



HASLEMERE MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026

Dear Members,

I will deal with u3a matters later in this Newsletter - but first, if you'll forgive me, a spot of self-indulgence! In the December newsletter, shortly after becoming Chairman, I set out some of my interests. I thought I would now take the opportunity to say a little more about myself and my background – and who's behind the u3a articles and emails. I was born in 1952 in Kandy, in the central highlands of Sri Lanka – a town surrounded by hills and tea plantations (which may explain my lifelong fondness for a good cuppa!) I was one of six children and, unfortunately, due to acute long-sightedness, the world only really came into focus for me at the age of three, when I was first fitted with very thick glasses – an early lesson in seeing things more clearly!

Our family left Sri Lanka following a period of unrest and instability and arrived in the UK in the early 1960s, settling in Basildon in Essex, then a newly developed town created to accommodate overspill from East London. My parents encouraged us to speak English at home, but my grasp of the language was still limited when I took – and failed – the 11-plus. I began my secondary education at a Secondary Modern school (not the most promising of starts, perhaps).

Both my parents were teachers and, after three years in the UK, they took up posts in a local school in Accra, Ghana for two years. Two of the older children, including myself, remained in England to continue our education – which felt quite grown-up at the time. All six of us went on to university in the UK, and later into careers in fields including medicine, education, languages and computer programming – so family gatherings were never short of opinions. I myself worked in industry for a time before moving into education. You now know the origin of my surname. I'm told that 'Abayasekera' roughly translates as something like 'fearless leader' – which may be setting expectations a little high! I will pause there for now – enough self-indulgence for one newsletter.

Warmest regards, Roger

NEW MEMBERS! *A very warm u3a welcome to: Constance Lynch, Celia South, Robert South, Simon Fegen, Alex Felton, Louise Harwood, Mark Anderson, Deborah Partridge, Vivienne Wright, Michael Clarke, Andy Wright and Patricia Tapner.*

NEWS OF MEMBERS – RIP - COLIN BADGER

We've just heard the sad news that u3a Member, Colin Badger, died peacefully at home on the night of March 23rd, aged 95. There will be a memorial service at Haslemere Methodist Church on **May 11th at 2.30pm** for Members of the Haslemere U3A to come and pay their respects. "I know how much the U3A meant to Dad and I know that there will be a number of people in Haslemere U3A who will have fond memories of him," said his son, Stephen. Our thoughts and condolences are with the family.

MAKING SENSE OF AI – A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR U3A MEMBERS

Experience a fantastic opportunity to learn about AI and how it can be used within our u3a groups - **Tuesday 5th May, 10:30 to 12:00 @ Haslemere Hall Annexe.**

AI is everywhere and is transforming the world and society. Sometimes in amazingly good ways. Sometimes in terrible ways. Our speaker is Alan Freeland, the u3a Network lead for AI, seeking to make all 420,000 u3a members aware of AI. U3A Family History, World History, Travel, Philosophy, Language and Book Clubs are some of the groups that are making the most use of AI today. In this talk Alan will explain what AI is, how it differs from the computer systems we are familiar with, what u3a members are using AI for and how society is benefitting and/or being harmed by AI. There will be live demonstrations and lots of opportunities to ask questions and make comments. **Doors open from 10:15 am**

Please register your attendance with Christine Howard, the Haslemere u3a Vice Chairman via the Contact page on the website.

HASLEMERE U3A – MAY LECTURE – MONDAY 11TH MAY 1.45PM FOR 2.00PM – 100 PIERS, PAINTING AT THE WATER'S EDGE WITH PAUL TRACEY @ HASLEMERE HALL.

Paul Tracey is a London born artist and designer, now living in Hampshire, who has had many solo and group exhibitions of his paintings, drawings and silkscreen prints, exhibiting with the Royal Society of British Artists.

