



# u3a

Shaftesbury and  
Gillingham

**Forthcoming Events**

Dear all,

At the AGM in November Liz Greenway stood down after 3 years as Chairman, with the thanks from us all for the running of the committee and sgu3a.

I have been appointed by the committee as chairman for the next two years and look forward to working with the committee in maintaining our u3a as a vibrant and healthy one. We welcome two new members onto the committee, Anita Keogh (your very capable "In Touch" editor) and Anne Jefferies who has opted to look after publicity.

Pam & I have been members of sgu3a for around 17 years and thoroughly enjoyed the friendship amongst members and the various groups we have joined over this time.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The year, 2024, will be the 25th anniversary of sgu3a, so let us all look forward to a bright and successful one for us all.

*Roger Laidler*



**Thursday 7 December  
Xmas Lunch  
Royal Chase Hotel**

**Thursday 4 January  
David Boag  
"Our Green & Pleasant Land"**

*link to our web page*  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/sgu3a/home>

## 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.*

### **4 Jan 2024 – David Boag – ‘Our Green & Pleasant Land’**

The aim of this lecture is not to get too bogged down with facts and figures but to simply enjoy the beauty that the British Isles has to offer. From patchwork fields to dappled woodland; wild moorland to limestone pavement. The beauty of the landscape is enhanced by an abundance of flowers, birds and butterflies. The outstanding scenery and magic of our green and pleasant land is captured in the photographs that are presented in a sensitive and different way.

David is a wildlife photographer and author, teaches photography to both degree and wildlife illustration students. He has led African wildlife safari trips and been a speaker on cruise ships, as well as having spoken at major conferences for organisations such as the National Trust, the RSPB, British Trust for Ornithology and the Royal Photographic Society. We welcome him back after his wonderful talk to us entitled The World of a Wildlife Photographer he presented to us in 2022.

### **1 Feb 2024 – Lieutenant General David Leakey CMG CVO CBE ‘The War in Bosnia 1992 to the Present Day’**

This talk gives a fascinating account of the Bosnia War from General Leakey's personal experiences as he had spent long periods between 1992 and 2010 commanding operations in Bosnia with the UN, NATO and European Union Force securing the peace in Bosnia, and was also the UK's military negotiator at the Bosnia Peace Talks in 1995.

David Leakey comes from a distinguished military family with two Victoria Crosses. After reading law at Cambridge his first job was in the Army. He commanded British and multinational forces on operations in various parts of the world and held senior appointments in the MOD and the European Union. After leaving the Army in 2010, he undertook a variety of media and consultancy projects, including some university lecturing until 2011 when he was appointed Black Rod, sometimes known as the Sovereign's representative in Parliament. He is a trustee, governor of numerous charities, sporting organisations and schools. He has many hobbies, including golf, tennis, skiing and squash.

## Group News

### IT Advice

Several people have mentioned to me that they sometimes need support with their IT devices, not by participating in formal group meetings, as before, but with advice via telephone or email, and perhaps a home visit. I know that some of our members have skills and experience in this area, so I would like to create a bank of volunteers who would be willing to help members who are struggling, often with quite simple issues. If you would like to offer that kind of help, please let me know, so that we can work out how best to arrange things.

*Barbara Hurst*

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### International Folk Dancing

I am considering starting this new group in January, and would like to know if there would be sufficient interest to cover the cost of hiring a hall

International Folk Dances are mostly danced in a circle, and no partner is needed – all are welcome to join in. The dances range from slow and gentle to some more vigorous offerings, and come mainly from Europe, with a scattering of dances from further afield

Sessions will be in the afternoon of the 2nd Tuesday in each month. Depending on numbers, the cost is likely to be in the region of £5 a session, and will include tea and biscuits in the break

I'm excited about the prospect of sharing this enjoyable activity which offers exercise, social connection, and most of all, fun.

Please email me if you would like to be part of this

*Barbara Robson*

[barbara.robson524@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.robson524@gmail.com)

## Shared Interests

Three members travelled to Chesil Beach Visitors Centre for their Winter Art Exhibition. Although we all agreed the exhibition was disappointing, nevertheless we had a great day out.



