



Crawley u3a

Monthly Newsletter: September 2026



Where was I in Crawley when I took this photo? (Answer on page 18)

Monthly meetings

Dates for your diaries below. All meetings are held at the Friary Hall, Haslett Avenue and start at 2.30pm, with the exception of the coffee mornings which run from 10.00am-12.30pm. Please see page 7 for 2027 coffee morning dates.

- **Friday 11th September** – Ian Worley, *Racing through the southern ocean* (for more details please see page 5)
- **Wednesday 23rd September** – Coffee Morning, 10.00am-12.30pm
- **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
- **Wednesday 18th November** – Coffee Morning, 10.00am-12.30pm
- **Friday 11th December** – Christmas Party
- **Friday 8th January 2027** – Daniel Sykes, Surrey Police, *Advice on Protection from Cyber Scams*
- **Friday 12th February 2027** – Bill Avenell, *That can't be Natural!*
- **Friday 12th March 2027** – Kathryn Ferry, *Sheds on the Seashore*
- **Friday 9th April 2027** – Tony Harris, *Titanic Conspiracy Theory*
- **Friday 7th May 2027** – David Taylor, *Friends of the South Down*

Full groups and groups with spaces: note from the Trustee Team

As our membership grows, the popularity of some of the activities we offer means that groups reach the ceiling as to the maximum number of members they can physically cater for.

We have to announce that this is now the case in respect of both the Afternoon Exercise and Indoor Pickleball groups.

These, plus other full groups, do operate a waiting list approach, so if you are interested in going on those lists then please make the appropriate Group Leader aware of your interest in their group.

Please remember that all activities are run on a voluntary basis, by the members for the members. Without volunteers coming forward to organise and run groups, then they would not be available for the membership to benefit from.

As an organisation we welcome the opportunity to provide a large and diverse range of activities for members to take part in, so if you do have a skill or interest that you would like to share with other members, please contact **Peter Beckley** via peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk and have a chat with him about what we could possibly do.

There are also several existing groups, especially around our popular outings activities, where the Group Leaders are looking for people to come in and help them run the group with the potential for them to take the Group forward in the future. Without new volunteers, we are likely to see a decline in the number of outings and trips being run.

If everyone was able to give a small amount of time to help with all the various tasks that are needed to keep an activity going and spread the workload around, then the more likely we are to be able to sustain that activity into the future for the benefit of the members.

Though we currently have a few full groups, we still have a large number that are looking for new members. For a list of groups with spaces, please turn to page 3.

(Continued on page 3)

Groups with spaces

Air Rifle shooting Art Appreciation 2 Bamboo Pipes Bridge (both groups) Chess Film Folk Music French History Italian for Beginners Italian Conversation Mahjong Out & About 8	Painting & Drawing Pétanque Pickleball (Outdoors) Poetry Quizzing Rummikub & Canasta Smartphone photographic Storytelling (both groups) Strollers Table Tennis Ukulele Urban Sketching Weekenders
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Membership Renewal for 2026-27

All members on e-mail with membership numbers up to 3082 inclusive should have received their formal renewal e-mail on Tuesday 1st September

Those who do not use e-mail should receive their renewal letter with their September newsletter.

The deadline for responses in both cases is **Monday 21st September**.

There will be a renewal clinic at the **Wednesday 23rd September Coffee Morning** (10:00 - 12:30, the Friary) for those who need some help.

A box of paper renewal forms is at St Paul's and renewal forms will also be brought to the monthly Friary Friday and other Friary based meetings.

Members with numbers 3083 - 3099 will not receive their renewal e-mails until mid-September, once they have received the September u3a matters, so they can decide as to whether they want to continue receiving it. They will have a deadline of **Monday 12th October** to respond.

Any questions or concerns please email crawleyu3amembership@gmail.com or contact **Jean Manuel** on 01293 512982.

Margaret Lloyd

Membership Coordinator

The Crop Circle Mystery: Monthly meeting talk by Andy Thomas



Andy Thomas

“So” said my friend George, “how was the talk on Friday? Crop circles, wasn’t it? They were all made by people of course”.

“Well, actually ...” I began to outline the various theories Andy had put forward, at which point I think George regretted having raised the subject. However, at the risk of boring the rest of you I will try to do justice to this most entertaining and very thought-provoking talk.

First of all; crop circles were very much a thing of the 1980s and 90s, weren’t they? And you don’t see them today, do you? Well, wrong on both points. The first recorded sighting was in 1678, when it was regarded as the work of the devil, and sightings have continued right up to the present day, mostly ignored as I suspect we have more pressing things on our minds these days.

