



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026

General Meeting

Our next General Meeting is on

Friday, 25th September, 2026 at 2.00pm

in Trinity Hall at Trinity Church in Sutton – access on Hill Road.

Our speaker will be Bernard Lockett on the subject “The Music and Satire of Gilbert and Sullivan.”

Sutton u3a is part of a unique and exciting international self-help movement providing recreational, educational and social activities for semi-retired and retired people, offering a wide range of interest groups and “out and about” activities.

Sutton u3a gives you the chance to develop your interests, make new friends and enjoy yourself.

Chair's report – September 2026

Welcome to our September Newsletter and hopefully cooler weather. The elevated temperatures over the last couple of months have taken their toll on our summer activities with some group meetings cancelled due to the hot weather and others seeing reduced numbers due to the heat. Our membership has now reached 535 members with 82 members joining us since 1st April. A big welcome to our new members for whom this is your first newsletter from Sutton u3a.

The social committee has organised successful outings for us over the last few months with one more to come in mid-September to the Watercress Line (now fully subscribed) and another before Christmas. I've not been on any myself this year, but I hear that these have all been a great success and enjoyed by everyone who went but, if they are to continue next year we need some more help. This year's outings have all been organised by just 2 people and we need more volunteers for the social committee who are willing to organise at least one trip each year. If you are interested in joining the Social Committee, please contact Mavis McCarthy (Social Committee Chair) by using the link on our website: https://sutton.u3asite.uk/u3a-contact-form/?contact_id=28575 and Mavis can discuss with you what's involved.

Our General Meetings continue to be very well attended, and we are regularly welcoming up to 100 members. The speaker last time was Peter Smith who told us all about the Private Lives of Butterflies. It was a very interesting talk from a speaker who was extremely knowledgeable about his subject and also very enthusiastic.

In September, the speaker will be Bernard Lockett who will talk to us about the Satire and Music of Gilbert and Sullivan. Please come along from 1.20pm for a 2.00pm start if you are interested in hearing what promises to be another excellent and informative talk.

On the last Friday of each month between our General Meetings (even months) we are having a get together for all members which we've called "Sutton Socials" – These take place at All Bar One in Sutton where they set aside a section for our exclusive use. The last few meetings have been preceded by a New Members meeting which also gives our new members an opportunity to meet existing members and find out a bit more about the groups they belong to.

As members of Sutton u3a we are all able to participate in events and on-line meetings that are organised by the London Region of u3a's and the National organisation. We will send out information about these from time to time but it's well worth looking at their websites to see what sort of things are available. Links to the event page of their websites are as follows: · London Region: <https://lru3a.u3asite.uk/events/>

National: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events>

Next Year is the 40th anniversary of Sutton u3a and we are beginning to discuss what events we might hold in order to celebrate it; we have set up a sub-committee to organise our celebrations and they will be holding their first meeting very soon. Please look out for e-mails discussing what we are suggesting and asking for your response so we can gauge the level of support for the suggested events.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I want to make sure all members know that I will be retiring as Chair in March 2027. By then, I will have served as Chair for more than six years, and it is time for me to stand down and allow someone else to take over. The committee and many members have known about my intention for some time, but so far no one has expressed an interest in taking on the role. If you would like to find out more, or know someone who might consider it, please contact me using the details below and I can explain what is involved. Whoever takes over will be well supported by our Vice Chair, Sue Deans, and by a full, experienced committee. We could also consider appointing a second Vice Chair alongside Sue if that would make the role more manageable for someone interested.

Thanks & regards

Graham

Graham Vincent

Sutton U3A - Chairman and e-mail Manager

Sutton Socials

Our next Social will be on Friday 30th October at All Bar One from 2-4pm. We will again have a Book Exchange table - bring unwanted books (no more than two please) in good condition – you can then choose one or two books yourself from the table. Also there will be help for basic mobile and computer problems available.

Our venue is All Bar One, situated behind Waterstones and almost opposite Trinity Hall. They have kindly offered us their Function Room for our meetings. The address is 2, Hill Road, SM1 1DZ. Food and drink are available.

Come along, meet friends and perhaps make new ones. Everyone is welcome. Please contact me if you need any further details.

Sue Deans



General Meeting on Friday, September 25th, 2026 at 2 pm

Trinity Church Hall (access in Hill Road)

Our September speaker will be Bernard Lockett, who will give a talk entitled "The Music and Satire of Gilbert and Sullivan." This is an assessment and overview illustrated by show excerpts.

