



Newsletter Number 82 October 2026

Views and opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or Committee.

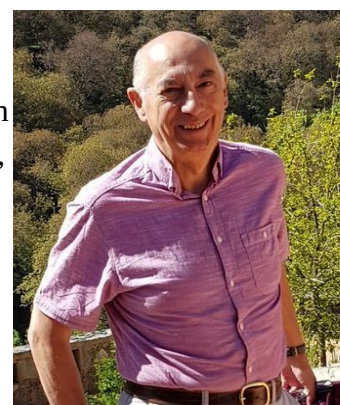
Deadline for the next newsletter items is Tuesday 9th February 2027. Please email newsletter.editor@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Chair person's report, October 2026.

With over 900 members, Buckingham U3A is bringing together lots of wisdom, knowledge and talent amongst local residents hereabouts. This growth has encouraged your committee to launch new activities such as the outings, most recently to Worcester. My thanks to Mark and Katerina for organising these and, from the feedback we had, you certainly enjoyed the visit!

This is my last newsletter as I will be standing down as Chairman after 3 years. Mark will take over and I know he will do a great job. The time has gone very quickly and I was lucky to have a great committee behind me. I am very happy to have started the U3A show on 3Bs Community Radio which is now a regular fixture, showcasing what we do. We have interviewed a wide variety of guests – a florist, a butcher even a Deputy Lieutenant and again I have been fortunate in having some dedicated presenters join the show.

Last month members of the U3A in Buckingham's twin town of Valmadrera visited Buckingham and were entertained to a fish and chip supper in the Old Gaol, together with visits to Oxford and Stowe and a walk round Buckingham. They want to return the hospitality to Buckingham U3A members and are offering a visit their town on Lake Como, Italy in March 2027, so if anyone is interested email me on howard@mordue.org.uk. Contact Buckingham U3A 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 – Ann Elliott	Technical Support - Steve Meakin
Newsletter Editor - Sheryl Hargreaves	* AGM personnel term end
Group Liaison Officers - Mark Owen, Katerina Owen, Arthur Newman	

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Committee

Meetings – Summary

Committee meeting minutes are available on the website, however for those without online access, next is a brief summary:

May: Reminder the U3A Trust magazine is part of the BU3A membership; The Worcester outing was postponed to September due to the hot weather; Open meetings are not recorded due to copyright.

June: The 300th meeting. The July summer social arrangements were being made; Possible purchase of a 4K projector; Committee personnel changes and meetings held online and face-to-face.

July: Initial AGM preparations; Cheque paying issue (fixed); Summer social arrangements complete; Science & Technology move to Community Centre; Group Leaders meeting for October.

September: Offer for BU3A members to observe the online meeting; AGM to allow proxy voting; Speakers and Social calendar plans; Group Leaders meeting 12th October to include Health & Safety; Community Centre hearing technology shortfall and solution.

October: Further AGM preparations; Community Centre hearing solution and mood lighting for socials
With thanks, The Committee.

Group Liaison

Our final offering as we step down as Group Liaison after 3 years.

We have seen groups start but a few have folded. A few successes include Tai Chi, Folk Dancing, Astronomy, Craft, Environmental, Latin, Movement & Dance, Outings, Social History and the restarting of the Science group which has proved to be very successful.

We have also seen more groups operating with shared leadership. This works really well as no one person has to take all the responsibility for the group and the hard work the leader has put in and the social aspect of meeting up continues.

So if you have a particular interest or skill you think would be a good idea for a new subject/activity group have a word with us at one of the open meetings or email us with any ideas
group.liaison.officer@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Please also look from time to time at our new groups page. <https://buckinghamu3a.org.uk/new-groups/>
Info on starting a group <https://buckinghamu3a.org.uk/new-groups/starting-a-new-group/>

We shall continue to be around after the AGM in November but we would like to extend our thanks to all the Group Coordinators for doing an amazing job in keeping our little outfit going year after year.

Wishing you all our very best. Katerina, Mark and Arthur

The minutes of the Group Leaders meeting on Monday 12th October are on the website.

National U3A Online Events: Refer to <https://u3a.org/uk>

The three day U3A festival at York was held 1st July with special guest Johnny Ball. Sheffield and Salford U3As' celebrated their 40th anniversaries recently.

Membership Secretary

Renewals continue where total active members are 758 with about 214 pending, per usual pattern.

