'swimming' through the air. Cheng Man Ch'ing (1902-1975), wrote about "Swimming in the Air" in relation to Tai Chi. He said: As man lives on the land. his long familiarity with air, often makes him forget its existence. Since it lacks solidity and shape, it eludes the attention. To liken Air to Water, aids the imagination. Air is like water, in the sense that, if one pretends to swim while out of the water, your movements automatically conform to the principles of Tai Chi. Cheng Man Ch'ing also writes that he feels that swimming is the only other form of exercise that conforms to the principles of Tai Chi and talks about "letting the palm move against the wind, feeling the air as if it were water". One should practice the Form as if you are swimming – smoothly, continuously, relentlessly, never-ending, like the waves on the sea or an ever-rolling river. Each posture moving seamlessly into the next without pausing



Ken Molyneux-Carter

Creative Writing Group

The Great Escape by Jill Low

Once upon a time there were three goats who had lived quite happily in their field until it was invaded by a herd of alpacas who pranced around, showing off their hairstyles and dainty hooves and making the goats' lives a misery. So the goats decided to cross the river to the field opposite, which was mercifully alpaca free.

There was a bridge across the river, but also a red-and-white striped barrier and a little hut, wherein sat a Border Force troll. It is widely known that trolls are alpha male types and tend to have names to match, such as Clint or Chuck. The parents of this Border Force troll were progressive people, however, and had named their little darling Robin. This, together with the two sizes too small polyester uniform and the absurd clip-on tie, combined to put the troll in a permanently bad mood - ideal for employment with Border Force.

The goats found their passports under a clump of dandelions - this took some time as dandelion clumps were numerous - and the eldest made his way onto the bridge, presenting himself at the counter of the hut. The troll took the passport, glanced at it, and said, "That's not your passport."

"Yes it is," said the goat.

"But in your photo you're clean-shaven, and now you have a beard."

"I'm a billy goat, it goes with the job description."

"I'm sorry," said the troll (which he wasn't), "Beards might be a sign of radicalisation. I can't let you across." He handed back the passport and the goat returned to his companions.

After they'd all shaved, the middle goat, the joker of the trio, took his passport to the troll. The troll accepted the goat's identity but said, "Now I've got to ask you a few questions."

"Fire away," said the goat, looking back to wink at the others.

"Fire what?" asked the troll.

"I'm sorry, I meant, please go ahead," smiling.

"Have you ever, or do you intend, to involve yourself in acts of terrorism?"

"Too right," said the goat, grinning, and found itself back with the others.

At this point one of the alpacas detached itself from the herd and sidled over to the goats.

"Psst," it said. It might have been spitting but the idea was "Psst."

"You wanna get across the river?" it asked. The goats nodded. "Well, I gotta boat. Round the bend. You wanna see it?" The goats nodded again and followed the alpaca into the reeds, where it had concealed a small rowing boat.

"It's a bit small," said one goat.

"I'll packa you all in," the alpaca sniggered.

"There are no lifejackets," said the smallest goat.

"D'you wanna go or not? I haven't got all day."

"It's very kind of you..." The third goat began.

"It's not kind, it's 5000 euros each."

"But we haven't got 5000 euros!" (which, in a world where trolls are called Robin and goats have passports, you might think they would have)

"Tough," said the alpaca and strolled away.

So, the youngest goat took his passport and walked up to the hut. The counter was closed so the goat knocked on the door. There was no answer. He pushed open the door. The hut was empty apart from the troll's clip-on tie. Pausing only to eat the tie, the goat rushed outside, calling, "Quick, he's gone off duty!" The three goats leapt over the red-and-white barrier and galloped across the bridge to the new field.

And they all lived relatively happily ever after, especially the troll, who could thenceforth wear open-necked shirts.

