



Newsletter Number 80 February 2026

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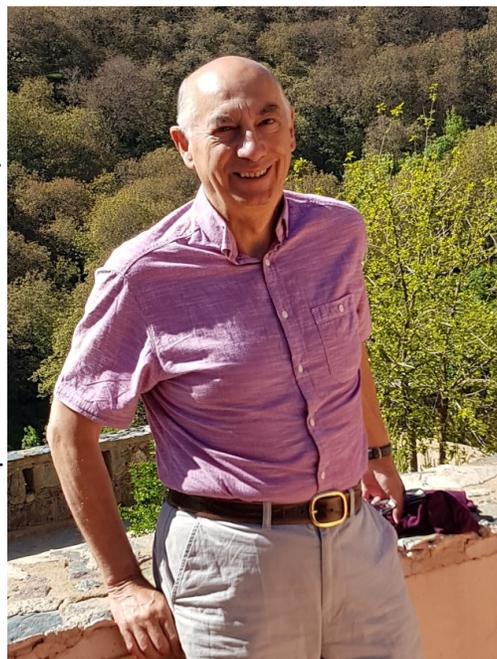
Deadline for the next newsletter items is Tuesday 12th May 2026. Please email newsletter.editor@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Chair person's report, February 2026.

The Buckingham U3A ended the year with a lovely Christmas social that could not take any more guests. Music was provided by Milady Clare's Musicke transporting us back centuries through music played on medieval instruments. As usual we had an excellent quiz provided by Roland. We are fortunate in have a very good team to provide the catering.

Unfortunately the January Open Meeting had to be postponed at short notice because the speaker had flu, but we look to 25 February when we have retired Scotland Yard Detective Superintendent talking about the Mafia and other high level organised crime. If we are to continue to have good speakers, we need a Speaker Secretary to take over from Roland. There is a list of approved speakers to choose from. What you need is some IT skill and an ability to communicate with the Speaker. The good news is they are booked until the end of the year.

The number of members in our U3A continues to grow, but sometimes the limiting factor is the willingness to take on the role of Group Co-Ordinator.



Howard Mordue, Chair Buckingham U3A, contact chair-person@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

The committee is:

Chairman - Howard Mordue	Vice Chairman - Mark Owen
Secretary - Heather Haydock	Treasurer - Andrew Richardson
Membership Secretary - Steve Warnes	Webmaster - Dorothy Morgan
Speaker Secretary – To be confirmed	Technical Support - Steve Meakin
Newsletter Editor - Sheryl Hargreaves	
Group Liaison Officers - Mark Owen, Katerina Owen, Arthur Newman	

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Committee

January Meeting

Group Co-ordinators are reminded to use the Simple email system available via the website, which will enable more inclusive interaction with all members. Thank you.

The committee need a speaker secretary to replace Roland. Also, shadow (support) for treasurer, technical support, newsletter editor and member secretary would be welcome.

Please be involved and help maintain the operational levels for the membership.

With thanks, The Committee.

Group Liaison – New Groups and Outings

It is brilliant that our membership is growing but the number of new groups starting is not in line with that, meaning that we have some people unable to join groups and enjoy the benefits of the learning and friendship that being part of the u3a offers.

Even if a group is full, please email the Group Leader, who should respond relatively quickly about putting you on their waiting list. It may be we could start another group if there is sufficient interest.

We are always looking for suggestions for new groups and we can support anyone who wishes to start one. Have a chat with us at an open meeting.

Coach Outings Meeting:

We are pleased to advise that organisation of Coach Outings has progressed to the point that an early first meeting is being arranged for all interested u3a members to update you. We will email to give you details of the meeting to inform you how the trips will be managed. Those members without email will be contacted by mail, so no one is left out.

A coach company are doing costings and timings for a couple of inaugural day trips so we can get the excursions started, about which we will inform you on the day. Come along with ideas of places you would like to visit that are around under 2 hours from Buckingham. It could be an event or a place that is difficult to get to by public transport or maybe you would like a day at the seaside?

We aim to keep the costs as low as possible. It will be great to see you at the meeting . Keep an eye out for the email

Contact Katerina, Mark or Arthur, email group.liaison.officer@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Membership Secretary – Update

The February report indicates 882 active members which is following the trend. Group Co-ordinators are asked to advise the membership secretary if a member has left.

Contact Steve Warnes by emailing memsec@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Regular Items

Recent Events – Open Meetings

Main speaker 22nd October '25 Roger Edwards – A Short History of Pantomime

From the Greek etymological explanation of the art, we were taken down memory lane with the request to recall as many of the characters as we could. And, we did quite well – almost double-digits. Roger filled in the rest, complete with details of their typical type-cast attire symbols and props.

We had quite a bit of fun while learning an intriguing history.

Contact speaker.secretary@buckinghamu3a.org.uk to book the 5 minute slot.



Recent Events – Christmas Social Thursday 18th December 2025

We had a plentiful attendance for the Christmas Social as the photos show.





