



A ribbon of yellow and purple crocusses runs alongside the river of turgid and fast flowing water in the Wey on the northside of Gostrey meadow, neatly encapsulating the first days of spring. The evenings are definitely lighter and it no longer takes the alarm to get me out of bed in the morning, the daylight does a good job. I write this on the last day of meteorological winter and I say “Good riddance!” to what seems to have been a long and dreary one and a fond “Hello!” to spring. Regardless of the seasons the Farnham u3a year is in a full swing and there are friends to see and much to do and think about to take your mind off the world’s efforts to depress you.

Welcome to the March 2025 edition of eNews!

The Editor’s part

Talking of friends, we all like to think of our u3a as a friendly one but a couple of chats with newish members in the last few weeks have made me think about what this means.

Every year between 100 and 150 new members join us. This number is important as it makes up for the number that, sadly, leave us, either for age related reasons or because they move to be nearer family members. I’m delighted to say that we have, for the first time this year, recovered our numbers to above pre-Covid levels. This means that about one in ten of us are new. New members join for all sorts of reasons and we don’t have a detailed breakdown of the reasons, but experience tells me that a considerable number are new to Farnham and join u3a to meet new people and hopefully to make new friends. It worries me therefore when I hear that some groups are ‘closed’ and even, in one or two cases ‘not very welcoming’. At the group leaders meeting which we will be holding later this month we’ll be discussing how to deal with this and with how to ensure that new members are made to feel welcome. My own experience in moving to Farnham six years ago and joining a u3a for the first time could not have been more pleasant (and look where it got me!) So mostly it works, but there are exceptions and I would ask everyone to keep in mind that the older one gets the harder it is to change, and that moving into a new area, perhaps to be nearer family, but knowing quite literally no-one of one’s own era is a potentially lifechanging experience, and that we, all of us, have the power to make it a very positive one.



I had hoped to get a letter out to all members in the last month about personal safety both in the Maltings and when you are out and about. This is a serious matter and is taking rather longer than I had hoped but it will be with you soon.

Important dates for your diary

Monthly Meetings

The slopes of Sri Lanka's southern mountains are clothed in neat rows of low bushes that produce one of the country's greatest exports. The famed 'English Breakfast' name is known the world over but the story of tea in old Ceylon is far less refreshing. Travel with **Jim Holmes on Monday, 31st March at 2:00pm** to meet the villagers who still hand-pick this everyday product in a talk entitled **English Breakfast and the story of Ceylon tea in Sri Lanka**.



In the 1900s balloons became all the rage among ladies who lunched... and flew for fun. Long before women won the vote these have-a-go heroines seized a freedom in the sky that was to be found nowhere on the ground. In a talk entitled **"High Society" on Monday, 12th May at 2:00pm Sharon Wright** tells all.

Theme Meetings

On **Friday, 14th March at 10:30am, Adrian Martin** will talk about a subject dear to many of us - music. He will look at **Great Musicians**; come along and see if you agree with him!



Originally betrothed to Ferdinand at the tender age of 6, **Isabella of Spain** eventually became a woman ruler in her own name in what was totally a man's world. She was the creator of the modern idea of Spain, of "Hispanidad", of the Spanish empire and she also found time to be the mother of three queens (those of Portugal, England and Burgundy). On **Friday, 25th April at 10:30am Peter Duffy** will introduce us to this remarkable woman's story.

From Pauline Belfield

Programme Planning – Theme meetings

We hope that you are enjoying your membership of our u3a, be it long or short, and are busy 'Living, laughing and learning' in your chosen groups. We are busy planning our programme for the next u3a year, 2025/26. The open Theme Meetings on Friday mornings in 2025/26 will continue to be about **Extraordinary People**. This offers enormous scope to our speakers. Extraordinary People can be found in all walks of life in the past or present - areas such as social reform, invention, exploration, sport, politics, music, art, science, medicine and 'derring do' etc. It could be your granny or your great uncle Fred. They don't have to be well known to be extraordinary.

The Theme planning team have already secured several speakers for 2025/26 but we need more of you to come forward. We cannot expect the same volunteers to go on year after year – even though they themselves are extraordinary people. With over a thousand members we should be able to find nine speakers a year from within our ranks.

So please contact me at theme@farnhamu3a.org.uk if you have some experience of speaking to an audience and are willing to give it a go. Help is available if needed.

"People do not decide to become extraordinary. They decide to do extraordinary things." Edmund Hillary

From Jane Moberly

Cuppa and a Chat

As the weather begins (very slowly) to nudge into spring, getting out and about may seem more appealing. So here are a couple of opportunities to meet up with other brave souls who have ventured out.

