

NEWSLETTER

THE ARCHER

JANUARY 2026



u3a
Romsey Archway

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear u3a Members,



Hope you had a wonderful Christmas and that Santa brought you some well-deserved cheer! As we welcome the new year, I'd like to take a moment to talk about the year ahead and the ongoing role volunteers play in the life of our club. My heartfelt thanks go to all those who already lend a hand at speaker meetings, social events, and other activities—your enthusiasm and willingness make such a difference, and we're truly grateful for your support.

However, one area where we still face challenges is finding volunteers for committee roles. If you've ever wondered about joining the committee but have hesitated, I'd love to hear from you. What are the concerns or barriers that might be holding you back? If you share your thoughts with me—just a quick email—I'll do my best to address them and hopefully make it easier for more people to get involved. Your input would be incredibly valuable as we look to strengthen our club together.

Despite the ongoing need for volunteers, I'm delighted to report that we're starting the year in a strong position, with both club membership and interest group numbers on the rise. Here's to another year filled with new friendships, lively events, and plenty of opportunities to learn and laugh together.

Wishing you all a happy and fulfilling New Year!

Warm regards,

Dave Green - Chair





SPEAKER MEETINGS

THIS MONTHS SPEAKER MEETING

Monthly Meeting will be at 2.30 on January 8th at Crosfield Hall.
Doors open at 2.00pm.

Our speaker will be Jackie Dimmock, an ex-policewoman, will tell the story of a life as a police woman that was Good, Bad and Downright Funny. Her story is told with the aid of Tapestries!

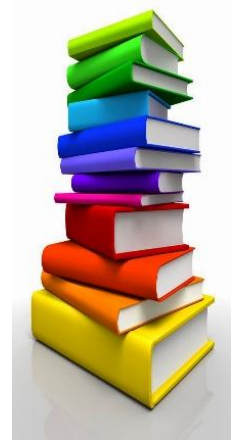


BOOK SWAP STALL

FROM RICHARD AND LUCY CROWDER

The book swap stall will be open for business at the next speaker's meeting. The organisers would like to remind everyone that it is a book swap - so one in - one out. This helps to stop the number of books held becoming excessive.

Currently we have far more books available than can be displayed at an individual meeting.



CLUB WIDE SOCIAL EVENTS

FROM JANET ROBINSON SOCIAL SECRETARY

The Christmas Event took place at Crosfield Hall on Thursday, 11 December. Attendees enjoyed performances by the AChoiring choir, who sang Christmas carols while everyone sipped mulled wine and ate mince pies. The event also featured several guessing games, including "Guess the Weight of the Christmas Pudding" (which was disguised as a snowman), "How Many Baubles Are in the Jars?", and a game to determine what was inside the Christmas stockings or socks.





Prizes were awarded to the following members:

- Christine J. correctly guessed that the snowman weighed 1,028g.
- The bauble count was 132, with Richard B coming closest to the right answer.
- Each of the ten stockings or socks contained one item
 - 1) Star topper
 - 2) String of lights
 - 3) Nuts
 - 4) Nut cracker
 - 5) Terrys chocolate orange
 - 6) Candle
 - 7) Lump of coal
 - 8) Fir cone
 - 9) Donkey figurine
 - 10) Jesus in his crib figurine

The winners were Bridget B, Joan and Sue.

SOCIAL GROUP VOLUNTEERS

If you'd like to join the social group, and share ideas / suggestions, please reach out to Janet Robinson, Social Secretary, at socialsecretaryarchway@hotmail.com.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Check back here in February for more updates



GROUP NEWS

From Margaret and Marion, the Groups Coordinators



An end of year message from the Archway members and committee to our wonderful interest group leaders:

“Thank you for all your hard work in leading your interest groups this year. Without people prepared to coordinate activities and keep everyone informed, our interest groups simply couldn’t exist. We really value your effort and commitment. The work you are prepared to do makes life richer for all of us.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW GROUPS

The development of new groups depends entirely on the talents and creativity of Romsey Archway u3a members. We welcome ideas for new groups and will help you research them to see if there is a core of interest amongst our members.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

ROMSEY ARCHWAY U3A BIG WALK GROUP

REVIEW OF 2025

We organised 10 walks during the year, starting from Fritham, the Rufus Stone, Whiteparish, Horsebridge, Bolton’s Bench, Hamptworth, Furzey Gardens, Mottisfont, Downton and Braishfield. Walks were 7 to 9 miles with five to nine walkers.





