

Notice Board

Newsletter deadline : 5 p.m. on Friday 20th March 2020
Next issue date : Monday 6th April 2020
 Please try to restrict your articles to fewer than 350 words

!!! IMPORTANT FOR GROUP LEADERS !!!

GROUP LEADERS' MEETINGS

25th March : Programme Checking
 3rd July 2020 : Group Leaders Lunch at VHHW

VISITS 2020

28th March : Greenwich Painted Chapel
 3rd April : Torquay
 23rd April : Hatfield House
 19th May : Bowood House & Garden
 6th August : Edinburgh Tattoo

Members Coffee Morning 2020

27th March: Zebon Copse from 10.30am all welcome

Monthly Meetings 2020

See page 7 for the programme details

Corona Virus and Fleet U3A

At the committee meeting on March 4th the trustees of Fleet U3A decided that we will continue to respond to all government advice. Consequently, we agreed that until we are told differently, we should continue with our programme as published. We will amend our advice to you as soon as the need arises. We ask that all members follow Government hygiene advice and general healthcare good practice. Please do not attend U3A meetings if you feel unwell.

Just in case the situation nationally becomes worse and you feel the need to self-isolate we suggest that you:

- * Exchange telephone numbers and email addresses with other group members so that you can contact them for a chat at least.
- * Set up online supermarket shopping now so that if you need to use it in the future you will have done the first order, which always takes a long time.
- * Consider that many pharmacies will deliver repeat prescriptions so signing up for this may also be a good move.
- * Help any fellow members without internet access not to feel alone if circumstances deteriorate.

Please would Group Leaders make sure this information is disseminated to all group members especially those without email addresses.

Wishing you all good health.

Paddy

Chat from the Chair



Hello again,

Another impressive turnout at our recent Monthly Meeting to hear a fascinating talk about our very own Fleet Pond. What an interesting place it is. For those who want to find out more, The Fleet Pond Society is leading a history ramble around the pond on May 14th. Tickets are available from Hart District Council.

If you live in Fleet, you may be interested in coming along to the Fleet Residents' Meeting at the Harlington on March 24th at 7.00pm. I will be there manning our U3A table and would welcome a visit from you.

On April 15th we have our annual Open Morning at the Harlington, starting at 11 o'clock. This is where all our groups set up tables and displays to show off what they do. There is always a good turn-out of members coming to support the event and to find out about other groups they might like to join. However, the main reason for the event is to show off what our U3A does for retired and semi-retired people to everyone else in Fleet. Please invite your family, friends, neighbours, in fact anyone you like – young or older. We are one of the largest U3As in the country with very nearly 2,000 members and 122 interest groups, at the last count, so we definitely have something to show off!

I am always delighted to hear what you have to tell me about our U3A when I see you at Monthly Meetings or just around the town but I would love to hear from more of you. Just let me know what is going well for you in Fleet U3A or what you think could be even better, we are always looking for new ideas. I am sure our Newsletter editor would be delighted to publish any letters you send in.

chairman@fleetu3a.org.uk or to

news@fleetu3a.org.uk

Your U3A will be looking for new committee members later this year. Just let me know if you are interested in finding out more or would like to come along to a committee meeting to see us in action – there will be cake!

Paddy

The whole Committee can attest to the fact that the cakes are home made and very tasty. Ed.

Group Leaders Report

Following on from Paddy's "Chat from the Chair" in last month's Newsletter can I please reinforce the message that it is very easy to set up a new group. If you have an idea for a new group, or perhaps an additional group covering an existing subject, please contact me or any other committee member. There is a very simple form to complete and we aim to have the proposed new group formally approved at the next committee meeting. We even have some start-up funds available if needed. You just need an idea and one or two members who are willing to act as Group Leader to be the point of contact and do the administration.

If you have an idea but are not sure how much interest there may be in joining the group, we are more than happy to put an advert in the next newsletter to assess the level of interest from members. We can also help with finding a venue for the group.

If you'd like to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can also send you a copy of the Group Leaders' Handbook which provides more detail.