Our November speaker will be Paul Barwick, who has given us talks before. He will give his presentation "Eddie Chapman—the life and crimes of double agent Zigzag."

Members should arrive at 1.30 pm for a 2 pm start. If you cannot attend in person, we will be providing a Zoom link for our meeting.

A warm welcome to our new members

We welcome the following new members to Sutton u3a. We hope they find their membership enjoyable and fulfilling.

Marie	Attard	Yusof (Joe) Omar
Sarah	Biggs	Lynne Omar
Sandra	Blackman	Liz O'Shea
Nancy	Boesinger	Sue O'Sullivan
Alan	Carroll	Robert Pedlar
Ellen	Crowe	Winifred Sabourin
Anne	Dassie	Michael Samson
Valeria	De Gennaro	Jacqueline Stainer
Peter	Dickson	Linda Theodoris
Brian	Dowdy	Stephen Turner
Tracy	Farron	Caroline Watson
Jill	Fisher	Diane Webster
James	Good	Ludy Williams
Alison	Griffiths	
Carole	Holland	
Leonora	Jagessar	
Victoria	Lee	
Chrissie	Martin	
Jane	Moore	
Christine	Morrell	
Pramila	Muthiah	
Geeta	Naik	



Coach trip to Blenheim

Monday, 7th December 2026



Home of the Dukes of Marlborough since 1705 and the Birthplace of Winston Churchill, Blenheim Palace has ornate state rooms filled with tapestries and treasures gathered from all over the world. There are over 2000 acres shaped by Capability Brown. You can explore the walled gardens and get lost in the Marlborough Maze. There will be a Christmas Market and inside the Palace you can enjoy the story of Cinderella. Unfortunately, we do not have time to do the illuminated trail and this is not included in the ticket.

Cost: £61

Pick ups: Wallington Shotfield at 8.40 am

Sutton Grove Road at 8.50 am

Please use the booking form at the end of the newsletter, if you wish to join us.



Visit to Basildon Park

In June this year we had a coach visit to Basildon Park in Berkshire, a National Trust property the Social Club had not been to before. The start to the day was a little fraught. The slight drizzle while getting to Sutton suddenly turned into pouring rain. We got drenched. The rain stopped as suddenly as it had started as the coach drew up.

There was an accident on the motorway and all traffic came to a halt for a long time. I informed Basildon and the driver offered to leave at 5 pm instead of 4 pm. Our day at beautiful Basildon House, park and gardens was not spoiled. It didn't rain again, and the sun shone all day.

We found out that Basildon Bond stationery started life here when they were discussing a new business round the dinner table.

In spite of everything, including the long walk from the car park, we had a lovely day.

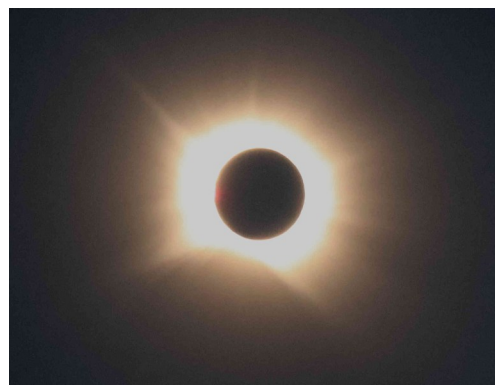
Mavis McCarthy



Did anyone see the eclipse?

I had the privilege of viewing the eclipse in its awesome totality off the coast of North Spain this August. You can look at it with the naked eye during totality. When the sun goes black, you can see the corona. It was truly an unforgettable sight. For anyone interested, there is another total eclipse next year on 2nd August in Southern Spain, Gibraltar, Morocco and Egypt. They are expecting about 6 minutes of totality in Luxor. Of course, you need clear skies to see it, which are never guaranteed. There is not going to be another one around Europe for decades, but accommodation is already scarce and extremely expensive along the path of totality. We did a cruise, which proved to be the right choice as we saw everything clearly out at sea. If we had stayed on land in North Spain (or Iceland for that matter) it was cloudy and probably rather unremarkable.

Rachael Ironside



Visit to Parham

We had a coach visit to Parham in Sussex in July. The Social Club had visited many years ago, but it was a completely new property for some. We had a full coach.

The deer park is extensive and it's a long drive from the gates to the house. After coffee, we were divided into two groups for a guided visit to the house. The guides were enthusiastic and informative. The long gallery was particularly enjoyed. The garden was lovely. We found shade under trees on a hot day, so we didn't get too hot. It was a really enjoyable day.

