

Milford and Godalming u3a

Spring Newsletter 2026

Jottings from the Chair



I've just returned from this afternoon's carol concert at St John's Church, Milford. The concert was well attended and it was lovely to see so many supporting u3a activities. "Singing for Fun" looked as if they were enjoying themselves and they gave us a lively and interesting programme of familiar and new carols. Thank you Singing for Fun – and also thanks to St John's Church who provided refreshments and hospitality.

If you've been to the church over the festive period you may have noticed the u3a Christmas tree decorated with sashes and ornaments. A sight to behold!

We've had a promising start to this u3a year with over 550 members attending a wide range of groups – some new but many continuing with increased membership. Lots of learning, laughing and living!

My term of office ends in May 2026, so if you or anyone else you know is interested in becoming chair, or just joining the committee – please let me know. It's a great team and we've had our share of learning and laughing.

I hope you have had a joyful Christmas. It is a contradiction – equal parts heartwarming and stressful, magical and messy, joyful and slightly bonkers.

However it reflects real life wrapped in shiny paper and sprinkled with hope. We need to try and approach it with humour, flexibility and kindness (especially towards ourselves). It can lighten our spirits even if we're still untangling the fairy lights at the end of January!

Lisa Seeley
(chair@mgu3a.org)

Surrey u3a Study Talks

Surrey u3a holds monthly study days which are open to all u3a members. Guests are very welcome. The talks are held in the Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon starting at 9.30am with registration and running from 10am to 4pm. Flexibility is made so that members can attend the hall in person or view the study days online. The fee per day, including coffee/tea and biscuits, is £12 for hall attendance or £7 online, £15 for guests and £15 for all attendees paying at the door, although booking in advance is preferred. Bookings can be made at <https://surreynetwork.u3asite.uk/events/>

The next study dates and subjects are as follows:

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.

Group Changes

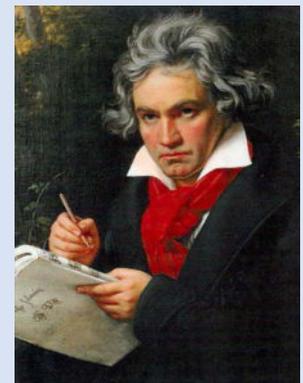
- **Mahjong** now meets on the **1st and 3rd Mondays** of the month from 8.00-9.30pm.
- **Wednesday Table Tennis** now meets weekly from **9.45-11.45am**.



Musical Mileposts (meet on 4th Tuesday 2.00pm-4.00pm) Masonic Hall, Godalming

A reminder to all those interested that the next meeting of this group is on Tuesday 27 January at the Masonic Hall, opposite the Inn on the Lake.

This talk will focus on the symphonic gamechanger, Beethoven's Eroica (Symphony No 3 in Eb).



john.bawden@mgu3a.org

Monthly Talks

Friday 9 January – 2.00pm - Milford Village Hall

Casualty Care in the Great War – Graeme MacPherson

Graeme will be outlining innovations in medical care during the war and how these have influenced health care today.

Friday 13 February – 2.00pm - Milford Village Hall

Gin – The Spirit of Westminster – Helen Naylor

Helen will give a flavour of gin's extraordinary heritage, its impact on social history and evolution to the current day.

Friday 13 March – 2.00pm - Milford Village Hall

What's in a Name? – Weeds, Worts, Fairies, Fables & Folklore – Peter Smith

Peter's talk looks at the fascinating world of the common names for our wildflowers, the origin of these names and the folklore that surrounds them.

Friday 10 April – 2.00pm - Milford Village Hall

The Man who Caught a Million Criminals: The Invention of DNA Fingerprints – Ian Goodall

Ian tells the story of the invention of DNA and how it was first used to solve a double murder case in Leicestershire.

u3a Friends Newsletter Community

The u3a Friends newsletter shares news, learning opportunities and member stories from across the u3a movement.

Signing up to the newsletter means you are up to date and in touch with all that's happening across the movement as it happens. You'll also gain exclusive access to the Friends Extra website - a range of offers, discounts and services. Each issue of the Friends Newsletter includes a link to the Friends Extra benefits website.