Paul spent five years visiting and painting piers in the UK, Europe and the USA. As well as the paintings, he collected vintage postcards, lithographic

prints, stories from old newspapers, stories of heroic feats of courage when disaster struck and all sorts of other pier memorabilia. All the paintings and some of the memorabilia are published in his book – 100 Piers, Paintings at the Water's Edge. The paintings have been exhibited in several groups and one man shows in England and for the past seven years with the Royal Society of British Artists, in the Mall Galleries, London.

Paul's fascinating talk also concentrates on some of the piers we have along the south coast, their history and how they ended up as they are. Complimentary refreshments will be served after the lecture.

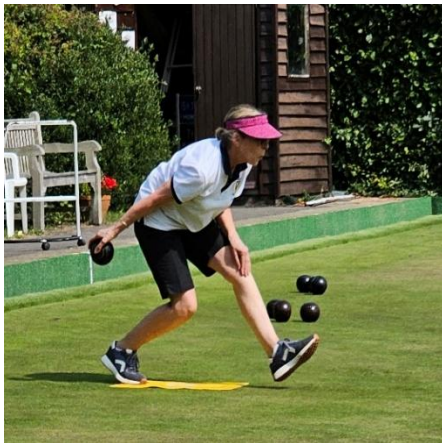
MAY MEMBERS COFFEE MORNING



Our next sociable u3a Members Coffee Morning will be on **Thursday 7th May from 11.00-12.00am** at the lovely Haslewey Café, opposite Tesco. It's on a bus route or you can park in the Tesco car park for up to three hours. Come and join us for a chat – and bring a friend perhaps? Why not stay on afterwards and indulge in Haslewey's truly scrumptious

Thursday Roast Lunch or you can choose from their extensive and delicious Bistro menu! Look forward to seeing you there!

By the way, the Committee is looking for someone to help us organise these coffee mornings? Interested? Contact our Groups Co-ordinator Claire Coxwell via the Contacts Page of this website. It would be a great way to "give something back" to the u3a and is definitely not an arduous task!



INTRODUCTION TO BOWLS!

U3A Group Leader, Judy Rix will be running an Introduction to Bowls course on **Thursdays, 7th and 14th May from 14.30 – 16.00pm**. The venue is Haslemere Bowling Club at The Recreation Ground, Old Haslemere Road. Equipment will be provided but please wear flat soft soled shoes and warm clothes as it can be windy. Refreshments will be provided when there will be time to socialise and there is a charge of £3.00 per person for the use of the green. "I

have enlisted the help of our fully qualified coach," said Judy. "If any u3a Member is interested in joining this group - which already has 5 prospective members – please email me - j.rix612@btinternet.com

If you can't commit to coming on these Thursday afternoons but would like to have a trial session to see if Bowls is for you, then you are most welcome to come to our **OPEN DAY on Sunday 17th May from 14.00 -17.00pm** when Members and their families (children included) can just turn up within this time slot. I will be running the 4th session for the U3A group during that afternoon."

CROQUET – FREE TASTER SESSION!



Haslemere u3a is joining forces with Guildford and Godalming Croquet Club, who started running weekly croquet sessions for members of local U3a groups last year.

There will be a FREE taster session on **Thursday 7th May**. The group will then meet every Thursday morning 10.30 - 12.30 throughout the summer season. After the free taster sessions, £100 must be paid in advance to the Croquet Club

as a lump sum or in £20 monthly instalments, paid by standing order. This is for the full season to the end of September, (22 sessions at less than £5 each – bargain!) The play is at Guildford and Godalming Croquet Club (GGCC) at Broadwater Park in Godalming. A map is available on their [website](#). The Club provides all the equipment including mallets and the group will be supported by GGCC coaches and other members of the Croquet Club. Haslemere u3a members wanting to book a place for the taster sessions need to complete the bookings form on the GGCC u3a sessions [webpage](#). If you would like to ask questions before signing up, please contact Haslemere u3a member and leader of this group Wendy Lockwood by emailing info@guildfordandgodalmingcroquetclub.co.uk

COME AND JOIN US - OUT AND ABOUT AT LOCAL FETES!



