

Speakers for Weston Turville u3a General Meetings January 2026 – November 2026

22 January 2026 – Rugby Club

The Secret Lives of Molecules – Kathryn Harkup

Revealing the inner lives of the invisible molecules that make up our world, ranging from the fundamental to the frivolous; from the psychedelic effects of caffeine to the global impact of medicines. This is a talk about the stories of discovery, the quirks of science and of human history that have enhanced our appreciation and understanding of the world.

26 February 2026 – Rugby Club

***Tea, Coffee and Chocolate: How the British first fell in love with Caffeine –
Melanie King***

Tea, coffee and chocolate play an important part in the modern British diet. Most people may not know that tea originated in China, coffee was allegedly discovered by a goat herder in Yemen and chocolate plantations were cultivated in 4000 BC by the Olmecs in South America. These exotic beverages arrived in London around 1650 causing immense anxiety and debate. This talk explains why Europeans were so terrified of these drinks and explores some of the ingenious ways they were consumed in the 18th century.

26 March 2026 – Rugby Club

Wildlife on your doorstep – Tom Way

This talk emphasises all the fantastic wildlife there is to see and photograph on or doorstep, from deer and hedgehogs to owls and foxes. Tom will not only be showing his wildlife images from our local area, but also describing all the stories behind how he took the pictures. This talk also branches out to talk about our coastline and northern areas of the UK, showing photographs of the very charismatic puffins and red squirrels.

23 April 2026 – Rugby Club

Where do Novelists get their ideas from – A Beginning, a Muddle; and an End – Bobbie Darbyshire

In an entertaining, informative talk, Bobbie Darbyshire will explain how the complex world of character, location, plot and subplot arrives in a writer's mind. Winner of the 2008 fiction prize at the National Academy of Writing and the New Delta Review Creative Non-fiction Prize 2010, Bobbie is author of five novels. She has also worked as a barmaid, mushroom picker, film extra, maths coach, cabinet minister's private secretary, care assistant and volunteer adult-literacy teach, as well as in social research and government policy.

28 May 2026 – Rugby Club

Royal Jubilees–George III, Victoria, George V and Elizabeth II – Sarah Slater

A talk about the origins of celebrating the Royal Jubilee, the pomp and pageantry but also the role that Hampton Court Palace played within the celebrations of the four monarchs.

18 June 2026 (moved from 25 June) – Rugby Club

Andrew Carnegie – The World's Richest Man – Rags to riches to giving it all away – Jeremy Holmes

Andrew Carnegie came from a slum in Dunfermline, Scotland, made his fortune in America as a ruthless steel magnate, then at the start of the 20th century gave it all away by setting up philanthropic foundations all over the world. In his day he was worth more than Bill Gates and earned so much that he couldn't give it away fast enough. This talk illustrates his rise, his motivations and his unique personal story, in the context of the dramatic industrialisation of America. The speaker was a trustee of the Carnegie UK Trust for many years.

23 July 2026 – Rugby Club

Summer lunch and entertainment (No Speaker)

27 August 2026 – Rugby Club

AGM + Blessed are the cheesemakers – with tasting! – John Pearson

John Pearson has spent all his working life in the Food Industry, primarily with Marks & Spencer. He is an international cheese judge having travelled throughout Europe visiting dairies selecting dairy products for M & S. In this talk he describes some amusing anecdotes about encounters with suppliers, impossible customers and will conclude with a short, tutored CHEESE-TASTING

24 September 2026 – Rugby Club

The Beatles- their story Part 1 – Beatlemania! – Martin Orkin

A fascinating talk about the early years of The Beatles and how they got started on the road to amazing success! Martin Orkin will discuss the group, who made so many fantastic recordings during the era of Beatlemania: 'Love Me Do', 'She Loves You', 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', 'A Hard Day's Night', 'Help!', 'Day Tripper' and 'We Can Work It Out'. We will hear snippets of each of these great records and many more, as Martin tells their story.

22 October 2026 – Rugby Club

How we remember and why we forget – Jim Ellis

How do we comprehend, remember and retrieve information, and do we all do this in the same way? Jim explains and demonstrates this with various examples and dispels some common myths about the brain and memory. He also encourages some audience participation – but only if people are comfortable doing so.

26 November 2026 – Rugby Club

TBC

TBC.

24 December 2026– NO MEETING

– NO MEETING