

IN TOUCH JUNE 2024

Welcome to June's edition of In Touch. As you are aware this year we celebrate 25 years of sgu3a and Barbara has organised a celebration lunch on Friday 9th August at the Rushmore Golf Club. It is difficult to find a large enough venue close to Shaftesbury and Gillingham, and this golf club is a lovely location.

The slogan for u3as is "Learn, Laugh, Live" and these aims have been maintained by the many people who have been involved in the successful running of our "branch" over the 25 years. The 25 years have seen so many great activities for many people and I do feel that we have a wonderful committee dedicated to a positive future at sgu3a.

The annual subscription has remained at £10 for the last 7 years. We are financially in a very healthy position. However, because of rising costs, the committee has decided to increase it to £12 (23p a week) at next renewal from August 1st to maintain this robust position.

Roger Laidler
Chairman

u3a

Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

Thurs 6 June

Colin Divall

**Who Built the Victorian Railways
and Did They Get it Right?**

Thurs 4 July

Steve Herra

**The Mysterious Disappearance
of the Irish Crown Jewels**

**Copies of this newsletter can be found
on our website**

<https://u3asites.org.uk/sgu3a/>

Next u3a Talks

Monthly open meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at The New Remembrance Hall, Charlton, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0PL - opening at 10.00am for 10.30am start. A small charge of £2 per person is made, to cover the cost of speakers and refreshments.

Open meetings provide an opportunity to have a coffee, socialise and to enjoy presentations from invited speakers. Non-members are welcome to attend one open meeting, free of charge, to sample what is on offer.

Details of speakers for the coming year can be found on our website; the next two are shown below.

6 June - Colin Divall BSC, MSc, PhD, FRHistS

Who Built the Victorian Railways and Did they Get it Right?

The great Victorian engineers like the Stephensons, Locke and Brunel get much of the credit for Britain's railways, but as the world's first 'big business' many other kinds of minds were involved in planning, promoting, constructing, operating and regulating the network. In this talk I argue that our fascination with the engineers echoes that found in the latter half of the 19th Century, which in turn was partly a reaction to the messy reality of railway politics. While the railways were central to many aspects of Victorian society, the network was not as good as it could have been, and the reasons for this might provide insights for railway policy today.

Colin Divall, professor emeritus of railway studies at the University of York, was head of the Institute of Railway Studies & Transport History for 19 years from its founding jointly with the National Railway Museum in 1995. He now splits his time between research on the history of rural transport in the West Country and campaigning for better facilities for walkers and cyclists in and around his now home town of Bridport and largely failing to build an accurate model of Wimborne station as it was in 1960 when he lived in that town.

4 July - Steve Herra - The Mysterious Disappearance of the Irish Crown Jewels

What were the Crown Jewels referred to by the Irish locals? Why was the safe kept in the library rather than the strongroom? When waking up after an alcoholic slumber, what did Arthur Vickers find wrapped around his neck? Who left the Crown Jewels on Arthur Vickers desk? Who found the front door and strongroom door open? What was the reward to recover the jewels? Which famous author offered his help in solving the case? Who was the famous brother of Francis Shackleton? What happened to the files in Scotland Yard? What did the King say when presented with the secret report?

Steve is a third generation of Cunard seafarers and met some of the stars featured in his QE2 talk. His last ship was QE2, where he was one of the Pursers. On leaving Cunard he served in the Royal Naval Reserve. During past years he has conducted tours of both Cunard and P&O ships when they are in Southampton. Sadly, when the pandemic struck these have all ceased. He has been delivering talks to u3a, Probus, WI and many local history groups for several years. We welcome Steve back after his very interesting and informative talk 'Titanic - A Night of Ice'.

PROMOTING U3A

Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a were well represented at **'What's Great in SP8'** on Saturday 18 May. Held at the Riversmeet Leisure Centre in Gillingham, the event was an opportunity for local



charitable organisations to showcase their activities. Our stand drew lots of interest, with many visitors taking away application forms. One lady even signed up there and then! Organiser Anne Jefferies would like to express her thanks to all those who volunteered to help.

If you hear of other opportunities for us to promote u3a, please let us know.