To find out more use this link:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter>



Festival 26: 1-3 July 2026

Following the success of last year's u3a Festival, Festival 26 is already in the planning stages.

Once again, the event will be held at the University of York, so please save the dates. Ticket and accommodation bookings aren't open yet but updated information about the event will be shared on the u3a Friends newsletter and a link to join this is included elsewhere in this newsletter.

The u3a are looking for volunteer activity leaders, crafters, speakers, musicians, sports enthusiasts and stewards to help build a rich and engaging programme. If you think you may be interested in getting involved do contact the organisers at festival@u3a.org.uk.



Your Committee Needs You!

Our AGM is due to be held on 8 May 2026. This year a number of our committee trustees are resigning or coming to the end of their term of office. We are now seeking new trustees to join the team to help lead our u3a.

The trustees leaving our committee this year are:

Lisa Seeley (Chair)
Ray Seeley (Room Bookings Manager)
John Oakey (Friday Talks Organiser)
Sue Allen (New Member Liaison)

Ray and John are prepared to stand again but Lisa and Sue will be leaving their roles and the committee. They will be sorely missed.



If you are interested in joining the trustees of Milford & Godalming u3a, please contact Lisa in the first instance for more information about the committee, the roles available and the skills you will be able to contribute. A list of job descriptions for the roles of trustees on the committee can be obtained from Lisa at

chair@mgu3a.org

Do you own an iPhone or iPad?

Would you like an easy way to add our website link to your home screen? Saves typing it in each time!

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Card Play (Meet Every Friday – 2.15pm-4.00pm) The Clockhouse, Milford

Ever feel like playing cards in a friendly group? Then come along and join us at The Clockhouse in Milford one Friday. We don't play Bridge as there are several Bridge groups already. We have, however, played Rummy, Whist, Switch, Pontoon, Go Fish, Sevens, Poker and Cheat. We are always keen to learn new games. We play Rummikub as an honorary card game because we enjoy it so much!



joanne.barry@u3a.org

Lovely festive photo from the recent visit of the MOTO group to the Guildford Castle illuminations.

They also had a friendly and enjoyable Christmas Lunch at The Jovial Sailor in Ripley. Lots of fun, jokes and conversation made it a good warm up for the big day.



**Art - Creative Mixed Media
(1st & 3rd Thursdays 2.00-4.30pm)
Unitarian Church Hall**

A creative collective of art makers from beginners to the more experienced. Why not come along one afternoon and find out more about us?

For more information contact
pam.daltonwilliams@mgu3a.org



Milford Community Christmas Tree Festival

A group of committee members spent time decorating a Christmas tree we had sponsored at St John's Church, Milford. This was available to the public to view during the early part of December and vote on the best tree! All the proceeds went towards supporting the continuing work of St John's and its outward giving. We tried to stick with a u3a coloured theme!!



This bulletin is published three times a year

If you would like to have an article included in the next edition please send copy and photos to

newsletter@mgu3a.org

Copy deadlines: 19 March 2026, 13 August 2026 and 15 December 2026

Trip to Ightham Mote

Another fantastic trip for members led by Sue Losson, this time to Ightham Mote near Sevenoaks in Kent in November. The wintry sun shone on our trip to this beautifully restored National Trust property that was decorated for the festive season.

Ightham Mote is an outstanding fourteenth century manor house, gardens and estate. The house has more than seventy rooms, all arranged around a central courtyard and was extensively renovated by the National Trust in a project lasting twenty years. It was completed in 2006 at a cost of £10,000,000.



It was one of the largest projects ever undertaken by the National Trust that won numerous architectural awards.

During the final year of the project Channel 4's Time Team filmed a special edition programme called the "Ten Million Pound House".

The house is vulnerable to extreme weather events and suffered from flash flooding in 2016 which flooded several ground floor rooms, the gardens and some cottages. It is a beautifully renovated house surrounded by lovely grounds and members enjoyed walking around the estate in the winter sunshine.



MOTO (Members on their Own) (meet on 2nd Thursday 2.00pm-4.00pm) Burton Pavilion

MOTO is a very active group that regularly meet to encourage friendship, companionship and the chance for new adventures to its members. Aply led by Mike they have a varied and wide-ranging programme of activities for members to enjoy.

