

# Stratford-upon-avon u3a Newsletter

March 2026 [Stratford-upon-Avon u3a: Home \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://u3asites.org.uk)

Founded 2000—

Deadline for copy for this newsletter is 17th of the month, it never varies, except December when we don't publish a newsletter. Please send items to me at this address: [newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk)

# AGM

**This Month**

**Wednesday 25th March 2026**

**2 p.m. at the Methodist Church**

**The Annual General Meeting will be followed  
by a short talk**

**about the Stratford upon Avon**



Please note: It is important our AGM is quorate before voting for officers and the committee take place. We need to make sure that 40 of us are present so that the conditions of our constitution are met. There will be tea, coffee and biscuits afterwards. It would be great to see you there. Come along and find out what is happening in your u3a.



**Next Month**

**Wednesday 29th April 2 p.m.**

**The Methodist Church**

**Michelle Flint Textile Artist**

Michelle describes herself as a mixed media textile artist. She does free-motion embroidery, drawing with thread and likes to challenge herself.

Intrigued? Come along and find out more.

## WORD OF THE MONTH: RUN !



I want to run something past you....

A man is trying to run a business, but nothing runs smoothly. Today he's feeling run down and running a temperature, so he decides to run a bath to feel better. He doesn't see it run over and ruin his bath runner. His finances can, of course, run to a new one, so he runs in the car to B&Q. En route he runs up a little bill at Tesco's buying milk, because he's running short, and stuff for his runny nose. But he's having a run of bad luck: B&Q have had a run on bath mats and have run out! On the car park he runs into a mate and they run over their plans for next week. But now he's running late. Driving away he runs over a nail, and now the car can't run properly. He has a run in with B&Q staff but soon runs out of patience. In the long run....

I could run on but I think I've given 'run' a run for its money!

Peter Gilliver of the Oxford English Dictionary spent nine months establishing over 245 uses/meanings for the verb 'run' and over 200 for the noun. A runaway success, beating 'set' into second place, with 'go' an also-ran in third place. AI would have you believe that run has 645 meanings, but I can't run with that for certain.

## News from our interest groups

### French

Despite Margaret's ongoing eye problems both **French for the Terrified** and **Improve your French** have met a couple of times to chat about their activities this spring, including visits to the theatre and to France. Looking forward to less rain and with sunnier days to come, the Tuesday group used a vintage copy of "Histoires Illustrées" to describe a family day on the beach.

### Latin



Having enjoyed the story of Horatius defending the bridge, we returned to Livy's earlier account of how his ancestors, the Horatii of Rome, had inspired him in their famous combat with the Curiatii of Alba Longa. Another stirring tale of derring-do!

*Left: 'Oath of the Horatii' by Jacques Louis David in the Louvre, Paris*

### Piano Group

At the church's request we met in the sanctuary and enjoyed playing the grand piano again. Some lesser known composers had been chosen: Theodore Kirchner, a 19th century German Romantic, and Heather Hammond, a prolific composer from Yorkshire, popular with children. Mozart's Fantasia in G Minor was predictably dazzling and Diabelli duets came up trumps as ever. To round off a thoroughly enjoyable morning we all stood round the piano to sing "The Boy I love is up in the Gallery", a music-hall song by George Ware, with Jill sight-reading the accompaniment. More!



### Stratford History Group

To our great disappointment the eagerly awaited talk on Bruce Bairnsfather, cartoonist and most famously creator of Old Bill, had to be cancelled when the speaker cried off at the last minute because of ill health. We are now looking forward to next month when we have something of a coup: the daughter of Tibor Reich, based in Stratford from 1946 and internationally known for his stunning textile designs, will talk to us about her father with examples of his work. Tibor created unique modern fabrics for the RSC, SBT, royalty and high profile clients worldwide.

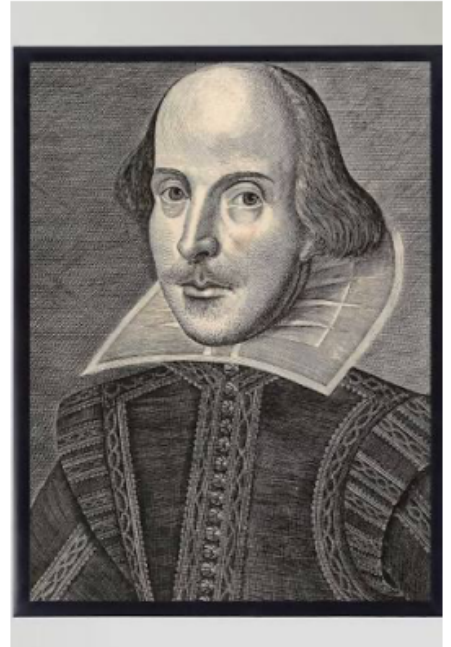
## SHAKESPEARE ONLY ACHIEVED GREATNESS THANKS TO GOOD FRIENDS!

