



## Ware u3a Newsletter September 2026

Dear All,

As I write this newsletter early in the morning, I am hoping to finish before the temperature climbs into the 30s. I hope you have all been managing to cope with the recent hot weather. The forecasters are already suggesting that next year could be even hotter, so perhaps this is something we may all need to get used to. Our monthly meetings begin again on 9 September, when we will welcome a speaker from Midshires Search and Rescue. This voluntary organisation supports the police in finding missing people across Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

If you change any of your contact details, please remember to let Anna Hardy know at [members@wareu3a.co.uk](mailto:members@wareu3a.co.uk). This allows us to keep the database up to date and helps ensure you do not miss any communications from us.

I have now lived in Ware for eight years, having previously lived in North London, and I continue to be amazed by how much there is for people to do in and around the town. I have recently become a trustee of Ware Museum, and I would encourage you to visit, or revisit, especially as the museum is celebrating its 40th anniversary. If you are passing and it is open, do pop in. The volunteers will be very happy to tell you more about the museum, and of course there is no charge.

There is always plenty happening in Ware, and more information about local events can be found here:

[https://www.waretowncouncil.gov.uk/council\\_events/](https://www.waretowncouncil.gov.uk/council_events/)

Last month, I carried out some analysis of our members and interest groups. It appears that around 860 members belong to one or more groups. However, some groups are very large—particularly the Exploring London groups—so not everyone attends every outing. With our membership now around 1,200, this suggests that approximately 340 members are not currently part of a group.

Another analysis suggested that around 450 members may not currently take part in any u3a activity apart from, perhaps, attending the monthly meeting. The figures below give a broad indication of group involvement:

- 336 members are in 1 group
- 156 members are in 2 groups
- 120 members are in 3 groups
- 24 members are in 4 groups
- 48 members are in 5 groups

<https://ware.u3asite.uk>

1 member is in 6 groups

These figures also show how difficult it can be to extract completely reliable data from Beacon, the system we use. I did send out a questionnaire some time ago, but unfortunately there were not enough responses to allow for a proper analysis. I would very much like to see more members involved, although I realise this means we also need more groups—and therefore more group leaders. If you are interested in setting up a group, we will give you as much help as we can. It can be easier if two people run a group together, so do consider whether there is someone you could work with. If you would like to become involved, please contact me at [chair@wareu3a.co.uk](mailto:chair@wareu3a.co.uk), and I will pass your details to our Groups Leader, Debbie Rudgley.

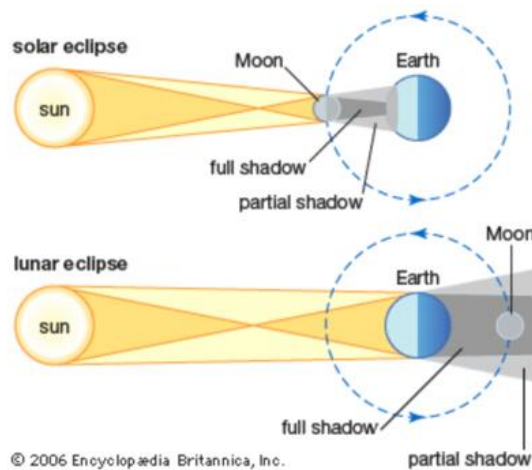
## Eclipse

I hope you were able to see the partial eclipse on Wednesday 13 August, using the proper protective glasses.

The photograph below was taken from my garden in Ware.



A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between the Sun and the Earth. There are different types of eclipse. When the Sun, Moon and Earth line up exactly, we experience a total eclipse. This is possible because, although the Sun is about 400 times wider than the Moon, it is also about 400 times farther away. During a total eclipse, people in the path of totality may experience darkness for several minutes as the Moon's shadow passes across the Earth. This darkest part of the shadow is called the umbra. Other areas fall within the penumbra, where the Moon blocks only part of the Sun's light. This is what we see during a partial solar eclipse.



Not to scale

## Strange and Surprising Facts About Ware

**The Great Bed of Ware:** This enormous three-metre-wide, four-poster oak bed once stood in Ware's White Hart Inn. It became so famous for its size that it was mentioned by William Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night* and later by Charles Dickens in *The Holly Tree*. It can now be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

**A Pun for a Motto:** Ware Town Council's coat of arms includes the Latin word *cave*, meaning "beware", as a clever pun on the town's name.

**Free Passage on the Thames:** Ware bargemen were historically granted toll-free passage on the River Thames. This was said to be in recognition of their help in carrying vital food and fresh water supplies down the River Lea to London during the Great Plague.

**18th-Century Gazebos:** Several rare timber-framed gazebos still stand beside the River Lea at the end of private gardens. They were originally used by wealthy malt merchants, who could sit and watch their barges pass along the river.

**Ancient Roots:** Archaeological evidence shows that the Ware area has been active since at least 4000 BC. The town also lies close to Ermine Street, a major Roman road, and excavations have uncovered the foundations of a Roman temple as well as cemeteries.

## Courier Fraud in Hertfordshire

"In most of these cases the fraudster tries to convince their intended victim that they are investigating fraud on their bank accounts, often posing as a police officer or bank staff to make it sound more genuine."

If you receive a message or call you are not expecting, you should be suspicious. The vital things to remember are that someone working for your

bank, or the police would:

NEVER ask for your bank account details or PIN, so do not disclose these to anyone, no matter who they claim to be.

NEVER ask you to withdraw money or purchase high value items and send it to them via a courier, taxi or by any other means.

NEVER ask you to send your bank cards, or any other personal property, to them via courier, taxi or by any other means.

If you are not happy with a phone call or message and are suspicious of a conversation, end it and call 101 or report online [herts.police.uk/report](https://herts.police.uk/report). In an emergency or if a crime is in progress call 999 immediately.

Remember, when reporting a suspicious phone call to police, wait at least five minutes before attempting to make the call to ensure you're not reconnected to the offender.

Alternatively, use a mobile phone or a neighbour's phone or test your landline by phoning a friend or relative first, to ensure you aren't still unwittingly connected to the offender.

It is good to see a number of members getting out and about. There was a Tamla Motown evening at Knebworth House which was well attended as well as some London walks where groups went along the south bank between Bermondsey and Rotherhithe and fortunately the weather was not too hot on that day. There has been a visit to Highclere House and a visit to Sonning theatre to see an interactive comedy called Shear Madness. It holds the title of the longest running play in US history. It was first performed in 1963 with its Boston run beginning in 1980 for a planned 8 week run and lasting for 40 years, only closing because of Covid.

For those of you who like going to the cinema please remember the afternoon cinema held at Fletcher's Lea. On the 8<sup>th</sup> September it is Hamnet with Michael and Wuthering Heights in October and November. The dates for these two are 13<sup>th</sup> October and 10<sup>th</sup> November respectively. Tickets can be purchased at <https://www.ticketsource.com/waretowncouncil>

A great quote for September is, "September is the other January," by Gretchen Rubin, because it captures the feeling of a fresh start, new routines, and a clean slate as autumn begins.

All the best

Keith

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<https://ware.u3asite.uk>