© Jill Low

Margaret Garrod

**Can you play Backgammon and had you thought about the possibility of running such a group?
Contact a Committee member to discuss. See page 8 of your Programme for details.**

Mindfulness and Meditation Group

The piece below is a favourite of my Mindfulness and Meditation group. We have light-hearted discussions on all aspects of positivity and life's "stresses" before our group meditation. Everyone goes home feeling more relaxed !

THE TRAIN

At birth we boarded the train, and met our parents, and we believe they will always travel by our side. As time goes by other people will board the train, and they will be significant, i.e. our siblings, friends, children and even the love of your life. However, at some station our parents will step down from the train, leaving us on the journey alone. Others will step down over time too and leave a permanent vacuum, some however will go so un-noticed, we don't even realise they've vacated their seats.

The train ride will be full of joy, sorrow, fantasy, expectations, hello's, goodbyes and farewells. Success consists of having a good relationship with all passengers, requiring that we give the best of ourselves. The mystery to everyone is we do not know at which station we ourselves will step down. So we must live in the best way, love, forgive and offer the best of who we are. It is important to do this as when the time comes for us to step down and leave our seat empty, we should leave beautiful memories for those who will continue to travel on the train of life.

I wish you all a joyful journey

Lesley Nicholls

Poetry Group

Poetry Voices need YOUR help as we prepare a special programme for the 80th Commemorations of the D-Day landings.

Troops from this area made huge contributions but we want to hear from YOU!

Was your family living in this area during WW2? Fleet, Church Crookham, Farnborough, Aldershot, Odiham, Hartley Wintney...? Have you parents or grandparents with memories or stories of the times? Maybe you were a local child – with memories of your own? About schools? Effects on daily life? Reactions to the increased military presence?

Lieutenant David Hazzard of the Queen's Own Rifles, Toronto, found himself in Aldershot. His Dear Sweetheart letters written regularly to his wife and children are rich and revealing and provide a skeleton for our programme. But can you access memories or stories of other Canadians who were here? Who else passed through the area?

Our programme In Their Own Words has poetry and prose, letters and memoirs of the war up to and including D-Day, especially from service men and women who arrived in this area. We'd also like to include the words of people who remember them.

Contact Christine West, Group Leader christine.west1@gmail.com or 01252 691176 with your memories or ideas about how to access them! Or join us on alternate Mondays between 1.00 and 3.00pm at Holy Trinity Church Hall off the Aldershot Road, Church Crookham. Dates as in the 2023/ 2024 Programme on the website www.fleetu3a.org.uk

ALSO – for your delight and delectation, we shall be performing a short 'taster' programme as part of the U3A Open Morning, April 17th at the Harlington – do come along and hear In Their Own Words! We look forward to seeing you and chatting with you.

Don't forget! Memories are made of this!

Christine West

**Your Fleet U3A Poetry
Group Needs You**



Proposed New Basic Spanish Group

We plan to offer Basic Spanish again from this September. We will be meeting on Monday mornings in the Fleet Methodist Church from 10am to Midday.

The group will be led by Antony Jones who has language teaching qualifications and many years of experience with TEFL but whose own knowledge of Spanish is probably A2 level on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference): so he will be sympathetic to the needs of beginners and will himself only be a step or two ahead of the group in the coursebook (BBC Talk Spanish)!

Antony found his limited Spanish very useful when he and his wife were walking the Camino de Santiago recently.

We look forward to seeing you in September. ¡Hasta luego!

Antony Jones *Antonu*

International Folk Dance Group

Do you enjoy holidays exploring different parts of the world? Yes? So do we. Every other Friday we spend two hours delving into the dance and music from many countries worldwide learning the various characteristics and steps traditionally danced by the villagers and townsfolk through the centuries. As a student in years gone by, one of my two final college theses studied the historical, geographical and costume influences on the development of European Dance. So how lucky was I to discover when first joining Fleet U3A that there was an International Folk Dance Group. What a thrill it has been to learn so many dances and enjoy the music which accompanies them with our very able Group Leader, Betty. Such a friendly group, and this year we have welcomed three new members who are gently led through each dance giving the rest of us a chance for a spot of recall! However we all say the music tells us what comes next. In the past the group at the request of the family of Jane our former leader was asked to dance one of Jane's favourite dances at her funeral in Christ Church. On another occasion we were privileged to participate at an event in Winchester Cathedral dancing in the chancel as part of a special service. We are a very friendly group and we warmly welcome all newcomers of all ages.