Mavis McCarthy



Photos by Debbie Edwards
and Rachael Ironside



New from our Groups

Tuesday Travellers

January saw us visit the British Optical Association Museum: a small museum, but plenty to see! Only available by appointment and guided by the curator. He was extremely knowledgeable and guided us through exhibits from ancient times to present. February we visited Pewterers Hall. Again curator-led with booking necessary, but well worth the visit. Something a little bit different for March, we went en masse to the Rameses exhibition, and in April took a guided tour of Tower Bridge. This, at the upper level, has a glass floor looking down upon the Thames. One of our number who suffers from vertigo, braved it with one of us on either side. He was so pleased with his achievement, he then proceeded to do it on his own at least half a dozen times. The June visit to the British Library was cancelled due to the heat wave. Little did we know how it was going to continue. Finally July saw us at the Museum of the Home – didn't sound very exciting but it was a fascinating museum spanning centuries and well worth a visit. August saw us take our usual breather with a summer barbecue. A very varied programme of visits all followed by our usual lunch at an interesting venue in the vicinity. We are all looking forward to the forthcoming visits for the remainder of the year.

Brian Hagley



News from our Groups

Science Group

The Science Group meetings have been in full swing during 2026. We have had entertaining talks by Sutton's Jim Joannou on a Scientific View of the Whisky Process, Artificial Intelligence, GM (Genetically Modified) Crops, and Optical Illusions.

This is a joint enterprise between the u3a's of Sutton, Epsom & Ewell and Banstead and we meet every 1st Wednesday of each alternate month, 2.30—4.00 at the Banstead Community Hall, Park Road SM7 3AJ.

The 2nd September talk was on The Unification of the British Isles: A Lesson in Geology by Sutton's Martin Eales and the final talk in 2026 on 4th November is on the famous physicist Michael Faraday.

We aim to have an exciting series of talks delivered by expert speakers. Everybody is welcome and there is no need to book (£3 for u3a members at the door, cash or card from November). Tea, coffee and biscuits served after the meeting.

The 4th of November talk is titled 'From Frogs to Fields: Michael Faraday'. The speaker, Laurence Scales, has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and subsequently worked for engineering companies. He has been an archive volunteer at both the Royal Institution of Great Britain (where Faraday lived and worked) and the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (in which Faraday participated). Laurence leads tours themed around the history of science, technology and medicine in London. He is a member of the Newcomen Society and is currently researching the history of civil and mechanical engineering as it developed in the West.

The poster gives more details and contact Martin Eales at https://sutton.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/science-group/ for any more information.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Martin Eales

Motorbike Group

We have a potential new group in the form of a group where members go out for a ride together on their motorbikes - on dates agreed by the group.

Do you own a bike or do you know someone who owns a motor bike who would like to join the u3a and this group?

If you are interested please contact Michael Edmonston -

email:- michael.edmonston@gmail.com



From Frogs to Fields: Michael Faraday

Laurence Scales

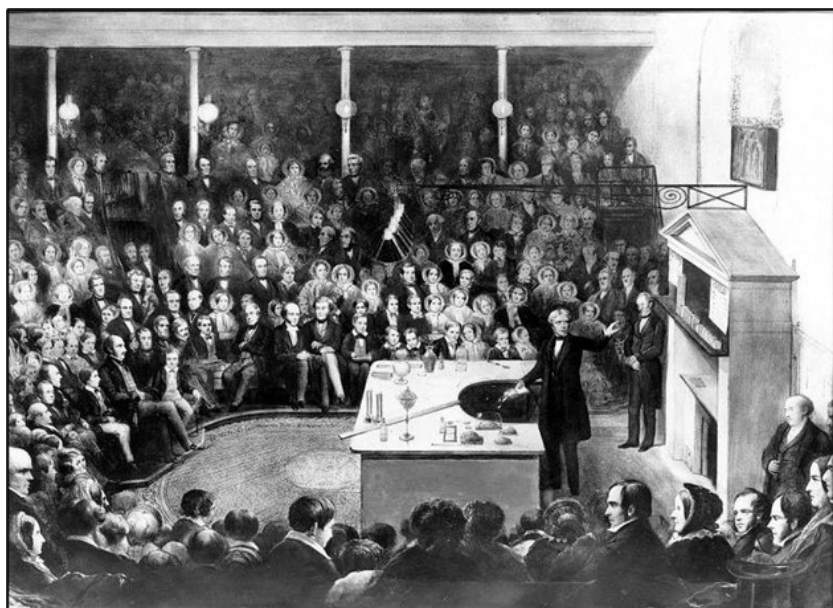
**Presented by Banstead, Epsom & Ewell and Sutton
u3a Science Group**