With the anniversary next month of Shakespeare's official birthday on the 23rd April 1564 it is interesting to reflect that he might never have become famous as a playwright if it hadn't been for two friends and fellow actors, John Hemings and Henry Condell.

Seven years after Shakespeare's death they had the foresight to collect together 36 of his plays and have them published in a reliable format for the first time. Otherwise, Shakespeare's plays in their entirety might have been lost to us for ever and Stratford-upon-Avon might have become known as just another small midlands town.

In contrast, unlike his plays, Shakespeare in his lifetime was determined to see his two long narrative poems as well as his stunning cycle of 154 sonnets through the printing press.

Even today there is much debate about who the subjects of the sonnets are, popularly known as the 'young man' and the 'dark lady', but in reality the sonnets tell us much more about Shakespeare himself. Try re-reading his most famous sonnet, 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day', changing the last rhyme from 'thee' to 'me'!



If this interests you at all and you would like to explore in good company some of Shakespeare's poetry along with the works of other great poets, past and living, then you are warmly invited to the first meeting of the new u3a group, **POETRY MATTERS!** on **Monday 30th March at 1.30 pm in Stratford**. All u3a members are very welcome to join the meeting, without commitment, to find out more.

For further details please get in touch with **Jonathan Baker** by contacting the Groups Coordinators via the **Contacts** page on the Stratford u3a website.

The Poetry Group will be meeting in the Library Room at the Town House in Stratford, at 1.30 p.m. on Monday March 30.

If you wish to contact Jonathan his email is: [jonobaker@hotmail.com](mailto:jonobaker@hotmail.com)

Stratford u3a monthly meeting talk, Wednesday, 25 February 2026 –

### **Dogs Trust – Speaker – Callum Stackhouse, Dog Rescue & Adoption, Evesham.**

History: The National Canine Defence League was founded in 1891. In 1967 the organisation declared its Non-Destruction policy (no healthy dog will be put down), and in 1978 the slogan, “a dog is for life, not just for Christmas”, was adopted. In 2003 the name was changed to Dogs Trust. The colour yellow was adopted for its cheerfulness.

Basic facts – the main aim is to re-home the dogs that come into its care. There are 22 centres and Evesham was the first re-homing centre in 1967. The average stay is 61.5 days, but this is getting longer as more dogs are being handed over, behaviour problems being the main reason, post pandemic. In 2024 10,467 dogs were cared for, and there were 3,202 dogs in foster care.

There are several reasons why dogs come to Dogs Trust. E.g., relationship breakdown, rising costs, homelessness, death or illness of the owner, and “difficult” behaviour by the dog. Strays have to be assessed and referred by dog wardens before the Trust can take them. Smaller charities sometimes pass on dogs that they cannot take. Ex-racing greyhounds are often seen as a problem breed, as many people erroneously believe that they need a large amount of exercise. Puppies born in the centres are transferred to fosterers if possible so that they can experience a more normal start in life. E.g., a Labrador came in to Dogs Trust and then later had 10 puppies. The Evesham centre was rebuilt in 2018 and it is able to house up to 100 dogs at once. About 500 dogs are re-homed per year.

The dogs have a very good life – they have a lot of walks, good food, heated kennels, and some centres have hydrotherapy pools and vet suites. There are also group living sanctuaries where some dogs live with other dogs whilst gaining confidence. There are also off-site vets for more serious treatments other than neutering, for example. Dogs also have access to fields, sand pits, agility areas, with ramps etc., as well as Astro turf runs, off-site walks both on an off the lead.

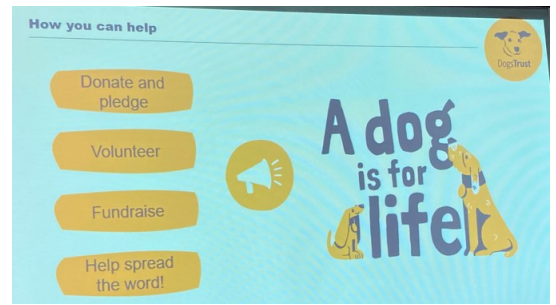
Fosterers find the job very rewarding without long term commitment. Staff often take dogs home to foster as well. Sometimes they adopt the dog.

