Crawley u3a

Monthly Newsletter: November 2026



Where was I? (Answer on page 4)

Monthly meetings and Coffee Mornings

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 **10.30am-12.00pm**.

- **Friday 13th November** – Annual General Meeting (for more details, please see page 2)
- **Wednesday 18th November** – Coffee Morning, **10.30am-12.00pm**
- **Friday 11th December** – Christmas Party
- **Friday 8th January 2027** – Daniel Sykes, Surrey Police, *Advice on Protection from Cyber Scams*
- **Wednesday 20th January 2027** – Coffee Morning, 10.30am-12.00pm
- **Friday 12th February 2027** – Bill Avenell, *That can't be Natural!*
- **Friday 12th March 2027** – Kathryn Ferry, *Sheds on the Seashore*
- **Wednesday 24th March 2027** – Coffee Morning, 10.30am-12.00pm
- **Friday 9th April 2027** – Tony Harris, *Titanic Conspiracy Theory*
- **Friday 14th May 2027** – David Taylor, *Friends of the South Downs*
- **Wednesday 19th May 2027** – Coffee Morning, 10.30am-12.00pm
- **Friday 11th June 2027** – Smith Raja, *Trekking the Himalayas*
- **Fri. 9th July 2027** – Roger Tristram, *Enzo Ferrari 'The Making of a Legend'*
- **Wednesday 21st July 2027** – Coffee Morning, 10.30am-12.00pm

Annual General Meeting: Friday 13th November at 2.30pm

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 13th November at 2.30pm at the Friary Hall, Haslett Avenue.

A copy of the Agenda, the minutes of last year's AGM (held on 14th November 2025), and the 2025-2026 Annual Report and Accounts are attached to the covering email which accompanies this newsletter.

Refreshments will be served at an appropriate point during the meeting.

Coffee Morning: Wednesday 18th November at 10.30am

Our next Coffee Morning will be held on Wednesday 18th November from **10.30am to 12.00pm** at the Friary Hall, Haslett Avenue. There will be a bookstall and a jigsaw puzzle swap.

Christmas Party on Friday 11th December

Invitations to this year's Christmas Party, to be held on Friday 11th December at 2.30pm at the Friary Hall, will be sent out in the next week or two. Make a note of the date in your diary!

Crawley u3a Facebook pages

Now it's time for my monthly plug of our Facebook pages, not only urging you to sign up to the pages if you are not already a member, but also to contribute. Only one member, **Monique Tovey-Mansfield**, contributed photos of a recent Out & About trip to Rye. It would have been nice to see a few photos from others of members enjoying themselves on the day.

To see Monique's photos and other posts on our main Facebook page, follow this link:
Crawley u3a | Facebook .

To view our Facebook Extra page, follow this link:
Crawley u3a Extra | Facebook

Report on October monthly meeting talk by Peter Griffiths: 45 years in aviation, with a fear of heights (Part 2)



Peter Griffiths (Photo credit: Jean Austin)

As Peter put it, his career as a pilot could be described as ”from sextant to satnav”. Judging by the good turnout, we had recovered from being terrified by his last talk, and were ready for more tales of near misses, aircraft flying low over Hong Kong, and all those things we’d rather put to the back of our minds while watching an in-flight film with a strong gin and tonic.

There were lots of gasps, and “oh my word”, “what on earth?” and so on all through the talk, but Peter wasn’t just here to put us off flying. We learnt some fascinating things, such as the amount and type of freight carried in passenger planes, including horses, whales, dolphins and turtles. And you thought it was just for your wheelie cases. Much as I rather enjoy the winter, I would not want to fly to Anchorage, where the temperature reaches -40 and I am likely to be greeted by bears, assuming the plane landed safely on the ice and didn’t skid off to the wrong runway. I’ll take my chances on the 100 bus.

Now, next time you are planning to fly why not consider a private jet chartered by NetJets, the company founded by Warren Buffet for whom Peter worked for five years before retiring? Peter flew to some interesting countries and met several celebrities, and some Saudi princes, so you would be in good company. With real leather upholstery, and gold plated everything, I think that fits the u3a profile, so here’s to the next summer outing.

Jean Austin

New: Meditation Group

Thanks to **Roma Marsden** for more details of the new Meditation Group.

