

Senior

Moments

*The quarterly newsletter of
Bookham & District u3a*

Issue 88

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2026



Happy New Year, albeit a bit belated.

First, I would like to thank all the helpers at the December meeting who made our Christmas meeting a success.

I am trying to get out to our groups and meet as many members as I can.

Just before Christmas I managed to have coffee with a fledgling group, still waiting to be fully formed, the Let's go group. This is aimed at members who would like to eat out, make some visits but would like some companionship rather than going on their own. They have some core activities, namely a lunch (usually but not exclusively on a Sunday) and a coffee morning monthly. The members then suggest exhibitions, cinema, or other outings that they would like to do and see if others want to join them. I must admit I had some worries that men would be hesitant to join, but no, the men of the U3A are not shy.

I went along to the Painting Workshop; it was a day when the rain poured down but this didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the members. The workshop takes place every week throughout the winter, and in a smaller form for some of the summer months. What a group of talented artists. Everyone was working on their own projects, swapping hints, and stories.

We start the year with two new group suggestions. The first is to learn a new language, Swedish. If you are going on holiday and want to try to be polite and learn the basics niceties and pronunciation this could be for you. The second is a listening to music. We used to have a classical music group and one that was interested in opera. This is totally different offering to cover a wide range of music genre chosen by its' members.

What does the new year hold for the U3A? The committee will carry on as usual, but we need practical ideas and suggestions from you.

I would like to think that you as members of this U3A will have a positive attitude and take an active part in our community. When we are looking for volunteers to help, take on committee roles, or become a group administrator I hope the answer instead of "I don't think so" will be "why not?"

I hope to get to your group and meet you soon.



Lyn Farrell

Bookham & District u3a

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Editorial

In this first issue of 2026 I received insufficient contributions from members to get anywhere near filling the magazine, but it is just after Christmas and the New Year break and not so long from the late publication of the last issue for 2025 but I still hope you will find sufficient interest in the pieces I have put together in this reduced pages edition.

If you have a mobile phone of any type you will have access to Google and in the App is this most helpful search facility, I was amazed how good it is.

Val Cross not only produced the most attractive cover but also has her newsy piece on the croquet group.

The articles I borrowed from the head office magazine are mainly for information and I think many will find them most helpful and informative. One article on page 9 gives details of discounts for u3a members

Happy New Year everyone

Maurice Baker



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Cover supplied by Val Cross

New Year - New Game?

It seems early to be talking about the next croquet season, especially as I'm writing looking out onto snow and ice but plans need to be made if you intend to "have a go" playing the brilliant



What to do...what to do...
Angela, Richard and Rob ponder



More pondering...

game of croquet. We play at Polesden Lacey so, while not compulsory, you really need to be a National Trust member or you'll have to pay weekly entry. This season we'll have a four week course of lessons for beginners on Thursday afternoons. Our provisional start date for coaching is 9th April, to be confirmed. The first one is regarded as a "taster" session after which you can decide if you want to carry on - most people do! It's very beneficial and helpful to us for you to arrange to attend each of the four sessions (hence forward planning). Following the course you'll be able to choose a convenient day and time to play and will be warmly welcomed into a group. There are

two main types of croquet games and some members play both, joining more than one group.

We have three tournaments (fun social days) and a day of play with a picnic one Sunday during the season, which ends in October. We may not have the best croquet lawn in the country but we surely must have one of the best views (see below). While some days can be chilly and damp, croquet players mostly dress accordingly and carry on; heat rather than rain probably halted some games last year.

However, playing and socialising in this beautiful setting on a warm summer day is a joy, exercising both body and mind!

There will be a sign up sheet for beginners at the next monthly u3a meeting or you can email our croquet group membership secretary, Peter Jackson:

You'll then be contacted nearer the time with further details. We look forward to seeing you!

