



Monthly Bulletin – March 2026

MONTHLY MEETING

Tues 10th March 2026

St John's Church Meopham

2.00pm



Chair's Introduction – John Peters

Welcome to March. Spring is arriving soon if it isn't here already. This may be the time for people to start exploring a bit more of the world around them so please spread the word about Meopham u3a to friends, relatives, and neighbours. As all of you reading this are already members, then you could consider joining a new group. Many will be full – a natural constraint which stems from the size of our houses - but this won't apply to all groups. Our Group Co-ordinators Roy Lingham and John Thompson will do all they can to help.

Also, I need to raise an issue that has come up since our last monthly meeting. The Parish Administrator for St. John the Baptist Church, Meopham has been told by their cleaner that there were lots of u3a people in the Church Hall over an hour before the start of our last monthly meeting. They therefore want to charge us for a longer hire period. If anyone has been arriving early in the past, please do not do so going forward as we do not have use of the hall (aside for ten minutes or so to set up tea facilities) before the 2:00pm meetings.

Finally, if you're among the first to arrive and you're able to walk the distance, could you park at the far end (back) of the church hall car park please. If we fill the car park from the back (as

opposed to from the front as we do now), this should alleviate the problem of people turning in to find the car park full.

Best Regards

John

Monthly Tuesday Afternoon Speakers 2026 – Pam

10th March 2026	Behind the Scenes at the BBC - Peter Woodley
14th April 2026	Silverhand Vineyard - Anna Evans
12th May 2026	Behind the scenes at the Chelsea Flower show – Chris O'Donoghue
9th June 2026	The Lady Code Breakers at Bletchley Park - Ian Thomson
14th July 2026	The Day the music died - History of Rock and Roll - Michael Grillo
8th September 2026	Walmer Castle Gardens – Phillip Oosterbrink - Head Gardener
13th October 2026	Meopham A to Z - Christopher Bull
10th November 2026	Great Escape 1944 Forget the Film. What Really Happened – Joanna Bristow-Watkins

Please note that although all these speakers are currently confirmed they could be subject to change.

Secondly this month's speaker is Peter Woodley and his talk is entitled Behind the scenes at the BBC and he has written this short piece for the Bulletin to advertise his talk.

My name is Peter Woodley and my talk entitled "Behind the Scenes at the BBC" is based upon the programmes, and the various things that have happened to me in my time at the BBC. I don't want to give too much away as all will be revealed during the talk, but suffice to say that I enjoyed a long career at the BBC, and yes, when I started, they were still making some programmes in Black and White! And during that time, I progressed through the ranks of the masses of people working in the industry, seeing it change from Black and White to Colour, the introduction of Stereo Sound, the change to Widescreen, then Digital Television, and lastly the launch of High Definition, and ending my career as the most Senior Maker of Tea in the BBC! I have also had experience in the production side of television, which is where some of my stories come from, and was also responsible for the recruitment and training of technical people for the Corporation. So let me assure you that we will take a light-hearted look at life and work in the television industry with the hope that I can hold fast to the BBC's intention to "Inform, Educate and Entertain."

Message from Membership – Andrew Morgan

Hello fellow u3a members it has come to our attention that some members are not receiving their five u3a Third Age Matters Magazine (TAMS) a year.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list for the magazine (or if you want to be removed) please come to the membership table at one of the monthly meetings or contact Andrew Morgan (on the email below) or Di Fenton (group contact for Book Group 2 or Art Appreciation 2 via the blue bird on our website interest groups page) we will sort it for you.

Many thanks

Membership Team

Andrew Morgan: meophamu3amembsec@gmail.com

Cyber Crime and Fraud – Mike Chantry

WARNING

In case you weren't aware Cybercrime is rapidly increasing, with global fraud projected to reach \$10.5 trillion annually by the end of the year and attacks rising by 300% since pre-pandemic levels. Driven by AI-powered phishing, ransomware, and our increased digital dependence, cyber incidents are occurring frequently—as often as once per minute in the UK—impacting businesses and individuals through stolen data and financial extortion.

