



March 2024 Newsletter

I am pleased to be writing to all members in the March Newsletter, especially to give the news that since the start of the New Year, there has been an exceptionally large number of new members joining our Harpenden u3a.

Since the beginning of the year, there have been, in fact, 18 new members, seven in January whose names were outlined in the February Newsletter, and 11 in February, whose names are listed on the following page. I give a very real welcome to them all. I aim to have a phone call with all new members and welcome them to the u3a.

One factor for our increase in members is our increasing number of Groups which provide interests in an increasing range of subjects. The other reason for attracting new members is the holding of talks on the first and third Thursdays of each month. The first Thursday is for Members' afternoons usually with a talk by one of our own members. We aim to provide a range of interesting topics for all of the talks.

I am pleased to confirm the two talks we have in March. The first is the Members' Afternoon on March 7th at 2.15, when Barbara Cordina will be telling us about her three years as the u3a East of England Trustee.

On March 21st at 2.15, the Speaker talk is by Zoe Jasko, with the title 'What the Wind Saw- Short Stories from the Heart of Hertfordshire'.

You will find on page 3 an up-to-date list of confirmed Member and Speaker Meetings, from March – July 2024.

If any member would wish to give a talk at one of our Member Meetings, please make contact with me.

Roger Thompson roger.c.thompson1940@gmail.com

Members' News

This month we welcome 11 new members in total: **Judi** and **Brian Davis**, **Cora Lau**, **Elizabeth** and **Brian Mitchell**, **Amanda** and **Eddie Jordan**, **Alison Huttly** and **Andy Phillips**. We also welcome back two members after a gap of several years – **Jane Leek** and **Pamela Patel**.

We are very sad to report that **Joyce Thomas** died at the end of February after a long illness. She and her husband, **Alan**, have been members for many years and they had both been former long-term committee members. **Alan** is still our Membership Secretary. Over the years they had belonged to the History Group and the earlier incarnations of the Poetry Group and Music for Pleasure Groups. In addition, **Joyce**, a former teacher, has entertained us with several talks at our Members' Meetings. We send our condolences and love to **Alan** and their family.

We also send our good wishes to **David Collins** who remains in hospital after breaking his leg badly in January. He has now been moved to rehab and will soon be starting physio to get him back walking again. He is very grateful to **Steve Gledhill** for looking after the **Science and Technology Group** in his absence.

Dates for Your Diary

On the following page, you will find our programme until our summer break in August. For our newer members, it might be useful to clarify that our two monthly Thursday afternoon meetings follow different formats (called **Members' Meetings** and **Speaker Meetings**) although they both start at **2.15** and take place in the main **Harpenden Trust Hall**.

On the **first Thursday of each month**, one of our members gives a short talk and this is followed by time for everyone to socialise and mingle over a cup of tea or coffee. Our meeting on the **third Thursday of each month** is given by a visiting speaker who talks for up to an hour. Unfortunately, this means there is no time for tea or coffee afterwards but there is always time for questions.

This pattern of meetings means that the meetings are **usually** two weeks apart. However, if there are three Thursdays in a month, the fortnightly pattern is thrown out so please check the chart and make sure you have the correct dates in your diary.

Thursday Afternoon Talks until the end of July 2024

all held in the Harpenden Trust Hall, commencing at 2.15

	Member/ Speaker	Speaker	Topic
7 March	Member	Barbara Cordina	3 years as u3a East of England Trustee
21 March	Speaker	Zoe Jasko	What the Wind Saw – short stories from the Heart of Hertfordshire
4 April	Member	u3a members	Joint Art Appreciation/History Groups' presentation of paintings.
18 April	Speaker	Anne Luder	The Plants of the Passover Plate
2 May	Member	Phil Marsh	Israel and Palestine
16 May	Speaker	Graham and Bronwen	The Fabulous Fifties – musical entertainment
6 June	Member	Clive Johnson	Rewilding Wendover Canal
20 June	Speaker	Mike Barbakoff	The First Enigma Codebreakers
4 July	Member	Steve Gledhill	Satellites, Spacecraft and Space Explorers – made in Hertfordshire
18 July	Speaker	Mark Lewis	The World of Art Deco
<i>No meetings in August</i>			

More Information about our Speaker on 21 March, Zoe Jasko –

A trained singer, she is a co-founder and creative director of the Hertfordshire-based Felici Opera. She has a BA in French and History and an MA in Victorian studies – 19th-century art, history and literature.

She lives locally with her family and in lockdown, like everyone else, she was unable to work, so she decided to take advantage of this time and enjoyed walking in the countryside and discovering its history.

Hence her book!! **'Short Stories from the Heart of Hertfordshire'**. It normally retails at £15 but at the talk on the 21st, she will sell copies at £10. Cash would be preferred as card readers don't always work in our hall.

New Groups

German Conversation

The new German conversation group starts on **Monday, 4th March**

The meeting will be very informal. Group members will initially prepare a few simple sentences on the following:

- The week just gone – or what you did on a particular day
- Your favourite town/city in Germany or an experience had in that country

It is anticipated that the first meeting will last about one hour.

No doubt we shall move from simple sentences to free-flowing conversation as we become used to regularly speaking in German.

If you need any further information please contact **Brian Ball, Group Co-ordinator** on ballbrian193@gmail.com

Needlecraft 2

For some time, Harpenden u3a has planned to start a second needlecraft group. (Group 1 is already full). For various reasons, Needlecraft 2 has not yet started. We intend to start it now.

