

Basingstoke – Old Basing



Thoughts from the Chair

Fear of closure

In July we have our Annual General Meeting. At that time several of our committee members will be standing down. Therefore in order that our u3a can continue we need members to step forward to take up the various roles needed.

The vacancies are as follows: Chair, Vice-chair, Group Facilitator, New Group Development, Publicity Officer.

This month two members have stepped forward to help on membership and I.T. Jean Herbert has joined as Assistant Membership Secretary and will help Marilyn Bennett on renewals and new members. Charles Miller takes on the role of Systems Manager and Webmaster and will cover various aspects of I.T. Richard Field continues to manage Beacon. I must thank Jean and Charles for coming forward to help.

It is imperative that other members step forward and volunteer for the vacant posts listed above. If we cannot cover the various jobs then, I regret to say, your u3a could close in July.

I was planning to step down last January for ongoing health reasons. However, I continued in the post of Chair, as well as covering PR and Publicity Officer duties. In the autumn I plan to take over another group as well as my existing Transport Group. Sadly, other committee members have had to step down for health reasons or other voluntary commitments.

We currently have 1,117 members. We have grown by 37% over the last two years which is excellent news. I know there must be talent amongst our members who can keep our u3a running. We are not the only u3a in Hampshire that has had concerns about closing because of a lack of committee. I know of three others this year who have had this problem but luckily members have stepped forward to save their u3a.

I therefore implore you to consider taking on one of the roles listed. The committee usually meets once every two months. We are a friendly team who help each other with the various aspects of management of our u3a.

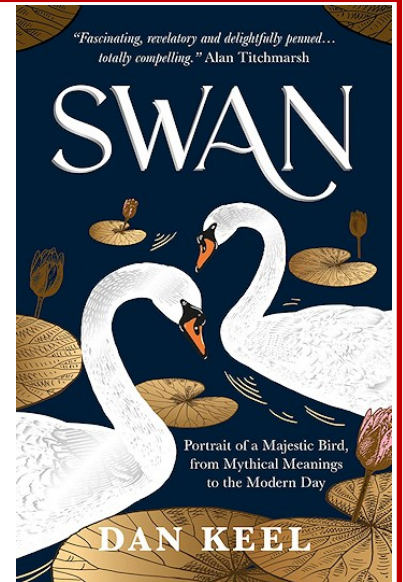
Please contact me on chair@basingstokeu3a.org if you wish to discuss these roles or any help you would be willing to provide.

Paul Dodge

Monthly meetings

14 May **Dan Keel:** *'The swan – a portrait of a majestic bird'*

Dan, a local wildlife writer and photographer, celebrates the mute swan, Britain's most iconic breed, by examining its significance throughout myth and history alongside vivid observations on its habits and habitats, particularly in Hampshire and Berkshire's lakes and canals. The swan is portrayed as both a lover and a fighter, a graceful angel and a clumsy oaf. Immortalised by artists over the ages yet mis-understood and threatened in the present day, the mute swan—with its orange beak and aura of stately silence—is the breed most familiar in Britain.



11 June Picnic at **Hatch Warren Community Centre** (see the box below). Set up will be from noon and we will need to clear the hall by 3.15 pm.

The room overlooks the field. There is a small patio area and a reasonably sized car park for those arriving between 12 and 1.

23 July **Tony Harris** returns, this time as Margaret Thatcher — in person!

This year's *Picnic in the Park* will take place on Wednesday 11 June from 1.30pm to 3.00pm at Hatch Warren Community Centre, RG22 4XF. All members are welcome, so take the chance to come along and meet up with friends. Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available, but please bring your own food and drinks. Goodie bags will be provided.

Parking is available on site, or some side roads, or at the nearby Sainsbury's or Lidl. Bus route 12 stops outside, or bus route 8 to St Mark's School or Sainsbury's is also an option.

There will also be a **cake competition** again.

As the venue has changed, sampling the cakes will be easier for everybody this year.

Last year, Carol Clarke won with a sublime raspberry custard cake, and we are looking forward to all the amazing ideas our cake bakers can come up with. So if you have a family favourite or signature cake, why not enter, as there will be prizes for the top three.

Scoring is based purely on taste and of course **we will need judges**. If you would like to be a judge (it's a hard job, but someone's got to do it ...), please contact Elaine Budd on elainesecu3abasingstoke@outlook.com



News from our groups

Health and Wellbeing

The new Health and Wellbeing group got off to a great start, with audiologist Fiona Barker telling us all about our ears. Here are the key dos and don'ts that were discussed:

- There is NO causal effect between loss of hearing and dementia
- NHS hearing aids now give as much frequency improvement as private but not as many add-ons such as Bluetooth
- They now think tinnitus is your brain trying to make up for hearing loss, so hearing aids may reduce it and there are sleeping aids available to distract the brain.