Stephen Grosvenor

NEW WALKING GROUP - C

A new walking group has been set up by Anne Morley and Penny Skelton with the support and help of Jack Tyler and Eoin Stephenson.

The walks will take place on the 2nd Wednesday of each month starting promptly at 13.00, we aim to walk for 4 to 5 miles.

The first walk will be on Wednesday 8th April starting from the Barley Mow Canal Car Park Grid reference SU 778541 prompt at 13.00 and lasting two hours.

The second walk will be on Wednesday 13th May at Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve starting from Horseshoe Lake Car Park, Mill Lane, Sandhurst, GU47 8JW Grid Reference SU 820619 prompt at 13.00 and lasting two hours.

The third walk will be on Wednesday 10th June starting from the Barley Mow, Tilford Green, Tilford, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2BU, (PLEASE NOTE CURRENTLY the Tilford Green Car Park is still closed so we are starting at Stockbridge Car Park Grid Reference SU 873432) prompt at 13.00 and lasting two hours.

If you have any queries or questions please contact by email: penny.skelton@gmail.com or anemmorey63@gmail.com

Penny Skelton

U3A Skittles Night

11th February 2020 at The Jolly Farmer, Binstead.

The event was attended by U3A members from Grumpy Old Men (GOM), Gentleman's Debating Group (GDG) and last but not least Golden Girls (GG). A total of 26 persons attended. Two mixed teams were formed and a total of four rounds of Skittles were held plus a Skittles game of Knockout to finish the evening. During the interval, a quiz by Jeffery Hawkins was held and a raffle was organised by Stuart Williams. A wooden spoon award was also available engraved with "The Worlds Biggest Stirrer". Grateful thanks to Duncan and Sue Meek for controlling the scoreboard and the other kind souls who erected fallen skittles. Pictures were taken with agreement from those attending. The results were as follows:

The Quiz: *First*, Duncan Meek, *Second*, John Nuttall and *Third*, Caroline Noad.

The Raffle: *First prize to:* Andy Kirk, *Second prize to* Caroline Noad and *Third prize to* Jannette McElarney.

Skittles: The highest scorers were: Duncan Meek, Caroline Noad and Stuart Williams all with the same scores. The wooden spoon award went to Robin Cork.

Best performers in the groups were: GOM, Duncan Meek & Stuart Williams; GDG, Andy Kirk and for the GG, Caroline Noad,

Knock out: This was won by Ann Guerin.



**The happy attendees
and the wooden spoon winner:
*Robin Cork,
Skittles Night Organiser.***



February's Monthly Meeting: Fleet Pond

Living locally, it is all too easy for us to take Fleet Pond for granted. Simply put, it is the reason for the development of Fleet itself. It is also the largest freshwater lake in Hampshire. The nature reserve has 141 acres of varied habitats and the pond itself is 52 acres. Most of the reserve is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the whole area became a Local Nature Reserve in 1977.

Another capacity audience heard two stalwarts of the Fleet Pond Society – Terry Austin and Colin Gray MBE – give a masterly, detailed and enthralling account of our most significant local asset. The Fleet Pond Society is the voluntary group that exists to protect and manage Fleet Pond Nature Reserve. From its foundation on 28th April 1976 to the formation of Hart Countryside Service in 1994, virtually all management was by volunteers under FPS guidance.

Walking round the pond, the evidence of FPS at work is there in the form of paths, jetties and pond dipping platforms. It is clear that there are significant issues with invasive species, so there is ample evidence of the hard physical labour required to maintain reed beds and heathland, as well as the newly created islands.

We learned how a seemingly small difference in the height of a sluice gate can have a significant impact, of the constant battle to deal with silting up and how enormous efforts to create a suitable nesting place for terns can be thwarted by the persistence of black headed gulls. Perhaps the top tip was the revelation that bog myrtle is a good mosquito deterrent.

A study of the flora and fauna of the nature reserve reveals many rare and little known species, whose needs have to be taken into account in the overall management plan.