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

Technical Support: Community Centre Assisted Listening Devices: Sound Advice The Journey

Erica Barrett, who has severe hearing loss, and Steve Meakin, who has age-related hearing loss, embarked on a journey to understand how to make U3A Open sessions better for those with hearing impairment. This article particularly relates to the Buckingham Community Centre and the U3A – but we hope it will be useful for many other situations.

Erica summarised her frustration, with being unable to hear presenters, as follows: In the olden days when lecturers / speakers looked at the big screen and spoke facing the audience, clicking their pointer to change the screen, it was easier: facing their audience seemed to automatically make them 'throw' their voices and to instinctively speak more clearly. But now, their heads are bent down towards their laptop (so no lips to watch) and they can see that the picture has moved on, so have no need to look up. Also, as the laptop sheds its own light, the hall is darker than of yore, making lip-reading impossible.

All this, combined with challenging acoustics in the hall and not being able to connect to either the hearing loop and/or Bluetooth, means that anyone in this situation might never come to a talk again!

Our Findings

Ultimately the problem didn't appear to be funding, equipment, legislation or the desire to do the right thing. 'It's just complicated' to see how everything fits together seemed to be the issue.

In this article we hope to explain and provide practical assistance to anyone who has hearing difficulties and uses the Community Centre. We welcome any comments to help keep this updated. Also please feel free to share this document with anyone who might benefit from it.

Summary of what we have learned

- There is a functional Hearing Loop in the Main Hall of the Community Centre
- In parallel to the loop, the U3A have a functioning 'Auracast' transmitter
- We have tweaked the PA system for speech from a live presenter
- We are considering live subtitles, if there is a demand

As a result, we have prepared three sources of information as Appendices:

1. For anyone with hearing difficulties
2. For Venue Organisers
3. For Speakers/Presenters

We'd particularly like to thank the Community Centre team (especially Maria) and the Buckingham U3A Committee for all the support they've willingly given us. Also, thanks to the RNID and the NHS for all the useful data we've been able to access from them. For further reading see the website buckinghamu3a.org.uk/2026/10/sound-advice-hearing-information-for-the-community-centre

Contact Steve M by emailing technical.support@buckinghamu3a.org.uk.

Remembrance – Clive Cowdy

Clive Cowdy died recently soon after his wife Rosie. Clive was Chairman of the U3A committee 2016 to 2019. Apparently, Rosie joined from the beginning and achieved Honorary membership in 2024. Clive has a memorial bench overlooking his favourite spot by the river. Clive and Rosie are remembered with respect and warm memories.

	
Mr Clive Cowdy	Mrs Rosemary May Cowdy
1940 - 2026	1941 - 2025
Heritage & Sons - Buckingham	Heritage & Sons - Buckingham
View	View

Remembrance – Dr Paul Radcliffe

The committee also recognise the death of Dr Paul Radcliffe who died last April. Paul was the BU3A's member number 1 at the 1998 inception, and together with his wife Germaine helped ignite our community. Over a 26-year legacy of dedication they watched the charity grow to over 800 members. Paul formed and led the first Science group for over 10 years then the PPE Group (Politics, Philosophy and Economics). Both are remembered with appreciation by all who share in the legacy created.

Regular Items

Recent Events – Open Meetings

Main speaker 27th May: Meriet Duncan – Why Honey Bees Matter

Meriet provided a comprehensive session covering varieties (around 272 in England/UK) separate to Wasps and Bumble Bees, importance to our life (nature, the environment), life-span, travel distance, hive participants and structure – complete with a working model.

Recognising supermarket or retail blends are not always 100% pure honey and contain syrup, was discussed.

The photo (right) shows Meriet's dedication to honey bees with an array of items – hive not shown.

See Meriet's website mdthequeenbee.co.uk for more details and book purchasing.



Main speaker 24th June: Claire Walden – Staying Cyber Aware

Claire outlined her background as an ex-teacher, not of the police, and took us through a question-and-answer session which highlighted our assumptions towards cyber security. Such as, the most vulnerable age group, being 30-40 & 40-50 due to the number of online accounts used. Other topics were the preferred three word phrase plus special character to use when setting passwords, use of two-factor-authentication, knowing your bank emergency contact number, getting to know about Action-Fraud (contact and website), and not to use login links provided by emails (which can contain bogus links, direct website login is best). Refer to BU3A website link for more information.



Summer Social Wednesday 22nd July

About 120 of us enjoyed some social time with food, drink, quizzes and harmonious tones of The Brave Marauders (right).



Main speaker 23rd Sep – David Allen: Blood, Gut & Gore – True Murder in Victorian England.

