



NOTICE BOARD

Newsletter deadline : 5 p.m.
Friday 24th January 2020
Next issue date : Monday 10th February 2020

Please try to restrict your articles to fewer than 350 words

!!! IMPORTANT FOR GROUP LEADERS !!!

The Newsletter is now distributed directly, to all with an email address, using the Beacon System. If possible, take a printed copy to your meetings for those without emails. Tell your members that it can be found on our website (www.fleetu3a.org.uk).

GROUP LEADERS' MEETINGS

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

VISITS 2019

11th December : Bournemouth Christmas Tree Festival & Russell Cotes House & Gallery

VISITS 2020

26th January : 'Singin' in the Rain' at Sonning Mill
 28th March : Greenwich Painted Chapel
 3rd April : Torquay
 23rd April : Hatfield House
 19th May : Bowood House & Garden
 6th August : Edinburgh Tattoo

Chat From The Chair

Hello again,

We were delighted to see 290 members at the AGM on November 20th. Thank you for coming along to hear what your committee have been doing this year. If anyone would like to read my annual report, it can be found on our website at www.fleetu3a.org.uk and attached to this Newsletter.

I was very happy to be re-elected as chair of our successful and ever growing U3A. I love the role, even the tough bits, and was delighted to hear so many appreciative comments from the members before and after the AGM. However, according to our constitution, this is my last year as chair. No one has stepped up to be vice-chair as yet so watch out for arm twisters in your vicinity!

Our committee of trustees is also nearly complete but we still need an Enquiries Secretary/Programme Secretary. We have role descriptions available for anyone who is interested and people on the committee who have done the roles before to offer advice and help. Please ask me for more information on chairman@fleetu3a.org.uk.

Trustees share the workload and obligations of running our charity, Fleet U3A. There are legal requirements incorporated in the role as dictated by the Charity Commission and central government but we share the responsibility and the work. We have trustee indemnity insurance, provided by the Third Age Trust as part of our affiliation with them. Being a trustee is a serious commitment but, as a committee, we endeavour to make it as enjoyable as possible. After all, we are all volunteers, just like you.

Two weeks ago, Carole Howlett and I attended a Third Age Trust conference in Alton. It was an interesting day attended by many U3As in the region. I was particularly interested in the workshop, 'Ideas for New Groups'. Some of the ideas I picked up were:

- TED (Technology, Education and Design) Talks – as a basis for group discussion,
- Bus Pass group – often using Park and Ride in nearby towns and cities,
- Armchair Travellers – research new place, watch videos, discussions,
- Arts from All – discuss paintings, theatre, books etc.,
- Geocache group,
- Knitting for Living – knitting and crafts for charities,
- Village Studies – research and then visit local villages and towns,
- Walking with Dogs,
- Walking with Cameras,
- Puzzles and Mind-games,
- Cryptic Crosswords – TAT Advisor available,
- What the papers say,
- Cribbage,
- Snooker Group, and my favourite
- Anyology – decide which 'ology' to study, research and feedback

Just let us know which one you would like to set up! All the funding and support you need is available immediately. I hope you all have a peaceful and enjoyable time over the Christmas break. Thank you to all our volunteers for another successful term of U3A activities, enjoy your rest and then come back ready for more in January 2020!

Happy Christmas, Paddy

Shakespeare Group

At the risk of offending those who simply cannot bear 'modern' performances of the plays, the Shakespeare Group has recently been blowing the dust off 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Seemingly well remembered from school days, on closer examination the play has a very harsh edge. 'Marry who your father chooses or die' as a choice for a daughter seems unconscionable to us.

In part that's why Sir Nicholas Hytner's production at the new Bridge Theatre, deftly switched speeches so – spoiler alert - it was Oberon not Titania who fell for Bottom the weaver. In contrast, Russell T Davies TV adaptation showed John Hannah as Theseus to be irredeemably harsh and domineering. The version performed at the Globe was altogether more appealing.

Thanks to Mike Mellor's enthusiasm for 'the Dream' – and the U3A paying for the necessary licences – we have the opportunity to read, study, discuss and watch the play in all its complexities and variety.

John Gawthorpe

Table Tennis

Recently, we have encountered problems whereby members who have signed up for Table Tennis have been turned away by reception at the Hart Leisure Centre. Due to Health and Safety there is a limit of 40 persons in the section of the hall where we play. We have more than 40 members signed up but, because of holidays, injuries, health problems, other social activities and looking after grandchildren, etc., we have kept below this limit until recently.