Angie and Roland celebrate winning the AC tournament in August



Val Cross

Old coaches

The signal man in this 1951 Southern Railway signal box at Farnham Station, has just rotated the big hand-wheel to open the gates, at this busy level crossing. A&D



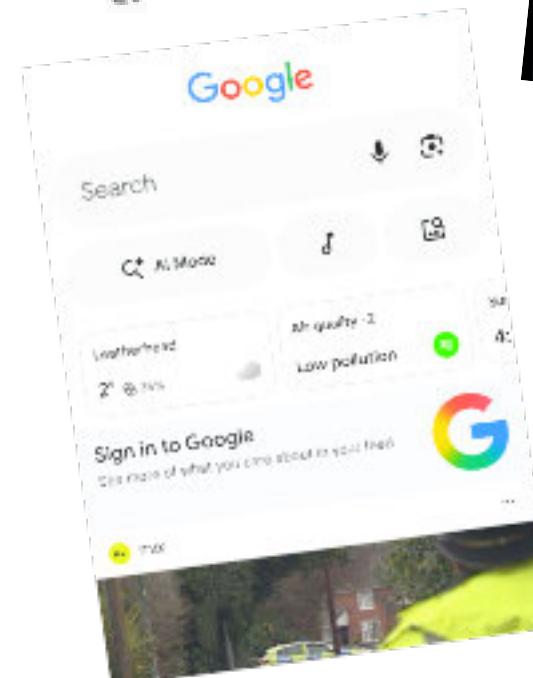
(Aldershot & District) buses along with an ambulance and a doctor(?) in his car and a Tolly's Ale of Ipswich truck make move.

Also in 1948, arriving for The Derby are M&D (Maidstone & District) coaches. The vehicles are now getting rather old, post WW II and are always accompanied by a



Useful tips

A very useful tip I learnt from my grandson was if you open Google App on your phone, any phone you will see in the top right hand corner a small camera icon. If you click on it, it not only



opens the camera but it also has a framed area and if you click on any thing you see it will then show you where you can get it and at what cost. It was first shown to me when

Kathleen was looking for a diary



similar to her 2025 one with a magnetic clip. I looked on the makers website but could only find £27 diaries not like hers. My grandson just pointed the Google App at the diary and up it came with a price of £8 from Amazon- he placed the order and it was delivered the very next day.

Maurice Baker



Sir William Prescott and Bessie

It's not often you get the chance to meet steam engine aristocracy but that was the fate of members of the Bookham U3A Science and Technology Group who visited London's historic pumping station in early April.



On a sunny day our members were shown around the



"destined to pump 19 million gallons of water each day to reservoirs across London".

west London on one of the museum's much anticipated 'Steam Weekends'. Then on to see in full glory their notable 'Great Engines', one aptly named after 'Sir William Prescott', British engineer and politician who died in 1945. This historic triple expansion steam engine is now lovingly restored to full operational use and tended by a group of enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers suitably attired in white overalls. A second similar engine named after his wife Bessie stands by its side and is currently being restored.

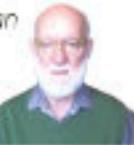
standing over 62 feet high from basement to the top of their valve casings and weighing 800 tons each. Ordered by the Metropolitan Water Board and



manufactured by Worthington-Simpson engineering of Newark in the late 1920s they were the largest built in the UK generating over 1000 horsepower and destined to pump 19 million gallons of water each day to reservoirs across London. While they offer an all too prescient reminder that they formed part of the critical infrastructure that

large parts of an expanding north and west London population in the early part of the last century. Along with their intricately restored motorised steam turbine pumps they were retired in 1980; however, they suffered a much kinder fate than that of a similar sized engine contained on the RMS Titanic during its fateful voyage in 1912. These great engines have featured in many a film describing the history of this tragic ship. Our members easily recognised the dedication of the museum's staff in maintaining these great engines for the fascination of the public, the largest fully operational examples of their type found anywhere in the world. It was a pleasure to spend the day with such engine aristocracy of Sir William Prescott and his dear wife Lady Bessie.

Brian Chapman



Making the most of retirement

A void the cliff edge

It can be quite a shock to your system suddenly leaving a structured work environment on a Friday and facing a blank page of retirement on a Monday; whether you are in a busy work environment enjoying every minute or simply counting down the hours when you will stop working, prepare yourself for it.