Group News

Italian

The Italian for Beginners group has gone from strength to strength this year and we now have plans to offer two groups from September 2024.

There will be two classes as follows every Tuesday in term time:

Beginners-10-11am

Intermediate 11.15am-12.15pm

All classes will take place at my home in Shaftesbury. Please sign up at your earliest convenience as there is a maximum of 6 spaces per group. For the Intermediate group, priority will be given to those who completed the Beginners' course this year.

All resources will be provided, you just need to bring enthusiasm and interest in learning the language!

A presto!

Alison Rigby

Literature

We have just finished our enjoyable journey through Shakespeare's 'Henry V'. I taught it years ago and thought that I knew it well, but the group discussions helped me look at it afresh.

Our next delight is a look at three Welsh poets: Dylan Thomas, R.S. Thomas and Gillian Clarke. Perhaps a glance at some Welsh bardic poetry as well. After that? Murray's going to lead on Joseph Roth's 'The Radetzki March', then perhaps we'll tackle some 20th century drama. Who can tell!

Peter Rolfe

Reading Group

Having enjoyed Barbara's leadership and choice of stimulating titles, we are taking over from her from July.

Our chosen titles for the next three months are:

July: The Machine Stops by E M Forster 1928

August: A Time of Gifts by Patrick Leigh Fermor 1977

September: Pompeii by Robert Harris 2003.

Meetings are held in Gillingham Library at 11.00am on the first Friday of each month. The library provides tea or coffee, but members are asked to bring their own cups/mugs and donate £1 to cover costs

We look forward to welcoming you.

Anne and Colin Marsh

Shared Interests

Now that Winter has finally passed, there are lots of events taking place around the area, and places to visit. Whatever your interests, there's something for everyone: sport, music, festivals, gardens, museums, galleries, as well as village fetes and fundraisers. If there are things you would like to do but don't want to do them alone, why not join the Shared Interests group to find like-minded people to share your enjoyment? It doesn't matter if you don't drive because our members are generally very willing to offer lifts to people who live nearby. If there's somewhere you want to go, just let me know and I'll put the word out among the group and hopefully find others who want to go, too. Or simply join the group so you know about any outings being planned.

Barbara Hurst

barbara@pbhurst.com

01747 825646

new Pub History

Have you ever wondered about the history of our local pubs? There must be some fascinating stories to be discovered. If there's sufficient interest, and providing someone volunteers to be leader, I will happily set up a new group to explore pub history. We even have the offer of a venue—in a pub, of course. Please let me know if you would be interested.

Barbara Hurst

barbara@pbhurst.com

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Garden Visits

Chantry Farm was our very enjoyable May visit.



Pristine gardens with flower beds not at their full height of



glory as peonies and roses were still in bud waiting to show their beauty.



The garden was a joy and totally inspirational. The hostess provided cakes galore along with lots of tea and coffee. Everybody had a wonderful time; our visit next year will be a bit later, perhaps June or July.

Next month we shall be visiting The Old School House, Blandford Forum. David Milanes whom I spoke with was most charming. A designers garden with interesting semi-tender plants near to the house.

Irene Gordon



Menu

Mains

Fillet of Salmon, Courgette, Saffron & Lemon Risotto, Brown Shrimp & Caper Dressing, Pea Shoots

Char-grilled Pork Chop on the bone, Roasted Onions, Whole-grain Mustard Mash, Sprouting Broccoli, Cider & Apple Sauce.

Lentil, Spinach & Mushroom Wellington, Roast Potatoes, Cauliflower puree, Green Beans, Cranberry Jus (vegan)

Desserts

Apple & Fruit Crumble with Vanilla Ice Cream

Vanilla Panna Cotta, Strawberry Consommé, Fresh Strawberries, Shortbread, Mint

Cheese & Biscuits with Quince Paste

For bookings and payment instructions, contact Barbara:

barbara@pbhurst.com

01747 825646

Other Groups / Items of Interest

BSO Concerts 2024–25 season Poole Lighthouse

I just want to mention that I have now circulated the concert lists for next season to those that expressed an interest, asking that everyone makes their six choices without commitment and return their choices to me jennifer@farmadmin.co.uk by 10 June at the latest. Please do look on the BSO website I know the links that I sent you don't work, the problem with bulk emails. I plan to go with the majority choices in moving this one forwards.