Like the outdoors life? We are looking for enthusiastic members to join our team for our summer events to help erect and dismantle the gazebo.

This year we will be attending:

Fernhurst Revels - **17th May**

Brook Fete – **26th May**

Churt Fete - **13th June**

Chiddingfold Fete - **14th June**

Beacon Hill Fete - **5th September**

So, if you fancy a fun day out in the sun, chatting to the public and introducing them to the Haslemere u3a, please get in touch with Membership Secretary, Judith Forde - 07507 643411 – no need to commit to every date!

NEWS OF GROUPS - To contact a Group or find out more information, please go to the Groups page of the u3a website. For enquiries about starting a Group or anything else, please contact either Claire Coxwell or Richard Mason, our two Group Co-ordinators via the Contacts page.

We have had a request for a **BEGINNERS GARDENING GROUP** – sharing tips about gardening and learning from each other. Would any other members be interested in being part of this – and are there Members out there who enjoy gardening and might like to work as part of a team to set this up. Claire Coxwell is waiting to hear from you!

The popular **LINE DANCING GROUP** is now running weekly on Thursday afternoons from 3.00-4.00pm weekly (term time only) at Fernhurst Village Hall – so why not sign up?!! Contact Group Leader, Gina O’Neil for more info via the website.

Good news! The **LATIN GROUP** which meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday afternoons, led by Jo McDonald, leapt into action in April after a dormant interlude. Members were fired up again by their return to the translation of challenging classical texts.

We are looking for someone willing to lead a **SPANISH FOR BEGINNERS** Group. If you, or someone you know can help, please contact one of our Group Co-ordinators via the website.

Our latest Book Group – **BETWEEN THE LINES** – met for the first time in mid-April. There are still a couple of vacancies if you are interested. Also, we have a request for an Evening Book Group. Would this suit you? Contact Claire Coxwell.

Our second **INTERMEDIATE FRENCH CONVERSATION** Group, which meets fortnightly on a Thursday, has a couple of vacancies. To find out more, contact the Group via the Groups page on our website.

ONLINE LEARNING - One of our new members Mary Ann Smith has been enjoying some national u3a online learning events. This is what she told us.

“I very much enjoyed the online learning session ‘Spring-clean your vitality with Qigong’. I attended a face-to-face course thirty years ago and was interested to refresh my knowledge in this art of movement. I was a little sceptical about how I would be able to watch Paul the instructor - at the same time as performing the exercises? However, I was pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to follow repetitive movements. I had propped up my laptop on a chest of drawers so that I had a good view of the screen as Paul was demonstrating the movements. I don’t hear well and although Paul spoke clearly, I nevertheless switched on the sub-titles so as not to miss any instructions. Paul began with some simple warming up exercises and then guided us through movements that energized us and then ended with a relaxing meditative exercise that left me feeling calm and well. The hour and a half flew by.”

“I also recently attended the ‘The evolution of AI and our changing world’. The presenters were so entertaining and related the info to current situations that what I expected to be a dry instructive presentation, turned out to be quite enjoyable! Learning online is very convenient for me, with no travel time or expense involved, and I can attend from wherever I am.” Discover a huge range of online talks, workshops and classes. Find out more by clicking [here](#).

NEED A LITTLE HELP WITH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – OR ABLE TO OFFER IT?

We know some members are less confident with IT so we are planning simple, informal support – including “Tea & Tech” drop-ins and a **Digital Buddy** scheme. If you’d like help with emails, accessing newsletters or the website, or if you could offer a little assistance to others, we’d love to hear from you. Just a small amount of help can make a huge difference. Interested? please get in touch with Roger via the Contact page on our website.



NEW MEMBERS - MEETING UP AFTERNOON

We had a lovely informal get-together recently at Haslemere Methodist Hall to meet our latest new members. Over a cup of tea and scrumptious cakes, we introduced new members to some of our Committee and Group Leaders so they could chat in person about joining groups and attending social events.

