

Newsletter

Chairman's Report



This is my first report to members since I took on the Chair's role at the AGM in April. Firstly, thank you for the kind messages of support following my appointment. I shall do my best to meet your expectations.

A big welcome to some new faces on the Committee: Sally Jacob (Vice-Chair), Neil Palmer (Treasurer), Bridget Collins (Groups Co-ordinator) and Kaye McArthur (Publicity Co-ordinator). We also have four Committee support roles, which are held by Aurora Acone (Finance Officer), Gill Walker (Assistant Finance Officer), Verena Edwards (Data Administrator) and, last but not least, Jacqueline Berghouse (Newsletter Editor).

My main focus, since taking up my post, has been to submit an application to the Charity Commission. To become a registered charity, we had to review our practices as an organisation and adopt a number of policies to provide support for our members. While this is important, it will not impact your enjoyment of our u3a group activities and events. Our overall aim is for you to feel safe and supported so that you can experience the various activities, knowing that should something unexpected occur, your group leader will know exactly what to do to keep you safe.

Enough of the business side of things – on to more interesting stuff! Our u3a continues to grow and, as a member-led organisation, we rely on people getting involved. In particular, we are looking for fresh, exciting ideas and volunteers to help with or lead activities. We all have a lifetime of experience to offer, with a diverse range of skills and interests. If you have a passion for a specific subject or hobby, why not consider establishing a brand-new group? To discuss your ideas, please contact the [Groups Co-ordinator](#), or any member of the committee.

I look forward to meeting and talking to as many of you as I can over the year.

To contact a member of the committee, click [here](#).

Keith Appleby



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Town Council

News Roundup

Art Appreciation: There is no talk scheduled for September.

Bandstand Sunday: Join us for live music at Mill Meadows: Sunday **30 August** Marlow Town Band; Monday **31 August**, Chiltern Hills Brass Band; and, Sunday **6 September**, Chinnor Silver Band. These popular public events, provided in association with Henley Town Council, conclude for the season in September but will return in April 2027.

Coffee Mornings: Join us at Dottie's Cafe (Toad Hall Garden Centre), off the Marlow Road, at 10.30am on the fourth Tuesday of each month. See feature on next page.

Creative Arts: The meetings for October and December have been moved from the fourth Wednesday of the month to the third.

Morning Walks: We now meet at 10am on the third Wednesday of each month (except December); weather permitting.

Music Appreciation 1: At present, there's a waiting list. Recently we have listened to Piano Concertos, A Tribute to Sir Thomas Beecham, and Music About Animals.

Music Appreciation 2: At present, there's a waiting list. Recently we have listened to French Favourites and A Tribute to Sir Thomas Beecham.

Photography: Dormant

Play Reading (revived): We will meet the first Tuesday of the month 10.30am – 12.30pm, beginning October. Venue TBA. Contact [David Morgan](#) for information and to express interest.

Popular Music: Now meeting at 2:30pm.

Portuguese: Closed, due to insufficient interest.

Stitchery & Yarn: Healthy attendance, with individual projects and collective ideas shared over coffee and tea. The date has now changed from the third Friday to the second Friday. 11th September is the first new meeting date going forward.

Weekend Lunches: Join us at the Catherine Wheel in Hart Street, Henley, for this popular social event. We meet at 12 noon on the second Saturday of the month – just look for our reserved u3a tables.

At time of going to press, the following groups have spaces available: Morning Walks; Day Walks; Board Games 2; Board Games (Evening); Creative Arts; Creative Writing; Effective Leaders; Family History; Film; Italian (all levels); Jazz; Play Reading; Poetry 1; and, Singing for Joy. All other groups are currently waitlisted.

Art Appreciation, Monthly Talks and all social groups are open events. Everyone is welcome.

For further information go to [u3a Henley Groups](#) or the [Events page](#).

**Summer
Lunch
2026**



The Dessert Table

The **Annual Summer Lunch** took place at the Sacred Heart Church Hall on **Wednesday, 22nd July** and was a resounding success! Thanks go to Lynette Hawkins and Ros Whittaker for all their hard work in organising the event, with a special mention to Ros's daughter and two grandchildren, who worked so hard to ensure everybody was well catered for.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to all members who have joined us since our last newsletter. Please take the opportunity to look through our [groups](#). Do contact the convenor if any of your choices are showing full, as there may be an opportunity to waitlist, or join a new group.

Our social occasions and events are popular, just come along and introduce yourself. There's always a committee member (with a badge) on hand to assist.

If you have particular skills or knowledge you wish to share, please discuss this with a member of the committee either [here](#), or in person at an event or social gathering.