Wednesday 4th November 2026, 2.30pm (doors open at 2pm)

Banstead Community Hall, Park Road SM7 3AJ

Free on-site parking

**£3 for any u3a members, £5 for non-members,
includes tea/coffee & biscuits**



Michael Faraday Lecture



The Faraday Cage at a Christmas Lecture

Michael Faraday is a very famous chemist and physicist of the early 19th century who contributed vastly to the study of electrochemistry and electromagnetism. Faraday's life saw tentative electrical experiments involving sparks and frog's legs, through to the elaboration by Maxwell of electromagnetic science as we find it today, enabling mobile phones and contactless payments.

He had a remarkable life, humbly born, but becoming a household name in his day, eschewing honours, but touching lives in many areas from seafaring to mining, and his legacy includes the famous Royal Institution Christmas Lectures for Children.

London Explorers C

The London Explorers Group (C) enjoyed a pleasant and informative trip to the Foundling Museum. The museum contains impressive artwork and lots of moving stories about the life and fate of the foundling children. Our new member - Diane - decided to take a nap on one of the beds on display and decided it was not very comfortable. There is also a Handel exhibition on the top floor as he was a supporter of the museum.

Joyce Ffrench



Scrabble Group

The newly formed Scrabble group has now had its first two successful meetings at Sutton Library on the 1st July and the 5th August. It is a monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of every month. Currently the group is full, but if you are a little competitive, why not put yourself down on the waiting list.

A UK survey once ranked Scrabble as one of the top board games most likely to cause massive family arguments, right alongside Monopoly. Play at your own risk. But in the u3a group we just want to have fun.

Sithy Chaplin & Val David



Scalextric

One of our members (Chris Gregory) runs a Scalextric club that meets most Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm in a hall near Purley. Chris would like to invite any Sutton u3a members who share his interest in Scalextric to visit and perhaps join the club, there is a modest monthly charge of £30.00 per person (first 2 weeks free). If you are interested in finding out more please contact Chris by e-mail at chris__gregory@hotmail.com (please note that the space is a double underscore) and he will get back to when he returns from holiday in early October.



Theatre Group Report

The Theatre Group started in April this year and has already got 75 members, with trips arranged to see 11 different shows. Our first two trips took place in August, with visits to the West End to see "Now You See Me Live" and "The Truth". During the first week of September, groups are also going to see "Abigail's Party" and "The Producers". We have four more shows lined up this year, including 32 members attending "Peter Pan" at Wimbledon Theatre, plus two visits planned for 2027 and one for 2028. More details of all planned shows are available on the group's page on the Sutton u3a website.

We manage to get really good group rates for most visits, with tickets discounted by up to 50% for good seats in the stalls or Royal Circle. We usually attend matinees, although some trips are for evening performances. Most members travel together by train and tube, but tickets are normally distributed in advance, and some members choose to meet us at the theatre.

Several members have taken on organising theatre trips, helping us offer a wider variety while sharing the workload so it does not become too onerous for a few people. We aim to arrange at least one show each month, with a good mix of locations and types of performance. Most shows so far are in the West End, but we also have trips planned to Wimbledon Theatre and the Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond.

The pictures below are from our first trip, "Now You See Me Live", a matinee at the London Coliseum. Twelve of us attended, and on the way home nine, on the spur of the moment, finished the day with a very pleasant dinner at Prezzo's at Victoria station. If you are interested in joining the group, please email me at graham.vincent@blueyonder.co.uk or call 07710 020805. There is no limit on numbers, so everyone is welcome. There are no spare tickets at the moment, but if anyone cannot attend a show for which they have tickets, those tickets will be offered first to the Theatre Group and then to the wider Sutton u3a membership.

Graham Vincent



London Explorers A

On Wednesday 17th June 2026 members of London Explorers A took a trip on a canal boat along Regents Canal from Little Venice to Camden Lock.

After a rather grey and rainy start we caught the train to London Victoria then the underground to Warwick Avenue via Oxford Circus. There was much hilarity as we discussed who originally sang the song "Warwick Avenue" (several of us are members of the Popular Music Group!) *(Answer at the bottom of the page).

We arrived at Little Venice in brilliant sunshine and had coffee in a café by the side of the canal. A brilliant place to sit and people watch.