Previously, this meeting for new members was only held once a year after enrolment day, but we now have more people joining throughout the year, so we didn't want to wait until next October before meeting our latest members! If you missed this occasion, you can always come along to our monthly coffee mornings and enjoy a friendly chat with other Members. See our Events page for what's happening <https://haslemere.u3asite.uk/events/>

APPEAL TO ALL MEMBERS: NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED!

“After four and a half years at the helm, our diligent and dedicated Newsletter Editor, Debbie Bowyer, will be stepping down. She will be greatly missed!” said Chairman, Roger. “We are therefore looking for a new Newsletter Editor to take over production of the monthly Haslemere U3A newsletter.”

“The role involves bringing together content from across the Haslemere U3A – including group updates, events, and announcements – and producing a newsletter (typically around 6–8 pages) using an existing template.”

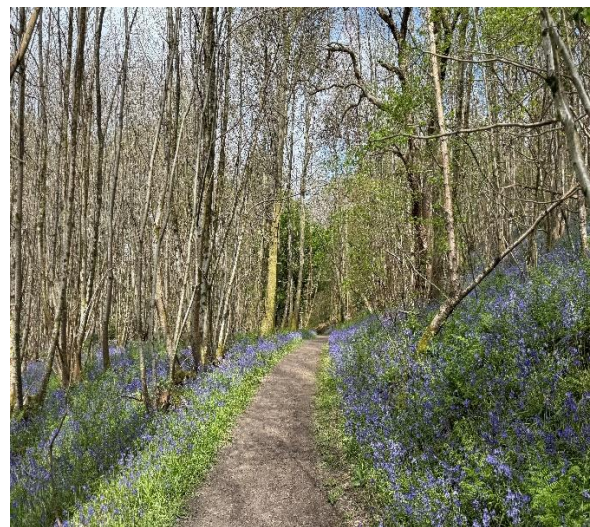
“You do not need to be a professional writer or designer. If you are reasonably comfortable using a computer, have an eye for clear presentation and can spare a few hours each month to coordinate content, that will be more than enough. A full handover and ongoing support will be provided.”

This is a great opportunity to:

- stay in touch with what’s happening across the U3A
- make a real contribution to the organisation
- help keep members informed and connected

If you might be interested – or would simply like to find out more – please contact Roger via the Contact page on our website. Even if you are unsure, please do get in touch for a conversation. We would be very happy to talk it through. It may also be possible to share the role initially or ease into it gradually.

BEST BLUEBELLS EVER! The Original 5 Mile Ramblers recently took on a 5-mile round trip around glorious Blackdown, embracing the sunshine and dry pathways with gorgeous bluebells EVERYWHERE! A delicious lunch was enjoyed by all at The Mill pub in Camelsdale afterwards. Such a lovely day out!





CYCLING FOR FUN IN THE SUN!

The Cycling for Fun group recently made good use of the wonderful weather we have been having, by cycling from Chiddingfold to Winkworth Arboretum to see the bluebells and azaleas and to have a last cup of tea at the lovely (but sadly closing) cafe. The new visitor centre is on its way!! One of our members owns a penny

farthing bicycle and he rode with us (without incident) looking like he owned the road! It certainly garnered a lot of interest both on the road and at Winkworth!

NEXT U3A STUDY DAY: Friday, 15th May – Truth, Lies, Risk and Reason Presented by Philip Harris, Emeritus Professor of Physics, University of Sussex. For more information, please go to: <https://surreynetwork.u3asite.uk/events/>

THE U3A WEBSITE To contact Committee Members, please go to the Contact Page and to contact a Group Leader, go to the Groups page via the website - www.haslemere.u3asite.uk.

NATIONAL ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE u3a. Discover a huge range of online talks, workshops and classes. Find out more by clicking [here](#).

U3A PAGE ON FACEBOOK!



Have you checked out our Facebook page? Go to <https://www.facebook.com/u3ahaslemere>

If you are on social media, please give us a like and join in the conversation. This really helps us to spread the word about Haslemere u3a.