Fleet Pond is not just another country park, so those who yearn for onsite toilets, a visitor centre or a tea bar have to recognise that such facilities are not generally compatible with the purpose and characteristics of a nature reserve. *John G*

Do you remember VE Day?

Are the celebrations of 8th May 1945 something you remember vividly, even fondly? Are you a veteran, looking back at the end of hostilities in Europe, or a child who might remember street parties and bonfires?

BBC One is planning a special programme to mark the 75th Anniversary, and the producer has asked 'our' Alan Grace for assistance in completing the necessary research. If any member is willing to help, please email me on meetings@fleetu3a.org.uk and Alan will give you an email for Jess the producer.

But hurry, the deadline is 27th March!

Spanish Canasta Group

Darn! The Group you wanted to join is full? well here's a fun alternative.

Try your hand in our Thursday Canasta Group- we have a few spaces left. Spanish Canasta is informal and easy to learn. Our group welcomes new players anytime.

Spanish Canasta is a partnership card game using three packs requiring two Canastas to close.

Rather than to challenge memory, our version is more of a battle of wits with a nice crowd. You'll quickly feel at ease by interacting on Day 1; no time allocated for self-consciousness. Feel the momentum, feel the excitement read on!

- make new friends, network or simply have fun
- bit rusty or new to the game..... no worries, full tuition offered
- meet at the Holy Trinity Church Hall at Church Crookham 2.15pm finishing 4.30pm
- Fleet U3A members can enrol anytime, term time. £1 per session.

You are only one email away to reserve your place.

Gordon Shefford

Strollers weathering the storms

We have successfully weathered Ciara and Dennis. Never to be deterred we have strolled twice in February.

We did change the route in order to escape mud and deep puddles. The track alongside the railway line fitted the bill. The heather growing wild is stunning. We always find something new to amaze.

A white van, parked outside a house having substantial construction work, gave us a big laugh. On the road just below the driver's door, was a pair of muddy site boots. Where was the owner, so many suggestions?

We were looking down concentrating on the empty boots, when suddenly I saw the workman sitting inside reading his paper. He found us very amusing as did we !!!

Answer to the quiz, as if you didn't know, was *garrya elliptica*. Bye for now. *Jenny Teagle*

John Gawthorpe

U3A Sailing Group

The U3A sailing group has had an outstandingly successful calendar year 2019. (We run by calendar year rather than by the normal U3A academic year!). We sail every Thursday between May and October at Hawley Lake Sail Training Centre. We mainly sail in Bosun Dinghies, which are very suitable for us as they are reasonably stable and roomy.



Our members at the sign-up meeting

We divide the sailors between sailors who are qualified to at least RYA Level 2 who do racing to hone their skills, and an Aspirers group who are training for Level 2. This year, we have been very lucky with the weather with almost no days when it was either too still or too windy to sail. As well as the official U3A sailing sessions, our group membership of Hawley Lake entitles people to sail throughout the year, and some hardy souls continue sailing during the winter (but this is independent and not under the auspices of U3A). We are very grateful to the Hawley Lake management for their support to our group, and for their excellent maintenance of the boats.



Keen contention during a race as some Bosuns are heading for the red mark at the left of the picture while others have already rounded it and are sailing away up the lake.

This year we had a record of 49 members, 12 of whom were aspirers. There were a total of 748 person sailing sessions, up from 583 last year, and on average each person attended 15.6 times during the year. There were an average of 27.7 people per weekly session. Actually we could be said to be victims of our own success, because we sail with two people per boat and have around 12 Bosuns available to us, so this means only 24 people sailing. We also have some members on safety boat duty, or running the racing, but occasionally we have to use some of the other boats such as the Quests or the Laser 2000s which are not always so popular. Our record attendance was 32 people, which entailed quite a bit of juggling to get everyone on the water!