If you like the popular Tony Harris sessions (offering theatrical biographic accounts of in/famous people), then you would've likely enjoyed David Allen's performance as story-teller extraordinaire, which contained a one-person show impersonating multiple characters of a factual case. The impressive sound effects struck a few nerves. Context and audience participation were wrapped up all the way to a present day connection, with a strong possibility of another session – given the popular choice of topic and vast wealth of material. Photo right is David in full performance kit.



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

Reminder: Open Meeting 25th November is the AGM

The meeting requires attendance of 5% of the membership (about 50) in order to make the quorum.

The AGM agenda will be emailed before the meeting.

A few committee members stepping down due to their terms ending. There will be a speaker this year.

Coffee Mornings – New Members

The next coffee morning will be held on Monday 2nd November and confirmed via the website. All new members should receive a personal invitation to attend the coffee morning.

Email new_joiners@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Groups

Tuesday Gardening Group – Not Just The Plants

The Tuesday Garden Group have enjoyed a varied and enjoyable programme this year, we have had interesting talks on flower visiting insects to advice from a retired gardener from Stowe about what to plant and what not to plant. We are always happy to hear what we are doing wrong!!

It's always nice to get out and about to enjoy other people's garden so we started our outings in April with a trip to Ascott House where we all enjoyed a very nice lunch before enjoying the spring flowers and warm weather, this was followed to a trip to Swallows Nursery in Mixbury for our annual lesson in planting up pots, followed of course with tea & cakes.

In June we ventured to Wicken to visit The Old Rectory, another beautiful garden and we had a tour of the garden with Head Gardener Steve, followed by the usual refreshments.

July saw us at Kingsbridge Farm, beautiful weather, beautiful garden and plants and some stories about the cyclone that hit the farm and tales of cows in the swimming pool which needed the help of 4 fire engines to winch them all out, just because the cows wanted a drink! All finished off with lovely tea & homemade cakes.

In August 16 members went off to Rutland Flower show, by mini bus, on the hottest day of the year, it was busy and not a lot of shade but we did meet Adam Frost from Gardeners World and enjoyed his talk, a very enjoyable day out.

September saw us visiting Preston Bissett where we were treated to a very varied and informative talk from Julia the plant buyer for the nursery.

October & November will see us go back to our indoor venue at Maids Moreton for in-house meetings where we will have a harvest feast meeting looking at and tasting all the autumn produce. Then an afternoon delving into a bag to see what comes out to talk about. Our Christmas social will finish the year off with a buffet lunch, entertainment and a visit from Santa.

Anyone interested in joining our happy, friendly group, please get in touch, we meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm.

Photo right: Rutland Flower Show, meeting the star of the show Alan Frost





Reflections



Enjoying the Sunshine



Spring flowers at Ascott House



Always enjoy the tea and cakes

Contact Margaret by email gardening@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

New-to-Drawing Group – August Outing

During the summer the New-to-Drawing group met on August 5th for lunch and a sketching session at Barton Hartshorn church, which originated from a 13th century chapel and extended in 17th century when the village was more active.

We enjoyed a pleasant afternoon together and raised £195.00 for the World Vision Venezuelan earthquake appeal with contributions from members and friends.

Photo (right): Sketching among church grave stones, with HS2 donated Coronation bench (top right).



Contact Jan by email new-to-drawing@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Poem by Tom Livingstone - Around The Corner I Have A Friend

Around the corner I have a friend,
in this great city that has no end.

"Tomorrow" I say! "I will call on Jim
just to show I'm thinking of him."

But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes,
and the distance between us grows and grows.

Days go by and time rushes on,
and before you know it, a year has gone.

I never see my old friend's face,
for life is a swift and selfish race.

He knows he's never left my mind,
and I'm sure he feels the same in kind.

Why is it when we're so close by
that we never meet up eye-to-eye?
What happened to the time we had to spare
when we lived our lives without a care?
We were younger then, but then again
we're no longer busy, fruitful men:
no longer playing life's foolish game;
no longer trying to make a name.

Life no longer gets in the way
Let's get together and laugh and play
As we once did 'back in the day'.
Jim's around the corner...yet miles away,

'Time is a healer', or so goes the phrase,
but time can be ruthless in so many ways.

It is cruel and kind in equal measure.

A sad posting appears while browsing at leisure

'It is with great sorrow that we must declare,
the sad passing of our father Jimmy McNair'

Why, why, why after years of postponing
could I not just have acted instead of condoning
sitting on my backside rather than walking
those steps to your door for us to get talking?