The group relies on the selection, organisation and leading of walks being shared among members. During 2025 this approach worked well. Walks were led by nine different members. Thanks to those leaders for their contribution to the group.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

We plan to organise walks on the first Tuesday morning of each month in or around the Romsey area. The group is open to new members. We don't expect everyone to lead walks, but we would especially welcome those willing to do so once or twice a year. It can be new walks or ones that we have done before. If members have a suggestion for a route but would like someone else to do the leading, this is also helpful, as



would be suggestions to make the group's activities more appealing. Anyone who is interested can contact the Big Walk group coordinator through the Archway u3a web site.

BOOK GROUP 2

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month, usually at the White Horse Hotel, Romsey, but in December some of us met at a group member's home for a bit of Xmas cheer!



We mainly review a mix of fiction and non-fiction books.

Some of the books we reviewed in 2025 were:-

Unruly by David Mitchell,

The Whalebone Theatre by Joanna Quinn,

The Seventh Son by Sebastian Faulks,

There are Rivers in the Sky by Elif Shafak,

Shackleton by Ranulph Fiennes,

Fatherland by Robert Harris,

The Glass Maker by Tracy Chevalier



4-6 MILE FRIDAY WALKING GROUP

On the first Friday of December, the 4 – 6 walking group completed a 5.5-mile circular route around Winchester. The walk began near St Catherine’s Hill, led us along the base of the hill, crossed over the M3, and passed by the Protest Stone (which commemorates the M3’s construction in the 1990s). We enjoyed various sights across Winchester as we continued. The path took us across Hockley Golf Course, under the M3 bridge, past the viaduct, Hospital of St Cross, and Winchester College before returning to our starting location. We were lucky with the weather—just a brief shower—and some group members even glimpsed a kingfisher. Our outing concluded with a hot tea or coffee at Cadence Clubhouse (previously Handlebar Café).



By Janet

BIRDWATCHING NEWS



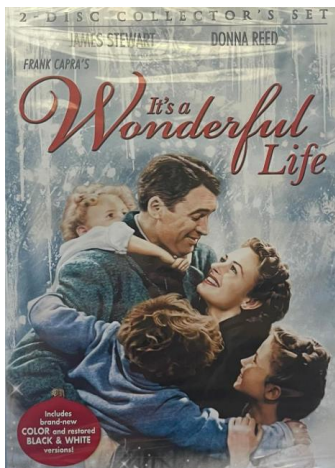
Archway Birders have had another successful year, with many good sightings and enjoyable walks together. We started off at Lepe in January on a chilly winter’s day. Much made up for by both a mega-spot of two spoonbill and hot coffee and cakes at the cafe. March turned up a white-tailed eagle at Fishtail Lagoon which we appreciated from a rather supine position on the sea wall. Lovely sightings of a great-crested grebe feeding its demanding ‘humbug’ entertained us at Blashford in September. We finished off the year in style with sunny, clear weather at Normandy Lagoon, made all the more special by breathtaking fly-overs of dunlin and brent, 21 spoonbill on the island, an enchanting hovering kingfisher and a veritable smorgasbord of ducks and waders on the scrape. Birding heaven!



The Fishlake Meadows birding group enjoyed some rewarding sightings at the local reserve. Water rail, bittern, great white egret, marsh harrier and some long-tail tits busily constructing a nest all kept us entertained.



THEATRE GOERS



On 6th December the Theatregoers group went to the Plaza to see A Wonderful Life. Most of us are fans of the film of the same name so we were interested to see how the story would be interpreted on stage.

We found the first half a little slow, with the emphasis on exposition – probably necessary but somewhat dull. However, in the second half the drama came to life, thanks in large measure to the acting of Chris Ball as George Bailey, who managed to sound remarkably similar to James Stewart in the film. He was ably

supported by Chloe Partridge as Mary and Christine English as Clarissa, while the rest of the cast showed their versatility by undertaking several parts each. The production was skilfully directed by Neil Gwynne.

Everyone enjoyed the evening and felt the stage version did justice to the film.

Sheila.