This year three members achieved the RYA Level 2 qualification (which entitles them to take independent responsibility for helming a boat). Five members achieved the Assistant Instructor qualification and six achieved Start Racing. Our enormous thanks to our Senior Instructor David Fulcher and our Dinghy Instructor Keith Hall for all their hard work in teaching everyone. Members have also taken courses with the Training Centre to help with safety support during the sailing sessions, three passed the Powerboat course, six the local safety boat course, and ten the First Aid course. Thanks also to Dick Brown as our 'liaison officer' for helping me to run the group.

Unfortunately, our very success means that we are now too full to take on any more members in calendar year 2020. Our drop out rate has been minimal, and as explained above we are limited by the number of boats we have available to us. In calendar year 2020, we plan to run an intensive course for existing members for RYA Level 2, as well as probably some other courses for more advanced qualifications.

Tim Lyons



A well-controlled heel.

Shakespeare Study Group

At the start of the year those group members who had previously encountered ‘Pericles, Prince of Tyre’ had certainly not been impressed. It’s fair to say that many of us opened our text with a sense of foreboding, uncannily reminiscent of the less appealing lessons in our memories of schooldays. Christine West approached the play with enthusiasm, and gradually we gained an appreciation of why it was so popular when first performed. True, most scholars are agreed that this was a collaboration between Shakespeare and George Wilkins, and true Wilkins is nowhere near the Bard in his command of verse.

Nevertheless the plot contains more twists, turns and setbacks than most TV soap operas. There’s incest and murder to start, considerable jeopardy which pursues Our Hero - notably every time he boards a ship - piracy, kidnapping, love lost and found, plus some truly shocking brothel scenes. All of which is resolved in a final scene which the cast of the BBC version play admirably. (The incongruity of a 28 year old Juliet Stevenson alongside her daughter, played by 27 year old Amanda Redman, was as nothing compared to the events of the previous five acts.)

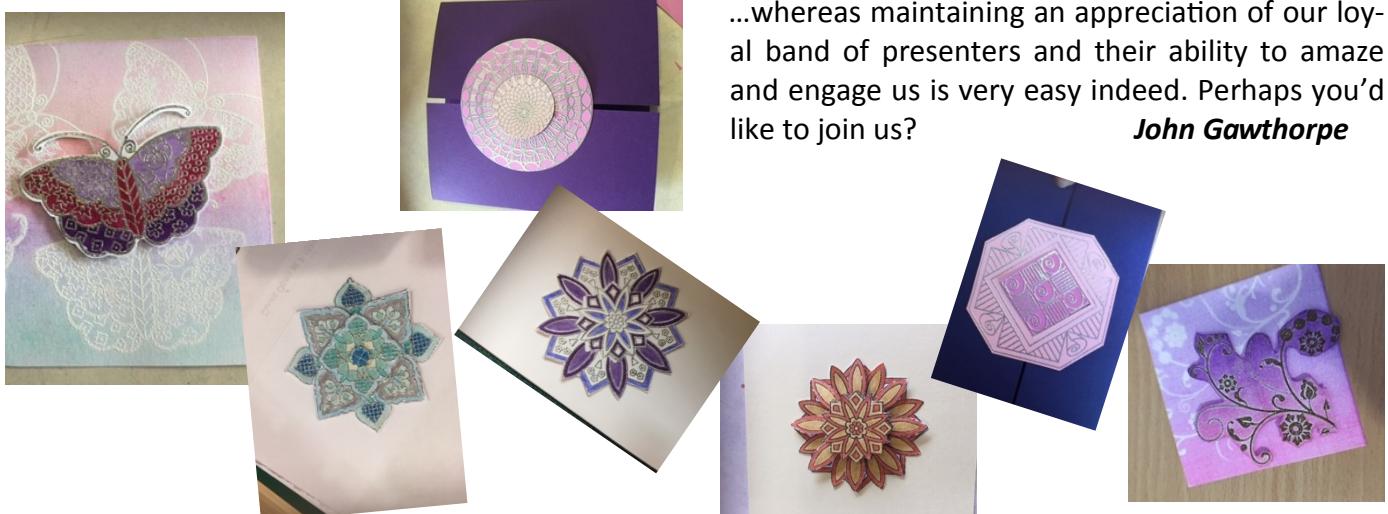
‘Pericles’ has not suddenly emerged as a masterpiece, but, as we now know, it is certainly worthy of study.