If you would like to enjoy needlecraft in a relaxed atmosphere and share our interest for knitting, crocheting, embroidery and tapestry etc., please contact **Judith Moseley, Group Leader** at judithmoseley@hotmail.co.uk.

Reading for Pleasure 3

Harpenden u3a currently has two book reading groups. We are now planning to start a third.

We will meet once a month to discuss a book we have just read. The book will have been pre-selected. It may be a children's book or a serious piece of literature, a thriller or a comedy, a biography or a piece of fantasy. The range of books is limitless and the purpose is in the group title: 'Reading for Pleasure'.

If you wish to join the group, please contact **Group Coordinator, Brian Ball** on ballbrian193@gmail.com

Existing Groups

Bus Pass Group

The Bus Pass Group will be starting again in March. At the moment there are 25 members on the list. This is rather a large number, so perhaps someone would be prepared to start a second group (they are welcome to use the same trips).

Planned trips for March are:

Wednesday 6th March A walk through Hemel Water Gardens and on to Old Town.

Thursday 14th March A stroll around Stockwood Park and coffee/cake at the café.

Monday 18th March Tring Natural History Museum

Wednesday 27th March A stroll around Ware visiting the Church and the Gazebos along the river.

For any further information, please contact **Pat Jackson**, Group Leader on **07811 717738**.

Church and Pub Group

After a considerable gap, the next outing for the Church and Pub Group will take place on Tuesday, 9th April, meeting at St Leonard's Church, Church End, Sandridge, AL4 9DL at 11am. We will be shown round by Vivian and this will be followed by lunch at a local hostelry – details to be arranged. Roger is very grateful for Jan's help with the arrangements. If you are interested in this, or in joining the group on further outings, please contact **Roger Fox**, Group Leader on **07768 695916**.

Creative Writing

The Creative Writing Group has been running for over a year and has grown in numbers. We have recently written stories that contained déjà vu or childhood memories and making decisions ... and too many other topics to include here.

We have shared our stories with other members of the group. We are a very sociable group and we enjoy listening to other members' stories and we talk about the story we have just heard: the storyline, the style of writing, did it make us happy or sad, did it remind us of something, etc.

We now intend to start a second group. If you are interested in creative writing, it's time to 'pick up your pen' or perhaps in this modern age we should say 'put your fingers on the keys'.

For further information contact **Brian Ball** at ballbrian193@gmail.com.

Current Affairs

If you have an interest in current affairs, please feel free to join us.

Our next meeting is on the 19th March (as usual the 3rd Tuesday of the month) in the Randall Room at the Harpenden Trust Hall in Southdown. Doors open at 2.15pm for setting up. We start the meeting at 2.30 and end at 4.00.

Further info from **Mick Nolan** at micknolangalway@btinternet.com

Exploring London

A visit to London has been arranged for the morning of Saturday 23rd March.

We are meeting at the station to travel into London and then on to the Victoria Line to Green Park, where we will meet Paul Barwick, our guide. The walk will be about 2 miles, visiting sites associated with spies and spying in the area.

Paul Barwick gave a very interesting talk recently to the u3a about Nancy Wake (the White Mouse) who was a member of the SOE during the war. He is a former policeman in the intelligence unit and has recently retired. We will end the walk near to cafes where we can have lunch, go shopping or visit other places of interest.

For further information, please contact **Pauline Waddilove** at pauline.waddilove@ntlworld.com

Gardening Group

We are a small group numbering six and we meet on the third or fourth Friday of the month either in our homes and gardens or for an outing. We enjoy chatting about our garden plans and favourite plants and we pass on plants and seeds and share gardening tips.

Winter is a quiet time for gardeners and not the best time to visit gardens but we have enjoyed the snowdrops at Batford Springs and in the Bishop's Garden in St Albans. The aconites and snowdrops have been early this year and Spring bulbs are already much in evidence.

We also had a trip to Aylett Nurseries where there were plenty of colourful plants for sale so everyone was tempted. Plans are being made to visit Kew Gardens and Wrest Park. For further information, please contact **Sybil Marsden** at **01582 762149**

History Group

The next meeting of the History Group will be on Tuesday, 12th March at 2.30, in the Randall Room of the Harpenden Trust Hall.

A presentation will be given by Malcolm Rainbow on the subject of 'The Crimean War'. As usual, there will be a £1 charge towards the cost of the hire of the room.

Can I remind those attending, that the room will be available from 2.15, meeting to start at 2.30. All are welcome. For further information, please contact: **Roger Thompson** at roger.c.thompson1940@gmail.com

Spanish Conversation Group

With 12 regular attendees, our sessions are very entertaining, with members delivering talks on a range of topics which often provoke lively discussion.

A new initiative is that we start the session with each of us presenting our new Word of the Week; this has proved very popular and we are acquiring new vocabulary as a result. We meet fortnightly on Tuesdays between 10 – 11.30. The group is currently full, but anyone interested is welcome to pay us a visit to see what we do; please contact **Rosemary Fenton** on **07443 425826** to arrange a visit.

Walking Group

Winter walks can be unpredictable. With dangerous winds forecast, we cancelled our first outing of the year, only to be greeted by a day of glorious sunshine and gentle breezes. And we shall remember our latest excursion, less for the anticipated snowdrops in Lamer Wood – which were well past their best – than for horrendous mud on the way there. But there were no such problems on an enjoyable walk via Batford Springs, Mackerye End and the old railway line.

After welcoming several new members since the new year, we recently achieved a record attendance, and we all look forward to more good walking as we move into Spring.

Further information from **Hugh Fricker** at hfricker13toller2002@yahoo.com