If new u3a members would like to consider these concert trips please email me. I will have their names and email address; but I also need a phone contact, also let me know whether you want to be picked up in Gillingham or Shaftesbury. A few of the members on my list haven't given me their phone number and preferred pick up town when sending in your choices please update these details as well.

Many thanks

JenniferDay

jennifer@farmadmin.co.uk

Schoolreaders

improving literacy • increasing life chances

I am the Dorset representative of the charity, Schoolreaders. We currently have 75 primary schools in Dorset who have registered with us asking for volunteers to listen to their children read.

We recruit volunteers to listen to primary school children read, to support the school and help raise literacy levels. Schoolreaders is the largest school children's literacy charity in the United Kingdom and our volunteers are in over 1,088 primary schools throughout the country, supporting 21,940 children each week. The charity is currently providing volunteers in 52 primary schools in Dorset with volunteers listening to 1,220 children read on a one-to-one basis each week.

As you may know, literacy levels in our primary schools have fallen, partly due to the two years of Covid interruption and the ongoing cost of living challenge, and now 1 in every 4 children leave primary school not having reached the government recommended standard.

We are desperately looking for volunteers for a primary school in Shaftesbury

No experience is needed. Just a good command of the English language and a spare hour or two a week during term time only. It is a very rewarding experience for both children and volunteers.

Rosie Cunningham

Tel: 07807 844897

Email: dorset@schoolreaders.org - www.schoolreaders.org

Trading Standards

14 days to cool off.

If you arrange for a business to carry out work then you may be entitled, in writing, to a 14 day cooling-off period. This includes services such as gardening, roofing, home improvements, and many more.

You have this legal right to cancel and get a refund if you contracted for the service away from the business, like in your home, in the street, or workplace. Additionally, you may have cancellation rights for distance contracts purchased for instance on the internet, mail order or phone.

14 days is the absolute minimum cooling-off period that the business must give you.

You don't automatically get a cooling-off period if you have something specially made, for example made to measure curtains, windows, or a conservatory, or if you invite the business into your home for urgent repairs, such mending a burst pipe.

Your cooling-off period begins the day after you give the go-ahead for the work to be done. The business must give you details of how to cancel. If they don't provide these then your cooling-off period is extended by 14 days from the date you do receive them - up to a maximum of 1 year.

If the business hasn't started the work and you're still within the 14 days cooling-off period, then you can cancel and get all your money back.

If you signed the written notice to agree for the service to be provided during the cooling-off period, and the business gave you the written cancellation information, you'll have to pay a part of the agreed price. The amount will depend on how much was completed when you asked to cancel.

If the business began the work during the cooling-off period without your approval, you then have the right to cancel and get a full refund of all costs.

For further advice, including suggested letter templates, or to report to Trading Standards a trader who has not given you a written cancellation notice, visit the Citizens Advice consumer helpline at citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer or phone 0808 2231133.

Dorset Museum Events

Roman Town House Tours

The following dates in May and June:

8 June 2024 10:00am - 12:00noon

22 June 2024 10:00am - 12:00noon

Each tour is limited to 12 participants.

John Brown in Dorchester: Rebuilding a Life after Slavery

Discover the little-known story of John Brown, in this new showcase display outside the Collections Discovery Centre.

Brown was a formerly enslaved Black man, who lived in Dorchester in the 1860s, working as a herbalist. Born into slavery in Virginia, USA around 1811, Brown, who never knew his family name, was separated from his family as a young child, and faced significant trauma whilst he was enslaved. Through resilience and determination, he escaped in 1845 by travelling via the Underground Railroad to Michigan, where slavery had been abolished. He moved to England, where he wrote a memoir, gave talks about his experiences, and built a new career, working as an herbalist. He spent several years in the southwest, living in Dorchester for 5 years.

John Brown in Dorchester was curated by Jordan Cole, a Master's student in Heritage Management at Bath Spa University, as part of a funded project through the Wessex Museums Partnership

Concert by The Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen.

26 June 2024, 7:30pm

[Book now](#)

BRIDGES TO BACH' with Soprano Philippa Hyde

A range of Baroque music brought vividly to life by a leading authentic early music group.