For the next few sessions the group are putting the plays to one side, and focusing on the sonnets. Maybe you have a favourite...?

John Gawthorpe

Making Cards 2

Here are a few examples of the cards we enjoyed making with Christine at our last class. We were experimenting with heat embossing. A bit messy but great fun and super results.



Music Appreciation

The term ‘catholic tastes’ is justly applied to the presenters who brighten Thursday afternoons for group members. 2020 has proved no exception. Following our fourth dip into the Great American Songbook – ably led by Mike ‘Mr Jazz’ Rance – Geoff Robinshaw explored new areas within his ‘Wonderful Variety of Music’.

True, lovers of Purcell, Brahms and Beethoven would not have been disappointed, but to my knowledge this was the first time that George Formby had appeared. The Dudley Moore Trio was also featured. And from the *‘these you may have overlooked’* category came a violin concerto from Swedish orthopaedist, Franz Berwald. Listeners in the early nineteenth century were slow to appreciate his qualities – he was certainly ahead of his time – so, unable to make a living from his music, he became the manager of a saw mill and a glass factory.

Brian Smith, who is well into his third decade of presenting programmes to us, delivered his traditional January review of the year’s anniversaries. Beethoven and Max Bruch appeared, but also Charles Avison and Loeillet of Ghent. The Gloria from contemporary composer Will Todd’s Mass in Blue was a revelation ... and in her centenary year, Peggy Lee’s ‘Fever’ was Brian’s entry in the ‘extraordinary recordings’ category.

Finally in Roger Moore’s ‘From Stage and Screen’, we had clips from films and live performances, not the least of which was the iconic black and white footage of Jacqueline du Pre playing Elgar. Then a video of Mozart’s Serenade No 4 gave us all the opportunity to observe the reactions of a woodwind player in a situation where the musician in the next seat had a great deal more work to do. Maintaining an air of concentrated appreciation was seemingly not easy...

...whereas maintaining an appreciation of our loyal band of presenters and their ability to amaze and engage us is very easy indeed. Perhaps you’d like to join us?

John Gawthorpe

Creative Writing

We are delighted to offer the first story from the second Creative Writing Group. Enjoy!

THE SPLIT

He stared at her across the table. He couldn't believe his ears. "What do you mean, you want me out of your life forever?" he demanded, the sharpness in his voice producing a level of decibels in the restaurant that was causing other diners to pause their own conversations, forks suddenly halted in their journey from plates to partially open mouths.

This was not the romantic interlude he had hoped for. She could barely conceal her tears; "I will not put up with any more of your lies", she hissed, dropping her own fork with a clatter, a piece of Whitby wholetail scampi falling noiselessly onto the floor. Some diners had now put their cutlery down, more interested in the unfolding tableau than their food.

"Your so-called new business venture", she scoffed, "...and the supposed long hours working late into the night. It was a bloody kebab van, for God's sake, and that little tart I caught you canoodling with..." Her voice cracked and her shoulders started to shake.

"She was one of my best customers", he riposted, instantly wishing he could un-say it. "And anyway, I haven't told any lies", he continued lamely, and fairly truthfully.

"You lied by omission then", she snapped, "you said this business would see us financially secure for the rest of our lives! When I think of all the time I've wasted with you...." She was sobbing openly now, and looking markedly less attractive than at the start of the evening, as tears, mingled with mascara, trickled down her overly rouged face. Suddenly, grabbing her handbag, she jumped to her feet and strode purposefully towards the exit, the effect slightly spoiled by her stiletto heeled foot slipping on the piece of discarded scampi, causing a wobble that would have effectively crowned the evening's entertainment for the other customers.

