

More new groups!

February
2025

Two new groups start this month – *Walk in the park* and *Sewing with your machine*. And two more are on their way: *Hellenic Life*, which will start in March, and *Health and Wellbeing*, which is set to hold its first meeting in April. We wish them every success.

The *Walk in the Park* group will include walks around War Memorial Park. In May, the park will again host the popular Transport Festival. In the photo below, Paul our Chair can be seen next to a car which he assures us is not his. We will however be keeping a close eye on our expenses ...



Chair's Report - February

Welcome everyone to the latest edition of *News Edit*.

It is February, and the days are slightly longer, hinting at the promise of Spring. This gradual change brings a sense of rejuvenation and anticipation for the activities and gatherings planned in the coming months.

I am pleased that we are starting three new groups: *Walk in the Park*, *Sewing with your Machine*, and *Hellenic Life*.

There has been a lot of interest in the ***Walk in the Park*** group, and it is expected that the first meeting will be at the end of February. This new group sounds like an excellent group for those who may now prefer a shorter distance amble to a longer distance ramble.

The new ***Sewing with your machine*** group, which offers the opportunity to learn new skills, is already well subscribed.

The ***Hellenic Life*** group, celebrating Greek and Cypriot life, language and culture will be starting at the beginning of March. Greece and Cyprus have a fascinating history and culture, and the group will offer the opportunity to learn about the Greek language, history, philosophers, music and cuisine.

Another exciting new group covering ***Health and Wellbeing*** is being planned: further information next month.

Please remember you can apply to join any group via the Members Portal.

Our monthly meeting on Wednesday 12 February at Popley Fields Community Centre will be *Tales of the Unexpected* presented by Christine and James Rowley. This is about the popular ITV series aired between 1979 and 1988.

Group Leaders should be aware that Richard Field, our Beacon Manager, now has a video prepared from national u3a showing significant changes to Beacon over the year. This also includes how the introduction of the Members Portal impacts you as a Group Leader. Any Group Leader wishing to see this video should contact Richard via email to beacon@basingstokeu3a.org.

Anne Mallinson who has been Assistant Membership Secretary has now left the committee. I would like to thank Anne who has helped Marilyn Bennett with renewals and new memberships during the roll out of the Members Portal last year.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success of our u3a. Your dedication and support have been invaluable. As always, I warmly welcome more members to come forward and help set up new groups. Your involvement will undoubtedly enrich our organisation and provide even more opportunities for learning and connection.

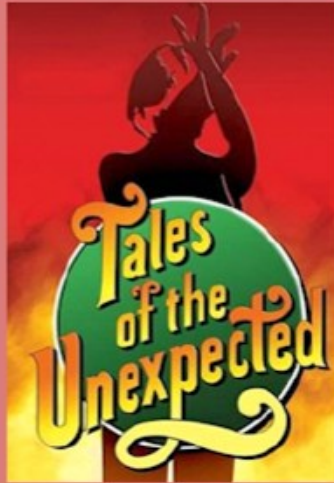
This is my last Chair's report. Popi Daouti-Edwards takes over as Chair in March.

Paul Dodge

Monthly meetings

12 February

The inside stories of *Tales of the Unexpected*, never aired before, will delight the audience and put a different light on this extravaganza series on ITV from 1979 to 1988, with its sinister twisted endings...



Join our members Christine and James Rowley who will take us through a marvellous intrepid interpretation of some of the episodes produced by Anglia TV.

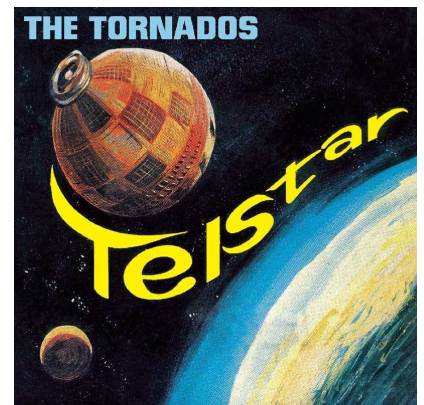
Learn about the actors, those who became famous, and take part in this fun presentation.

Music clips, extracts and more.

Talks arranged for subsequent months:

12 March **Stephen Wilkinson**, magician and mentalist
<https://itsmindmagic.com>

9 April **Jacqueline and Brian Sutton** are T WOgether Talks
The exciting birth of British pop music, including Billy Fury, Jess Conrad, Lonnie Donegan and many more. The talk includes the story of innovative sound engineer and record producer Joe Meek, who wrote and produced the instrumental hit *Telstar* for The Tornados, and the tragic and violent end to his life.



13 May **Dan Keel**: *'The swan - a portrait of a majestic bird'*

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

* Our 2025 Annual General Meeting will be held this afternoon, so please note the date in your diary.

www.basingstokeu3a.org

learn, laugh, live

News from our groups

Patchwork and Quilting Group

This group has been existence for about 20 years. Each year we make items for a charity, as well as items for our own use.

Last year the charity was *Sebastian's Action Trust*, a trust that supports families with children who have a terminal illness.

Each member made a 12 inch patchwork block of their own choice, but to use blues and creams or white. A single quilt was made (see the photo below) plus three cushions from excess blocks and a tote bag donated by a member.



The patchwork items were part of the trust's Christmas Raffle, which raised over £700. The items from our group played a significant part, and as a nice touch, the quilt was won by a child the trust supports.

As an ongoing project, the group also makes baby quilts for the neo-natal ward at our local hospital. Mums who give birth prematurely can choose a quilt to take home, plus they brighten up the incubators whilst babies are in hospital.

Our group has a maximum membership of twenty due to the restriction on power points in our meeting room, as most work is machine done. We meet twice a month.

Angela and Penny, Group Leaders

News from any group is always welcome. If your group has something it would like to share, please send an email to enquiries@basingstokeu3a.org.

250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth

This year marks the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth in Steventon, 8 miles west of Basingstoke.

The splendid photos below were taken by our chair Paul Dodge. The one on the left shows St Nicholas Church, Steventon, where Jane Austen's father George was rector. The other shows the lane leading to the church in springtime.



A quiz for February

1. What is the traditional birthstone for February?
2. Who, in 1861, created the first heart-shaped box of chocolates for Valentine's Day?
3. Which popular tradition is celebrated in the United States and Canada on 2 February?
4. Who was beheaded at the Tower of London on 12 February 1554?
5. (i) What is Superman's birthday?
(ii) What is his star sign?
6. President Jean-Claude Duvalier fled which country in February 1986 after a popular uprising?
7. On 11 February of what year did Nelson Mandela leave prison as a free man?
8. Which famous London hospital accepted its first patient in February 1852?
9. February takes its name from the Latin *februum*, which means what?
10. On what day did the UK and Ireland decimalise their currencies?

The answers will be given in the next *News Edit*.

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