Programme to include:

J S BACH - Harpsichord Concerto in F minor BWV 1056

VIVALDI - Cello Concerto

J S BACH - Solo Cantata 'Weichet nur' BWV 202

VIVALDI - Aria 'Gelido in ogni vena' from Farnace

Works by PEPUSCH, ZELENKA and FINGER

The TFG (as we say) was founded in 2006 in London by a group of leading players in London's early-music scene with the core goal of devoting themselves to overlooked repertoire. It started slowly, with a few concerts in London and Liverpool, but since then have recorded four critically-acclaimed CDs and performed at many of Europe's most prestigious festivals and also on radio broadcasts.' – taken from The Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen

(<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/dorset-museum-music-society-cio/the-harmonious-society-of-tickle-fiddle-gentlemen/e-raxbrg>)



- Angela Bartlett
- Tina Steady-Grimster
- Annie & Mike Strang

A very warm welcome to all our new members who joined in May

and finally.....

Taking a dog named SHARK to the beach – is not a good idea!



Working at an unemployment office has to be a tense job...knowing if you get fired, you still have to come in the next day.

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| Group | Date | Leader | Website |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Art Appreciation | 2nd Monday 2-3.30pm | Barbara Hurst | click here |
| Canasta I | Monday pm – weeks 1 & 3 | Hazel Baker | click here |
| Canasta II | Wednesday p.m. – weeks 2 & 4 | Barbara Watkinson | click here |
| Canasta III | Thursday am – weeks 2 & 4 | Pam Hooker | click here |
| Celtic World | 4th Monday - am | Denise Sims | click here |
| Churches/Places of Worship | To be Arranged 4 visits per year | Barbara Hurst | click here |
| Cosmology | 2nd Monday - am | Denise Sims | click here |
| Digital Photography | 3rd Thursday – am | Andy Newton | click here |
| Embroidery | 3rd Wednesday – pm | Lesley Frost | click here |
| French for Fun 1 | Tuesday/fortnightly - am | Ron Beard | click here |
| French for Fun 2 | Wednesday /fortnightly-pm | Chris Stotesbury | click here |
| Garden Interest | 2nd Monday – am | Irene Gordon | click here |
| Genealogy | 4th Monday – pm | Liz Greenway | click here |
| German Conversation | Wednesday /fortnightly-pm | Robert Light | click here |
| International Folk Dancing | 2nd Tuesday -pm | Barbara Robson | click here |
| International History | 3rd Wednesday–am | Richard Sims | click here |
| Italian - Beginners | Tues 10am – 11am weekly | Alison Rigby | click here |
| Italian Intermediate | Tues 11.15am – 12.15am weekly | Alison Rigby | click here |
| Knitting/Crafts | 2nd Tuesday - pm | Irene Gordon | click here |
| Languages of Planet Earth | 3rd Friday – 2.00pm | Denise Sims | click here |
| Literature | 1st & 3rd Monday-am on Zoom | Peter Rolfe | click here |
| Lunch Club | 4th Friday in the month | Michael Pittman | click here |
| Mahjong | 2nd & 4th Friday – 2pm | Marion Pace | click here |
| Music for Pleasure | 2nd & 4th Thursday – pm | Eileen Haddleton | click here |
| Natural History | 2nd Wed in the month 10-12.30pm | Janet Fenton | click here |
| Philosophy | Monthly Tuesday pm | Chris Spencer | click here |
| Poetry & Play Reading | 1st Thursday – pm | Janet Botterill | click here |
| Reading Group | 1st Friday 11am -12pm | Barbara Hurst | click here |
| Really Useful Group | Anyone who would like to help | Barbara Hurst | click here |
| Scrabble | Weekly Friday – am | Jill Page | click here |
| Shared Interests | Varied | Barbara Hurst | click here |
| Spite & Malice | 3rd Monday – pm | Sue Walker | click here |
| Table Tennis | Weekly Thursday 2pm | Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury | click here |
| Walking Group | 1st Tuesday – am | Barbara Robson | click here |
| Writing for Pleasure | 10.30am on the 2nd and 4th Monday each month via zoom | Peter Rolfe | click here |