He sat with his head bowed, his partially devoured sea bass staring balefully up at him. He got out his phone and buried himself in the contents of its little screen, in an attempt to escape the room's attention. He reflected ruefully on his life; OK, running a kebab van hardly made him a captain of industry, but at least it was a step up from helping out at the car wash, or rather a 'key executive of a premier automotive valeting company', as he advertised it. And, as for being caught "canoodling", he had only admitted the lovely Vanessa behind the van's counter when she said she was cold. He had given her a free Doner and she had responded by planting a kiss on him. Did that make her a tart, or himself a customer of hers?

And what rotten luck that SHE, of all people, happened to stop by the van at that very moment. He had never even thought she might be a kebab enthusiast. Anyway, it wasn't as if she wasn't given to hyperbole herself; what did she say, "...all the time I've wasted with you"? He scrolled through the phone's diary. He grunted; thought so, it was less than three weeks since their speed dating encounter.

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Rollers Visit to Blenheim Palace

Thursday May 14th Depart 8.45am Cody Sports & Social Club, depart Blenheim 4.00pm.

Book at the February meeting or by email/phone.

**Cost £38 based on 33 people including one wheelchair user.
An accessible coach NOT a double decker bus!! Cost includes entry to the Palace and Gardens. A free 40minute tour of downstairs and upstairs (steps no lift) optional.**

Driver's tip not included. Parking costs are n/a.

Payment in full at the time of booking, cheques made payable to **fleet U3A**.

Liability and refund policies are the same as the U3A visits group (see page 6 of Fleet & District U3A Programme 2019 to 2020.)



Jenny Teagle

Visits

It was a ‘Wonderful Feeling’ when we left Sonning Mill in the rain, after the aptly named show ‘Singin in the Rain’. Yet again, Sonning really put on a fantastic show. ‘Real rain’ wonderful costumes and the most irritating leading lady. Her acting was brilliant, and I did wonder what her ‘real life voice’ was like.

Those in the front row had waterproof covers for protection, so when the lead man with a glint in his eye, twirled his umbrella while dancing in the rain, the next row were not as fortunate as we all got sprayed. I know you are humming the tune as you read this! As Miranda Hart says ‘such fun’!

We have already managed to secure Sonning Mill ‘Top Hat’ tickets for January 2021. Booking for this event will be 10.15 a.m. at the March monthly meeting. This is a very popular visit.

At the March meeting we will continue to sell Hatfield House in April, childhood home of Queen Elizabeth 1 and the setting for many films, the latest being ‘The Favourite’.

In May we will visit Bowood House in Wiltshire, home of the Duke of Lansdowne, rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolia and blue bells and all set in a Capability Brown landscape. Morning coffee a house tour and afternoon cream tea, this is a not to be missed trip.

This will be the last trip for the current U3A year until August when we have the five night stay in Scotland, still a few rooms left.

Good company, fun & laughter, with no ‘around the houses’, free parking and a pickup point in the Fleet Road, travel by luxury coach, we hope to see you on our day visits or overnight stays very soon.

We operate a visits waiting list and we would ask that if your name is on **any** visits waiting list that you inform us if you can no longer make that visit and wish to be taken OFF the list. This year people caused a lot of extra work for us by not informing us of a change of mind.

If you have taken the time to read this article, can I direct you to the visits web page where you will find ALL up to date information and booking procedures. www.visits@fleetu3a.org

We are working hard on new visits for 2021

Carole Matthews

MONTHLY MEETINGS PROGRAMME

2020

January 15th **The Story of Berlin 1931 to 1989**

Speaker: Alan Grace

February 19th **Fleet Pond**

Speaker: Colin Gray MBE

March 18th **In search of Elgar**

Speaker: Richard Wigram

April 15th

Fleet U3A Open Morning

Groups provide exhibits / Displays and information regarding their Group

May 20th

Al Bowlly, Britain's first pop star

Speaker : Jerry Ward

June 17th

The Flying Girls

Speaker: Anita Mays

John Gawthorpe



Don't forget to come along from 9:45 am for a coffee and a chat in the function room next to the main hall of the Harlington.

COMMITTEE

EMAILS



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