

Greeting Members!



We've had two new visitors into our home recently: two Harnessed Tiger moths visited us - a first for me (despite having been treated to an array of moths by my father when I was young). I talked to the lovely Dorothy recently and she produced a similar photo, so they are obviously having a successful year.

The second is the cutest young male fox, not a cub and not at all shy, who, I suppose, has separated from his family and established his own urban territory. He has a liking for pet's toys & shoes - both of which have been found in our garden recently, the latter snatched from just inside our house. My poor husband's gardening crocs have been rather chewed – this fox likes rubber apparently!



Our next **monthly meeting** is on **Monday 10 August** at the Methodist Church. **Doors open at 1.30pm** for trips stalls, teas & coffees.

This month, former Police Officer Paul Barwick recounts the death of Alexander Litvinenko – The Spy who solved his own murder.



Litvinenko, former spy with the Russian KGB, came to Britain in November 2000 with his wife & son, seeking asylum from Putin's regime. He found work with British security services under a new identity, exposing the secrets of the Russian mafia & covert assassinations. In November 2006, two Russian agents who had infiltrated his business, slipped a liquid vial of the deadly radioactive isotope Polonium 210 into a pot of his favourite green tea. By 26 November he was dead.

In one of the most notorious incidents in the murky world of international espionage, the Met Police investigated his poisoning, using information provided by the victim himself as he lay dying. PO Barwick will describe the fascinating and grisly saga of how the Met Police went about this investigation.

Notices will be at 2.25pm & Paul will start his talk at 2.30pm.

Magazine – 2026 Edition – Last call for contributions!

Please send your contributions– particularly photos & descriptions of u3a trips- for the 2026 magazine to our Editor Maureen at magazine@bsu3a.org.uk. We are now compiling the magazine, hopefully for an August publication. The winning cover pic will once again win a prize!

Discount venues for Stortford u3a members

Please click here for all 8 of our discount venues listed on our website:

<https://bishopsstortford.u3asite.uk/members-discounts/>

Membership 2026

The new membership year started on 1 April. You are still able to renew your membership for only £10 until 31 March 2027. New Memberships can be secured from Steve H at membership@bsu3a.org.uk, at the Membership table at the monthly meeting or via the website [click here](#).

All groups are listed in the diary sheet (paper copies available to collect at monthly meetings) or click on our [website](https://bishopsstortford.u3asite.uk.uk/): <https://bishopsstortford.u3asite.uk.uk/>

Are you a lapsed bellringer or want to have a go?

Ringling practices are held at St Michaels Church, Windhill on **Thursdays 7pm to 9pm**.

If anyone is interested in finding out more they can attend the Tower **Open Day on Sunday 20th September** or contact Nick Hughes on bells@saintmichaelweb.org.uk or ring 07971 138020.

St James' Church, Thorley is also looking for new ringers.

The Practical Art and Drawing group is holding its **2nd Annual Open Day on 7th August** when you can pop in and view a selection of their completed work and see some work in progress.

Complimentary tea and biscuits are available.

Venue: The Markwell Studio in the Castle Park between 2-30pm and 4pm. No need to book – just drop by!



Contact: Derek Crowther : john.crowther2@ntlworld.com

Notice to Group Leaders

Can all Group leaders please conduct an inventory of their group members and ensure that their contact details are up to date. If you are a new group leader please can let our Group Co-ordinators know: groups@bsu3a.org.uk, and please ensure that the details on Beacon & our monthly diary/listings sheet (taken automatically from Beacon) are up to date. If you need help accessing Beacon as a group leader please contact Chris at beacon@bsu3a.org.uk. He is very helpful!

Summer Trips

Bure – there were two trips to Bure, Norfolk this summer, unfortunately only one of them enjoyed beautiful weather! By all accounts both were greatly enjoyed.



[Photos courtesy of Steve Howe]

London Rovers Walking Group –Hammersmith to Chiswick House – Weds 15 July

This was a delightful, if hot, walk from Hammersmith Bridge along the river, past the gardens, pubs and floriated balconies seen annually in Boat Race tv coverage. We passed the Fullers & Lamb breweries and famous residents' houses– notably Walpole, William Morris and Hogarth. The latter two have small museums dedicated to them. We called in at the Dove Pub, which houses Britain's smallest bar & where Rule Britannia was allegedly written; the church where Hogarth was buried; and lunched at the RIBA awarded Chiswick House cafeteria. Here you can see a photo of the group in front of the Palladian Chiswick House. The walk was led ably as ever by Sue Giles & Chantale (right, below),



Hitchin Lavender Fields: 17 July



This was a lovely half-day trip to Hitchin where we were met by Harry who conducted our tour of the fields & the distillery, differentiated between the 60+ types of lavender there and gave tips about propagating and harvesting lavender in the UK. Harry also helped serve us to a delightful cream tea in the delectably scented barn cafeteria, sitting at beautifully decorated oak bench tables: it was fun & delicious! We had some free time to browse the two shops and small museum,

eat lavender ice cream and fill generous paper bags with the lavender we cut ourselves from the fields. The coach on our return journey smelled heavenly!

First trip to Royston Caves & Knebworth House – 29 July



leader, Rosemary. Royston cave's fascinating etchings and the five likely theories propounded by our guide as to when, why and by whom this cave was brought into being 8m below the middle of Royston High Street were all mind-

Cutting her teeth as a u3a trips organiser, our outing was efficiently managed by Chris under the watchful eye of our beloved History Group



boggling. The descents into the cool interior below were managed in 4 groups of 15, while the rest of the contingent roamed round the coffee shops, colourful streets and Royston church.