NEW GROUPS

To start a new group, please contact the [Groups Co-ordinator](#).

CARD READER PAYMENTS

Please note that, by the end of the year, we aim to take all payments for talks by card only.

Coffee Mornings

*10.30am, fourth Tuesday of each month
Toad Hall Garden Centre
Marlow Road, Henley RG9 3AG*



The ever popular [Coffee Mornings](#) are now being held in the brand new [Dottie's Café](#) at Toad Hall Garden Centre. This is a great place to meet the committee, group convenors and fellow members socially. Just turn up and look for our reserved tables – speak to Roger if you are new or cannot find a seat.

No transport? Catch the 850 bus (towards High Wycombe) outside Boots on Bell Street. These operate every 15 minutes and stop right outside the entrance to Toad Hall. From there, it is a short walk down the drive to the garden centre, where you will find Dottie's. Plenty of parking is available for those wishing to drive.

Upcoming dates for your diary: 22nd September, 27th October and 24th November. There is no Coffee Morning in December. In the first couple of months of 2027, the fourth Tuesday is 26th January and 23rd February.

TOAD HALL GARDEN CENTRE

Fresh Air, Exercise & Good Company

JOIN US!

Volunteer Leaders Welcome

Whether you prefer a short **morning walk** at a pace to suit you, or a more challenging **day walk** with a break for lunch, Henley u3a has you covered.

Both groups welcome fresh faces and encourage all members, new and existing, to lead walks.

Contact Roger Shaw ([Morning Walks](#)) or Julia Whitelaw/Gill Hegarty ([Day Walks](#))



New intake of day walkers



A June Drenching

This failed to dampen our spirits and, as luck would have it, the sun broke through with the finish in sight, shining brightly and warmly upon us. Two months later, the British weather swung to the other extreme! We set off lathered in sunscreen, with hats and sunglasses firmly in place, trekking across parched brown fields under the glare of the sun, thankful for every bit of shade.

In August, we hosted our summer reunion, a popular event that brings former and current walkers together. We kicked off with a morning foray – before 21 of us settled down to a convivial catch-up over lunch at The New Inn, Kidmore End.

While we could be fortunate to have an Indian summer, autumn will soon usher in those shorter, cooler days, with winter looming on the horizon. Happily, at the beginning of December, we have our Christmas reunion to look forward to – another wonderful gathering of past and present walkers. But first, there is a venue to be found and booked!



An August Drought

WALK WITH US, ENJOY THE SEASONS!

Roger says: The **Morning Walks** are now taking place at 10 o'clock on the third Wednesday of each month (except December), weather permitting. Some are held in and around Henley, with others in outlying villages and towns. Lifts are usually available. Volunteers to lead new walks are especially welcome. Light exercise, delightful views and scintillating conversation are promised by this friendly group.

Recent walks have taken us around Warren Row (with views of Windsor Castle) and the outskirts of Henley.

Future walks include routes around Binfield Heath (16 September) and Sonning Common (21 October).

No need to book, just turn up, but it's important to read the [latest info and safety guidelines](#) on the website.



PARTICIPATE, FEEL GOOD, MEET NEW FRIENDS

Allotment

The weather may have been lovely, but the group have had to work extra hard to keep the allotment from suffering because of the drought. I really do thank them for the daily watering! Our efforts seem to be paying off as the photo shows!

We have had a bumper year for courgettes and onions. The tomatoes are ripening well, but the runner beans have been very slow and sparse (common this year apparently).

Sadly I think any late planting and winter crops will be pointless as the ground is so dry, but we will see what September brings us! Contact [Lynne Appleby](#) for further information.



bonjour



Since March '26, the **French Discussion** group has considered topics such as the city of Lyon, a selection of French poems inspired by nature, French wines and classical composers, and national parks of France. Our varied programme for the coming months includes the Cannes Film Festival, Toulouse and its Christmas market, and the Enlightenment (a 17th- and

18th-century European intellectual movement emphasizing reason, science, and individual liberty). Those who have studied 'A' Level or degree level French in the past, or have lived in a Francophone country are welcome. We converse in French 95% of the time. All attendees contribute actively, using email for written communication and the internet for sharing links and photos in preparation for the monthly meeting.



For further information or to join this group, please contact [Sally Jacob](#).

FRENCH REFRESHER GROUP ALSO AVAILABLE



The **French Film** group formed in April '26, and has now met several times. We watch a different French film (with English subtitles) each month, in the comfort of a member's home. So far, we have seen *Back to Burgundy*, *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis*, and *Jean de Florette*, soon to be followed by *Manon des Sources*. It is a very pleasant way to spend an afternoon, sharing an interest in French cinema, with refreshments and a discussion after the film (in English). Our programme is varied: films of different eras, genres and cinematic styles.

