



February 2026

Chair's Message

Hello Everyone

Well, it's been a cold start to 2026 and I am definitely looking forward to the warmer weather, but on the plus side it's good to be back after the Christmas break. I thought that Rowena Beighton-Dyke's talk was an excellent start to the new year - who knew that wallpaper could be so fascinating? Looking forward it seems we have another great programme of speakers (thanks Pam!) and one or two interesting activities for our Social Meetings - although I would always welcome ideas for a few more.

With the warmer weather we can, of course, look forward to more trips out. Tony's Bus Pass Group has been a tremendous success thus far and I am sure we are all grateful that he brought the idea to us - such a logical way to get out and about with good company. The Walking Group is another way for us to enjoy getting out together and I'm grateful to Ken for all the work he does arranging so many walks throughout the year. His job would be a lot easier, though, if more walkers could step up and lead a walk once in a while, so if you think that could be you - have a word with Ken.

Margaret our Group Coordinator started the year with a meeting for the Group Leaders and it looks like there will be some interesting developments with our Interest Groups, so watch this space! If you have your own ideas for a group, it's never too late to speak to her and see how it could be done.

One final request for help. Joan has organised the tea and coffee rota for our Thursday meetings for as long as I can remember and is always looking for volunteers. It's a great way to meet people if you are a new member, or even if you're not and now that TWPG have a dishwasher it is not that onerous. So, if you think that you can help, please speak to Joan.

As a u3a we need to remember why we joined, why we chose an organisation that is run by members for members, and to do whatever we can to contribute. So those of you who step up and help out - thank you! And those of you who haven't yet found a way to contribute, have a think about it!

I'm looking forward to a busy and fun filled 2026, as I hope you are.

Many Thanks

Corinne

More Wallpaper, Vicar?

Rowena Beighton-Dykes



Rowena Beighton-Dykes is a researcher and writer specialising in period wallpaper. She is Honorary Chair of the Wallpaper History Society and editor of the Review, the journal of the Wallpaper History Society.

In our latest talk from Rowena, she explored the socio-economic and political context of wallpaper purchases by members of the Anglican Church in the 19th century.

This well illustrated talk showed how grants from the fund known as 'Queen Anne's Bounty' (for the support of poor clergy in England and Wales), led to the development of new clergy houses. This in turn led to an increase in wallpaper purchases by members of the clergy. The Cowtan Wallpaper Company pattern books in the V&A show the names of customers with members of the Anglican Church prominent.

Rowena wove together a fascinating mix of topics in her talk — from the surprising use of poisonous pigments to the stories behind local houses, the echoes of Jane Austen's novels, and the social expectations of the era. It was a pleasure to hear her speak and to see the sample pages from the order books, especially now that wallpaper is enjoying such a strong revival.

For Your Diary.

If you are noting u3a meeting dates in your diary for 2026, you may have spotted a small error which I overlooked when preparing the New Blue Membership Cards.

On the card it says "11th September 2026 – First Meeting after Summer Break".

11th September is a Friday! We are NOT changing the day of meetings; the date of First Meeting after Summer Break will be Thursday 10th September 2026.

Thank you to those who brought this to my attention.

Tony

Membership Secretary.

North West Region u3a Summer School 2026

Tuesday 11th August – Friday 14th August

Manchester Metropolitan University, M15 6GX

The University is located in the centre of Manchester and less than 20 minutes' walk from Oxford Road Railway Station. The campus has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access.

There will be a quiz on the first evening and a "Gala Dinner" on the third and final evening. Speakers will also attend on the second and third evening.

Full Board Residential Delegate; £430. (+£15 car parking charge if applicable;)

Full board for 3 nights, includes dinner on 11th Aug, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 12th Aug, breakfast, lunch and Gala Dinner on 13th August, and breakfast on 14th Aug.

Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215 (+£15 car parking charge if applicable)

This includes lunches, teas and coffees, excludes breakfast daily and dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday – but does include the Gala Dinner on 13th August.

The 8 courses on offer are: –
Archaeology Explorers (now full)
Making sense of everyday Mathematics
An introduction to Geology
Photography – Beyond the Snapshot
Art challenges – the history of colour
The UK and USA Political Scenes
Operatunity – opera appreciation
Intermediary Ukulele

An application form must be completed by post or email, Payment can be either by bank transfer or cheque

Bank transfer (North West Region of u3as, Lloyds Bank sort code 30-90-16, account 00197002 quoting name and post code) cheque (payable to North West Region of u3as)

£100 DEPOSIT (£50 non-residents) PAYABLE UPON APPLICATION;
BALANCE BY 11 MAY 2026

Queries should be directed to Alan Hough or Neill Stewart at
alanhough1949@gmail.com; neillstewart.uk@icloud.com

An application form and further details are available online at
<https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2026/>

Art Appreciation



This month's meeting took the form of a well-organised group visit to the *Turner: Always Contemporary* exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery, celebrating 250 years since the birth of J.M.W. Turner.