Above- Milady Clare's Musicke



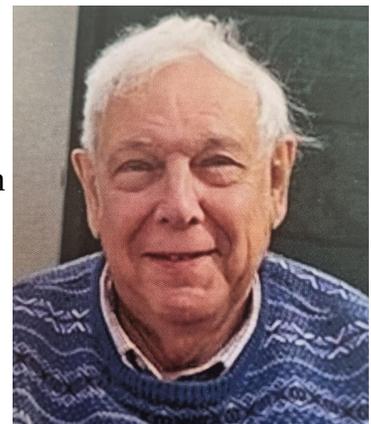
Thank you to Howard for supplying the photos.

Coffee Mornings – New Members

The next new members coffee morning is to be confirmed via the website. All new members should receive a personal invitation from Judy Austin to attend the coffee morning. Email new_joiners@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

In Memory of Steve Heywood

Sadly, we lost former member and Group Liaison officer Steve Heywood on 30th January. Steve was well known in Buckingham and among the many organisations he was involved with included the Lenborough Singers, Probus, Buckingham Rotary, and with his wife Rosemary, started the Buckingham Christmas Parade.



Groups

German - Congratulations Alan Biggins: Doctorate Award

It is with the greatest pleasure we can announce U3A member Alan Biggins has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Buckingham.

Alan is one of the most popular speakers at the monthly social meetings. His talk about 'The Intelligence Zone', describing the importance of this area of the country during the Second World War was very well attended.

Buckingham University has honoured Alan in appreciation of his work in developing an interest in local history of the region through his talks and books, in addition to his help at the university.

Alan's interesting contributions to the German Group meetings are much appreciated by the members who congratulate him on this recognition by Buckingham University.

GUT GEMACHT!

Architecture – Invitation: Join Us

Since its foundation in 2012, the group has grown steadily to the current membership of 30, but new members are always welcome to enjoy our illustrated talks and our visits to places of architectural interest.



Our talks cover a wide range of topics relating to both historic and modern buildings and their architects. Occasionally we have discussions on current issues such as local plans and the government's housing crisis.

In this year's programme we have include guided tours of Milton Keynes, historic Hampstead in London and visits to two National Trust properties in the south of Oxfordshire.

Article by Group Co-ordinator Peter. Email architecture@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Handbells – Newest Member Rosy

Fancy trying something new and fun?

My name is Rosy and I'm the newest member of this group – having joined in the autumn. It wasn't long before we were practicing for the the local BellFest where the theme was dancing! It is a fun get together where we join with other groups and play for each other in a lovely social occasion! I was still quite nervous as I had only been playing for a few weeks!

There we played for a local group in Padbury at a Christmas social, where we were given afternoon tea with a the local residents.

After a break we are now back to practicing together – looking ofr new music to play!

We are a very friendly group and we are looking for new members so that we can play more bells!

If you love making music and can count the beats to follow the tune so that you know when to ring each bell this maybe for you! You won't know til you have a go! It's a brilliant feeling when we get it right!

We meet on a Monday afternoon from 2.30 – 4pm in Gawcott Methodist Chapel.

If you fancy joining us – email Catherine on handbells@buckinghamu3a.org.uk Lifts are available.

Thanks for reading my article. Rosy Fenwick.

Group co-ordinator Catherine. Email handbells@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis – Thursday Mornings

If you play or used to play table tennis and would either like a bit more practise or feel like refreshing old skills then please do get in touch via the U3A email address below.

We are a friendly, non-competitive group who play every Thursday morning from 1000hrs – 1130hrs at the Buckingham Youth Centre adjacent to the Swan Sports Centre. We have three tables and play a mix of singles for an hour and then doubles for 30min. The current cost is £2 per session although this might have to increase very slightly in the future.

Contact Group co-ordinator Geoff, email table.tennis@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Walking Group – Stowe

The Walking Group endeavours to walk in all weathers and seasons. In early February we schedule a walk in Stowe Gardens to see the snowdrops and other flowers, which hold the promise of spring and summer. This year it was dull with a bit of moisture in the air, but the flowers made up for it. The weather forecast no doubt put people off, but an intrepid band set off from the New Inn.

We walked into the Sleeping Wood, where we saw the first snowdrops and aconites. There was a quick talk about the Parlour and the importance of “carpe-diem” (seize the day). We walked across to the Muses and the cheeky Apollo, where we had fun trying to pronounce Mnemosyne, Melpomene and Terpsichore.

A little further on, the mix of snowdrops and aconites beside the water is particularly attractive.



We walked up the hill to the Temple of Concord and Victory then continued along the top middle path, where there were hellebores and cyclamen, and rare glimpses of tiny buds on the bushes.

We went past Cobham, eternally gazing over the domain, and down to the Gothic Temple. Along the avenue and into the top of Lamport Garden, with more swathes of snowdrops and some large wicker birds.

We spotted beautiful turkey tail fungus (*trametes versicolor*).

