



Crawley u3a

Monthly Newsletter: June 2026



Where was I? (Answer on page 12)

Monthly meetings

Dates for your diaries below. All meetings are held at the Friary Hall, Haslett Avenue and start at 2.30pm:

- **Friday 12th June** – Andy Thomas, *Crop Circle Mystery* (for more details please see page 5)
- **Friday 10th July** – John Griffiths-Colby, *Doods Rd. Great Pigeon Loft*
- **Friday 11th September** – Ian Worley, *Racing through the southern ocean*
- **Friday 9th October** – Peter Griffiths, *45 Years in Aviation with a fear of heights – the second part of his flying experiences*
- **Friday 13th November** – Annual General Meeting

Messages from the Trustee Team

Communications Coordinator/Newsletter role: help needed

Ensuring that the membership is aware of what is going on is a key foundation of running any effective organisation. For the last three and a half years this function has been undertaken by **Sue Parker**, producing and circulating the monthly newsletter, ensuring that our mobile noticeboards are available and up to date for member events and producing our recruitment pamphlets and handouts. Although Sue continued to write the newsletter when she stood down from the Committee last November, she had to give up the other tasks and as yet there is no-one else to fulfil these tasks.

It is time to find someone new who can add their own creativity to these activities. This includes the newsletter. Sue fears that after four years of writing it she is in danger of becoming stale. Fresh ideas are needed.

We are now looking for someone, or a small team of people, to take these tasks on.

If no volunteers come forward, then it is likely that the flow of information to members will become spasmodic.

If you have the time and would be interested in helping with these tasks and would like to find out more, then please contact either:

Sue Parker: sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk

Graham Friday 07982424533 or treasurer@crawleyu3a.org.uk

Notice of Special General Meeting before July's monthly meeting

A special general meeting will now be held at **2.00pm on Friday 10th July**, before the normal monthly meeting (which will plan to start at 2.30pm).

The purpose of the meeting will be to consider an increase of £1 to the Annual Membership fee for 2026/27, taking it from £14 to £15 per annum.

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Changes in the Trustee Team

The Trustee Team has now formally welcomed **Marion Lang** and **Moira Blackman** to its ranks. **Graham Crozier** has now stood down as a Trustee, the rest of the Trustee Team would like to thank Graham for his contribution and wish him all the best for the future.

Trips or Outings

Can we please remind Members that when planning to go on trips or outings that you do ensure you are aware of the contents of the risk assessment issued by the Trip Leader. If you feel you will need carer support to come with you, then please discuss that with the Trip Leader when you make your booking.

Holidays

Thinking about booking a holiday? Then please give Riviera Travel a consideration. The national u3a movement has partnered with Riviera Travel to support local u3as. When a member books a holiday directly with Riviera Travel, 9% of the basic cost of the holiday will be donated back to their local nominated u3a, which will help contribute to keeping our future fees affordable.

To redeem this opportunity call 01283 901 085 or go online to rivieratravel.co.uk/u3a and start planning your next adventure. Make sure to you tell them you are a u3a member and are a member of Crawley u3a.

For Group enquiries - call 01283 742 322 or email groups@rivieratravel.co.uk

Crawley u3a website

For this month's look at our excellent website, I thought that it would be a good idea to point you in the direction of our volunteers page. On this page you will find a list of vacancies along with the details of what a particular role will entail. To see more, follow this link: [Volunteers - Crawley](#)

Report on monthly meeting talk on 8th May: Tony Harris as Margaret Thatcher



Tony Harris

Well, what good timing this was; the day after local elections, to be visited by a famous former Prime Minister, and to have a much-needed afternoon of laughter. No wonder the hall was full.

Tony Harris has visited us before, looking remarkably like Henry VIII and then Winston Churchill, so we knew we were in for a treat when “Baroness Margaret Thatcher” swept in. Somehow Tony manages to deliver the facts, but with great humour. He reminded us of her beginnings (101 years ago, astonishingly) as Margaret Roberts, the daughter of a Grantham greengrocer, through grammar school where she became deputy head girl, known as “bossy Roberts”, to Oxford, where she gained a first-class degree in chemistry. While working for ICI she developed a technique to stop ice cream becoming runny, so you have her to thank for Mr Whippy; remember that for a pub quiz. She also studied law at night school, becoming a barrister specialising in taxation; which I did not know. And of course she had married Denis Thatcher and had twins Mark and Carol.