“Protect yourself from Cybercrime and Fraud” - a free talk

The Rotary Club of the North Downs have invited a police cybercrime expert to talk to their members on Thursday 12th March at the Hartley Country Club from 8.00pm. Wanting to spread the word they are please to invite Meopham u3a members to join them – no charge. If you are interested, please RSVP to mikecchantry@gmail.com
Places are limited so its first come, first served.

Meopham Murders – Graham Jansen

On Mon 2nd Feb the Local History group met at The Green Man, Longfield Hill, to discuss various sinister crimes that have occurred in or around Meopham over the years (who needs Midsomer?). This was a popular topic of conversation with contributions from many of those attending. Some of the incidents referred to included a supposed attempted murder and suicide in 1911 involving an elderly man being shot dead through the heart and his female companion lying in hospital with a fractured jaw. There was also the Wrotham Hill Murder of Dagmar Petrzywalski in 1947 and the hunt for her killer by Fabian of the Yard, which resulted in the hanging of Sidney Sinclair (real name Harold Hagger) at Wandsworth Prison by Albert Pierrepoint. On a more-lighter note there were also references made to the Meopham Players performing 'Dial M for Murder' in the Village Hall in 1964 and 'Murder Deferred' in 1992. If anyone would like some bedside reading please email me and I can help furnish you with all the gruesome details.

London Visits 3: The Museum of The Home – Roy Lingham



19 Feb 2026

A slightly depleted group visited to the Museum of the Home (formerly the Geffrye Museum, renamed [2019] due to associations with practices now iniquitous), appreciating the dry, but cold day - although the transfer from Hoxton Station to the Museum entrance was only 30 metres if that.

The Museum is accommodated in a conversion of 14 Victorian alms-houses operated by the Ironmongers Company, each of which housed four persons, plus ancillary facilities for Matron, Chapel etc., presenting a grand (Grade I listed) facade to Kingsland Road. After closure of the alms-houses and acquisition in the early 20thC by the LCC it was used to display artifacts and examples of the furniture trade then centred in the area, altered to accommodate the current 'rooms' layout in the late 1930's. After an extensive refurbishment programme, it reopened in its current form in 2021.



The initial section comprises artifacts and stories from around 1600, some of the newer exhibits being a bit too close to home, and generating a few personal memories.

Unfortunately, this early in the year the gardens are only just emerging, much of their content consisting only of labels and a few green shoots. The 'widows weeds' (medicinal) plants spread throughout the various areas were however, surprisingly comprehensive, and the DIY greenhouse a structure to behold, almost compensating for the immaturity of plants.



The room layouts are well displayed, although possibly only a minority of our members forebearers would have benefited from the relative niceties included. Again, those of more recent years were perhaps too familiar, and quite authentic (at least to my memory).



Notwithstanding sharing the facility with half-term groups – for whom facilities are very comprehensive - the various parts were readily accessed, and rewarded time spent on respective information boards.



The outing concluded at Mel's cafe, a great local business offering good food at modest prices, notwithstanding the recent gentrification of the area.

Painting and Drawing Group 2

Small friendly and relaxing session.

Meeting monthly in Millbrook Garden Centre Restaurant
over in the far area.

2nd Tuesday

3rd Wednesday

Just buy a beverage (or more)

10am – 12noon

Contact Angela Devlin via u3a website



Continued Restoration Meopham Windmill

During our closed months the Base Floor renovation went ahead with some ruthless decluttering and some hard work from several volunteers, mostly from the U3A, but also with the necessary professional help **from painter and decorator Tony Argent and electrician Matt Crunden.**

New lighting with dimmer switches for ambience was installed and some of the original arched brickwork over the entrance door and window was exposed whilst **Bob** opened up and repaired the inner and outer shutters to the windows. **Nigel** also sanded the central post back and gave it a fresh stain and the whole place is looking much loved and definitely provides a greater impact on entering.



U3A Photography Group

Members of the U3A Photography Group came along to the windmill for a session gathering fresh images for their portfolios.