Over the last term these have included many different trips to appeal to everyone.

They have gone on a trip to G Live to listen to a talk by Alice Roberts giving a new perspective on the Rise and Fall of Empire. On another occasion they have had a social curry night in Farncombe. Travelling a little further afield the group made a visit to Littlehampton for a stroll along the promenade



followed by a fish and chips lunch. A trip to Reading took place on another occasion with a private tour of the Bayeux Tapestry. Other diverse events included listening to a rock band at Godalming Town Hall, a visit to the Turner exhibition at Petworth, a trip to Arundel Castle and an outing to see the Autumn colours at Winkworth Arboretum.

And this is just a flavour of what this group has to offer. All in all, lots of ways to do what the u3a do best – which is to give members an opportunity to make new friends and try things that you hadn't previously had an opportunity to do.

For more information about this group do contact Mike at mike.jones@mgu3a.org.



Pickleball (meet every Thursday 10.00am-12.00) Surrey Sports Park

Our Thursday Pickleball group has come a long way since it started from scratch in April last year. We now have about fifty members playing on Thursday mornings at Surrey Sports Park. Most are new to the u3a, which is great news for our growing membership. New faces keep joining every month – some with a background in tennis or badminton, others picking up a racket for the first time in years (or ever!).

A number of our players also kept things going outdoors through the summer and autumn as the Elstead Picklers, and they'll be back in action around Easter. When we wrapped up our outdoor sessions for winter at the end of November we had around thirty regulars – some of whom play in both groups.

If you fancy giving Pickleball a try just come along on a Thursday morning or drop me a line at david.sowerbutts@mgu3a.org.



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HAVE A LISTEN TO YOUR u3a RADIO PODCAST

I'm Maggie West, your u3a Radio Podcast presenter and a member of Reigate & Redhill u3a. Each month, in just thirty minutes, our production & reporter team share fascinating stories and learning experiences from across the country – from life as an executive airline pilot, to being a maid at Buckingham Palace, to “quantum physics made simple,” and even the mysteries of the ancient archaeological site Göbekli Tepe in Turkey.



It's all part of our u3a spirit: Learn, Laugh, Live.

Do you have a story to tell, a learning experience to share, or a passion that could capture listeners' imaginations? Whether it's a piece of history, a unique hobby or something thought-provoking, we'd love to feature it in a future episode. Just let us know, and we'll do the rest!

Get in touch: communications@u3a.org.uk

 Listen: Just 30 minutes each month — simply [click here](https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/u3a-radio-podcast) to enjoy! Alternatively put the following into your web browser: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/u3a-radio-podcast>.

Do you know anyone who may interested in joining Milford & Godalming u3a?

All the information about joining us can be found on our website
<https://mgu3a.org>

Do you want to keep up to date with what is going on in our group?

Why not join our Facebook page – Milford & Godalming u3a - where we post new information about groups and activities?





Could you stand for the u3a Council?

In January, the u3a is asking for members to put themselves forward for a role on the u3a Council - and we need volunteers from your area.

There are vacancies in the following regions/nations: East Midlands, East of England, North East, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South East, South West, West Midlands.

Nominations will open from Thursday 8 January until Tuesday 3 February and further information will be available on the u3a website. Successful members will join the Council on 1 April 2026.

Anyone interested in putting themselves forward will need to be nominated by their own u3a and seconded by another, so if interested, it might be worth starting those conversations now.

The full role description and requirements will be published on the u3a website soon - please keep an eye out for updates on the [Elections page](#).

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please email council@u3a.org.uk.

Did you know the u3a has free online training events for members?

u3a members can access a wide range of free online talks, workshops and courses through their membership.

All events are bookable via Eventbrite. Sign up to events mailing to get monthly online events straight to your inbox.



Use this link to access the information page:
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

10 Years of Singing for Fun
(meet every Tuesday 10.00am-12.00)
The Chichester Hall

Yes!! We've been going for 10 years and we celebrated our anniversary in October with two cakes – one just wasn't big enough for everyone to get a bite!