Many theories have been put forward for how they are created, and they are extremely complex mathematical patterns. Is it atmospheric phenomena, underground water systems, the earth’s magnetic field, thought projection, drones, UFOs or even hedgehogs? And what about the mysterious balls of light often seen, which Andy showed us on a film he had taken. In 1991 two men “confessed” to having created some circles, but this was proved to be a hoax, and scientific surveys have shown that the crops could not have been changed by human interference (sorry George).

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Andy did not attempt to offer any explanations. Instead, he hoped his talk had challenged some beliefs, as it certainly did for me, and he ended by suggesting we reflect on the grace, beauty and mystery of crop circles.

Jean Austin

Details of September speaker: Ian Worley, Racing through the southern ocean

In October 1976, Ian saw an advert in the Times:

“Wanted – crew to help race Great Britain II in the 1977/78 Whitbread Round the World Race”. He responded immediately, knowing that this was the adventure that he craved.

Ian’s illustrated talk will recount this thrilling adventure of a journey covering 26,000 nautical miles of perilous seas and living off mouldy bread!

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

Italian Conversation Group: vacancies

There are several vacancies in our Italian Conversation Group, which meet fortnightly on Thursday mornings from 10.30-12.00 in a private home. If you are interested then please contact the Group Leader, **David Devere**, via the link which can be found on the Group’s page on our website:

[Italian Conversation - Crawley](#). The next meeting of the group will be held in October.

New Group: Meditation

Roma Marsden, who recently joined us, would like to start a Meditation Group. The aim is for the Group to meet once a fortnight, giving members a safe, supportive, calm space to learn and practice the art of meditation and mindfulness, helping to reduce stress, learn, focus and share their experiences within a kind group. Expressions of interest to: peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk

Amblers walk and lunch on Friday 3rd July

After a walk around some of our local parks, Amblers adjourned to Phil's house for some welcome refreshment and the perfect weather with which to enjoy his beautiful garden!

Thanks to [Phil Light](#) for the photo.



Unwanted Bras

I would like to say a huge thank you to the generous u3a members who donated unwanted bras for the WI appeal. I was able to hand over two full bags of bras to the WI, which will be put to good use.

Out & About 7's Cricket St Thomas break in July

Thanks to **Phil Light** for sending me this photo of a beautifully colour co-ordinated group of O&A7 members, taken on a trip in July to Cricket St Thomas in Somerset.



Dates for 2027 Coffee Mornings

Wednesday 20th January

Wednesday 24th March

Wednesday 19th May

Wednesday 21st July

Coffee mornings will run from 10.00am-12.30pm and will be held at the Friary Hall in Haslett Avenue.

Urban Sketchers' 2nd Anniversary celebration on Friday 17th July

The Urban Sketching Group, pictured in the garden at Goffs Manor, celebrating their 2nd anniversary.

Thanks to [Margaret Lloyd](#) for the photo.



Crawley u3a Facebook page

For reasons of space, I am unable to feature the excellent collages of sketches produced by the Urban Sketching Group in this month's newsletter. Head over to our Facebook page to see what this talented group of sketchers has produced recently: [Crawley u3a | Facebook](#)

Walkers Extra's Turners Hill walk on 23rd July 2026

Walkers Extra enjoyed a 5 mile circular walk from the Red Lion in Turners Hill. I can highly recommend the lunches served here, tasty and with generous portions. Several of us took home doggy bags!

Thanks to [Jan Morris](#) for the photo.



u3a getaways: the new travel service for u3a members

This is a collaboration between u3a and the UK Holiday Group, each trip takes the learning and fun of u3a on tour. On a u3a getaway you can scrub up your knowledge on a wide range of topics while exploring the UK and forming new connections. To find out more, follow this link: [u3a Getaways](#)

Amblers' Outwood Common walk on 7th August

Thanks to **Phil Light** for sending me this photo of Amblers enjoying a spot of welcome shade on their Outwood Common walk. When the walk was over they headed to the Dog and Duck for lunch.



Suggested new group: Guitar Group

Recently, a friend asked me whether Crawley u3a had a Guitar Group. I told him that we did not, then trotted out my standard 'Why don't you start one?' response. It turns out that he does not play but is hoping to learn. Is there anyone who plays the guitar and would be happy to teach others? If we are able to start a group, would members be interested in joining? Expressions of interest please to peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk

O&A7 & 6's Henley on Thames boat trip on 11th August

Out and About 7 (and 6) could not have asked for better weather for their Henley on Thames boat trip.