Mind, Body and Spirit

Give yourself permission to pause.

From Noise to Stillness

The group session will be a grounding journey designed to help you drop out of your head and back into your body.

The Mind

We start with meditation to calm the mental chatter.

The Spirit (Non-religious)

We step into a deeper stillness for inner clarity.

The Body

We will track how this quietness physically impacts you.

Lowering your heart rate, releasing stored tension and restoring your energy.

You will leave each session feeling more grounded and physically refreshed.

Expressions of interest to peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk

Where was I? Answer to front page photo

Well done if you guessed that I was at K2. The CD Bollards outside the front entrance of K2 Crawley were created by artist David Watson. Made using recycled CDs, stainless steel and solar-powered lighting, the artwork combines creativity, functionality and sustainability. The installation was designed to work with the building while highlighting the importance of reusing materials and reducing waste.

Amblers' Hampshire walk on 2nd October

Never a dull moment on an Amblers' walk! Thanks to **Phil Light** for the photo and his account below of a memorable walk for the group:

'Our Amblers walk was a bit of an adventure due to train delays and cancellations and we aborted our attempts to get to Portsmouth after being re-routed at Barnham and then Littlehampton before finally arriving at Chichester where we put plan B into operation. Rather than risk an onward train journey, we took the bus to Emsworth (an Amblers' favourite). There we did a short walk around the seafront and then managed to get all 18 of us into the very friendly Coal Exchange pub for a splendid lunch. En route back to the bus stop for the return journey to Chichester, we stopped off "for the best ice creams on the south coast". What could have been a disastrous day, turned into a truly great day out - one we will remember for a long time.'



Amblers Extra's Loxwood walk on 2nd October

Amblers Extra also had sunny weather for their Loxwood walk before enjoying a tasty meal at the Onslow Arms.

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



2027 u3a pocket diaries

Does anybody want to purchase a u3a 2027 pocket diary? I should warn you that the cost is £9 per diary. A bulk purchase of 10 diaries reduces the cost to £6.75 but, given that only one person wanted to buy a diary last year, realistically it will cost £9. If you would like one, please contact me via: sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk

Air Shooting Group's meetings in September and October

Congratulations to **Peter Perry** and **Derek Hall**, winners of the September Air Shooting competitions (pictured below). Thanks to **Craig Edwards** for the photos.





Congratulations also go to **Derek Hall** and **Cliff Tate**, winners of the October competitions.

If you would like to find out more about the Air Shooting Groups, which meet on the second Wednesday of the month, then please follow these links:
Air Shooting 1 - Crawley Air Shooting 2 - Crawley

Out & About 7's visit to Chichester Festival Theatre on 9th October

Out and about 7 visited Chichester Festival Theatre for a backstage tour. Please turn to page 8 for Jan Morris's report.



O&A7's visit to Chichester Festival Theatre (continued)

The Theatre, which seats around 1300 people, was opened in 1962 when its first artistic director was Sir Lawrence Olivier. It features the brutalist style of architecture showcasing the bare building materials and structural elements over decorative design, hence you can stand in the foyer and look at the base of the rows of seating above your head. The Minerva theatre opened in 1989 seating 300 people and the Nest, a smaller studio space opened last year. There is also a separate rehearsal studio.

Most costumes are brought in for particular productions but are looked after by the in house team. We were amazed to hear that costumes are washed dried and ironed between each matinee and evening performance. Magnets are used for fastenings when a quick change is required. Wigs are made to measure with each hair individually knotted onto a mesh cap. There are no star dressing rooms but each shared room has big windows overlooking the park.

The theatre has a thrust stage which comes out into the auditorium rather than a traditional proscenium stage which is framed by an arch separating the stage from the audience. This can be a challenge for actors new to the concept and requires a change in their style of delivery. The stage can be altered to provide trap doors and revolving areas. The orchestra performs under or above the stage or sometimes in the screen dock area which houses scenery, props and the quick change area.

Our guide Jon interspersed his tour with anecdotes about different productions which made the information so much more vibrant. For example, the young actor playing Oliver felt unwell during a performance and within 2 minutes a substitute actor waiting in the green room was prepped and ready to carry on with the show.

Many of us had enjoyed watching a variety of performances at the theatre but this tour really made us realise how much work goes on (literally) behind the scenes.

