

Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) u3a

www.u3a.co

Newsletter – April 2026

Editor: Solo Awadzi - Email: solokawadzi23@gmail.com

Meet at Community Centre, Prebendal Avenue

1.30 p.m. for start at 2.00 p.m.

Free Refreshments available.



SPEAKER - 16th April 2026 - Keith Muras - *Guerillas in the mist*

We are delighted to be able to welcome Keith Muras once more. April's talk will allow him to regale us with his insights based on a visit to Uganda. This involved the search for mountain gorillas as well as human guerrillas of a different hue. Hopefully we will hear about the Lord's Resistance Army, its genesis and impact, and a brush with disaster in the mountains. The talk is based on Keith's personal involvement and experiences.

SPEAKER - 21st May 2026 - Gemma Kitching and Julie George - Cancer Research UK - *History and progress of life-saving research*

SPEAKER - 18th June 2026 - John Tyler - *Woodland Wildlife*

SPEAKER - 16th July 2026 - Sara Shelby - *1976 - the year of equality in the Police*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Colin White

Welcome to our Newsletter for April 2026. Apologies, I was a little premature in my thoughts about the weather in last month's newsletter, it's now really cold again, climate change eh?!

Attached to the end of this newsletter are: a copy of the notice of this year's Branch AGM (which takes place on Thursday 21st May 2026); a copy of the draft Minutes of the 2025 AGM, and a copy of the Committee Nomination form. Please: note the date; read the draft Minutes, and



have a thought about making nominations to the Committee.



I know it's hard to believe, but it's now British Summer Time, so all sorts of things are starting to emerge. For us this means that the coach trips will start soon (Wimpole Hall on 14th April), the second pub walk round Bishopstone will have taken place by the time you get this, and Local History group meetings will be more outdoors than indoors (though they never really hibernate anyway!). If you feel able to do so, and aren't already, don't forget to engage with these and other groups if you can.

We're now in April, which means that your 2025/26 Memberships have run out, so your Membership Renewal forms for 2026/27 should already be winging their way to Wendy, and money should be hot footing it to our bank account. Please complete the forms and pay your subs as soon as possible, thanks.

If you look towards the end of this month's Newsletter you will see a poem that has been submitted by Jan Paver. She organises trips, has organised pub walks, does lots of other stuff and can write poetry. Is there no end to her talents?! Are there any other budding writers or commentators out there? We will always look to include other items to add a bit of variety to the Newsletter. Please let Solo or I know if you'd like to include anything.

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP Jasmine & Simon Reeks

April Meeting Thursday 23rd Quainton Windmill Tour, The Green, Quainton, Aylesbury, HP22 4AR at 10.45 Plenty of parking by the Green with a few spaces at front and rear of mill. Car share if possible. Refreshments at your own cost at the George and Dragon Coffee Shop from 10.00 – let us know numbers in advance for the café to help their staffing. Please book ASAP. If you wish to lunch at the George & Dragon pub, please make your own booking. (photo copyright Wikipedia)



May Meeting Thursday 28th May Ascott Estate, Wing, Ascot LU7 0PT. Meet at 13.30 in the Cricket Ground Car Park (for those of you who haven't visited for years!). The House is signposted from the main road. Those who



have opted for the Garden Tour, it starts at 14.00. Free roamers, do what you will. We will meet up for refreshments (pay for your own choice) in the Long Room at the back of the Tea Pavilion. Timing to be arranged on the day. For those on the Garden Tour, you then have time to visit the House. The site closes at 17.00, so aim to leave by 16.30 but you can

head for home before. Numbers have been confirmed and finalised with the National Trust but for exceptional circumstances do speak to us. (photo copyright National Trust)

June Meeting Friday 26th June, 11.00 Amazon in person tour Dunstable, LU5 4GB. Details to follow. **Note change of date from normal.** Further information will be provided nearer the time but please sign up as soon as possible.