We had pre-booked seats on a canal boat (advisable if you are going in the summer as they get very busy).

Graham and Jane had booked a canal boat trip with a guided talk. It was well worth it as the guide was very knowledgeable and very funny and had many anecdotes to share about the history of the canal and why it was built and the people who lived on and alongside it in the past and the present day.

The trip took about 45 minutes in total and we sailed past some beautiful houses belonging to the rich and famous on both sides of the canal. Definitely the place to live if you have a spare £40m. We also sailed past Regents Park Zoo and you can see some of the enclosures but we didn't see any animals this time. We also sailed under Macclesfield Bridge which was the scene of a terrific explosion in October 1874. A barge carrying gunpowder amongst other goods exploded. The explosion was heard and felt up to 12 miles away. The damage was catastrophic but the canal was reopened in five days. You can still see evidence of the blast today on the metal pillars of the bridge and a tree that was a sapling at the time bears the scars of the blast. Lots of opportunities for photographs as the scenery is very interesting.

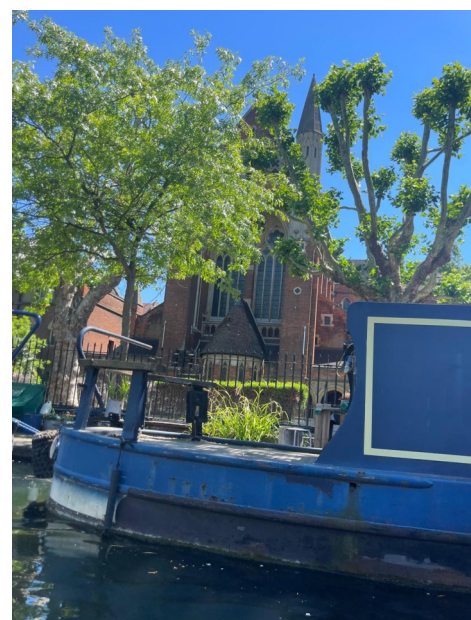
We also looked around a very busy Camden Lock, where there are plenty of street food outlets to get something to eat, but we opted for Wetherspoons and were not disappointed. We walked down Camden High Street which again was very busy (could have something to do with the fact that England are playing in a football match) with some very interesting T-shirts for sale but we weren't tempted!

The canal trip is a very pleasant way to while away an hour, especially if the weather gods smile on you, and a visit to Camden is recommended.

A word of caution though getting on the boat would not be easy if you have mobility problems.

(*Answer: Duffy)

Lin Harris



Active Rambling Group A

Our June walk was Blackheath to Greenwich. After experiencing delays on the train we all made it to the cafe in Greenwich for coffee. The walk took us across Blackheath Green to the Shooters Hill entry into Greenwich Park. We walked up to the Royal Observatory and enjoyed the view. On our journey through the park we saw the Queen Elizabeth Oak. We then took a narrow path which rises up the hillside and at the top there is a terrific view across to the building of the Observatory. We left the park via the metal gates onto the elegant terrace of Park Vista and then had some road walking past Maze Hill Station to the end of Pelton Road where we finally came to the riverside at Belfast Quay. We continued along the Thames Path passing the iconic Greenwich Power Station, originally built to power the tramways, still operating today but using gas and oil. This is immediately followed by the Trinity Hospital, a set of almshouses, originally built in 1613 by Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, to provide shelter for twenty "Poor Men". We continued along a narrow street passing the Yacht pub and the large historic Trafalgar Tavern ending at the imposing side edifice of the Old Royal Naval College. We continued along the riverside to The Cutty Sark, our destination. We then enjoyed lunch at the Wetherspoons in Greenwich.

Our walk in July was cut short due to the hot weather conditions. We travelled to Richmond station and had coffee at Pret in the High Street. We then made our way to the towpath and walked to Ham House. We walked around the perimeter of the house and saw some beautiful horses at the stables. We then got back to the towpath and made our way to the riverside Tide Tables vegetarian cafe and were able to sit outside in the shade and enjoy a lovely lunch, before making our way back to Richmond station for the journey home.

Sylvia Beavis

London Appreciation B

In June our group had a fascinating guided tour of St Bartholomew the Great Church, London's oldest surviving parish church founded in 1123. We started with coffee and biscuits in the cloister before we were taken on a guided tour by the head verger. We learned about the church's history and saw all the highlights including the Lady Chapel which was once used as a printing works, the 15th century font in which Hogarth was christened, the tomb of Prior Rahere the founder, who also founded the neighbouring hospital, and in contrast a statue entitled Exquisite Pain by Damien Hirst. A most interesting and entertaining tour of the church in which Hugh Grant almost got married in Four Weddings and a Funeral!