Your brain and your body need time to acclimatise, so where possible, reduce your hours and consider how you will spend your time in retirement. This is not always possible but scanning the environment beyond work and checking out opportunities

for structuring retirement in ways that you choose, will make a difference.

Keep learning

The 'Live, Learn Laugh' ethos of u3a with its emphasis on informal, lifelong learning, supported by member volunteers provides such a very uplifting experience. I became a member of East Antrim u3a shortly after retirement. The 'Practical Art' group enables me to explore my creative side, 'Bat & Chat' (table tennis) helps me keep active both in mind and body. I had never held a table tennis bat in my life before, and the challenge of acquiring a new set of skills without judgement or censure is such a joy.

See ageing as an opportunity

Generally ageing is viewed in a negative light but considering the

alternative I welcome it.

At any one time we have at least three ages: our chronological age, our biological age and depending on mood and circumstances the age we feel; sometimes we shift from feeling 80 to 18, (this happens to me quite a lot during 'Bat & Chat').

So reframe thoughts of chronological age, and consider retirement as the next stage of your life.

The ancient Greeks had two words for time: Chronos and Kairos. Chronos reflects the measurement of time passing - seconds, minutes, days. Kairos represents the opportunities and experiences that occur in between times - how someone spends their time, quality rather than quantity. This is what u3a means to me.

Whether you want to share your skills or develop new ones, there is something for everyone.

Religions and philosophies throughout the world promote the idea that 'it is better to give than to receive' and u3a enables you to do both. What a powerful way to spend the next stage of life.

This article was copied, with permission, from the u3a Matters magazine

Air fryers

These new pieces of kitchen equipment have amazing facility for producing cooked food quickly, efficiently and above all tastily anywhere you want to use them. Our daughter who lives in Cheshire came down to us with her husband and a large beef joint for Christmas and proceeded to make a most splendid Christmas day lunch for us. The beef was cooked in the oven in the normal way—it was a large joint. But the vegetables were all cooked in the air fryer and we had carrots, parsnips, Brussels sprouts with sweet chestnuts and of course roast potatoes. All of them taking 20 minutes in the air fryer after being parboiled for 10 minutes. It was a lovely and memorable meal,

I regularly toast slices of bread setting the temperature to 205C for 3 minutes and it produces lovely toast—crisp on the



outside and soft in the centre. One of my favourites is frozen croissants that I buy in a pack of eight from Waitrose and the cold, slimy items become the loveliest croissants after just 12 minutes at 180C



Another favourite is fresh scones. I came across a very simple recipe that involves one heaped tablespoon of self raising flour; one level tablespoon of icing sugar; a pinch of salt and either cream or milk with a knob of butter; mix to form a



dough and cook for 12 minutes at 180C—perfect scones every time and there is nothing quite like fresh warm scones with



apricot jam and clotted cream

for afternoon tea.

I have now almost perfected the way to poach eggs.

I have taken to do a great deal of the cooking for the two of us these days, not only because I enjoy it but also because it gives Kathleen a well earned break from always having to think what the next meal will be. The one cooking task I frequently fail at is bread making, I either make a loaf that is better employed as a door stop, or one that is flat and soggy. I can make a loaf from a pack in my bread making machine but I've always wanted to make a regular loaf from basic materials and it all makes me wonder if an ancestor of mine failed in a similar way and so gave up his named trade!

Maurice Baker

Painting Workshop Group members at work on their projects



The Third Age Trust has developed workshops in partnership with u3a members to provide support, information and advice for all u3a members. The workshops are delivered online using Zoom by Trust volunteers who bring their experience as Trustees, u3a Chairs and Committee members.