Cuppa and a Chat Monday. 17th March, 10-12 midday in the reception area of The Maltings.

Quiz Thursday, 3rd April, 6.30-9 pm in the Barley Room at The Maltings

Please book a place in advance by contacting membereng@farnham.org.uk This is particularly important in light of our current review of our policies on fire and evacuation procedures. Your safety is our prime concern. Below you can see participants deep in thought, and yes - there is tea and coffee!!



60s disco?

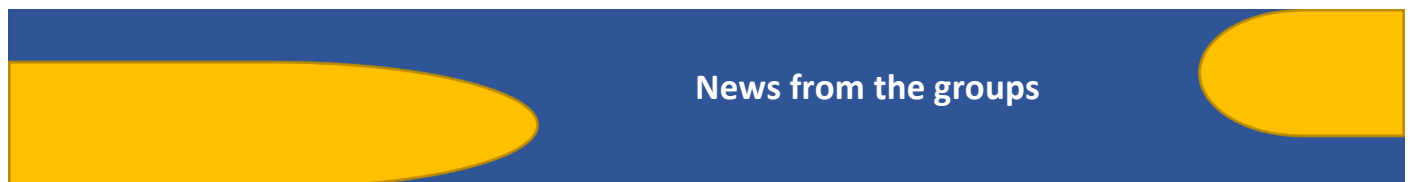
We asked for your views on having a **60s disco** as an 'end of year' social event - and the responses have been terrific. It is important to us to know what you, the members, would like us to include in our social/fun offerings. Thank you to everyone who has already participated and if you have not yet had your say then do get in touch via membereng@farnham.org.uk

Book Swap

The book swap proved so popular last summer that we will be doing it again this year ... so resist the temptation to ditch all those not-to-be-read-again books, hang on to them a little longer and there will be an opportunity to send them to pastures new. Details to follow!

Jane Moberly - Membership Engagement

Details of all of the quizzes and C&Cs are on the u3a website. You can find them here <https://farnhamu3a.org.uk/social-events/>. You can reach me on membereng@farnhamu3a.org.uk



Anyone for Pickleball?

Pickleball is, we are told, the fastest growing sport in the UK, well one of them anyway! It is an easily playable sport for all ages, provided you have a modicum of fitness, it has a low (but we cannot guarantee zero) chance of injury, it is not too physically strenuous as the courts are smaller than say tennis courts and - if that isn't enough for you - it's also jolly good fun.

We are hoping to be able to start a u3a Pickleball group at The Bourne Club in Frensham Road, on Thursdays from 1pm to 3pm. Everyone is welcome to join us, equipment will be provided and the first couple of sessions will be about learning the rules and practising all the shots and the rather unusual scoring system. To join this new U3A venture please message Janine Durrant on j9durrant@gmail.com by 15 March, letting her know if you have played before, are a pure beginner or have played other racquet sports in the past! We are hoping to start playing later in March subject to there being sufficient interest and support from the committee. Otherwise we will be looking at a September start.

From Mandy Caine

Day Trips in January & February

39 members left Farnham on a sunny January day and arrived right outside The Natural History Museum. Members dispersed from the coach quickly heading to The Natural History Museum, The Victoria & Albert Museum, The Science Museum or off to Knightsbridge for a quick visit to Harrods and Harvey Nichols. The beautifully decorated café in The Victoria & Albert Museum saw many members enjoying a coffee and cake in the most wonderful surroundings.

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at The Natural History Museum was also very popular and I saw a lot of members enjoying the amazing photographs from all over the world.



In February we headed to Kew for The Orchid Festival after which members could visit the other glasshouses, walk around the beautiful grounds with stunning spring flowers blooming in the winter sunshine or visit the galleries. The theme for The Orchid Festival for 2025 was Peru and on entry we were greeted by a friendly Alpaca model as well as traditional Peruvian music and everyone felt they were definitely in the rainforest when they entered the main exhibition area.



The following trips have been finalised for our Day Trip Members

May – Brighton, June – British Wildlife Centre, July – Seal Safari, August – Weald & Downland Living Museum, September – Hawk Conservancy Trust, November – Christmas Lights at Kew

For more information contact Mandy at u3adaytrips2@outlook.com

From Andrew Morgan

The film set

Over 150 members from Farnham, Alton, Fleet and Farnborough u3as came along to the Reel Farnham to see either “Maria” or “A Complete Unknown”. The latter, a biopic of Bob Dylan’s early years was the more popular.

“THE BEST BRIDGET EVER”
★★★★★

**BRIDGET JONES
MAD ABOUT THE BOY**
IN CINEMAS FEB 13
BOOK TICKETS NOW



Next month we have two films for members and guests to choose from.