Thanks to **Jan Morris** for the report and photo.

Walkers Extra's Haywards Heath to Balcombe walk on 22nd October

On a lovely sunny day, we caught a train to Haywards Heath and set off on a 6 mile walk to Balcombe. We crossed a golf course before entering woods, through a field of very curious cows, saw a train crossing the Ouse Valley Viaduct and walked around Ardingly Reservoir which was looking incredibly low. Then up 75 very steep steps and into Balcombe Village where we had a lovely lunch at the Half Moon Pub, before heading to Balcombe station for the train back to Three Bridges.

Thanks to **Anne Thorn** for the report and the first photo and to **Jan Morris** for the second photo.





History Group: presentation on Red Cap (abridged)

Best known for its association with revolutionary France, the red cap of liberty, also known as the Phrygian cap or bonnet rouge, became a popular symbol of freedom, revolution and the rejection of tyranny.

It is made of soft felt or wool and conical in shape with a pointed tip that curls forward. It was named after Phrygia, an ancient region in modern-day Turkey and later became blended with the pileus cap given to Roman slaves when they were officially emancipated as a symbol of freedom.



George Redgrave wearing a Phrygian cap (Photo credit: Clive Morris)

The use of a Phrygian-style cap as a symbol of revolutionary France is documented in May 1790. By wearing the bonnet rouge wearers made their revolutionary enthusiasm and working-class solidarity immediately recognizable. The simple red cap especially when contrasted with the elaborate hairstyles and hats of the aristocracy was seen as a symbol of patriotism and equality and described as a sacred symbol that could be worn only by those with merit. In 1792, when Louis XVI was induced to sign a constitution, prints of the king were altered to show him wearing the bonnet rouge. Everybody was equal now.

During the period of the Reign of Terror (September 1793 – July 1794), the cap was worn by all classes to show loyalty and adopted defensively by those who might be denounced as moderates or aristocrats and were especially keen to advertise their adherence to the new regime.

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After the revolution the red cap remained as a symbol of freedom in France becoming prominent again in times of revolution.

The figure Marianne is the national personification of the French Republic and wears the red cap and there are pictures of her leading revolutionary charges holding the French flag and wearing her red cap.

The red cap has also been used in America and south American countries as a symbol of freedom.

What was originally an everyday item remains a relevant, recognisable iconic symbol of freedom

Karen Deasy

u3a free online Learning Events

As ever, it is difficult to pick out just one event from the variety of online learning events offered this month. To find out more about what is on, follow this link: u3a - Online learning events

However, two events caught my eye. The first, Learn about the Lords, is on Thursday 26th November from 2.00-3.00 pm. This webinar will be provide an opportunity to hear directly from Members of the House of Lords. You'll get an insight into their backgrounds, and find out about the work and impact of the House. They will also talk specifically about the work of the Numeracy for Life Committee, sharing information about the report's findings and recommendations. If you would like to join this event, please follow this link: Learn about the Lords Tickets, Thursday 26 November • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT | Eventbrite

The other event which might be helpful to anyone interested in learning how to play bridge, bearing in mind that we have two Bridge Groups, is Learn Bridge Online with u3a, which takes place on Monday 30th November from 2.00-3.30pm. To find out more, follow this link:
Learn bridge online with u3a Tickets, Monday, November 30 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT | Eventbrite

K2 Winter Warm Up on 8th October

Graham Friday, Marion Lang, Jim McGough and I attended the Winter Warm Up at K2 on 8th October. We talked to a number of people who were interested in our u3a, as well as having the pleasure of seeing so many of our members who kindly dropped by to say hello.

Thanks to **Everyone Active** for allowing me to use their photo. If you squint, you can just about make Graham and me out on the far right (I am wearing a blue jumper)!



Crawley Museum and Warnham Evening Flower Club: Wreath making workshop on Tuesday 15th December

This is one for our crafty members! In case you cannot read the email address at the bottom of the poster, it is janetsharp1961@gmail.com



Welcome to new members

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

John Atherton, Ann Baldwin, John Bearryman, Neville Britt, Julianna Broom, Ann Earl, Coral Gatt, Enid Williams

December newsletter

The December newsletter will be emailed to members on Monday 7th December, and posted or hand delivered to those without email shortly thereafter.

Sue Parker

Newsletter Editor

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