

u3a Thameside Wallingford

www.thamesidewallingfordu3a.org

April Newsletter

Notes from the Chair

The good news is that spring has arrived (despite the chilly winds) and the outings committee have had their first trip of the year to London. I heard from Ken that it went well and was a most enjoyable day.

As you know, the renewal notices were sent out last month and nearly all members are paying by bank transfer: thank you as this really helps us. Cheques are very difficult for us as an organisation to deal with as they incur an extra charge and finding a Lloyds Bank to pay them in, especially as the Didcot branch will close next March. Renewals for all new members are based on the date you joined but for the majority this will be the 1st April. A reminder email will be sent out one month before your fees are due. If you forget to pay then a final reminder is sent one month after they are due (joining date or 1st April) and you will then have 4 weeks to pay. If no payment is made your membership will lapse and you will be removed from the membership list and from any interest groups you attend. This means you have eight weeks to pay your renewal fees from the date you receive your first email payment notice.

Please note we will check your membership when you book an outing and if you are not on the membership list then you will not be able to book. If your payment is overdue you will be put on the waiting list until you renew. Conveners will also have access to the list and you may be asked not to attend group meetings.

I appreciate this sounds very officious but as a committee we do need to make sure that everyone has paid to be a member of our organisation.

The AGM is on the 20th May and if you would like to stand for the committee the nomination papers will be available to download from the website or find them attached to this newsletter. Printed papers will also be available at the next coffee morning. To stand, you must have renewed your membership for 2026-27 and you must have a proposer and seconder who also have to be members for 26-27. Nomination forms to be returned by post or scanned and emailed to the secretary by the 1st May 26.

Paul Roberts was the guest speaker last month and this time he focused on Sicily. He gave us a fantastically clear account of Sicily's history accompanied by wonderful slides and maps. I definitely need to visit again! Next month we welcome Eleanor Janega who will talk on 'Women in the Middle Ages'

Please remember the next coffee morning is Friday 10th April (not the 3rd which is Good Friday).

Ian Shipton

Chair

Vacancies

Outings sub-committee

We have vacancies for members to help with organising our monthly outings. If you feel you could help, then please email the outings subcommittee.

Upcoming Events

Next Coffee Morning will be on the 10th of April, 10:30 till midday.
(Please note, put back a week because of Easter).

Next Speaker Meeting – 15th April: Eleanor Janega - Women in the Middle Ages

Visit to Dorney Court and Thame - Friday 17 April 2026
This outing is fully booked and there is a waiting list.

New Members

We welcome four new members this month.

From Wallingford, Jane Stickland, Terry and Doris Hoyle, and Vivien Wigfield.

Coffee Morning

First Friday every month – Wallingford Methodist Church St Leonard's Square OX10 0AS

This month will be 10th of April, 10:30am until midday

Brenda Taylor & Graham Carpenter

Next month will be 1st of May, 10:30am until midday

Jill & Tony Reeves.

If you want to join the serving rota then please contact Pam Johnston via the [contact page](#).

Groups

No new groups this month.

If you want to join or form a group, then please contact Yvonne via [contact page](#) on the website.

Speaker Meetings

Next Speaker Meeting – 15th April: Eleanor Janega - Women in the Middle Ages

Dr. Eleanor Janega is a medieval historian specialising in propaganda, urbanity and sexuality in the late medieval period.

Her work highlights the ways in which society has been influenced by the past and also tells us stories about history that are not actually true in order to justify our own desires.

Dr. Janega is renowned for her approachable style of history, making complex concepts digestible and entertaining for non-expert audiences

Following Speaker Meeting (and AGM): 20 May Simon Booker - Strictly Nature

Check Website for Updates More on speaker meetings can be found on our [speakers' webpage](#).

Outings

Visit to Dorney Court and Thame - Friday 17 April 2026

This outing is fully booked and there is a waiting list.

We will visit (guided tour) Dorney Court, an estate and private home, owned by the Palmer family, that has passed through the generations for nearly half a millennium. It's considered to be one of the finest Tudor Manor House's in the country.

Thame

A market town, many of us will be familiar with. This is an opportunity to stop for lunch (on our return leg), there are plenty of pubs and cafes dotted around the marketplace.

Included in the visit:

Coach travel including driver's tip

Refreshments on arrival- we have refreshments at the garden centre set in the walled garden of Dorney Court.