For more information,
please contact [Graham Harris](#).

Go to 'HoT Groups
& Activities'

CREATIVE ARTS

Revised Plans for autumn 2026

Our next meeting will take place on the revised date of **Wednesday, 21 October**. We will revisit the subject of paper marbling.

The December meeting has also been changed to the **third Wednesday** of the month, **16 December**, because the fourth Wednesday is too close to Christmas. We will tackle either the songs of Hugo Wolf or the operas and ballets of Manuel de Falla. More definite information is forthcoming.

2027 dates revert to the fourth Wednesday of the month.

These meetings will take place at my house, in central Henley, at 2.30 p.m.



Contact

Darius Halpern

SINGING FOR JOY



The Henley u3a singing group, led by Colette Ashby and the convenor Darius Halpern, resumes, after a summer break, on 28 August 2026.

All u3a members are welcome to join. There is no need to read music and there are no auditions. The emphasis is on enthusiasm and enjoyment of singing (mainly popular songs from the 50s to the 80s). Colette is currently planning a special session consisting entirely of songs from musicals.

We meet at Pither Hall, Christchurch Centre, from 11.00 a.m. to 12 noon on the **fourth Friday** of the month. There is a charge of £5 per meeting, payable in advance by the term.

Contact: Darius Halpern

ART APPRECIATION

Sacred Heart Church Hall, Vicarage Road, Henley RG9 1HT
Admittance: £2 members, £4 guests / Event will start at 2pm sharp

There is no talk in September but the programme for the rest of this year is as follows:

Oct 6th – Edward Hopper and Andrew Wyeth: Two important 20th-century American artists with very different ways of depicting American life.

Nov 3rd – The Camden Town Group.: A look at an influential group of British artists working at the beginning of the 20th century in London.

Dec 1st – 19th-century Photography: The beginning of photography and its rising importance during the latter part of the 19th century.

The new programme for 2027 is not yet finalised, but it will include European Impressionists, Henry Moore, Art Deco, the Newlyn School, Pointillism, and Les Fauves.

Please note that we are going to be taking card payments for the talks instead of cash. You may still pay with cash at the moment but we are aiming to make all payments by the end of the year, card only.

Do you want to pen your memoirs or have an urge to write a novel, but are not sure where to start? Are you an avid reader or have a vivid imagination? These are just a few reasons you might want to join the **Creative Writing Workshop**. Story writing is fun and it keeps your mind active!

Under the expert guidance of Charles Whittaker, we strive to improve our writing skills through learning, practice and feedback. We discuss a particular topic each month, read examples from published authors and share our interpretations. In our own time, we write a story of up to 1500 words on the current theme, which is submitted by email for feedback at each meeting.

In recent times, we have studied characters and personality in literature, openings, and point of view. Settings is on the agenda for September.

If you wish to develop your writing skills – for memoirs, competitions, potential publication, or simply for fun – this group is for you. Take your love of writing to another level.



*We meet on the
first Thursday of
each month at the
Henley Library
2pm - 4pm.*

*If you are
interested in
joining us, contact
Charles Whittaker.*

MONTHLY TALKS

Sacred Heart Church Hall, Vicarage Road, Henley RG9 1HT
Admittance: £2 members, £4 guests / Event will start at 2pm sharp

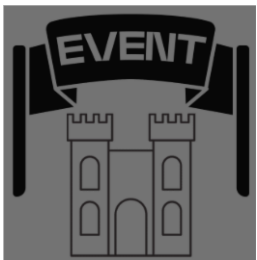


September 9th Jim Ellis How we remember and why we forget

How do we comprehend, remember and retrieve information, and do we all do this in the same way? Jim explains and demonstrates this with various examples, and dispels some common myths about the brain and memory. He also encourages some audience participation – but only if people are comfortable doing so.

October 14th Dr Kathryn Harkup Making the Monster – Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

An exploration of the science behind Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Is there any science behind the science fiction? How would a real-life Victor Frankenstein have gone about creating his monster? The century before its publication saw huge advances in our understanding of science, particularly electricity and physiology. Sensational science demonstrations caught the imagination of the general public, and newspapers were full of lurid tales of murderers and resurrectionists. From stories of artificial life and experimental surgery to monsters and electrical experiments on human cadavers, Dr Harkup examines the science and scientists that influenced Shelley and inspired her most famous creation.