So if you feel tempted come along one Friday and join in - we would love to see you. Come and have fun and exercise your body and mind in the process!

Jacki Cansdale



Computer Group - PC and Tablet Workshop

After 10 years running the PC and Tablet Workshop, due to other commitments, I have decided to stand down as Group Leader. If anyone is interested in taking on this group I'm happy to pass on all the PowerPoint slides used in the last 6 session group that was in November/December 2023.

The group met on Monday afternoons from 2.00pm to 3.30pm at the Guide Hall in Basingbourne Road, which has not yet been booked for 2024/25.

I enjoyed my time running this group, had some great assistants and, as the group was always made up of new members each time, met some really nice people along the way. **Richard Fielding**

I am sure that everyone in the Fleet U3A would wish to thank Richard and hope that someone is willing to take the role on. Ed

MOTO 3 - New Group

Hello, we are thinking of starting a third MOTO group with Fleet U3A.

The group would meet the first Saturday of each month at 11:00hrs at the Lismoyne Hotel.

If there is sufficient interest we will have our first meeting on Saturday 4th May.

Please show your interest by responding to Val and Sally at val.street76@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

Valerie Street

HELP We urgently need members to come forward to fill some crucial roles within your Committee. Please look out for a special Edition of the Newsletter next month regarding this real problem. Failure to find a Membership Secretary, Secretary plus Minute Secretary could result in Fleet U3A not existing. This isn't being alarmist this is a fact. Ed

Art 13 Group

Exhibition of recent work by the Group.



Not for us the glamour of Belly dancing or the excitement of the Ukelele! Art 13 is the home of newcomers, improvers and old lag(s) who claim to remember the siege of Mafeking.

Every term under the ever patient eyes of Jane Jeffares our Group Leader, we strive to perfect the noble art of tricking the minds of fellow U3A members into believing that a few blobs and streaks of watercolour paint, actually form a picture. This could range from distant sunlit hills, woods and sheep, or figures strolling along a beach with a (possible wonky) lighthouse in the distance. We admire those who operate at dizzy heights far beyond Fleet U3A and have perfected these illusions, to the extent that the public actually pay cash in exchange for the one dimensional 'masterpieces'.

Recently and with a change to our normal routine, which in itself generated much excitement, all sixteen budding artists were invited to paint the same winter's landscape. The excitement reached fever pitch and then crashed, when our dear leader asked us to imagine and paint the same scene in the summer at our next meeting, while she took time off to enjoy herself under blue skies and warm sunshine! The results were interesting, displaying a freedom of spirit so typical of Art 13.

The results can be seen in the above picture. Every picture has been created as an individual interpretation working from the same starting point. Long live Art 13 !

Masheratura

NEW PILATES CLASS

Pilates is very popular, and we get regular inquiries from members who would like to join, but vacancies in our present five groups are few and far between. Our morning tutor, Anna, has offered to start an additional group on Wednesday mornings, 10.15 to 11.15 at the Guide Hall in Basingbourne Park. It has not yet been decided whether the new group will start after the coming Easter break or in September - much depends your response. If you are genuinely interested in joining this new group please contact me at pilates@fleetu3a.org.uk to register your interest, and I will keep you informed. ***Chris Porter-Pilates GL***

Visits

Visits welcomes Helen Joynson a NEW fleet U3A member onto the team after our request for helpers at the last Monthly Meeting. We also have another volunteer - Ann Morley who many of you know as a greeter at the Monthly Meetings. Thank you to both for joining us.