Know Before You Go



Tour Duration. Each tour is approximately 45-60 minutes long and covers between 1-2 km. Tour routes may involve walking up and down multiple flights of stairs. We recommend bringing a clear water bottle that can be refilled at water stations along the route.



Arrive Early. Early arrival is strongly recommended. Plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to your tour. If guests do not arrive on time, the tour will start without you. Once the tour has begun, guests will not be able to join the tour.



Attire To ensure the safety, comfort, and security of all guests, we require visitors to follow our dress code while participating in warehouse tours. Guests must wear flat, closed-toed, and closed-heeled shoes (no sandals, clogs, Crocs, or high heels). We recommend comfortable shoes or trainers.

Long trousers are recommended for additional protection. Shirts must have sleeves (short or long). Visitor badges must be worn at all times for security and identification purposes (Amazon will issue breakaway-type lanyards upon check-in). Long hair must be pulled at or above shoulder length. Loose-fitting clothing and accessories (such as long-hanging jewellery, scarves, or ties) are not permitted. Headscarves worn for religious reasons are permitted but must be tucked in securely. Other attire or head coverings worn for religious reasons are permitted, provided they do not create a safety hazard.

Not Permitted: Sandals, clogs, Crocs, high heels, or other unstable footwear. Offensive or revealing clothing.

Our warehouse is an active work environment with moving equipment, shelving, and uneven surfaces. Appropriate attire, identification, and footwear help reduce the risk of injury and ensure security.



Visitors who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to join the tour. **Identification.** Upon your arrival, your tour leader will ask for a government issued photo ID. Please ensure that guest information submitted during sign-up matches the guest ID.



Guest Registration. Required Guests must sign up for the tour prior to arrival. Walk-ins will not be admitted into the tour.



Accessibility. To request a specific accommodation for a tour, please submit a request via the [Amazon Tours Help Centre](#) ahead of registration to confirm we can support.



Photography. All filming or photography of any kind is strictly prohibited, including the use of mobile phones, smart devices, wearable technology, or augmented-reality glasses (such as Meta Glasses).



Items Allowed on Tour. You may bring your wallet, keys, and transparent water bottle on the tour. We ask that you keep all bags, and backpacks at home or in a vehicle, unless medically necessary. If you cannot leave these behind, our team will provide a safe location for you to leave these items for the duration of your visit. While we encourage guests to bring a clear water

bottle to stay hydrated throughout the tour, other outside food and drink will not be permitted.

JIGSAW TABLE - Julie Leach

The suggested contribution for a jigsaw is 50p. Our supply of puzzles is good at the moment. However, we are always grateful for any donations that are made, and if we don't sell them they will still go to a good home. If you have finished a jigsaw that you previously obtained from the table, why not donate it to another worthy cause such as a charity shop?



QUIZ GROUP - Ann Burman (07709 226884 / 01296 422084)



The next Quiz will take place on **Tuesday 21st April 2026 at Foxhill Indoor Bowls Club, starting at 2.00pm. Cost £2 per person** (including tea/coffee and biscuits). All members are welcome. It would be nice to see some new faces, why not give it a go?

Quiz is normally on the third Tuesday in the month, apart from December when we do not meet.

HISTORY OF TRANSPORT – Simon & Jasmine Reeks



At our April meeting (**14.30 on Wednesday 15th April, 9 Barge Crescent, Broughton, Aylesbury, HP22 7BH**) we will be looking at the development of motorways (don't we all love the M25 experience?!). For the May meeting, we may well be visiting the de Havilland Aircraft Museum (near London Colney, just off the M25!), further detail will be available at the next meeting.

Any queries, please contact us by phone/email on 01296 482735 / reeks@fangio.co.uk

MUSICAL APPRECIATION - Jim Wilding (01296 623628)



Our next meeting will be on **28th April, 2.30 at 9 Mill Mead, Wendover**, subject to my current health problems having cleared! Will contact members if need for cancellation.

GADGET GROUP - Simon Reeks

Over the last month I've set up 2 new laptops as well as the regular McAfee, email issues etc. that tend to crop up on a regular basis.