Margaret was elected as MP for Finchley in 1959, became leader of the opposition in 1975 and Prime Minister in 1979. I remember saving the newspaper for my then 5-year-old daughter, as this was a momentous first for women.

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My notebook is full of facts I scribbled down, including her meetings with Ronald Reagan, the IRA bombings, the miners' strikes, the Falklands War, the Brighton bombing; what a packed eleven and a half years it was, before she resigned in 1990, partly due to the unpopularity of the community charge, known as the poll tax. She died in April 2013, by which time she was suffering from dementia, possibly due to her well-known habit of sleeping for only 4 hours a night.

While chatting over tea and biscuits afterwards I kept hearing "Well, I did not know that" or "I'd forgotten about that". I think Tony reminded us that, whatever your politics, Margaret Thatcher was an important historical figure. We also speculated on his next reincarnation: Donald Trump? Mmm...

Jean Austin

Details of monthly meeting talk on Friday 12th June

The speaker for our June meeting is Andy Thomas, a leading unexplained mysteries researcher and author, who will explore the extraordinary phenomenon of crop circles, revealing the fascinating history and intriguing arguments around these controversial but stunningly entrancing patterns which appear in fields each year.

There will be a bookstall. Don't forget to bring your used stamps for Isabel's RNIB box and a mug.

Below is a photo taken by [Isabel Baker](#) of a pair of gloves left behind at the May meeting. Does anyone recognise them? Isabel will bring them to the June meeting, and if they are yours then you can reclaim them.



Pickleball Groups

Fancy getting a little fitter whilst having some fun, then why not give our Pickleball groups a go? They meet indoors at K2 on a Tuesday morning and outdoors at Maidenbower Recreation Ground on a Thursday morning.

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports for senior aged people. It helps retain flexibility, movement and reactions, whilst not imposing the stress and strains on joints or the heart that other sporting activities do.

For more information either have a look under the 'groups' heading on our Crawley u3a website or drop the group leader **Graham Friday** a text message on 07982424533 or email him at treasurer@crawleyu3a.org.uk. Links to the group pages are as follows: [Pickleball - Indoor - Crawley](#) and [Pickleball - Outdoor - Crawley](#)

Thanks to Graham Friday for the photo.



Online learning events

As ever, an interesting array of subjects to look forward to this month on the u3a online learning events page. Why not take a look and see if something takes your fancy? [u3a - Online learning events](#)

Chess Group

We have been running as a group for 9 months now and in recent weeks have seen our numbers begin to grow as word gets out that you can play one of the world's oldest games with Crawley u3a.

We are very focussed on helping members who are new to Chess to get an understanding of the game and begin to play it. In recognition that chess can be complex and challenging we have begun to develop some resources to help get to grips with the basics.

The first of these is the 'Getting Started with Chess' guide which is a downloadable PDF from the Chess group page on the u3a website. Follow the links below, firstly to the group page on the website and secondly to the guide: [Chess - Crawley](#) [Getting Started with Chess](#). The guide provides easy access to all of the basic information about the chess board and pieces.

The Chess Group always has room for new and experienced players.

We play every other Tuesday morning at St Pauls so make the step to enjoying a great game with friends.

Phil Vandenberg

Crawley u3a Facebook pages

A gentle reminder that only Crawley u3a posts should go on our main page. Anything not directly related to Crawley u3a should be posted on our Crawley u3a Extra page. I have removed a number of non-Crawley u3a posts recently from our main page. I have left a few but, having issued this reminder, I will be removing all such posts in the future! I understand why members prefer to post on our main page with 444 members, versus the 64 on our Extra page, but if more people joined the Extra page then these posts would have a wider audience! Why not join our Extra page now via this link?

[Crawley u3a Extra | Facebook](#)

u3a Festival 26: 1st-3rd July

Although tickets for the Festival have sold out, a series of online fringe events has been organised. To find out more follow this link: [u3a - u3a Festival 2026](#)

Amblers Extra's walk on 1st May

Amblers Extra enjoyed a sunny, circular walk from Haskins Garden Centre before returning there for lunch.