It could have been you; it could have been me.
Neither of us pushed for the other to see.
And so, this is what we deserve in the end,
around the corner a vanished friend.



Tom L 25/01/2026.

Craft – Mix of Skills

The Craft Group has been going for a few months and is an enthusiastic group of people – some are experts and some are beginning.

Our individual group leaders (knitting, crochet and card making) are doing a brilliant job.

Some people have never knitted (or never crocheted) so its a completely new skill to them. People are bringing in patterns and books to share.

The card making group are learning size, proportion, and whether putting an extra ‘elephant’ or something is really necessary! It’s not just about sticking things down. We have taken some cards to be sold by a charity and we hope to have some for sale at the AGM.

Our embroidery group are doing such different things that they exchange ideas and encourage each other – this group’s end products take much longer to complete especially if they talk too much!

We hope to have a couple of demonstrations in the near future.

Some weeks ago we had a spare material sale the money went to charity.

So our progress is encouraging and we have vacancies for new members.

I share (below) a couple of photos – you can see there is a lot of discussions as well as activity! When our group started it consisted of many people coming in alone, but now they are meeting up with friends to do their craft. What could be better than that 😊.



Contact Lesley or Deirdre or Arthur by email crafts@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Travel/Outings – Worcester Trip

Our second outings trip was planned for May but due to the Government health warning and a summer full of unpredictable heatwaves, we decided to defer it until September.

So after days of heat, we had a typical rainy start to the day but as we approached Worcester the grey skies cleared and we had a comfortably warm day.

Worcester is an interesting medieval riverside city and people enjoyed visiting Greyfriars house, Royal Worcester porcelain museum, the Commandery, the Guildhall and the river.

Some of us went for a guided tour to the very small George Marshall Medical Museum situated in the hospital (it seemed bizarre to bring a sightseeing coach tour into a hospital). We learnt about early medicines, the use of leeches and how just a ring of a bell would cure the plague (by disrupting and clearing the miasma which they believed spread the plague). There is a fascinating display of medical instruments. The BMA originated in Worcester, started by Sir Charles Hastings.

Many thanks to our member Anne who sat in the amputation chair whilst the museum curator Louise dressed in bloodied apron, wielding a saw, knife and bucket explained and demonstrated the amputation process on Anne's arm with panache. No mishaps happened and Anne lives to tell the tale (unlike many of the original patients).

The amputation chair was used by esteemed surgeon Robert Liston for the only operation to have ever resulted in 300% mortality, due to a few "accidents" during a procedure, and is still a world record for the most number of deaths occurring during surgery on one person.

Despite the difficulties in rearranging the trip, judging by the lovely comments it was an enjoyable day out.

Photos from Michelle C: Right Worcester Cathedral; Below left armour display; Below right statue of Edward Elgar; Lower right Tudor House.



Contact Katerina or Mark by email
outings@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis – Spaces for new players

The Monday Table Tennis group have been meeting now for a number of years at the Buckingham Youth Centre between 10.00am and 11.30am and have space to take 6 – 8 new players.

We are a mixed ability group which caters for those who have an understanding of the game, with experience of playing at club level rather than league level, and would like to improve their own game.

Contact Jim Whatmore by email table.tennis.monday@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Why You Won't Be Bored By Board Games Anymore!

No matter what your fancy, if it fits on a table top then we can play it - and we've some big tables!

Draughts, chess, backgammon, dominoes, playing cards...

But if your view of board games is limited to Monopoly, Scrabble and maybe Cluedo we have important news for you!



Allow us to expand your view of modern table-top games.

Over the past couple of years we have been increasing our repertoire of games to include MahJong which members have thoroughly enjoyed and introduced a few strategy games including Carcassonne and Ticket to Ride. Quirkle is another new game we've embraced after it being brought in by one of our members.

We now meet every week in the **White Hart Hotel** on **Wednesdays from 10 am**, where we have been made very welcome by the staff. Delicious tea and coffee (and even a slice of cake) is available from our hosts.

There is no need to pre-book, just turn up any Wednesday at 10 am.





If you have a favourite game then bring it along. You're most welcome to just sit in and watch, learn a new game or even bring along one of your own favourites and find some more players - just don't forget to bring the rule book!

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Contact Mark by email board.games@buckinghamu3a.org.uk

Thanks For 10 Years of Wild Life, Tony

In September Tony Dines completed ten years as Co-ordinator of the Wildlife group and what a decade it has been. Tony has organised trips to locations near and far such as nature reserves, arboretums, lakes, forest trails and the like. This has given the group the chance to observe much flora and fauna ranging from large birds of prey & mammals down to tiny insects & flowers.