I "play" with many gadgets, for example PCs, laptops, Android phones (including connection to get SatNav onto car screens via Android Auto), televisions, printers etc. As long as Apple is not involved, I'll happily try to help. Please contact me by phone/email on **01296 482735 / reeks@fangio.co.uk** and I'll see what I can do.

COACH TRIPS 2026

Pickup points: Exchange Street 9.00 am / Tennis Club 9.05 am / Jansel Square 9.15 am.

The Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park Thursday 14th May.

A 35-acre haven of gardens, woodland and seasonal displays.

Cost: £25 This should include a guided tour of the main areas of the gardens.

Please make your own arrangements for lunch. Visit the website to book the restaurant if you want this option, (we suggest 1.00 pm after the tour). Alternatively, other cafés for light bites are available. You can sign up for this trip at the April meeting.

You can pay by cash, by cheque (payable to Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) u3a), or by bank transfer (to Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) u3a **Metro Account, number 47992982, sort code 23-05-80**

Please remember to include 'Savill Garden' and your surname in the payment details.

Lead Val Blackburn (07923 023064)

The following trip is on **10th June**. The coach will drop off at Chichester and then go on to East Wittering Beach. You can sign up for this trip at the April or the May meeting.

Cost: £16

Lead : Pauline Noble (07899 726258)

Upcoming trips 1st July Kelmscott Manor and Lechlade

8th September Boat trip on Rutland Water and Stamford

PUB WALKS – Colin White (07941 652918)

The next pub walk will take place on **Thursday 7th May**, meeting for an **11:00** start at **The Squirrel, Penn Street, HP7 0PX**. Penn Street is located in the countryside to the south west of Amersham. The car park is quite small, so please park sensibly and on-road if necessary.



The walk is about 3 miles long and is generally on the flat. There are no stiles and there will be a couple of short bits of walking next to the road. We hope to see some bluebells in Penn Wood (if they are still in bloom by then).

See the following link for an example of a lunchtime menu - [The Squirrel: Dine](#)

Please sign up at the April monthly meeting or call Colin (07941 652918) if you would like to join us. All welcome.

BOWLS GROUP – Colin White (07941 652918)

The Bowls Group meets and plays at the Foxhill Indoor Bowls Club. The next sessions take place from **2:30 to 4:30 on Sundays: 12th and 26th April, 10th and 24th May and 7th June 2026** (meet at 2:15pm). The sessions will cost **£5 per person** (which includes refreshments).

We will have booking sheets available at the monthly meetings for those interested in coming along to play.



Please remember that you will need to play in clean, non-marking shoes. Either bring your own or wear a pair provided by the Bowls Club.

The primary contact for this Group is Colin White (email colinwhite100@virginmedia.com) and the secondary contact is Sandra Chaudhry (07881 768449).

BRIDGE GROUP – Martin Lock (01296 433838)

This group meets regularly, on days to be confirmed, at various members houses. For more information see the branch website or contact Martin Lock.

SINGING FOR FUN – Sheila Bulpett (01296 622540)

This Group is run in conjunction with Wendover u3a and takes place from 11:15 to 12:45 on the second Wednesday of the month at Halton Village Hall. The Group is looking for more singers, particularly men.

For more information see the branch website or contact Sheila Bulpett using the number above or sebulpett@yahoo.co.uk – and remember to say you're from the Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) branch of the u3a.

YARN CRAFTERS – Sheila Haldane (01296 488267)

This Group meets from 2.00 to 4.00pm on the second Monday of the month.

For more information see the branch website or contact Sheila using the number above.

WEBSITE – Solo Awadzi – (07748 750547) & Colin White – (07941 652918)

The website is the door to our u3a and in need of contributors to submit items to the website manager who would gratefully publish them. Please contact Solo or Colin using the numbers above or solokawadzi@hotmail.com or colinwhite100@virginmedia.com

POEM COLUMN

Where does the time go?

Where does the time go? Nobody knows.
The older you get, the faster it goes.
The faster it goes; the numbers get higher
The candles on your cake could now start a fire.