Guided tour of Dorney Court (90 minutes)

Not included:

Lunch - At Thame

Price £39 per person

Leave: Wallingford Museum 0900

Crowmarsh Church 0905

Arrive: Dorney 1015 (1100 guided tour)

Depart: Dorney 1230

Arrive: Thame 1330

Depart: Thame 1530

Wallingford: 1630 approximately

To be put on the waiting list please email or post with the following FIVE points of Booking information to Sue Wright

1. My/our Name(s)
2. My phone number(s) & email address
3. Reserve for me place(s) @ £39.00 per person
4. Pick me up from ... Wallingford Museum or ... Crowmarsh Church
5. Name, relationship and phone number of an emergency contact on that day.

DO NOT PAY YET. You will be asked to pay if a vacancy occurs.

Sue Wright.

Visit to RHS Wisley - Friday 8th May 2026

This outing is fully booked and there is a waiting list.

A request to visit RHS Wisley was popular when members completed our recent questionnaire about future outings.

George Fergusson Wilson, a keen grower of fruit and orchids, bought the site in 1878 and established his "Oakwood experimental garden".

After Wilson's death in 1902, Sir Thomas Hanbury, founder of La Mortola Garden in Italy, purchased Oakwood and adjoining Glebe Farm and donated it to the Royal Horticultural Society for its perpetual use. RHS Wisley is one of the world's great gardens packed with horticultural inspiration.

There is a café and restaurant on site for refreshments plus a shop for gifts and plants.

Included in the visit: Coach with WC including driver's tip and admission to RHS Wisley (NB free entrance to RHS members).

Not included: Refreshments

Price: £35.00 per person including entrance to RHS Wisley

£ 20.25 per person if RHS member (you MUST bring your RHS membership card on the day)

Leave Wallingford Museum @ 9.00am and Crowmarsh Gifford Church @ 9.05am

Arrive RHS Wisley @ 10.30am.

Depart RHS Wisley @16.00, return to Wallingford approx. 17.30.

Organiser Jane Milne

TO GET ON WAITING LIST:

Please email the following FIVE points of booking information to Jane Milne via the janemilneu3a@gmail.com – please put WISLEY WAITING in the Subject line.

1. My/our Name(s)
2. My Phone Number & email address
3. Reserve for me place(s) @ £20.25 or £35.00 per person (please state if RHS member)
4. Pick me/us up from ...Wallingford Museum or ...Crowmarsh Gifford Church
5. Name, relationship and phone number of an emergency contact on that day.

DO NOT PAY YET. You will be asked to pay using your bank's online bank transfer or by cheque only when you are offered a place.

The Third Age Trust

is the national representative body for the u3a in the UK. Here is their [website](#).

Online Learning Events

Sign up for the [u3a National Newsletter](#) for news and stories from across the u3a movement.

u3a members can join a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free with their membership

U3A Radio Podcast

Thames Valley Network

We are one of 38 branches within the [Thames Valley Network](#)(TVN).

If you would like to receive information directly from TVN with details of Study Days & Workshops, please email events_info@u3atvnetwork.org.uk

TVN Study Days:

Pandemics – Monday 13th April at 10:30. Dr Jeffrey Almond, is retired Professor of Microbiology at the University of Reading with a specific interest in Virology. His groundbreaking research included identifying the detailed structure of avian and human influenzavirus and poliovirus. Jeffrey has also led research into new bacterial and viral vaccines with Sanofi Pasteur.

The fee for this event is £2,00 per device

To view or download the flyer click on the link [Pandemics](#)

To book for this event click go to [Ticketsource](#).

Applications will not be accepted after 10th April 2026.

Contact any of the below via our [contact page](#)

Committee 2025/26

Chairman – Ian Shipton

Deputy Chairman – Ken Johnstone

Treasurer – Tony Fenner

Secretary – Hilly Bailey

Meeting Minutes – Jane Milne

Membership Secretary – Charmaine Anderson

Database Administrator – Malcolm Brooks

Thames Valley Network Rep – Neil Kelly

Newsletter Collator – Bob Ferguson

Communications including Newsletter - Ian Shipton & Malcolm Brooks

Calendar & Website – Sarah Robinson

Co-opted member – Anna Gordon

Coordinators:

Groups Co-ordinator – Yvonne Griffiths

Speakers Co-ordinator – Jane Tuckett

Outings Co-ordinator – Ken Johnstone

Coffee Mornings Rota – Pam Johnstone

Speaker Refreshments – Richard & Ros Steptoe

Accessibility & Inclusivity – Jane Milne