Regrettably, I cannot accept any new members.

A Fleet member, who was interested in playing Table Tennis, contacted reception at the Leisure Centre directly and was told that if they are a U3A member they could attend. As you will see from the foregoing, I cannot allow this to happen.

If anyone is prepared to take on the post of a second Table Tennis group leader and have sessions at a different time or day, this could alleviate the problem. I would be willing to give advice.

John Asprey, Group Leader of Table Tennis.

Music Appreciation Group

November's presenters were firm favourites Mike Rance and Alan Grace.

Mike used his theme 'Trios' to play a wide variety of music, across a range of styles and formats. We learned about the 'minuet and trio' section of a classical symphony, as well as hearing from both the Andrews Sisters and the Beverley Sisters.

As a jazz aficionado, Mike played tracks from the Bill Evans trio and the Kora Jazz trio, but surprised some of his audience with selections from Vaughan Williams, Schubert and Poulenc. Add Cream, Emerson Lake & Palmer to Mozart played by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and it will be readily understood that this was an intriguing, eclectic and thoroughly fascinating programme.

Next year it will be 'Quartets', though first on Thursday 9th January at 10:30 'MAG' and 'JAG' join for another exploration of the Great American Songbook.

Alan Grace's time in the British Forces' Broadcasting Service saw him influencing the careers of a number of sports and entertainment broadcasters, as well as being in at the beginning of 'Two Way Family Favourites'. His daughter holds the record for the youngest person to be mentioned in a request: she was but a few hours old!

'Cobweb Corner' was the BFBS nickname for a varied and unusual collection of recordings, with which Alan is obviously very familiar. From it on this occasion he unearthed a series of pieces on the theme of 'love'.

Clifford T Ward's 'Home Thoughts From Abroad' featured –with namechecks for both John Peel and Terry Wogan as did an informal recording of Kathleen Ferrier very much in party mood. 'Song to the Moon' from Dvorak's opera Rusalka highlighted the lovely voice of Summer Watson, and Victoria de los Angeles and Elizabeth Schwarkopf relished The Cat's Duet (attrib Rossini).

'Clarice', the original title of Elgar's 'Salut D'Amour' sat well alongside Netani Davreth's version of Caneloupe's 'Bailero Lero', in a typically well-crafted programme.

All U3A members can enjoy Alan on January 15th, talking about 'Berlin 1931 -1989' at our Monthly Meeting.

John Gawthorpe

New Members Coffee Morning

This will be held in the Baptist Church Hall, Basingbourne Road

on Friday 10th January 2020 at 10.30am

Come along and meet other Members, Group Leaders and see what you have joined

Creative Writing

Guests for Christmas by Margaret Garrod

Roger watched with interest as his wife packed the turkey with homemade stuffing and sewed it up. It was the same every Christmas Eve, but he never tired of watching.

'Anna, you really should let me take you away for Christmas one year. It'd give you a break. Let people wait on you for a change.'

'It's a kind thought, but no thanks. Christmas is hard work, but I prefer my own cooking to anything an hotel has to offer.'

'It would solve one problem though.'

'What's that?'

'Insufferable guests.'

'Oh, you mean Rick and Tara. But it wouldn't be Christmas without your brother and sister-in-law.'

'I guess not, but you have to admit a little of them goes a long way. Plus, I think it's a cheek they expect to come here every Christmas.'

'Well please don't ever suggest going to theirs; by her own admission Tara's a terrible cook.'

'Perhaps she isn't and it's a ruse to get out of entertaining us.'

'I don't think so, Rick's always telling me he wished she had half my cooking skills.'

'I wouldn't mind so much,' continued Roger, 'if they left when they're supposed to, but two years' running, they've pulled the same stunt and frankly it's wearing a bit thin.'

'Oh, you mean the one where Tara slurs, "I think we've drunk a bit too much - hic - probably not safe for us to drive home - hic - any chance of a bed for the night?"'

'That's the one. Have I told you that you do a wicked Tara impression?'

'Frequently. Don't fret. Surely, they won't try it on for a third time, but I'll make up the spare bed just in case.'

Rick and Tara were due at noon on Christmas Day and Roger was not surprised when the doorbell rang five minutes before.

'Come in,' he said. 'Happy Christmas. My, that's a lot of bags. Are they all presents?'

'Mostly,' said Tara, 'but that one isn't,' pointing to one that looked suspiciously like an overnight bag.

'Something smells good,' said Rick popping into the kitchen to give Anna a hug.