Are your legs getting longer? The ground's moving away?
You could reach your toes easily, back in the day.
No job was too much; you just got stuck in
Now breaks are essential. Coffee or gin?

So which part is aching and giving you gyp?
Your shoulders, your back, your knees or your hip?
They've all had their turn. And without a doubt,
there are quite a few bits of you on the way out.

It's the brain that's a worry, which is really not fair.
As you walk in a room and forget why you're there.
In your youth you were calm and measured. It's true!
Now you shout at the telly like Victor Meldrew.

Technology explosion. It's just passed you by.
Computers confused you, but now there's AI.
I think it's quite clear, old age is a curse
But take it from me, the alternative is worse.

By – Jan Paver

Sudoku Puzzle April 2026 (Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9)

				2			6	8
	6			8	7		2	5
	2			5	6			
	1	5	8					
	4				9	8	1	
		8	4	6	1		5	
	8						3	6
		9		1				4
6	3	1					9	

Sudoku Puzzle March 2025 solution

1	9	8	4	2	7	5	6	3
6	7	2	3	5	9	1	8	4
4	5	3	8	6	1	2	7	9
9	8	6	5	4	3	7	2	1
2	4	5	7	1	8	3	9	6
7	3	1	6	9	2	8	4	5
3	6	7	9	8	5	4	1	2
5	1	9	2	7	4	6	3	8
8	2	4	1	3	6	9	5	7

Next Newsletter latest contribution date – Friday 1st May 2026

MID-BUCKS (AYLESBURY) u3a

2026 Annual General Meeting

The Twenty-Ninth Annual General Meeting of Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) u3a will
take place on

Thursday 21st May, 2026

Commencing at 2pm at the Southcourt Community Centre, Prebendal Avenue,
Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 8LF

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AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 15th May 2025**
- 3. Matters Arising**
- 4. Chairman's Report**
- 5. Treasurer's Report & Accounts for the period ending 31st March 2026**
- 6. Election of Chairman**
- 7. Election of Officers – Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary**
- 8. Election of Committee Members – Trips Organisers, Speakers Organiser, Website Administrator and Newsletter Editor**
- 9. Appointment of an Examiner for the Accounts 2026/27**
- 10. Vote of thanks to retiring Committee Members**
- 11. Any other business relevant to the AGM**

MID-BUCKS (AYLESBURY) u3a

Minutes of the Twenty-eighth Annual General Meeting

Held at Southcourt Community Centre on Thursday 15th May, 2025

Present: 52 Members.

Colin White welcomed all present and proceeded to open the business of the Annual General Meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence** had been received from Brian and Julia Goodwin, Wendy Aplin, Alex Dunk, Solo Awadzi, Mary Evered, Allan and Brenda Horne, Jim and Gwyneth Wilding and Gill Perrottet.
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on the 16th May 2024** had been circulated with the April Newsletter and were signed as accurate.
3. **Matters arising from the Minutes.** There were no matters arising.
4. **Chairman's Report.** Colin White commenced his report by expressing our sadness at the loss of any Members in the year. Our condolences and thoughts go out to all of their relatives and friends. On a more positive note, we have been heartened to hear that our previous Chairman, Geoff Short, is making a recovery, and we continue to wish him well. The Branch Committee has seen a period of stability for a little while. However, that is about to change and we will be losing several members from their key roles. If these roles are not filled we will have a significantly reduced level of activity to offer both current and new Members. It would be very sad to see this happen, so I encourage you to consider volunteering where you can. New members on the Committee would clearly bring new ideas. Our monthly meetings continue to be held at the Southcourt Community Centre, and we are grateful to be able to do so. We continue to get about 50% of Members attending each meeting and they have been treated to a great variety of talks. This is thanks in large part to Val Blackburn's efforts. The Branch continues to have a good number of active groups, which is great to see. I have received some information from various Group Leaders to back this up.
 - A. **The Local History Group** continues to be one of the best attended, with an active membership of 44. Meetings regularly attract most of the membership with 38 attending the talk by Julian Hunt about Stony Stratford.