Just around the corner is situated the historic palace, a favourite hunting lodge & retreat of King James I (1604). With its cluster of court buildings, stables & privy lodgings it dominated much of central Royston. Now missing its original oak frontage its surrounding associated buildings are now town houses & shops. While waiting, several of us sought climactic relief & lubrication in the wonderful Chalk Hare Hotel in Melbourn Street!



Onwards by coach to the second part of our day – to the magnificent Knebworth House, a gothic revival mansion & private home to the Lytton Family for over 500 years. Following a free wander around the magnificent gardens (didn't manage all 250 acres!), our guide led us round the medieval and Victorian furnished salons, dining parlour and bedrooms, with just enough detail to entice us back on a further visit. Some of us stopped off for a bite & drink in the cafeteria there before rejoining the bus for our return journey. Congratulations to Rose and Chris for organising such a lovely day out!

2026 Trips

If you have requests for trips please contact trips@bsu3a.org.uk.

The second planned trip to Royston & Knebworth has now been cancelled due to lack of sufficient seats sold.

When taking part on trips or in group activities, please consider your own needs, mobility and ability to cope with the demands of each group/trip. All responsibility is your own. Members are asked to complete your "In Case of Emergency" contact details on the reverse of your membership card. Trip leaders should provide members with full details of each trip, including any mobility/fitness requirements and to check membership numbers when recording participants' names on Beacon (this is particularly important for refunds - in case of duplicate names).

BSCS Come & Sing Show Tunes Day

Come & Sing show tunes from West End musicals at a relaxed & welcoming workshop under the expert direction of Richard Balcombe, award-winning West End opera & orchestral conductor. An afternoon's rehearsal of iconic hits from Phantom, Les Mis, Carousel & La La Land with the opportunity to show your friends & relatives what you've learned in a free informal performance at 6.15-7pm, also at the URC.

Sat 17 October 2026, 1 – 7pm Cost £20

United Reform Church, Bishop's Stortford

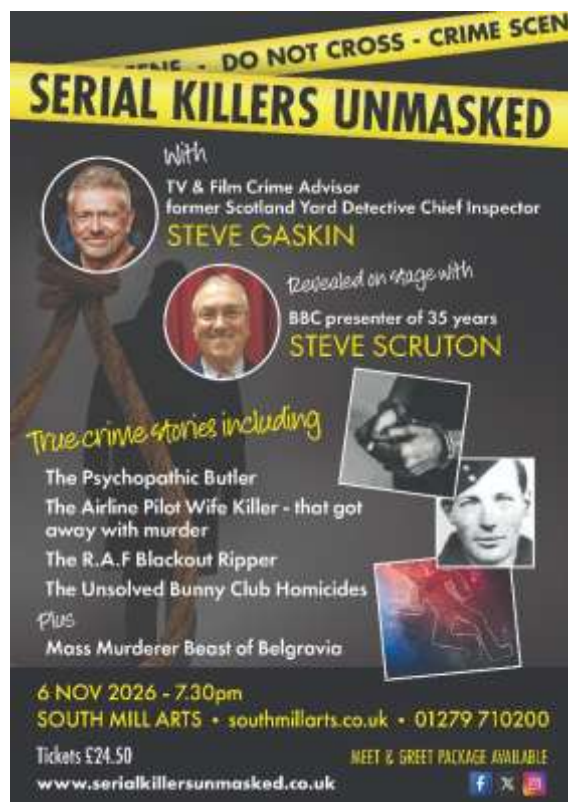
To sign up visit BSCS website

www.singwithbscs.org.uk or visit Ticket Source

<https://www.ticketsource.com/bishops-stortford-choral-society/come-amp-sing-show-tunes/e-aryma>



Serial Killers Unmasked South Mill Arts – 6 November



I know u3a members are great supporters of local theatre, so I am happy to bring you news of a new show coming to SMA in November which purports to lift the lid on some of Britain's most shocking crimes. It features a former Scotland Yard DCI, Steve Gaskin, in conversation with BBC presenter of 35 years, Steve Scruton. Steve Gaskin will share his experience of working at the highest levels of true crime. He's a trained criminal psychologist and will take us into the minds of serial killers. He's also a regular guest on TV crime documentaries and has advised dramas including the BBC's Silent Witness. Steve Scruton has interviewed over 20,000 guests over five decades on air and will tease out the stories and ask the questions that matter.

For more information, please see www.serialkillersunmasked.co.uk which has booking details

The library has updated its IT champion availability (Tues 14-1600; Weds 10-12). They are also advertising for volunteers across the region to help people improve their IT skills <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/support-your-library/jobs-and-volunteering-at-your-library.aspx>

Committee News



We are pleased to welcome **Frances Stride** (Left) Assistant Membership Secretary

and **Tim Castle** (right) Assistant Beacon Administrator) onto our committee. You'll recognise Tim from the registration desk at the monthly meetings.



We are still looking for a Vice Chair and Publicity lead.

If you'd like to attend a committee meeting, please email the Secretary and he'll send you the details of the next meeting: secretary@bsu3a.org.uk

I attach the **Groups Information/diary sheet**. Hard copies will be at the meeting on **Monday 10 August** & in the library & tourist information office.

See you on Monday 10 August!



Sue RJ

Dr Sue Rayner Jacobs
Chair, Bishop's Stortford u3a
chair@bsu3a.org.uk
For BSu3a website: [click here](#)