Thanks to [Pam Wilson](#) for the photo.



Citizens Advice Crawley: volunteers required

Citizens Advice Crawley are looking for volunteers who can help out in their spare time. If you follow this link to the website, it will tell you more about the work they do: [Crawley - Citizens Advice in West Sussex](#). If anyone is interested in volunteering then please contact me via email: sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk and I will put you in touch with Citizens Advice.

Air Rifles Group: 12th August

Congratulations to **Laura Boggis** and **David Packer** who won the markswoman/marksman of the month in the Bell competition.

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



Out & About 7's annual Croquet Match on 31st August

The winner of O&A 7's annual August Bank Holiday Croquet Match was **David Packer**. Runner up was **Sue Pay** and **Jan Morris** took 3rd place. Congratulations to the worthy winners!

Thanks to **Jackie Hoey** for the photo.



L to R: Jan Morris, David Packer, Sue Pay

Quizzing for Fun: 12th August

On a hot August afternoon, Quizzing for Fun met up to quiz together. As I was the quizmaster, I cannot give an impartial view on how good or otherwise the quiz was, but I hope that everyone enjoyed themselves.



Crawley u3a Website

For this month's look at our excellent website, I would like to point you in the direction of the Join Us page where you will find a link to details of our monthly meetings and social events, as well as our Groups page, our newsletters, the u3a matters Magazine and the National u3a page. In addition, if you have any friends or neighbours who are interested in joining, there is a link to the New Members Application Forms. In order to view this page, follow this link:

[Join Us - Crawley](#)

Theatre Group trip to Chichester on 18th August

Members of the Theatre Group enjoyed a trip to Chichester to see a fantastic production of *My Fair Lady*.

Thanks to [Isabel Baker](#) for the photo.



Age UK's Bowl & Connect

Age UK have organised three Bowl and Connect sessions at Hollywood Bowl in Crawley Leisure Park on Thursday 10th, Thursday 17th and Thursday 24th September from 10.30am-12.30pm, all of which are free to attend. If anyone is interested in attending and would like more information or to book (**booking is essential**), please call 01403 260560 or email: crawley@ageukwsbh.org.uk. I am told that there are only a few spaces left so book now to avoid disappointment! Maybe see you there?

O&A8's Treasure Hunt on 18th August

Members of Out & About 8 enjoyed a treasure hunt in Lindfield followed by lunch at the Red Lion.

Thanks to **Carol Allen** for the photo.



u3a week 19th – 27th September 2026

To find out more about the events planned for this week, follow this link:

[u3a - u3a Week](#)

u3a Online Learning Events

September brings another varied selection of free online talks, workshops and courses. To find out what's on this month, follow this link:

[u3a - Online learning events](#)

Walkers Extra's Outwood walk on 27th August

Walkers Extra enjoyed a 5 mile walk around Outwood, starting and finishing at the Dog and Duck where they had an excellent lunch.

Thanks to [Phil Light](#) for the photo.



Smartphone Photographic Group's greeting cards

You may remember I mentioned in a previous newsletter that the Smartphone Photographic Group are selling greetings cards in order to raise money for St. Catherine's Hospice. I am delighted to report that they have achieved their target of £500. However, they still have more cards to sell. If anyone knows of a venue or two who would be happy to let them sell the rest of their stock then please contact me via: sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk

August trip to Brussels

A small group of u3a members (see photo on the left) visited Brussels in August to see the flower carpet.

Thanks to [Monique Tovey-Mansfield](#) for sending me this lovely photo collage of their trip.



Welcome to new members

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

Judith Barber, Diane Channer, Melloney Cripps, Roma Marsden, Sandra Moore, Josephine Mutalu, Terence O'Neill, Felben Pujanes, Vincent Riches, Richard Scott, Joy Wilkinson

Where was I? (photo on page 1)

An easy one this month, especially for Jan Morris, who drove past me while I was taking the photo! I was at the Hawth roundabout photographing the sculpture *The Flying Spiral* which was created by Ray Smith. According to the artist, 'there are three broad elements to the work. They are a (Celtic) spiral, a human figure with arms outstretched and by association, the ideal of a plane taking off. The link between the figure and the idea of the plane calls to mind the playground games where children run around with outstretched arms. The resulting form lends itself to a number of possible interpretations'.

October newsletter

The October newsletter will be emailed to members on Monday 5th October, and posted or hand delivered to those without email shortly thereafter.

Sue Parker

Newsletter Editor

Crawley u3a

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