Things we should/can do:

1. Wash the outer ear
2. If you have excessive wax, use ear drops once or twice a month
3. Always have wax that impacts your hearing removed by a professional
4. Have your ears tested the same number of times as you do your eyes – once a year.
5. Always wear hearing protection whilst at concerts or around loud noises such as strimming.
6. As we get older, we reduce the amount we turn our heads. That ear/eye/feet system manages our balance, so to improve balance do the following:
 - a) Stand on one leg, alternating, every day when you brush your teeth
 - b) Go for a 20–30 minute walk outdoors. Use your eyes to look around and to improve eye/head co-ordination you can do the following:
 - look for things that are the same colour
 - look for things that all start with the same letter

Things we MUST NOT DO

1. NEVER put things down your ear canal: **throw away those cotton buds immediately**
2. Never wear hearing aids at concerts – always protection of some type

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On 8 May we have Lily Samuels MSc BSc, Registered Nutritionist, coming to talk about **"Feeding Your Second Brain – the powerful link between your gut, health, mood, memory and longevity"**.

Kate Harrison from Age Concern will also be there to give a short update on what is available and book one to ones at later dates to discuss things such as entitlements and carers.

Elaine Budd

MAY 2025

End of an era in the Bridge Improvers group – and the start of a new one

On 17 March, Stan and Jean Babb and John Glasscock retired from running the Bridge Improvers group. Stan and Jean have been running the group for 11 years, very ably assisted by John over the last couple of years.

Grateful members of the group presented them with flowers and chocolates at the final session, which was the end of course tournament.



They have now handed the reins over to Richard and Janet Field, who will be running the 20 week course starting in September 2025. Richard also runs the Very Relaxed Duplicate Bridge group. If you are interested in joining either group, please visit these groups on the Members Portal or email Richard on beacon@basingstokeu3a.org.

Jean and Stan represent everything that our u3a stands for. They have in-depth skills in Duplicate Bridge and they are willing to share those skills with other members of our u3a, who are keen to learn new skills.

But Jean and Stan are not resting on their laurels. They are still heavily involved with Bridge in our u3a, continuing to run the Duplicate Bridge group every Thursday afternoon.

Let's give a big thank you to Jean, Stan and John for all their hard work, dedication, good humour and patience!

Richard Field

Hellenic Life

The new Hellenic Life group led by Popi Daouti-Edwards and Joyce Cook started recently. The group has been enjoying learning the Greek alphabet and finding out about how ancient and modern Greece and Cyprus (known as Hellenes) celebrate customs of Easter and May Day.

Group members are sharing memories of going on holidays to beautiful places such as Corfu and getting to know its rich history and culture. In addition to learning some basic Greek words, the group is planning to have a meze, music and dancing afternoon, a visit to a Greek restaurant and a visit to the British museum in the autumn. Future talks are scheduled to be on mythology, poetry, and the Minoan civilisation of Crete.



The group has spaces. It meets twice a month at Brookvale Village Hall, and members can join via the Members Portal.



MAY 2025



Some members of our Hellenic Life group

Opportunities at one of our local radio stations

Further to a feature on our u3a on Basingstoke Community Radio, plus supporting u3a commercials, they are looking for local people to be involved in their station based at Chineham Shopping Centre.

You have the opportunity to learn new skills and be part of one of our new radio stations. Volunteers are required for the following roles.

General Admin: help keep things running smoothly behind the scenes.

Show Presenters: share your passion for music and chat with our listeners!

Co-presenters: team up with a friend and bring your dynamic energy to the airwaves.

News and Special Interests: report on local happenings or delve into your favourite topics.

Be part of the action at local events.

They will provide all the training you need and will support you every step of the way. There's no age limit!

They can be contacted on 01256 533987.

Website: www.basingstokecommunityradio.org.uk

Paul Dodge

Short Mat Bowls

The group held its annual u3a Short Mat Bowls Challenge Cup on Saturday 5 April at the Loddon Vale Indoor Bowls Club.

It was a tightly fought battle between Red Kites and Kingfishers, with lots of laughter and fun. After two hours of play it ended up with just four shots between the teams: 67 to the Kingfishers captained by Chris Vickers and 63 to Red Kites captained by Barbara Clark.

Congratulations to both teams who played in the true spirit of the u3a ethos – the umpire did not have to step in once to break up any disputes! This was followed by a supper and trophy presentation.

Since moving to Loddon Vale Indoor Bowls Club, the group has been able to welcome more members, whether experienced or with no experience at all. They have all found it very friendly and great fun, regardless of their skill set.

Chris Harris



Needles and pins

These are items donated to Oakridge House for Easter from the Friday Needles & Pins group.



Book Clubs welcome local author Claire Fuller

This month the two book clubs were lucky to welcome a local author Claire Fuller, after we had read her award-winning book *Unfinished Ground*. Claire was nice enough to come to both the Monday and Tuesday clubs, and after we had discussed the book, she joined us in small groups to answer questions on the plot and its direction. After tea, Claire talked us through her career, as she only started writing in her 40s – how she got her first book deal, the process of writing, editing and getting her books published. What was really unusual about Claire is that she doesn't have just one genre and the book about to be published is another departure as she is telling a ghost story. Both groups ranked the book in our top five reads!



We also raised £172 for the Read Easy charity in Winchester which Claire supports.

Our book in May is the amazing Kristian Hannah novel about nurses in Vietnam, *The Women*. If you like reading books and are interesting in discussing what you think of them, why not join us?

Elaine Budd

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

MAY 2025