All u3a members are welcome to attend these workshops which are informal and informative and provide a great opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and share best practice with u3a members across the UK. If you are curious to learn and would like to join us at an upcoming workshop, please book your place using the links below.

u3as, networks and regions are also able to request specific workshops, if this is something you are interested in for your Region, network or u3a, please read the information at the end of this page to find out more. Additional information and support for your u3a can also be found on the Advice and Guidance webpage.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Coffee Morning

What does it cover? A coffee morning hosted by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee for u3a members to share experiences, raise awareness and help everyone increase their knowledge and understanding.

Date of next session(s):

Tuesday 3 February, 10.00-11.30 Book Now

Monday 11 May, 10.00-11.30 Book Now

"Very interesting and inspiring session"

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

What does it cover? An introduction to supporting u3a to enact their legal responsibilities. If you are in Northern Ireland please complete the form below to request a workshop that covers NI legislation.

Date of next session:

Monday 9 February, 10.00-12.30 Book Now

Finance Matters

What does it cover? This workshop will cover: ensuring good financial practice within your u3a, discuss reporting requirements - what and to whom, give an overview of speaker fees and paid tutors, and to consider the necessary steps for claiming Gift Aid.

Date of next session(s):

Tuesday 10 February 10.00-12.30 Book Now

"This was a really helpful workshop and pitched in a way a non-accountant can understand...and I now feel that I know where to start."

More Dates Coming Soon

We're taking a short break to review feedback from current workshops to ensure they meet your needs as u3a members running a u3a. We will be back in the new year with more opportunities to join our workshops.

Workshop support

If you require help with Zoom prior to attending a workshop, any additional support, or if there isn't a workshop date listed for one you would like to attend please email volunteeringteam@u3a.org.uk

Workshop requests

We can arrange to run online workshops for groups of u3as, networks and Regions. If this is something you would like to request, please click on the button below and complete the form.



The changing face of retirement

In this series, we debate the topics that affect the u3a and wider society. Here, CEO Iain Cassidy

considers what retirement may mean now – and whether the organisation is keeping up.

Not long ago

over coffee with friends, the conversation turned to retirement. “Are you looking forward to it?” someone asked. For a moment, I didn’t quite know how to answer. The truth is, the old idea of retirement – work until 60 or 65, draw a pension and spend days at leisure – no longer fits everyone’s reality. Indeed, in my last column (u3a Matters, Autumn 2025), I considered whether the way we view volunteering going forward may need to change, not least because volunteering and retirement often go hand in hand. That’s because today many of us are

working longer, juggling caring responsibilities or still paying off mortgages well into our 70s. Others take mid-career breaks or combine part-time work with volunteering. In this new landscape, retirement feels less like a single milestone, and more like a shifting, complex transition. So, the question is: how do we, the u3a, keep pace with this change? Perhaps the key lies not in altering what we stand for, but in how we reach people. Could we become a bridge for younger people who have stepped back or are working reduced hours? Could we be a space where confidence is rebuilt through shared purpose, meaningful friendships and the joy of learning? Exploring these questions challenges us to think about how our model – and the way we deliver it – must evolve to meet the expectations of the next generation. Of course, being part of the u3a doesn’t take away life’s challenges, but research shows that volunteering and staying active in later life can slow biological ageing. That makes your

local u3a walking group, language class or book club more than just a pastime – it could be a lifeline. Retirement may be changing shape, but the need for purpose, growth and connection is timeless. And this is where u3a can – and must – play a unique role by helping people both today and tomorrow navigate the tricky waters of later life with optimism and resilience.

- How do you think u3a can reach and support this changing

demographic? Please email editor@u3a.org.uk and head your email: RETIREMENT



U3A Book Group 2 Average Voting scores 2025

Title	Author	Style	Content	Good Read	Range
We Are All Birds of Uganda (2021)	Hafsa Zayyan	6.7	7.9	7.6	6-10
The Beloved Girls (2022)	Harriet Evans	6.3	5.8	5.6	4-9
Rites of Passage (1980)	William Golding	4.7	5.7	4.1	2-9
American Dirt (2019)	Jeanine Cummins	8	8.7	9.1	7-10
Tulip Fever (1999)	Deborah Moggach	6.9	6.8	6.6	4-9
Oh William! (2021)	Elizabeth Strout	7	6.8	6.8	5-8
Small Things Like These (2021)	Claire Keegan	8.4	8	7.6	2-10
Past Tense (2018)	Lee Child	6.5	5.9	5.2	1-9
The Dictionary of Lost Words (2020)	Pip Williams	7	7.2	6.6	3-10
Moving (2015)	Jenny Eclair	7.7	7.6	7.2	5-9
Whale Fall (2024)	Elizabeth O'Connor	4.8	4.8	3.7	0-7