Canine Care Card – This is a free service, open to all dog owners. This gives reassurance that the dog will be taken care of in the event of the inability of the owner to do so. The card is activated if the owner has a life changing diagnosis, goes into a care home or dies. Application can be made both online and by a paper form.

Behaviour Support Line – in 2024 16,000 calls were taken from 8,000 owners. The main reasons are dog reactivity and people reactivity problems. The advice line can help people to keep dogs with behavioural difficulties rather than give them up. The telephone number is 030 3003 6666.



Outreach work – “Together through Homelessness” gave 1,881 free vet treatments to 774 dogs and 2,610 Christmas parcels to 273 homeless dogs. “Freedom” helped 339 families suffering from domestic violence. 422 dogs were fostered, temporarily if possible.



Costs and funding – It costs £6,406 a day to look after dogs in kennels; £32.46 a day for dogs in foster care. Funding comes 48% from donations; 42% from legacies; 5% from trade; 2% from adoption fees and 3% from investments etc.

How can we help? Donations and pledges; volunteering; fundraising, and publicity.

Tours of the Evesham re-homing centre are also possible!

The large audience enjoyed the talk and asked a number of questions. It was a very informative and interesting presentation, plus moving videos showing the various activities at the centres, with contribu-

## Membership Renewal, THANK YOU and a reminder

Thank you to those members from whom we have received renewal payments and we look forward to receiving more payments as we approach the renewal date of 1 April. Payment (£18 or £22 if you wish to receive the Third Age Magazine by post) should be made as follows:

By bank transfer to our account with **Barclays Bank: Stratford-upon-Avon u3a, Sort Code 20-48-08, Account number 70778818** with your surname and membership number as a reference.

By cheque made payable to Stratford upon Avon U3A with your surname and membership number written on the back and sent to Sarah Furniss, Membership Secretary, Stratford U3A, 29 Vincent Avenue, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 6SR.

By cash or cheque at the meeting of 25 March 2026.

Please don't pay into our account over the counter – we have received a payment into the bank for £18.00 and are unable to identify the payer.

Sarah Furniss, Membership Secretary

# MEMBERS

## COFFEE MORNING



You are invited to join our members' regular  
coffee morning chit-chats



2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month 10 till 12

The Town House Hotel, Church St

Next month we will get  
together on Saturday 11th April

All are welcome, it would be lovely to see you.

A note from the editor

Thank you to everyone who continues to send monthly contributions for the newsletter, they are appreciated. It would be great to hear from more group leaders about your activities. Just a few lines is great, better still with a photo or two.

Please do continue to send your contributions for the newsletter to:

[newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk)



## STRATFORD-UPON-AVON u3a - SPEAKERS FOR 2026

We have an interesting and varied programme of talks and entertainment for you. Please come along, and tell your friends!

DATE	NAME/ ORGANISATION	SUBJECT
25 March 2026	AGM + SUA Foodbank – Ian McLean	The Work of the Foodbank.
29 April 2026	Michelle Flint – Textile Artist	Textile art, including demonstration.
27 May 2026	Elizabeth Rose +1	African songs + percussion and audience participation.
24 June 2026	John Kinory	My Life and Times as a Film Extra.
29 July 2026	Janet Mobbs	How does your garden grow?
26 August 2026	Colin Wade	The Joys and Perils of being an Author. Crime thrillers.
30 September 2026	John Butterworth	My Trip to the End of the World – Antarctica, the Falklands and Argentina
28 October 2026	Margot McCleary	Ghost Stories of Warwickshire.
25 November 2026	Rosalie Taylor, Sharon Hilton, Warks. CC	Mature Drivers Workshop.
16 December 2026	TBA	No outside speaker.



# TEA ROTA

Please make sure you know what to do when it is your turn. The task is not onerous. Put out the mugs and biscuits, pour the tea and coffee. Oh and of course wash up. Everything is provided.

Many thanks to Annette Riddleston, our new mistress of the tea urn.

## Stratford-Upon-Avon u3a Tea Rota to September 26

Month	Group
March 2026	AGM
April 2026	Rummikub Club
May 2026	Bryan and Annette
June 2026	Stratford History Group
July 2026	Sunday Morning Walkers
August 2026	Tai chi/Yoga
September 2026	Wine Appreciation