Then back up from the Bell Gate to the cafe and some decent coffee. The total was only three and a half miles, but the beauty and variety of the gardens is extraordinary. We are very lucky to have them on our doorstep.



Article from Stan.

Contact Group co-ordinator Stan, email walkers@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Croquet – Fridays During April-October

The croquet group meets on Friday afternoons between April and October. It is a game of skill and tactics and new members are always welcome if you fancy giving it a go!



No previous experience is required as the game we play, called golf croquet, is simple in concept and we will give new members plenty of help to understand playing the game.

We play on the outfield of Buckingham Cricket Club (opposite the fire stations on Bourton Road), starting about 2.00 pm.

We have a number of mallets available for members' use and sufficient equipment for three croquet lawns. Games last approximately half an hour and everyone gets to play a couple of games.

The main objective is to have a social afternoon in the fresh air, get a bit of gentle exercise and improve at playing the game. Interested?

Article from Group Co-ordinator Nigel. Email croquet@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Spanish – Refresher for February

New members are joining Buckingham U3A and there are possibly longstanding members in our popular Spanish courses ready for a step up into the Intermediate course. Are YOU up for a new challenge? WE do NEED fresh blood to maintain the course viability. Yes, it works successfully and flexibly on ZOOM and has done so since Covid. Our native speaker teacher working in mainstream education is au fait with this up to date technology to present varied and stimulating topics, chosen in conjunction with ourselves.

When we think of the status of Spanish as the fourth most widely spoken language in the world with over 600 million speakers worldwide it is no wonder it attracts learners within the nationwide U3A. Spain is the country with the fourth largest number of Spanish speakers worldwide and attracts holidaymakers of all ages. Popular TV series such as the current Michael Portillo programmes on key cities and regions and a little while ago the one presented by Eva Longoria on regional cuisine open up insights into hidden Spain.

We gain more pleasure and appreciation of the country through a deeper knowledge of and competence in Spanish. We should not forget Central and South America, popular destinations for our members. Mexico has the highest number of Spanish speakers in the world. We have studied articles about Cuba. El Salvador, Argentina amongst others and of course the recent US intervention has brought Venezuela into full focus. Colombia receives a lot of attention in the media prompting group discussion, so we benefit by exploring the whole Spanish speaking world in our classes.

The USA welcomes us as holidaymakers; for over 40 million people Spanish is the main language spoken at home, that's about 14% of the population. Your enhanced level of the language could come in handy. At least you will understand Bad Bunny better than President Trump.

Members have children and grandchildren currently studying Spanish in schools in fact GCSE Spanish is now the most popular language subject studied, about 137,000 entries in 2025. About 8300 candidates took A level.

Being able to support them is another reason to give your Spanish a boost yourself.

So if you already have a good grounding in Spanish and are tempted to find out more about our course and explore contemporary issues in the worldwide Spanish speaking world, acquire new vocabulary and discuss serious issues of the day of national and international interest why not send an email.

Contact Robert Group Co-ordinator. Email spanish.revision@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Upcoming Open Meetings – 2:30 Buckingham Community Centre

Non-members are welcome as guests and doors are open from 2:15pm.

1) **25th February 2026** – Stephen Parker: Operation Atlantic

Stephen is a retired Scotland Yard Detective Superintendent and will discuss a successful multi-faceted operation involving UK, mafia, and a Bolivian drug cartel. There are mentions of contract killings and a multi-seizure of high-grade cocaine

2) **25th March 2026** - Mark Orchard: Tall Ship Sailing Experience

Mark will present the charity organisation The Jubilee Trust which was established in 1978 with a donation from the Queen's Silver Jubilee Fund. Hear about the STS Lord Nelson maiden voyage and the SV Tenacious.

3) **22nd April 2026** - Dr Helen Fry: British Intelligence MI9

Established December 1939 during World War II, hear about their vital operations supporting Allied forces in enemy territory and valuable work with local resistance movements.

4) **Thursday 28th May 2026** – Meriet Duncan: Why Honeybees Matter

Beekeeper, author and storyteller informs us about the honeybees world and the inspiring lessons they offer us about our community, resilience and our connection with nature.

Contact by email Speaker.secretary@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

3Bs Radio – Tuesdays Noon 3bsradio.co.uk

Just click on ‘Listen Live Click Here’ to hear our U3A slot.

The buckinghamu3a.org.uk website has the schedule – see Flier advert below.

Our U3A member Roger has another article in the local Focus magazine outlining the 3BS Radio background of community enterprise aim at providing entertainment and information to Buckingham and district people.



24th February Life in TV and Stage Ian Reddington

03rd March A Kings Messenger Steve Haines

10th March Christianity Will Pearson-Gee

When? Tuesdays from 12noon to 2pm

<https://3bsradio.co.uk> – click on ‘LISTEN NOW’ button

Want to get involved?

Contact 3bsradiogroup@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Or phone Howard on 07850 869532