'And I hope it tastes good too,' she responded warmly.

Roger poured out large sherries for them all and found himself refilling the guests' glasses at least twice.

Lunch was a jolly affair with Rick telling some near the knuckle jokes and Tara letting out loud guffaws in response.

'Hey Rodge,' said Rick, 'Got another bottle of Polly Fume? This one's empty and so's my glass.'

Roger rolled his eyes at Anna. 'Sure thing Rick. Just don't forget that one of you has got to drive home.'

'Not a problem. We'll be fine, won't we Tara?' and he winked at his wife as Roger went to fetch another bottle of Pouilly Fumé.

After lunch they enjoyed a vintage port while they opened presents. Roger's gift from his brother was a Spider-man onesie which Tara insisted he try on. Of all the ridiculous presents he'd received from Rick over the years this had to be the worst. It might have helped if he'd got a bigger size, but it was rather tight and left little to the imagination. Tara was beside herself with laughter.

The afternoon wore on and after a few games of charades in which Tara managed to put in a lewd performance for the most innocent of book and film titles, Anna suggested a few turkey sandwiches before they headed home.

'Lovely jubbly,' said Rick, 'and perhaps some of your delicious sausage rolls Anna.'

'Of course, Rick. I made them with you in mind.'

Despite Tara saying she still felt stuffed from lunch, she managed several sandwiches, sausage rolls and a huge slice of Christmas cake.

By the time supper was over, Roger couldn't wait for them to be gone, so he and Anna could have some time on their own.

'I guess you need to get back for the cat,' he said to Rick.

'Oh, she'll be fine, Tara left out plenty of food. Thing is, old man, I don't think either of us is fit to drive. Any chance of a bed for the night?'

'Funny, I thought that might be an issue, so I took the liberty of booking you a taxi.'

'A taxi,' exclaimed Tara. 'But that'll cost a fortune. And we've got to come back for the car.'

'No rush,' said Roger and with that the doorbell rang. 'They'll be out in a moment,' he said to the taxi driver.

© Margaret Garrod



To All U3a Members

Why Not Get Involved

The Calligraphy group is involved with decorating a Christmas Tree for the St Philip and St James Church, Kings Road, Fleet for the Christmas Tree Festival. If you would like to have some fun and join in then please contact

Lynda, Calligraphy group leader

Strollers

We have had an increase in numbers Great news, our numbers continue to increase. We hit the dizzy heights of 14 strollers, our largest so far.

The ground underfoot begins to get muddy, my wheels needing a hose down afterwards. Still our strollers remain stoic and determined.

The grazing rare breeds have moved to winter pastures. Leaves are mulching having fallen to the ground.

However, dog walkers keep walking, the heron remains in charge of the pond and strollers keep strolling.

We aim to continue into December and then break until the New Year.

Thank you all for your support, making Strollers a great success.

Dates for December walks are 9th & 16th. Then we have a break until January 13th 2020.

Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year.

Jenny Teagle

!!! FIND US ON FACEBOOK NOW !!!

We have now created our own Fleet & District U3A Facebook page, which will be developed over time with your help and use.

So please 'LIKE' and 'FOLLOW' our page. Our page in Facebook can be found by putting 'Fleet U3A' in the search box at the top of a Facebook page.

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.

Your Committee wishes you all a Happy and Safe Christmas and New Year Holiday

COMMITTEE EMAILS



Chair	Paddy Powell	chairman@fleetu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Alan Jones	secretary@fleetu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Neil Morley	treasurer@fleetu3a.org.uk
Membership Sec Group Leaders'	Fiona Godfrey	memsec@fleetu3a.org.uk
Liaison Sec	Steve Grosvenor	groups@fleetu3a.org.uk
Events Sec	Carol Howlett	events@fleetu3a.org.uk
Webmaster	Chris Porter	webmaster@fleetu3a.org.uk
Monthly Meetings Sec	John Gawthorpe	meetings@fleetu3a.org.uk
Newsletter	Sandy Redman	news@fleetu3a.org.uk
Enquiries	Barbara & Alan	enquiries@fleetu3a.org.uk
Programme Sec	Fiona Godfrey	programme@fleetu3a.org.uk
Minutes Sec	Barbara Jones	minsec@fleetu3a.org.uk
Venues Sec		venues@fleetu3a.org.uk
Outreach Sec	Jenny Teagle	outreach@fleetu3a.org.uk

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

Fleet and District U3A
Chair's Report for the AGM 2019

Thank you all for coming today.