A committee member is in the wings to help. But where are you? Come and join Helen and the rest of us on Visits, as the committee members are already committed. It would be good if another man, or more, came and joined the team, you will be well looked after by the female team members.

The more helpers we have the more visits we can plan.

Sadly, Chris Porter who has been on the team for many years has stepped down, in his words 'too many years on the clock' another person who was on the committee, doing several jobs. Thank you, Chris, for all your input and help over the years. Also, Andy King has stepped down as she has moved to Devon. She wasn't on the team long due to ill health, so we wish her well in her new home.

At the February monthly meeting it was very busy. It wasn't helpful that there were road works on the Fleet railway bridge and both Sue & Helen were late helping with the bookings. Poor girls arrived in a fluster but came up trumps with the booking, so thanks girls.

Thank you to all who waited so patiently in the queue. Mamma Mia sold out very quickly and I did my best to control the queue, to enable the Leonardslee gardens visits to also be booked.

We are still having difficulties booking visits as with so few dates left for coach bookings and the 'snail email trail' of contacting people is not easy.

The Beacon messages, that Alan our secretary sends out on behalf of Visits, seem to be working well, BUT I still have people say 'oh! I don't read the Newsletter or Beacon messages'. WHY NOT? the Committee and Group Leaders are doing their best to run groups and the U3A for YOUR benefit.

We haven't arranged an overnight stay this year as we have lost our travel agent, in addition hotels are shutting down and coach companies are fully booked. But don't give up as we may squeeze in something.

On that note, there has been a request for return visits to; Kynren show, near Durham and Potters at Hopton-on-Sea. This is NOT a bowls holiday, but you have the option to bowl. New ideas are Ireland and Jersey, both will be expensive from the research that I have done. When you're in a private group like us we can do what 'we' want and be with people that we know. We have had so much fun and laughter over the years on our overnight stays, so consider coming on one.

Any feedback on all the information in this article would be welcome.

A reminder - when booking a visit if you cannot attend the Monthly Meeting you can email the appropriate leader of the trip and they will put you on a waiting list. IF there are spaces left after the meeting you will be notified. There is no guarantee of a place. In fairness to members, multiple booking request at the monthly meeting maybe refused. When booking, either by email or in person, we require your membership number contact number and email address. If you want to depart from Sainsburys bus stop Fleet Road let us know.

All payments, cheques, or BACS for any trips by whatever method are payable to FLEET & DISTRICT U3A, update your records if you pay by BACS. 'Visits' must NOT be in the payee box the payment will be refused. We have had several people pay into the wrong BACS account which gives the team and our treasurer unnecessary work.

Diary dates

29th April Leonardslee Gardens SOLD OUT

26th September ... Mamma Mia the Musical SOLD OUT waiting list

21st August ... Tudor 'Chevenage House', Beverston near Tetbury, Gloucestershire. The House is set in the Cotswolds and we will also have some time to spend in Cirencester. This Visit will be sold at the April Monthly meeting and Helen our new team member will be taking this visit.

Carole Matthews

BOWLS 2 Group - Crondall Bowls Club

The pavilion at Crondall Bowls Club becomes a lively venue on a Tuesday morning as U3A members gather for their weekly game of short mat bowls. This is a modified indoor version of the outdoor game.

Depending on numbers we play various formats of the game, sometimes in pairs, sometimes in teams of three or four. The games are keenly contested but always in a friendly sporting manner. It is a joy to host this group and admire their developing bowling skills and enjoy their banter and encouraging words to each other. We are now starting to look forward to the start of the outdoor season and hopefully some sunny weather!

Outdoor Bowls 2 will start in Crondall on Tuesday, 23rd April at 10.00pm.

Why not come along and have a go? You will have a warm welcome and tuition and bowls can be provided.

Jenny Keyte



Beginners Bridge Play

We are going to start a new Bridge group which will be weekly on Wednesday afternoons from 2.00pm until 4.00pm at Zebon Copse Community Centre starting on 17th April 2024. **We would like to find out how much support there is for this group.** See email contact details below.