“**Bridget Jones: Mad About The Boy**” The latest incarnation of Helen Fielding’s heroine has been very successful having received rave reviews from the critics.

The story is a typical Bridget Jones chaotic relationship saga.

After jumping back into the dating pool, single mother **Bridget Jones** finds herself caught between a younger man and her son's science teacher.



“**September 5**” is a completely different story and tells of the horrific events at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. Told through the eyes of the ABC Sports reporters who were there to report on the competition but find themselves in the middle of a terrorist attack.

The date has not yet been agreed but it will be towards the end of March and I will choose a date that has minimum impact on the Group programme.

Other dates of interest

From the Maltings own programme:

Each month we highlight three or four events from the Maltings programme.



Having won his second Oscar as Best Actor 22 years after his first, Adrien Brody gives a fabulous performance as the visionary architect László Toth, who fled Germany with his wife in 1947 to practice in post war America. **The Brutalist** (in case you are put off by the title - it refers to an architectural style, not a behaviour) is long but it has that old fashioned cinema thing - an intermission! **12th March at 11am, 3pm (subtitled) and 8pm**

One day in 1949, a young Scottish painter climbed a Swiss glacier. The experience rewired her brain, and transformed her art. Winhelmina Barns-Graham was synaesthetic – associating letters, names and people with particular colours – and director Mark Cousins explores how her neurodiversity and her encounter with the glacier shaped her vision of the world. In 'A Sudden Glimpse of Deeper Things' her life is explored in a documentary voiced by Tilda Swinton. Peter Bradshaw of the Guardian called it a "lovingly eccentric ode to a forgotten abstract painter" **TUESDAY, 22 April at 11am, 3pm and 8pm.**



Peter Sellar's role in **Dr Strangelove** has been re-imagined by Steve Coogan in an **NT Live** stage production beamed to the Maltings on **Thursday, 27th March at 2pm and 7pm**. This explosively funny satire, about a rogue U.S. General who triggers a nuclear attack, is led by a world-renowned creative team including Emmy Award-winner Armando Iannucci and Olivier Award-winner Sean Foley. The excellent Riverside restaurant will be doing pre-show dining for many of these events and it's really good!

Please do think about becoming a member of the Maltings. Films for £6 and 10% off food and drinks! Details on the Maltings website.

Phyllis Tuckwell

[Phyllis Tuckwell](#) is once again on the search for unique and interesting gardens to swing open their garden gates to friends, family, and our local community this spring and summer. [Open Gardens](#) is all about sharing the beauty of your garden with others. Perhaps you have acres of picturesque countryside or a small cottage garden full of pots bursting with blooms. Whatever size your garden, Phyllis Tuckwell would love for you to join its [Open Gardens event](#) and open it up for members of the public to browse around, to raise money for Hospice Care. As well as being a great day out, all of the money raised will go directly towards helping fund the important care they provide for local patients and their families.

Farnham Trust Verney lecture

The Farnham Trust is a local charitable trust, and one of the oldest building preservation trusts in the country.

You may already be aware of it as it has made many active contributions to the preservation of the Farnham scene, rescuing threatened buildings - including Farnham Maltings and Farnham Pottery. They have also contributed to both conservation projects at Farnham Castle, St Andrews Church, the Windsor Almshouses in Castle Street, and the Daniel Hall in Long Garden Walk and the preservation of precious landscapes such as Bishops Meadow.

The next Verney Lecture “**An alternative architectural history of the old Palace of Westminster**” is to be given by **Dr Kirsty Wright** at **St Joan’s Church Hall, 19 Tilford Rd, Farnham, GU9 8DJ** on **Tuesday, 1st April 2025**. The event is free of charge although donations will be welcome. There will be a free raffle for a bottle of House of Commons wine. Attendees are requested to arrive for **6pm** for a welcome drink with the talk starting at 6.30pm

News from the Committee

Work on new member benefits, which I hope to announce in full next month, continues. We also spent time discussing next year’s membership fees, new groups, and further locations. We have a small group looking at our website with the aim of making it slightly clearer and easier to navigate. This is not a quick fix!

...and finally

With thanks to Jenny Bray...



At a wedding reception, someone yelled: "All married people please stand next to the one person that has made your life worth living." The bartender was almost crushed to death.

And to Clement Freud;

"If you resolve to give up smoking, drinking and loving, you don't actually live longer it just seems longer"

And to Berkeley Breathed , an American cartoonist ;

"It's never too late to have a happy childhood"

Have a happy spring!

Philip