This is my second report as chair of Fleet and District U3A. It is a privilege to lead such a lively, successful and growing U3A. We are already at 99% of last year's total membership and look forward to welcoming our 2,000th member in the near future.

I have already introduced your hardworking committee. All committee members are also trustees of Fleet and District U3A. They are the people who share the ultimate responsibility for governing our charity and directing how it is managed and run. Our decisions are always based on best advice from experts, thorough investigation by committee members and detailed discussions of the issues as they affect our U3A. It sounds onerous and it is, but it's also enjoyable otherwise we wouldn't do it!

This year the Third Age Trust (TAT) has made a change to the U3A branding logo. They have changed the strapline which sits underneath the U3A logo in all publications. It used to read, 'University of the Third Age' but now reads 'Learn, laugh, live'. It was felt this new strapline better reflects what the U3A movement stands for and is simpler to explain to non-members. Another innovation from TAT is to instigate an annual U3A day, beginning on June 3rd 2020. We will want to participate here in Fleet so volunteers and good ideas please.

The most important occasion for our U3A this year was the celebration of our 25th anniversary. We marked this milestone by holding a Performing Arts Evening at the Harlington. More than 80 performers gave us a wonderful mix of dance, music and poetry. We had a very enthusiastic audience with only one unsold ticket. I wish to thank Ray Llewellyn, our MC for the evening, Ann Bauer, our stage manager, Mike Brown, our Events Secretary and his small organisation team, but most of all to the performers who gave us so much enjoyment. You were all wonderful.

We propose to hold a similar event every two years. It would be super if more performing arts groups or just individually talented members would like to showcase their skills June 2021.

Last year I reported on our investigations into Beacon, a secure data management package offered by the Third Age Trust, and this year I can report that we have made the important decision to sign up and are now successfully using Beacon. Alan Jones, our secretary and Beacon lead, says that the move to using Beacon as our membership, group management and finance system is a significant and positive change for Fleet U3A leading to a reduction in workload for many of us and increased security of our data. The data transfer from our previous data base and the subsequent membership renewal process in June went smoothly. Thanks are due to Mark Hawes who set up and managed our previous data base. All members with an email address registered with us are able to manage their own data in the Beacon system. They will also receive the newsletter and other important communications directly to their inbox. If you have an email address and are not receiving information from us, please let us know.

Several GLs have begun to manage and communicate with their groups, through Beacon. The advantage is that GLs can be certain that they are General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant within Beacon. They have no need to keep any personal data on their own computers.

This year, the committee is proud of its actions in making our U3A more inclusive. We have a walking group for people who find walking a challenge! Strollers has proved so successful that it now meets every fortnight for a walk and a coffee. There is also a visits group utilising an accessible coach. The group is called Rollers and is for all members whether they use mobility aids or not.

The committee have begun to host a 'New Members' Coffee Morning' each term to ensure all new members have the chance to be properly welcomed into our U3A. If you are a new or nearly new member please come along to any of the meetings to have a chat and meet your committee. The dates for next year are, January 10th and April 3rd. The dates and venues will be advertised in the Newsletter, as you would expect.

I am pleased to report that our general meetings are increasing in popularity with our members. We have enjoyed a varied and engaging set of speakers at the Monthly Meetings here at the Harlington. Ideas for

thought-provoking speakers are always welcome. The side-hall with the pre-talk offer of tea or coffee is proving a very popular meeting place for you all as well as a chance to chat with committee members. Our Events Team are delighted with the excellent attendance at everything they organise. What is particularly gratifying is to see the number of volunteer helpers who turn up every time to set up and clear away. We could not exist without you and your generosity in offering your time and effort in the interests of us all.

Overall, our U3A has continued to grow in popularity and we now have 1,905 members. We have 122 groups each run by a dedicated Group Leader and typically a team of helpers to ensure everything runs smoothly. Nothing would happen in our U3A without this hard-working band of volunteers so I will thank them all, on your behalf, for giving up their time and expertise so willingly. Fleet and District U3A offers an impressive range of activities from which to choose but we are always on the lookout for more so if you have an idea for a new group, please let us know! We are particularly grateful to GLs who host groups in their own homes or in the open air as we are rapidly running out of venues to hire. If you hear of any new venues coming 'onstream' please let us know immediately!