We visited Portland Bill, where the waves crashed wildly where the ledge is, a sight to behold, especially as we had lunch in the Lobster Pot restaurant and the sun came out glistening on the water. Then we walked to Portland Bill lighthouse but unfortunately we couldn't climb up it as it was closed. Our walk also took us to an Art Deco building which was unfortunately

destroyed by fire, a listed building which in its day must have been beautiful. Holding many secrets, it is now apartments and a school/academy. We even saw Wallabies, a very unexpected sight at Portland. As we stopped to take a photograph of the area, a rainbow shone beautifully in the sky, the perfect end to our day at Chesil Beach

*Kim Poulter*

## Music for Pleasure

The music group met on Thursday afternoon when we welcomed back Patsy. She was her usual cheerful self after breaking her hip. She almost broke the speed limit using her Zimmer frame! We heard Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto which is a particular favourite. There are ten of us in the group, with only two apologies this time.

The next meeting will be at Clare's on the 14th December, when we are each going to bring a CD of our favourite Christmas music, so we will have a cheerful run up to Christmas.

We wish every member of the u3a a very happy Christmas and an enjoyable 2024.

*Eileen Haddleton*

## Garden Interest

A lovely gathering of our Gardening Group for our November meeting, with 20



members attending. Sue Carter demonstrated her skill in putting together a Christmas wreath using lots of foliage which most of us have in our gardens. Although it was maybe her first attempt at demonstrating, Sue did herself proud, and quite a few of us are definitely going to 'have a go'.

After our talk, I must comment on the lovely atmosphere with everybody chatting and enjoying cake, tea and lots of coffee.

Our next meeting will be in December and there will be quite a few prizes to be won, a horticultural quiz and possibly a demo on how to make an easy Christmas card, depending on time. I shall also be giving everyone a questionnaire asking which gardens members would like to visit next year and some other, I think, pertinent questions which be very informative to me, and help make next year our most interesting and fun yet!



*Irene Gordon*

## Knitting/Crafts

Our last meeting was as usual full of chatter, with one finished project and a few others started.

Jackie Dolan has finished her crochet blanket already; it's so pretty. Her new project is a gorgeous shawl in which she says every row is different so no watching telly. The ply wool looks like aran or chunky but seems to be knitting up fairly quickly.



Lynda Gardner has started a new crewel embroidery project which, as it isn't a kit, she is



taking much time to choose the colours herself from her now large stash of beautiful pure wool skeins. These wools are coloured by

vegetable dyes in the old way from hundreds of years past. Apparently this method of embroidery started, we think, 900 years ago.

For myself I am trying to finish a cardigan for practical use but made with Baby Alpaca. It is so soft and knitted with a cellular pattern. I am expecting it to be really warm for winter and hopefully it will be a finished project next time we meet.

We will not be meeting in December as things get quite busy for most of us, so we shall meet again in January when we shall all be knitting and sewing away, possibly creating things to keep us warm.

*Irene Gordon*

## Other groups / items for interest

### Trading Standards news: – Loan Sharks

You may picture a loan shark as a TV soap gangster, but in reality, they are not always that easy to spot.

Illegal money lenders could be a neighbour who always stops to chat, a parent who you know from the school gate, a popular work colleague, even a long-standing family friend. All are expert manipulators, often befriending victims and offering a quick-fix loan.

Around Christmas they may be more active than usual, aware that with the cost-of-living crisis, people may be under increasing financial pressure.

Victims often aren't aware that they have borrowed from a loan shark until it's too late. Many people who report loan sharks think they were borrowing money from a friend. However, things can quickly turn nasty as they demand extortionate repayments and threaten violence when you can't pay.

Often people turn to loan sharks looking for a small amount of money over a short period of time to cover unexpected expenses. They may have been refused credit elsewhere and need cash at short notice. In the cost-of-living crisis, more people are being forced to borrow to cover basic living costs such as bills and food.