- B. **The Gadget Group** and, of course Simon Reeks in particular, has continued to be very active with people seeking advice about replacement of computers with laptops and the navigation from Windows 10 to Windows 11. Simon reports that his knowledge of electronic gadgets is being constantly challenged. He seems to be successful in that challenge.
- C. **The Trips Team** organised visits to the Shuttleworth Collection; Chedworth Roman Villa; Hever Castle; Portsmouth and the Cotswold Wildlife Park. The five trips attracted 161 Members, with an average of 32 attending each visit.
- D. **Bowls Group.** The 11 regular sessions for the new Bowls Group have been attended by an average of just under 14 Members, with 148 participants in total. This is very encouraging and welcome.

Thanks must go to all organisers of Group and other activities. They are too numerous to mention, but they know who they are!

If you feel that there is a group that was previously active which ought to be resurrected, please consider taking on an organising role. We previously had groups such as French conversation, gardening, geography/travel, photography and ten pin bowling. It's a shame that these, and others, are no longer active.

The decrease in the number of active groups may be due in part to the decline in the number of Members that the Branch has experienced in the last few years. However we seem to have turned a corner in the last year. The decline seems to have arrested, and we are now attracting some new members, which may bode well for future years. If anyone has any ideas about ways to increase membership, please do let us know.

We continue to face increased costs for most things in life. The u3a is not immune to this. With reduced numbers of Members, we have faced a tightening of the purse strings. However, we have now had a number of years with the accounts being in deficit. The Committee has actively discussed this issue and has reluctantly agreed that membership fees ought to be increased, for the first time in many years. This will be put to the AGM and the subject of a vote in a little while.

Once the AGM has resolved the make-up of the Committee, we will be able to finalise the detail required for completion of Membership Cards for the 2025-26 year. These will be available to Members once renewal forms, or applications for new Membership, and payments have been

received and processed. They should be available at the June monthly meeting.

Finally, I would personally like to record my thanks to the following:

- a. The rest of the Branch Committee, who are currently: Solo Awadzi; Val Blackburn; Chris Blaik; Sandra Choudhry; Wendy Russell and Michael Walden
- b. David Mummery for continuing to edit the website from afar. We are grateful for his continued input and mindful that we need to be active in seeking his replacement.
- c. Group leaders and event organisers. They continue to be the lifeblood of the Branch.
- d. The ladies of the refreshment rota, ably led previously by Alex and now by Louise.
- e. All those who help by setting up the technology (in particular Rupert Anson), chairs and tables at meetings and for putting them away afterwards. It is very much appreciated.
- f. And the William Harding Trust for their subsidy of £2,000 towards coach costs. Without this aid trips would be much more expensive and potentially unattractive.

As well as those thanks, I would also like to ensure that the Branch's gratitude is expressed for the sterling work that the Trips Team have done over the last 11 years. The current team of Michael Walden, Ann Burman, Sally Smith and Chris Blaik now need to step down. Without their efforts so many people would not have enjoyed day trips of such a wide variety over this time.

5. Treasurer's Report for the period ending 31st March, 2025.

Sandra Chaudhry thanked Cyril Parsons for once again examining the Accounts. She reported that the financial position seemed to have steadied following the loss of members post Covid, but we are still running at a loss. The figure shown is a loss of £870. This was larger than usual as we had to pay out £595 for the coach Trip to Milestones in March before the William Harding grant was received. Like for like the loss for 2024-25 is £600. The William Harding grant has been confirmed as £2,000 for the current year - £500 per trip. We had invested in a bulk order of paper cups which should last for the next 5 years or so. The Christmas Raffle had raised £160 for the Florence Nightingale Hospice. Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Jasmine Reeks and seconded by Tony Ashpool.