We started off on 20 October 2015, with twenty-four singers, at Godalming Unitarian Church Hall, and the group has taken off from there. We held it together during the Covid outbreak, with comment and comedy in weekly emails, and then changed our venue to The Chichester Hall at Witley – mainly because it's bigger and gave us space to expand, and we have grown even bigger. Membership is now in the region of 70 singers – and yes, there are a suitable number of men – it's not all ladies! And they come from far and wide – Grayshott – Haslemere – Cranleigh – Guildford and even Farnborough and Bookham – as well as Chiddingfold; Elstead; Milford; Godalming; Farncombe; Witley; Hambledon and any more locally that I've missed. And it's not all singing – it's social as well!



During our 10 years we've sung at forty events – yes – forty – some with Guildford u3a Singers, and even one with the celebrated Hart Male Voice Choir – that's how good we've become! And it all started because the then Milford & District u3a secretary, Ann Stewart, made the right moves at the right time. If it hadn't been for Ann, we would be relaxing in our garden living the life of retired gentlefolk, instead of rushing around preparing music for this, that and the other. Thanks Ann!!

At Christmas in 2025, we sang our Christmas programme at St John's Church in Milford. Were you there? Many thanks if you were. Shame on you if you weren't. Maybe our advertising wasn't as good as it should have been. Watch out for details though, of our next production, in June – and maybe our Christmas programme in December. Want to be part of it? Why not give us a try? No need to be able to read music – most of our singers don't – they learn by just doing it! You'll find we're the most friendly singing group around.

Hope to see ya soon!

Kay and
Wayne Richardson



wayne.richardson@mgu3a.org

Book Club 6
(meet last Monday of the month – 2.30pm-4.30pm)
The Refectory, Milford

Love books and looking forward to making new friends? Join a warm, welcoming group of fellow readers. Hosted by Maria Coles the first meet-up will be on:

Monday 26 January 2026 – 2.30pm - at The Refectory, Milford

Thereafter on the last Monday of each month.

Whether you're a seasoned book lover or just getting back into reading we look forward to seeing you.

Please email – colesmaria3@gmail.com if you're interested to find out more. Alternatively give her a call on 07876 616320.

Maria has chosen "The Women" by Kristin Hannah as the first book for the group. However, she is hoping everyone will bring suggestions to make it a varied and inspiring group moving forward.

Making New Friends and Connections

During a recent holiday in Mallorca I met and made friends with a group from Teignmouth u3a. They were there to enjoy the warm Mediterranean Sea. Back in Teignmouth they swim every week off our chilly shores. They were a great bunch and we are now unofficially twinned with Teignmouth u3a with open invitations to join in activities including wild swimming and singing sea shanties. However, it's probably quicker in time to meet them in Mallorca than travelling to Teignmouth!



chair@mgu3a.org

Gardening (meet monthly on the fourth Friday 2.00pm-4.00pm) Milford Village Hall

The gardening group held a special talk on 28 November where the speaker was the tulip expert, Geraldine Primarolo, who had come all the way from North Wales to speak to us about these beautiful flowers.

She had a lovely slide show of tulip varieties and gave us a detailed history lesson on the development of the tulip from a wild flower to the multiple cultivated varieties of today.



Fatih Sultan Mehmet, who conquered Istanbul in 1453, was passionate about tulips. He ordered the palace gardens to be ablaze with tulips that were sourced from central Asia and Iran. Suleyman the Magnificent, who became sultan in 1520 also adored tulips. His clothes were embroidered with exquisitely detailed renderings of tulips.

The Ottomans liked tulips with long, needle-like petals while Europeans preferred cup shaped blooms with striped colouring that are more familiar to us today. These blooms were known as Broken Tulips as the variation in colour was the result of a virus called Mosaic or Tulip Braking virus that breaks down the solid colour of the petals.

The word tulip was actually the Turkish name for a turban (Tulbend). The Turkish name for a tulip is Lule. The name was mistaken as Turks used to wear a single tulip in their turbans, hence the confusion by the early European visitors.

Tulips became incredibly collectible in Europe during medieval times. In 1630 it was cheaper to buy a house than a single tulip bulb for some species!

To join this thriving group, or to find out more, do contact:

peter.stevenson@mgu3a.org