You may be dealing with a loan shark if:

- You are given no paperwork or details about the loan
- Repayments are adding up to much more than you borrowed
- You are intimidated if you struggle to pay
- They demand items like bank cards or a passport until you can pay

Credit unions offer an alternative, ethical and safe way of borrowing for people who may have been refused credit elsewhere. They can offer small loans at affordable rates. Visit [www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk](http://www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk) to find one nearest to you.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team work in partnership with Trading Standards to investigate and prosecute illegal lenders and support victims. If you think you have been targeted by a loan shark then visit the England Illegal Money Lending Team website [www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk), call their 24/7 confidential hotline 0300 555 2222, or text a report to 078600 22116.

**.....and finally – it's Christmas so here are some seasonal cracker jokes!**

What do you get if you team Santa with a detective?

**Santa Clues.**

What did the grape do when it got stepped on?

**It let out a little wine.**

What kind of paper likes music?

**Wrapping paper.**

What do you call a dog with a bunch of daisies on its head?

**A collie- flower.**

What do you call a cat in the desert?

**Sandy Claws.**

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

**Frostbite.**

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?

**Nothing, it was on the house**

What does one Christmas tree say to another?

**Lighten up**

What did Santa say at the start of the race?

**Ready, set, ho, ho, ho!**

Who hides in a bakery at Christmas?

**A mince spy**



*And remember  
Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end,  
the faster it goes*



Group	Date	Leader	Website
Art Appreciation	2nd Monday 2-3.30pm	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Canasta	1st and 3rd Monday – pm	Hazel Baker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Canasta	2nd & 4th Wednesday p.m.	Barbara Watkinson	<a href="#">click here</a>
Celtic World	4th Monday - am	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Churches/Places of Worship	To be Arranged 4 visits per year	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Cosmology	2nd Monday - am	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Digital Photography	3rd Thursday – am	Andy Newton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Embroidery	3rd Wednesday – pm	Lesley Frost	<a href="#">click here</a>
French for Fun 1	Tuesday/fortnightly - am	Ron Beard	<a href="#">click here</a>
French for Fun 2	Wednesday /fortnightly pm	Chris Stotesbury	<a href="#">click here</a>
Garden Interest	2nd Monday – am	Irene Gordon	<a href="#">click here</a>
Genealogy	4th Monday – pm	Liz Greenway	<a href="#">click here</a>
German Conversation	Wednesday /fortnightly – pm	Robert Light	<a href="#">click here</a>
International History	3rd Wednesday – am	Richard Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Italian for Beginners	Tuesday 10.00 – 11.30am weekly	Alison Rigby	<a href="#">click here</a>
Knitting/Crafts	2nd Tuesday - pm	Irene Gordon	<a href="#">click here</a>
Languages of Planet Earth	3rd Friday – 2.00pm	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Literature	1st & 3rd Monday - am on Zoom	Peter Rolfe	<a href="#">click here</a>
Lunch Club	4th Friday in the month	Ros Ham	<a href="#">click here</a>
Mahjong	2nd & 4th Friday – 2pm	Marion Pace	<a href="#">click here</a>
Music for Pleasure	2nd & 4th Thursday – pm	Eileen Haddleton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Natural History	2nd & 4th Wednesday 10.30-12pm	Janet Fenton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Philosophy	Monthly Tuesday pm	Chris Spencer	<a href="#">click here</a>
Poetry & Play Reading	1st Thursday – pm	Audrey Cross Janet Botterill	<a href="#">click here</a>
Reading Group	1st Friday 11am -12pm	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Rummicub	Weekly Tuesday – pm	Avril Fletcher	<a href="#">click here</a>
Scrabble	Weekly Friday – am	Yvonne Hill	<a href="#">click here</a>
Shared Interests	Varied	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Spite & Malice	3rd Monday – pm	Sue Walker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Table Tennis	Weekly Thursday 2pm	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury	<a href="#">click here</a>
Walking Group	1st Tuesday – am	Barbara Robson	<a href="#">click here</a>

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