2026 proved particularly challenging with trips having to be cancelled due to weather alerts both too much rain/flooding and then twice due to high temperatures! Here are some of the places we have been in recent times:

- Rutland Water to see the Ospreys
- A guided tour of the Dancersend nature reserve where we had a guided tour of one of the first nature reserves in England started by Charles Rothschild. Mick Jones our guide pointed out all sorts of things we would have missed otherwise including fungi and his passion oak galls. Candle Snuff & Ivory Waxcap fungi (photo right)

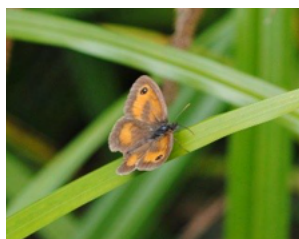
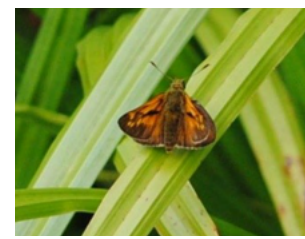


- Linford Lakes nature reserve in Milton Keynes, a hidden gem of water and woodlands that requires a permit to enter.



- The Forest Centre nature reserve at Marston Moretaine.

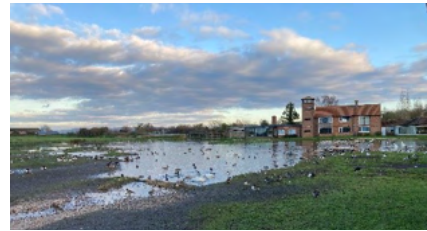
- Salcey Forest for butterflies in July where we found plenty of Gatekeepers, Skippers, Speckled Woods, Red Admirals etc. but no Purple Emperors were seen.



•Batsford Arboretum, a large collection of trees but also plenty of flowers and landscape features. Magnolias & Cherry blossom in the spring, leaf colour in the autumn. An excellent place to eat as well!



Slimbridge WWT centre, where there was a huge collection of waterbirds including migratory visitors such as Bewick Swans, Cranes & Avocets.



This year's programme on our page of the Buckingham u3a website. We welcome new members.

Contact Andrew Cross, group co-ordinator by email wildlife@buckinghamu3a.org.uk.

Staying Cyber Aware - Summary

Below summarises the leaflet provided by Claire Walden at the June open meeting.

Key Actions:

- Use strong passwords: Consider three random words; Add complexity with special characters; Ideally 13+ characters; Unique for each account.
- Consider using a password manager or a book (kept unlabeled and secure)
- Always use two-step verification
- Never share codes with anyone
- Use PassKeys where available
- Have a backup copy of important data stored separately, such as internet (cloud) or removable media
- Apply updates to software as soon as these are available.

Useful Resources:

- Police Cyber Check tool <https://cybercheck.southeastcyber.police.uk/>
- Use this website to check for data breaches: <https://haveibeenpwnd.com>
- For advice in spotting fraud and scams, plus where to report and how to recover after a fraud: <https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/>
- Take Five <https://www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

- Age UK for advice on using the internet safely <https://ageuk.org.uk/information-advice>

- Reporting:

Action Fraud <https://actionfraud.police.uk>

Phishing emails report@phishing.gov.uk

Spam SMS forward to 7726

Contact the Fraud Team at your bank dial 159

Upcoming Open Meetings – 2:30 Buckingham Community Centre

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

1) **Wednesday 28th October 2026** – Topsy-Turvy World of Gilbert and Sullivan

Jim Stebbings devotes his leisure time to musical and entertainment interests, encompassing festivals and studying musical theatre, in particular The Great American Song book.

2) **Wednesday 25th November 2026** – U3A Annual General Meeting

3) **Thursday 17th December 2026** – Christmas Social

4) **Wednesday 27th January 2027** – Tony Harris as Donald Trump

Tony is a favourite in our open meetings, so come along and enjoy an edition of Tony's living persona highlights and perhaps more fun with the question-and-answer part too.

5) **Wednesday 24th February 2027** – Lady Aurelia Young: Finding Nemon – the life of her father sculptor Oscar Nemon

Oscar Nemon was a Jewish refugee sculptor from Croatia, whose subjects include Winston Churchill (House of Commons statue), the Queen, Freud, Princess Diana and more.

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

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

Click on 'Listen Live Click Here' to hear our U3A slot. Our website has the schedule