One pleasurable duty for the committee is to consider nominees for the award of life membership of our U3A. Life membership is granted for very significant contributions to the work of our U3A. This year we had the pleasure of inviting Mike Brown to become a life member. Mike has been involved in teaching and promoting the game of Bridge in our U3A for more than 20 years. Due to ill-health he has had to step down from active involvement in our Bridge programme and I know his guiding hand and wise counsel will be missed. He has single-handedly taught hundreds of members to play and enjoy Bridge. Many of you are here today, I am sure. I know you will agree he is a worthy recipient of this recognition of his achievement.

This year I am delighted to report that ten new groups have formed. They are;

- Creative Writing (a second group)
- Canasta
- Italian (a third group)
- Keep Fit (a second group)
- Members on their own, MOTO (a second group)
- Patchwork (returning after a break)
- Philosophy (a third group)
- Rollers (accessible visits)
- Strollers (accessible walking)
- Ukulele (a fourth group)

The fact that there are so many 'second, third and fourth' shows the U3A ethos is working well in Fleet. We teach each other and when the knowledge and confidence has been passed over the 'student' becomes the enabler and begins a new group, so spreading the learning even further. I am very grateful to all the new Group Leaders for taking on the challenge of setting up new groups and making them successful.

This year several groups have had a change of GL so I would like to say thank you and well done to the following outgoing GLs:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Steve Bannister | Ballroom Dancing |
| Rod Marshall | Board Games |
| Fiona Godfrey | Bobbin Lace & Rummikub |
| Carole Brownlee | Crafts |
| Malcolm Hitchcock | Cycling extra |
| Adrian McAnerney | German Conversation |
| Graham Mist | Photography |
| Kevin Manley | Ukulele |
| Len Summers | Art 5 |

Group leaders take on the responsibility for organizing and running their groups regularly, most have weekly meetings. I know from personal experience that being a GL is extremely rewarding but it still takes real time and energy and all GLs are to be commended for their generosity and commitment.

Our U3A would not function at all without our committee. As well as meeting monthly to conduct the business of running a charity, individual committee members lead on various aspects of our work. To begin, I will mention those remaining on the committee this year. John Gawthorpe leads on our flagship event each month, the Monthly Speaker Meeting, which is increasing in popularity. Our much-admired Newsletter is skillfully edited by Sandy Redman. Alan Jones, our Secretary, keeps us on the straight and narrow overseeing our official charity business. Neil Morley manages our money to ensure we spend it wisely for the benefit of our members. Fiona Godfrey expertly manages our membership recruitment and renewal processes as well as producing the Annual Programme this year. Barbara Jones is our very hard-working Venues Secretary as well as taking the minutes at our meetings. Jenny Teagle, as Outreach Secretary, has opened our eyes to additional opportunities to make our U3A more inclusive and welcoming to everyone.

At this AGM, three committee members are standing down. Mike K. Brown has served as Events Secretary since May 2013. All who have appreciated our U3A Quiz, the Christmas lunch, the GLs' lunch, Open Day, Enrolment day as well as many smaller events owe thanks to Mike. He works quietly but very capably leading the Events and Catering Teams to ensure your enjoyment every time.

Leigh Palmer joined the committee in May 2015 as Group Leader Liaison Secretary. With understanding and open-handedness, he has supported all GLs, new and more established, in addition leading meetings and updating the GL Handbook regularly.

Rod Marshall, in his short, but very productive, time on the committee completely revamped our Website before moving to Basingstoke to become a 'hands-on' grandfather.

I know you will join me in thanking all three and wishing them health and happiness in their new-found free time!

Sadly, this year, Pat Welford died after a long stay in hospital receiving treatment for a rare form of cancer. Pat was the very efficient 'first impression' of our U3A in her capacity as Enquiries Secretary. We continue to miss her sense of fun and valuable input at meetings.

You will be delighted to hear that three of the committee vacancies have already been filled, subject to a vote at this AGM. Chris Porter is already in place as our Webmaster. Carol Howlett has agreed to become our new Events Secretary and has been shadowing Mike Brown for some time. Stephen Grosvenor has volunteered to take over from Leigh Palmer as Group Leader Liaison Secretary and is busily learning the ropes already. So that just leaves the Enquiries Secretary role to be filled when a generous member steps forward...

Volunteers are the life-blood of our U3A. Without members willingly giving up their time and effort to guide, teach, support, facilitate, make tea, move furniture and the myriad of other jobs essential to our success we would be nothing.

'Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless but because they are priceless.'

Anonymous

Thank you, the members, for all the volunteering you do as leaders and helpers and for continuing to support your committee this year in striving to make this an even more welcoming, forward thinking and successful U3A.

Paddy Powell
Chair Fleet and District U3A
November 20th 2019