Thanks to **Janet Newson** for the photo.



u3a South East Summer School 7th – 10th September

This will take place at the University of Chichester. To find out more, follow this link: [2026 - South East u3a Forum](#). The second link takes you to the booking form: [Booking Form for Summer School 2026 - South East u3a Forum](#)

Air Shooting Group meeting on 13th May

Congratulations to **David Packer** who won the Group One shooting competition with a score of 95 out of 100 and **Jim Selby** who won the Group Two shooting competition with a score of 93 out of 100.

Thanks to **Craig Edwards** for the photos.

Craig tells me that Group Two has some vacancies. The Group meet on Wednesday mornings from 11.30am-1.00pm in the 2nd Ifield Scouts Hut. If you would like to know more, follow this link: [Air Shooting 2 - Crawley](#)



David Packer



Jim Selby

Crawley u3a Facebook page photos

For reasons of space I cannot bring you all of the fantastic photos our members posted last month on our Facebook page of the various trips which have been undertaken, including our Spring outing to Windsor. As well as the Windsor photos, you can see **Monique Tovey-Mansfield's** photos of O&A8's visit to The Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden in Ockley, Monique's photos of the Gardening Groups' visit to Sissinghurst and **Margaret Lloyd's** collages of artworks produced by our talented Urban Sketching Group.

To see all of this, and more, follow the link: [Crawley u3a | Facebook](#)

Walkers Extra Slinfold walk on 28th May

Walkers Extra donned their sunhats, slathered on high protection factor sun cream and set off on a hot Thursday morning for a 5 mile walk around the Slinfold area. We were grateful that much of the walk was in the shade. At the end of the walk, desperate for some form of liquid refreshment, we had no choice but to head to the pub – The Red Lyon in Slinfold. Another highly recommended pub, the food was excellent.



Crawley Museum talk on Tuesday 30th June

The Crawley Museum talk will take place on Tuesday 30th June at 2.00pm (doors attended from 1.45pm) and will be given by Dr Mary Rudling on *Supporting the poor in 19th century Sussex*. Dr Rudling will discuss the impact of the 1834 New Poor Law on the lives of folk in poorhouses and homes in Sussex, including the work of female guardians in saving children from the Victorian workhouse. Crawley Museum members free (but donations welcome), visitors and non-members £3.00. Tea and biscuits afterwards.

Crawley Croquet Club: discover Croquet with Crawley Croquet Club!

Crawley Croquet Club is looking for new members!

Following a decision by Crawley Council to withdraw financial support for the croquet club in Worth Park, members are currently finalising a new lease to take full control of the lawns. The great news is that this new arrangement means the club can now play seven days a week.

These additional playing hours give the club a fantastic opportunity to recruit new members to learn this challenging, strategic, and highly enjoyable game in beautiful surroundings. The club has recently hosted many members of Crawley u3a as guests, and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The club's normal playing times are from 14:00 on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. If you are passing, you are welcome to have a look at the club in action.

The Chairman of the club, **Neil Hoey**, is an active member of several groups within Crawley u3a and warmly invites you to the lawns for an introduction to the game.

- **Three Free Trial Sessions:** you can enjoy three free taster sessions before deciding whether to join as a full member
- **Equipment Provided:** all you need to bring is a pair of flat-soled shoes (like trainers); mallets, balls, and hoops are provided

To arrange a visit or to find out more, please contact Neil at:

- Email: neil.s.hoey@gmail.com
- Website: crawleycroquetclub.org.uk



Crawley Croquet Club, Worth Park

Later Life Festival on Thursday 18th June at The Charis Centre

Hosted by Radfield Home Care, I am tempted to visit the Later Life Festival on Thursday 18th June from 10.00am-1.00pm at The Charis Centre. This is planned to be a friendly, informative event where people can explore a wide range of organisations, community groups and services dedicated to supporting older people.

Welcome to new members

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members:

Monica Lane, Ann McKeever

Where was I?

To counter the recent hot, dry weather, this month's cover photo was taken in Memorial Gardens in February when there was enough rain to form a mini pond!

July newsletter

The July newsletter will be emailed to members on Monday 6th July, and posted or hand delivered to those without email shortly thereafter. Please note, there will be NO newsletter in August

Sue Parker

Newsletter Editor

Crawley u3a

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