MEMBERSHIP

FROM HEATHER TRIM BUSINESS SECRETARY AND MEMBERSHIP



We start the new year welcoming 11 new members bringing our total membership to 515. A very warm welcome to: Sue E, Kan C, Peter C, Alison and William H, Margaret M, Janet B, John C, Iain and Joyce E and Diane D.

If you have friends interesting in joining Romsey Archway a reminder that we now have a reduced membership fee of £6 covering membership until 31st March.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

COMMITTEE ROLES THAT ARE CURRENTLY VACANT

We are still very keen to get members to volunteer for the following roles:-

- Chair
- Groups Co-ordinator
- Business Secretary
- Committee Members generally



OTHER VACANT VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

- Content Creator—To work on creating web and social media content.
- Facebook Admin—Non committee role
- Newsletter Editor—Non committee role
- Beacon Admin—Non committee role

Please contact Dave Green or any committee member, if you would like any more information about any of the above.



SUGGESTION BOX

A reminder that we have a “suggestion box” on our website that is there for you to give us any feedback on events and speakers etc., and also any thoughts or ideas you might have about, how we may develop our u3a or better support you as members.

<https://romseyarchway.u3asite.uk/contact/>

SOCIAL MEDIA

FROM RICHARD CROWDER – WEB ADMIN

After 18 months, it is time to update our front page. To help move forward I am looking for a number of photographs that represent our groups. So photographs of members enjoying one of the following would be most helpful: Arts and Craft, Food and Drink, Games, History, Languages, Literature, Music, Natural History, Sport and Walking would be most helpful. If your pictures have members in frame, please ensure you have informed them that the images are for the Website and they agree to the use of the image online.

We encourage you to take photographs of the our u3a events and activities that you get up to so that we can publish them on the website and also in this newsletter. This will promote us and share what we do and what we are about.





DATES FOR THE DIARY



2026	
Thursday 8th January	<p>Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm</p> <p>Jackie Dimmock, an ex-policewoman, will tell the story of a life as a police woman that was Good, Bad and Downright Funny. Her story is told with the aid of Tapestries!</p>
Thursday 12th February	<p>Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm</p> <p>Beyond Beliefs: One Family's Incredible Story (Part 2)</p> <p>Dr Sohail Husain, a return visit for this speaker whose first presentation was extremely well received, and this is Part 2 of that Story</p>
Thursday 12th March	<p>Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm</p> <p>Ministering Angel. Meet Nursing Superintendent Shaw, good friend and colleague of Florence Nightingale and discover why she left Netley Hospital in disgrace. Speaker is an actress who dresses and acts the part</p>
March / April Date tbc	See Southampton Guided Tour – More details to follow
Thursday 9th April	<p>Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm</p> <p>Annual General Meeting</p> <p>Followed by Neil Nixon giving an entertaining, surprising and occasionally funny talk looking at ten of the world's best known songs and sharing the amazing back stories of their creators, their true meanings and the often accidental routes they found to becoming best-sellers. Including the kindergarten teachers who wrote the most valuable song in history, the wheelchair bound lyricist who wrote a classic song about dancing and the unique promotional campaign that turned Bohemian Rhapsody into chart gold.</p>



Thursday 14th May	Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm "Knocking on Shackleton's Door ". It's about a recent Expedition Cruise to the Ross Sea, Antarctica to visit Scott's and Shackleton's Huts.
Thursday 11th June	Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm The work, animals and photographic activity of the wildlife and bird of prey sanctuary in Winchester. Including live owls.
Thursday 9th July	Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm Billy the Kid and Other Bad Eggs. Stories of villains and anti-heroes from the American West
Thursday 13th August	Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm Details to be confirmed
Thursday 10th September	Monthly Meeting Crosfield Hall 2.00pm for 2.30pm It was the best of times it was the worst of times. The private life of Charles Dickens

NB

For Regular Monthly Speaker Meetings: Doors Open 2.00pm for Tea and Coffee, Speaker Commences 2.30pm

USEFUL INFORMATION

There is a lot of useful information about u3a that can be found on the National U3A Website at <https://www.u3a.org.uk>

Our Romsey and Archway u3a Website is <https://romseyarchway.u3asite.uk>

You can contact us at <https://romseyarchway.u3asite.uk/contact/>

Please join our Romsey Archway Facebook at –
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/443593039767427>