November 11th Bruce Winton Organising events at Hampton Court Palace and Winchester Cathedral

A glimpse at the lesser known challenges of running Hampton Court Palace and Winchester Cathedral on a daily basis, and for special events. For example, why do historic venues need sugar cubes? How do parrots and pigeons feature?

9th December Wayne Newport Pantomime – the Classic British Tradition

Illustrated talk exploring the history of Pantomime. From its origins in the Middle Ages, through to the lavish spectacular productions of today. Stories, traditions, characters – Lots of tales to tell..... Oh Yes, he has! There's no business like show business, and there is nothing like Pantomime. After all, it's the only theatrical form we British ever invented.



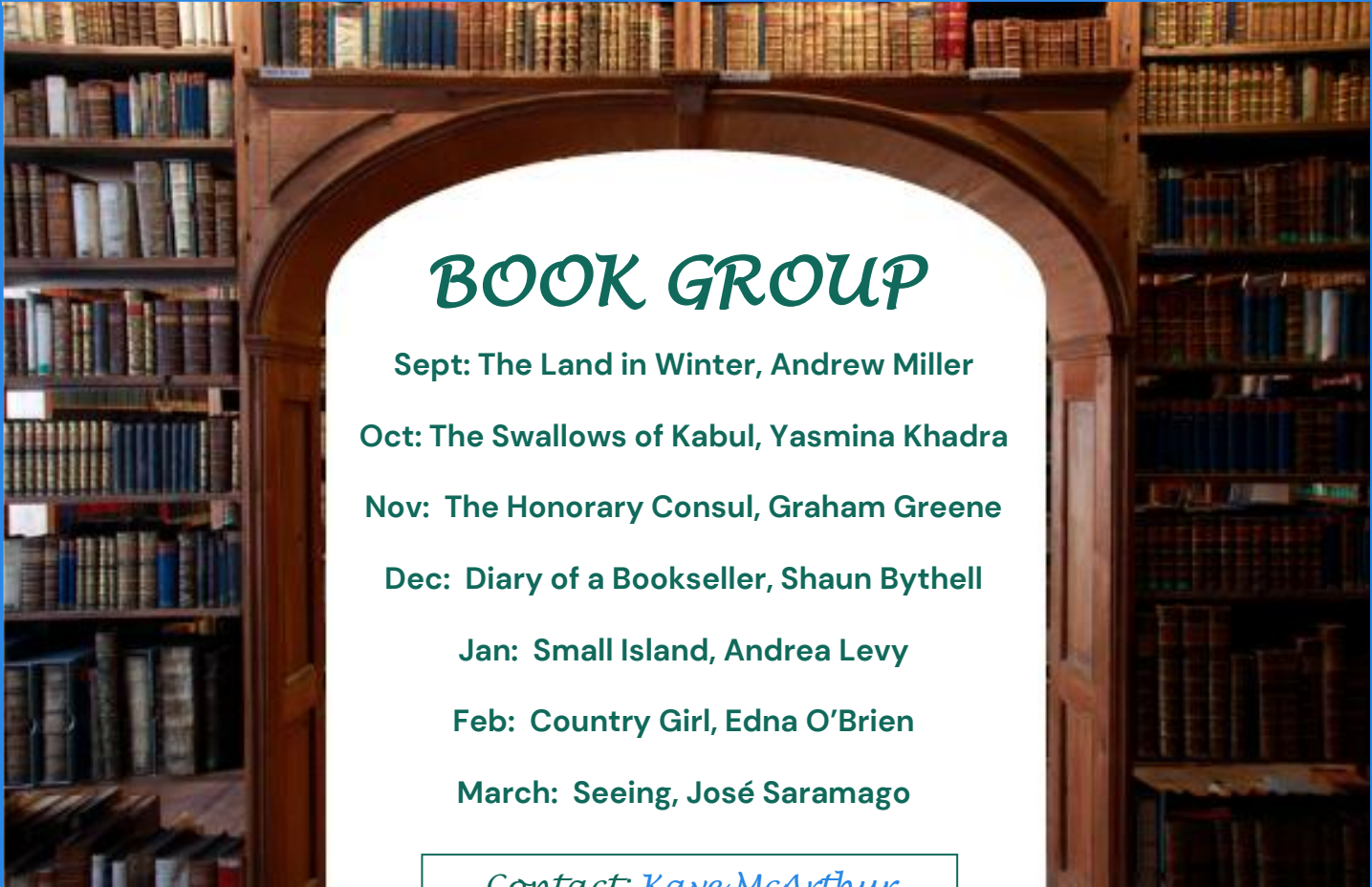
13th January Dr Helen Fry WWII Thomas Kendrick, Spymaster

Helen is an authority on the secret listeners. Her extensive research has shed light on one of the greatest intelligence deceptions of WWII, the bugging of Hitler's generals. She will focus on Thomas Kendrick who, for 30 years, was the most senior spymaster in Europe for SIS – the British Intelligence Service (MI6).