Our group has vacancies. We meet on the third Thursday of each month and would very much welcome new members.

Pamela Kerr



Pickleball

Our new Pickleball group meets every Thursday Morning at 11am and players of all standards are welcome including beginners. We only started this group about 6 weeks ago but already up to 12 members but with plenty of capacity for others to join us.

Pickleball is very easy to play and it is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world! The court is smaller than a tennis court, and the game offers a low-impact way to exercise. It's played with a lightweight, plastic ball and a paddle, and combines serves, volleys, and fast-paced rallies. At higher levels, pickleball becomes a demanding, quick-fire game, making it a perfect challenge.

We play at Cheam Fields Club in Cheam and the cost is £5.00 week or alternatively, u3a members can join Cheam Fields Club (£60.00 per annum for Pickleball membership) and the weekly sessions are then free. All equipment is provided at no additional cost.

If you are interested in joining please contact Graham by e-mail:



Group Vacancies

The following groups have vacancies. Please contact the group leader as listed at the end of the newsletter or via our website, if you are interested.

Active Rambling C	History	Rummikub
Art	Italian	Science
Art Appreciation A	London Appreciation B	Scrabble
Art Appreciation B	London Appreciation C	Snooker
Bird Watching	London Appreciation D	Social Photography
Book club	London Explorer C	Spanish
Bookworms	Mahjong	Sports
Bridge - Wednesday	Making Music	Stamp Collecting
Coffee Club	Padel Tennis	Sunday Lunch Group (1st Sunday)
Creative Writing	Philosophy	Sunday Lunch Group (3rd Sunday)
Current Affairs	Photography	Table Tennis
French	Pickleball	Theatre
Family History	Popular Music	
Geology	Real Ale Appreciation	

On-line learning events

Did you know that the u3a has a number of on-line talks and workshops? For more details find the events page on the website:

[u3a - Online learning events](#) Here is a taster of events in the near future.

Live cookery demonstration - try something new
Friday, September 25 • 10 AM - 11 AM

Chef Alex from "Vegetarian for Life" demos his delicious Autumn recipes live on Zoom. He gives an introduction to vegetarian and vegan cookery and will be focusing on those new to the world of all things plant based.

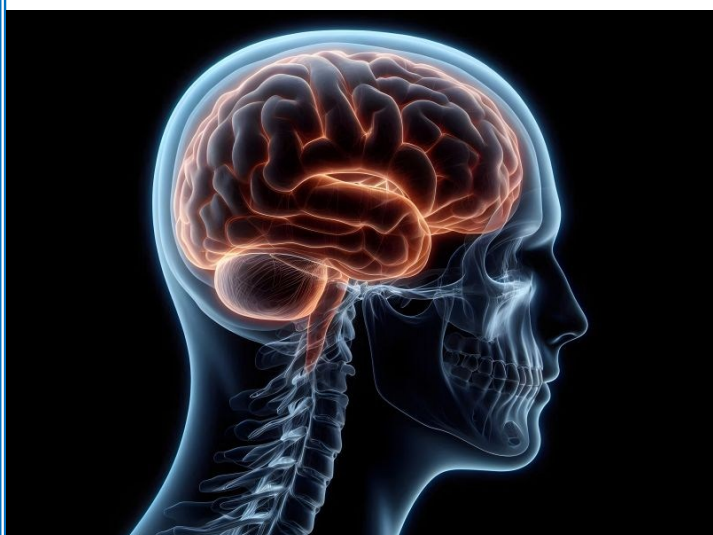


Experimental brain research: from old suppositions to modern observations

Tuesday, September 29 • 11 AM - 12:30 PM

Professor Itamar Ronen describes theories of how the brain works and modern experimental approaches focussing on neuroimaging.

This event is hosted by the u3a Science Network with speaker Professor Itamar Ronen.



Explore the UK with u3a getaways

We are excited to invite you to the first of our u3a getaways trips - The Agatha Christie Story - from 14-18 September 2026. You'll join other u3a members from across the country to explore the beautiful houses and coastlines that inspired her famous mysteries, and there are now other trips available too, including Appreciating Shakespeare and Yorkshire Festive trips.

u3a getaways is a new programme of bespoke holidays exclusively for u3a members and friends. Please share this news with your members. Find out more on the u3a getaways website:

[Explore the UK with u3a getaways.](#)