The group aims to help members to improve their bridge play and bidding, with an emphasis on play. It is open to anyone who has been to the u3a Introductory or Improvers Bridge Groups, or others, maybe those who have let their bridge play lapse, at the discretion of the group leaders. All must bid and play according to the system taught by Fleet u3a. Those currently attending the Introductory

Group will normally be ready to join this group after they have learnt 'overcalls' around February half term. Members do not have to have partners. There will be a waiting list if there are too many people wanting to join.

Typically, at each meeting there will be a brief discussion of an aspect of play followed by a duplicate session. Usually there will be prepared hands to practise the current topic. The basic course will be the same every year. It is envisaged that members would be in the group for no more than a couple of years.

Please email us on u3aBridgePlay@outlook.com for further details or to show an interest in joining.

Liz Rougier and Dee Hollowood



Sing for Peace of Mind (new group from September 2024)

Is life quite tough for you presently?

Would you like to take time out once a month to sing in a gentle, relaxed and informal atmosphere?

Singing well-known songs in unison from the movies, musicals and more, this group is for anyone who would enjoy and benefit from singing in a quiet, calm place away from the pressures of everyday life. This group is suitable for those with memory challenges.

There is no requirement for reading music: words will be provided. Songs will be accompanied on the piano. Please contact the Group Leader in the first instance to find out if this group is for you.

Contact: ellie.faulkner1@gmail.com

Ellie Faulkner

Sing Songs from the Musicals

Written by one of the members.

We are a very Friendly, Enthusiastic Group of Amateur Singers. We meet monthly on a Thursday morning at the "Royal Albert Hall" in Fleet (otherwise known as the United Reform Church).

Our songs are from famous West End Musicals, always accompanied on the piano by the "nimble fingers" of Ellie and the "arm waving gyrations" of our Maestro Conductor Tim. During the toe tapping, hip swinging performances 'One' is easily transported into the Magical World of Musical Theatre.



No voice training required, just the desire to have fun and enjoy the fulfilment of hearty singing.

We even manage to swagger our way into the foyer for a quick coffee break.

Ellie Faulkner

Group Leaders - Important

In the event that you have to cancel a session will you please let Barbara, the Venues Secretary, know a.s.a.p. as she may then be able to avoid us paying for the venue on that occasion.

COMMITTEE EMAILS



Fleet U3A Website

**Keep up to date with all our activities,
News, Events, Visits Monthly
Meetings on our website
www.fleetu3a.org.uk**

Find us on Facebook

Find us on Facebook - Fleet U3A has its own Facebook Members' Group, our Facebook page can be found by entering "Fleet U3A" in the search box at the top of any Facebook page. You can then request to join our private Members only group, you will be asked for your Name and Membership number.

We now have 360+ Fleet U3A members in our private Facebook Members Group for contact and discussion between members. This is a Private Group for members of Fleet U3A only, you are encouraged to join.

Chair	John Gawthorpe	chairman@fleetu3a.org.uk
Secretary & Beacon	Alan Jones	secretary@fleetu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Neil Morley	treasurer@fleetu3a.org.uk
Membership Sec & Programme	Fiona Godfrey	memsec@fleetu3a.org.uk programme@fleetu3a.org.uk
Group Leaders' Liaison Sec	Mike K Brown	groups@fleetu3a.org.uk
Events Sec	Pam Openshaw	events@fleetu3a.org.uk
Webmaster	Stephen Grosvenor	webmaster@fleetu3a.org.uk
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Enquiries	Jenny Teagle	enquiries@fleetu3a.org.uk
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Outreach Sec	Jenny Teagle	outreach@fleetu3a.org.uk
Publicity Sec	Adrian Van Klaveren	publicity@fleetu3a.org.uk

**PLEASE AVOID TELEPHONING MEMBERS
BEFORE 9 a.m. OR AFTER 5 p.m.**