10th February Mike Baker "The Corn Exchange, Wallingford"

The Corn Exchange Theatre in Wallingford is owned by The Sinodun Players. This talk will go through the history of the building, how The Sinodun Players came to own it and how we put on shows.





BOOK GROUP

Sept: The Land in Winter, Andrew Miller

Oct: The Swallows of Kabul, Yasmina Khadra

Nov: The Honorary Consul, Graham Greene

Dec: Diary of a Bookseller, Shaun Bythell

Jan: Small Island, Andrea Levy

Feb: Country Girl, Edna O'Brien

March: Seeing, José Saramago

Contact: [Kaye McArthur](#)

Seasonal Stanza

As the autumn air sets in, Emily Brontë's classic poem beautifully captures the changing mood of the season:

Fall, leaves, fall

BY [EMILY BRONTË](#)

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.

Source: Poets of the English Language (Viking Press, 1950)

DISCOVER THE WORLD

DID YOU KNOW?



The [Atacama Desert](#) in South America is the driest hot desert in the world.

Watch [Where Extreme Meets Beauty](#).

The island of [Borneo](#) is shared by three countries.

Watch [A Spectacular Journey into the Oldest Tropical Rainforest](#).



The [Mariana Trench](#) is the deepest oceanic trench on earth.

Watch [Inside the Mariana Trench: The Deepest Place on Earth](#).

The [Trans-Australian Railway](#) includes the longest straight stretch of rail track in the world.

Watch : [Crossing Australia on the Indian Pacific](#).



The [Caspian Sea](#) is the largest enclosed body of water in the world.

Watch [Exploring the Mysteries of the Caspian Sea](#).

The [Lake Pontchartrain Causeway](#) is the longest bridge in the United States and the longest in the world that runs continuously over water.

Watch [The Engineering of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway](#).



Images courtesy of Canva.com

Learn

Laugh

Live

HoT Groups & Activities

Below is a list of all groups and activities, at time of going to press. Click on the title to access the relevant website page, contact the convenor and view a description with current status, schedule and venue. For the Groups Main Page, click [here](#).

Art & Craft

[Art Appreciation](#) [Art Workshop](#) [Photography](#) [Stitchery & Yarn](#)

Exercise

[Day Walks](#) [Exercises](#) [Morning Walks](#) [Table Tennis](#)

Games

[Board Games 1](#) [Board Games 2](#) [Board Games Evening](#) [Bridge](#)

Languages

[French Discussion](#) [French Refresher](#) [German Conversation](#)
[Italian Beginners](#) [Italian Intermediate](#) [Italian Advanced](#)
[Spanish Conversation](#)

Literature

[Book Groups 1 & 2](#) [Creative Writing](#) [Film](#) [French Film](#)
[Play Reading](#) [Poetry 1](#) [Poetry 2](#)

Miscellaneous

[Allotment](#) [Creative Arts](#) [Effective Leaders](#)
[Family History](#) [Wine Appreciation](#)

Music

[Jazz](#) [Music Appreciation 1](#) [Music Appreciation 2](#)
[Opera](#) [Popular Music](#) [Singing for Joy](#)

Social

[Bandstand Sunday](#) [Coffee Mornings](#) [Weekend Lunches](#)

U3A RESOURCES

**Click on the links below to discover
the local and national network**

[Henley-on-Thames](#)

Our local website gives up-to-date information
on all our groups and activities.

[Thames Valley Network](#)

Regional network offering a range of talks, study meetings
and other activities.

[National Online Educational Events](#)

This national u3a website provides online learning events that feature a host
of interesting free talks, workshops and courses.

[Interest Groups Online](#)

The IGO is an online u3a community that gives members the opportunity to
join groups, talks and courses from the comfort of their own home.

[Friends](#)

Sign up for the u3a Friends newsletter.

[YouTube Channel](#)

Various u3a recorded videos

[Radio Podcasts](#)

Created by a group of u3a members with radio experience.
New podcasts available on the 17th of every month.

[Let's Tech Talk](#)

For u3a members with an interest in technology

[Learning Activities & Short Stories](#)

Links to puzzles, games and competitions.

[Keeping in Touch](#)

National u3a Facebook Group

[Future Lives](#)

Shares information and resources to inspire, influence and
inform members to help improve their lives.