Election of Chairman

6. **Chairman.** Colin White is happy to stand again as Chairman. Proposed by Lesley Yates and seconded by Rupert Anson. Unanimously elected.
7. **Election of Officers:**
 - Vice-Chairman.** No nominations had been received. Position vacant.
 - Secretary.** Val Blackburn is willing to continue as our named Secretary. Proposed by Colin White and seconded by Mary Bickley. Unanimously elected.
 - Treasurer.** Sandra Chaudhry is willing to stand again. Proposed by Jasmine Reeks and seconded by Ken Berry. Unanimously elected.
 - Membership Secretary.** Wendy Russell is happy to continue. Proposed by Ann Cottrell and seconded by Vi Swindlehurst. Unanimously elected.
8. **Election of Committee:**
 - Trips Team:** Michael Walden, Ann Burman, Sally Smith and Chris Blaik are standing down once the rest of the trips have finished in 2025. There are no nominations for a Trips Organiser, but Jan Paver and Val Blackburn would be willing to help. Position vacant. **Speaker**
 - Organiser:** Val Blackburn has arranged Speakers up until May 2026 so that they can be included in the Membership Cards, but a new Speaker Organiser(s) is required. There were no nominations.
 - Website Administrator:** Solo Awadzi has volunteered to investigate what this role entails. It is an important role as the Website needs to be kept up to date and is our window to new members.
 - Newsletter Editor:** Solo Awadzi has agreed to continue as Editor. Proposed by Pauline Noble and seconded by Ann Cottrell. Unanimously elected.
9. **Appointment of an Examiner for the Accounts 2025/26.** Cyril Parsons has agreed to stand for 2025/26, but not for following years, so a replacement will be needed next year. Cyril was proposed by Colin White and seconded by Wendy Russell. Unanimously elected.
10. **Vote of thanks to retiring Committee Members.** Colin thanked Val Blackburn, Michael Walden, Chris Blaik and David Mummery for their contributions. He also again thanked all Group Leaders and Teams. Jan Paver will be stepping down as organiser of Pub Walks at the end of 2025, so this Group will require a new organiser in 2026.
11. **To approve an increase in Annual Membership Fees for the year 2025/26 to £20.00** per person (this allows for free refreshments at monthly meetings). The proposed increase to £20 per person was approved by a show of hands with no members against.

12. **Any other Business.** Linda Gill suggested that the proceeds from the Christmas Raffle should be kept to offset our funding shortfall. This will be discussed by the Committee, including a possible summer raffle. Tony Ashpool proposed a vote of appreciation to Colin White for his hard work.

The Meeting closed at 2.35pm



MID-BUCKS (AYLESBURY) u3a Committee Member Nomination Form 2026

Current committee members:

Chairman: Colin White (willing to stand for 2026/27)

Vice-Chairman: Vacant

Secretary: Val Blackburn (willing to stand for 2026/27)

Treasurer: Sandra Chaudhry (willing to stand for 2026/27)

Membership Secretary: Wendy Russell (willing to stand for 2026/27)

Trips Organisers: Jan Paver and Pauline Noble (both willing to stand for 2026/27)

Speakers Organiser: Julia Goodwin (willing to stand for 2026/27)

Website Administrators: Colin White and Solo Awadzi (both willing to stand for 2026/27)

Newsletter Editor: Solo Awadzi (willing to stand for 2026/27)

Nominations are especially required for the following positions:

1. Vice-Chairman
2. Secretary
3. Website Administrators
4. Committee Members

(You may make nominations for as many positions as you wish)

NOMINATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE 2026/27

The following members of the Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) u3a are nominated for election to the positions indicated at the Annual General Meeting to be held on **Thursday 21st May 2026**. The members concerned have verbally agreed to serve if elected.

POSITION	PERSON NOMINATED (Block capitals please)	PROPOSER (Block capitals please)	SECONDER (Block capitals please)

PLEASE NOTE: All nominations should be returned to Wendy Russell - wendyrussell@hotmail.com or by post to 36 Elm Trees, Long Crendon, Bucks, HP18 9DF - ***Not later than Thursday 7th May 2026.***