The exhibition brings together Turner's own work alongside an impressive range of important and influential loaned pieces. We enjoyed works by artists such as Claude

Monet, Bridget Riley, Maggie Hambling and Jeff Koons, as well as the striking Damien Hirst sharks. Together, these works span 250 years of art and highlight Turner's enduring and timeless influence.

Before entering the gallery, Bernadette gave us an informative introduction to Turner's life and career. She explained how his talent was recognised at an early age, while some of his later work shocked contemporary critics. When Turner died, his unsold works were left to the nation, which is why many of us are familiar with his atmospheric and panoramic paintings from galleries across the country.

This exhibition, however, goes further by exploring not only Turner's own remarkable achievements but also the powerful influence he has had on generations of artists who followed. It clearly demonstrated just how relevant and inspiring his work remains.

Nordic Walking



Now a January tradition to lunch out together. The group walked, then went home, got ready, and got out to enjoy lunch at 'The Queen's Arms'.

Walking Group

Ken is unable to lead a February Walk, but will lead the Liverpool 3 Parks Walk on 20th March. It is possible that a walk may be organised by another member before then, so check the notices and boards in meetings for details.

Day out with a Bus Pass

Tony will be leading a visit to Sudley House Museum, Liverpool on Thursday 19th February. The sign up sheet is available at meetings.

Tea and Coffee Rota

Would you like to help out and meet more members?
Please contact Joan Benton on 0151 608 6226 or 07568563329

12 February 2026

Karen Little
Norah Murray

26 February 2026

Marion Jackson
Barbara Riley

The Independent Monitoring Board

Sophie Anscombe from the Department of Justice asked for support in advertising a local volunteer role that she thinks would be of interest to our members.

The Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB) are opening recruitment until the 18th of Feb, and she believes there is a lot of overlap between the type of people who join the u3a and those who volunteer.

The IMB is a group of volunteers who monitor the treatment and conditions of people in custody, providing independent oversight to ensure fairness and decency. It's a role that offers variety, challenge, and the chance to make a real difference

Many of the most successful members of the IMB are retired or semi-retired people who want to continue learning new skills, engaging with their communities, and doing valuable and interesting work. This seems to align closely with the interests of u3a members.

You can find more information about the role on our website:
<https://imb.org.uk/>

Please feel free to contact her if you'd like to discuss further:
<mailto:sophie.anscombe@justice.gov.uk>
07742 658544

Speaker Meetings

Arranged by Pam Southall

12 th Feb	History & Work of the RNLI	Brian Jordan
12 th Mar	Special Investigation inside the Brighton Bombing	Barry Cave
9 th Apr	Solo Walk across Africa	Fran Sandham
7 th May	Peru in the Footsteps of the Incas	Dr. David Mottram
4 th Jun	The Liverpool Tobacco Industry 1642-2007	Robert S. Jones
2 nd Jul	'Operation Fish' - saving Britain's Gold from the Nazis	B Nevin

GROUPS

Art Appreciation - Held in the Session room in TWPG. 3rd Wednesday each month. 10am for 10.15 start. Also, Gallery visits.

Contact Bernadette - <mailto:art@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Natter and Read

Meets at 10.30. - 12.00. in Wallasey at Joyce Woosley's home near Wallasey Town Hall on Thursday following the first u3a meeting in the month. Spaces available. All books are provided by the Library Service.

Contact Joyce: <mailto:book2@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Lunch Group

Our lunch group hosted by Joan Benton is held monthly at the Refreshment Rooms. It is held on the third Wednesday in the month at 12:45 for 1:00pm. Numbers are limited so watch out at TWPG meetings for the signup sheet.

Walking Group

Usually 3rd Friday in month. <mailto:walks@oxtonu3a.co.uk>
Information and Sign-up sheet available in meetings.

Nordic Walking

Come and join Corinne's Nordic Walking Group every Tuesday at 10.00 am at Birkenhead Park visitor centre. We walk for an hour then have refreshments at the café. All year round.

Bridge Group and Rummikub

Bill Nock is the leader with Tony on hand to teach bridge to new members. Meets in the cabin at TWPG fortnightly on Wed. at 10.00am.

Book Group 1

Meets in Oxton at Val Edward's house on the second Tuesday in the month. Full at the moment. Contact: book1@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Craft Group

Meets on the last Monday of the month. 2.00 – 4.00. At Joan Benton's house. Full at the moment, but names can be added to a reserve list.
Contact: craft@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Play Reading

2nd Tuesday monthly usually. Meeting: 10.00am – 12.30. Held at Eliane Davie's house. Full at the moment. Reading 'The Real Thing' by Tom Stoppard
Contact Eliane: <mailto:playreading@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Care of members

Eve Felton has agreed to be the point of contact so if you know of any member in need of a kind word please contact

committeemember@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Please give some info – a different type of card is required for someone who has a broken leg to someone who has had a major heart attack!

Also, a bit of information for sympathy cards is helpful.

Thanks to Steve Cottam for proofreading, and to Corinne for photographs.

If you think you have anything u3a related to be included in the newsletter please send it to me.

<mailto:newsletter@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Kathy