It was cold and the re-decorating of the Base Room was well underway but the intrepid photographers climbed found ways to capture the windmill in all her glory in a variety of ways. *(I don't know when this group meet or where)*





Volunteer With Us

More Volunteers Needed Please.

Although, our regularly Open Times are on a Sunday for 3 hours, 1.30pm – 4.30pm, demand for a variety of events is growing and we need more Volunteers who will donate their time and energy for a few hours, either regularly or on an Ad Hoc basis.

From guiding 15-minute Tours to joining the garden team, refreshment team, meeting and greeting visitors, hosting the merchandise and children's resources table.

We especially need help with some simple and occasional admin and we are hoping to recruit a volunteer Event Co-ordinator which could be a shared role.

For example, we have bespoke visits arranged with local groups and organisations mid-week as well as weekend open events for the general public.

This is an exciting new phase with much more focused on community and public engagement.

If you would like to donate your skills and interests please contact us.

info@meophamwindmill.org.uk

Meopham Windmill

DA13 0QA

Every Volunteer Matters



EASTER BUNNY HUNT

Meopham Windmill

Sunday 5th & Monday 6th April 2026

1.30pm – 4.30pm



Locate 10 Bunnies hiding in the Windmill
Garden to claim your own Bunny

£5 per child

Receive Early Information

When you **subscribe to our mailing list**, we can send you advanced information for all our future events via email.

info@meophamwindmill.org.uk

You can subscribe on our website by scanning the QR Code below and please share the opportunities here at Meopham Windmill.

Thank you for supporting us, from everyone here at Meopham Windmill

EVENTS 2026

(THERE ARE MORE TO COME – please see website)

Windmill Open - 2 Days for Special Easter Weekend

April

Sunday 5th and
Monday 6th

1.30pm - 4.30pm
both days

Easter Bunny Hunt

£5 - to join in and find a bunny,

Sunday 12th

11am - 4pm
1.30pm - 4.30pm

Sussex & Weald Stationary Engines

Normal Sunday Open Times **FREE**

May

Saturday 9th and
Sunday 10th

1am - 4pm
1.30pm - 4.30pm

National Mills on Air Weekend

with Cray Valley Radio

Normal Sunday Open Times **FREE**

Sunday 31st

1.30pm - 4.30pm
1.30pm - 4.30pm

Poetry Project Final Submissions

Normal Sunday Open Times **FREE**

June

Sunday 7th

11am - 11.45am

Early Morning Event

2pm – 5 pm

Hartley Morris Men Dancers

Ellenor Hospice Glorious Gardens
Event

1.30pm - 4.30pm

Normal Sunday Open Times **FREE**

South East u3a Forum Summer School

Monday 7th – Thursday 10th September 2026

University of Chichester



South East u3a Forum Summer School 2026

The dates for 2026 are:

- **Thursday 2nd April 2026.- Course list and details** will be posted on the Forum website at **11.00am**
- **Friday 8th May 2026.- Bookings** will go 'live' at **11.00am**

Courses

The finalisation of courses for this year is moving forward at a steady pace, with 4 courses confirmed at this point; we have 3 returners and a completely new tutor and topic. A list of confirmed courses will be available in early March on the website, with the full complement by the end of March.



Costs

The prices for 2026 summer school are as follows:

En-Suite Accommodation £390.00	Standard Accommodation £360.00
Non-Residential with dinner £220.00	Non-Residential no dinner £175.00

The residential prices include accommodation, all meals and refreshments offered at break times and a 'Welcome' drink on the first evening, with a 'Farewell' drink on the last evening, both prior to dinner. Also, the evening entertainment is included; available on campus each evening at 8.00pm.

As mentioned above the next update for this webpage will be in **early March** and then the following one at the **end of March**. No further information is available at present.

Full information on all aspects of this Summer School can be found on the South East u3a Forum's website: [2026 - South East u3a Forum](#)

The Summer School Team 2026, South East u3a Forum



All
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are from
Summer
School
2025



END OF THE BULLETIN