All the books we read this year were fiction and all except two were written in the last decade, but in other ways there was quite a variety, including thrillers and historical novels.

The most popular book was American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins, whose family includes migrants to the USA. The story starts in Mexico where Lydia and her 8 year old son manage to escape when her journalist husband and all the rest of her wider family are murdered by a drug cartel because her husband had written an article

exposing the leader. The account of their journey to the US, alongside other migrants escaping violence in South America, is full of gripping high adrenalin drama

punctuated by quieter passages describing their former lives. The author was criticised for telling a Latino story when she is white but she spent years researching it and was keen to write from the viewpoint of the victims rather than the perpetrators and law enforcers. While she was writing, the US view of Latino immigrants increasingly saw them as resource-draining criminals rather than human beings who can contribute. This book provoked much discussion about US drug problems and attitudes towards



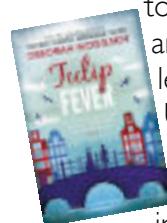
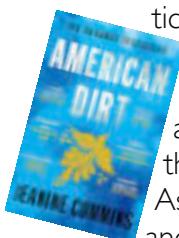
immigrants there and in our own country.

The joint second favourite books were also set outside England. The title We Are All Birds of

Uganda refers to the view that birds can't be confined to a particular territory if they fly.

This book explores family relationships, identity and racism, not only in the context of Ugandan Asians' reception in the UK and the often more subtle present day racism here but also the tensions between the British, the Asians they brought to Uganda to build railways and the black Africans which led to Idi Amin expelling Ugandan Asians in the 1970s. Humour brought some light relief to digesting all the facts. Small Things Like These is also based on real events. It is a short atmospheric novel set in Ireland in the

1980s exploring one man's struggle with his conscience when he gradually realises that unmarried young mothers in the convent laundry



are being treated cruelly but knows that if he speaks out he will jeopardise his business and his daughters' chance of a good education because 'these nuns have a finger in every pie'.

I haven't revealed how any of these books end in case anyone is interested in reading them for themselves.

We started the year with a meal at The Anchor and ended it with an Icelandic custom 'Jolabokaflokkid', a Secret Santa giving a second hand book and a chocolate.

We are back to our maximum 10 members, with one person on the waiting list but there are other book groups in our U3A.



Anne Eagle





Bookham u3a future events

The table below shows upcoming meetings open to all members at the Old Barn Hall. For more information on these meetings

please refer to the Bookham u3a website. You will need to be logged in to see the additional information.

The monthly meetings always start at 2.30pm

03 Feb 2026	14:30	1 hr	How now spirit, tingling tales of theatre ghosts
03 Mar 2026	14:30	1 hr	The Orpheus Centre
07 Apr 2026	14:30	1 hr	A Sussex Farm in the 1950s

Study Days at Yehudi Menuhin School

Always on a Friday 10am to 4pm

Bring your own lunch

£12 u3a members

Friday 20th February 2026 - [The Story, Development & Operation of the National Garden Scheme](#)

Presented by Clare Bevan, Clare Waters, Georgina Waters, Sarah Wilson, Vicky Flynn & Richard Claxton

Friday 20th March 2026 - [Global Warming & Your Grandchildren's World](#) ***

Presented by Dr Colin Summerhayes & Professor Jan Zalasiewicz

Friday 17th April 2026 - Current Threats to UK, NATO & European Security

Presented by Major Gordon Corrigan, Military Historian - Cancelled due to health issues



Visit the [u3a](#) website for more information