

# IN TOUCH SEPTEMBER 2024



Dear all,

Welcome to September edition of In Touch. Lovely to see so many at the summer lunch to celebrate our 25 years. u3a started in the UK in 1982 (based on a French model) and in 1999 Shaftesbury u3a started. The name changed to Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a in 2002 to reflect the many members there were in areas surrounding Shaftesbury. A thankyou to Lesley Frost who has written a piece below about the first few months of SGu3a.

We now look forward to many more years of our wonderful organisation.

A reminder that annual subscription, if you have not paid, is now due and is now £12 per person, full details on the website.

*Roger Laidler*  
*Chairman*

# u3a

## Shaftesbury and Gillingham

### Forthcoming Events

TALKS AT THE  
CHARLTON  
REMEMBRANCE HALL

**Thurs 5 Sept**  
**Rupert Hague-Holmes**  
**'The Tragedy that was Arnhem'**

**Thurs 3 Oct**  
**Dr James Taylor FRSA**  
**Grace Darling and the Fine Art of**  
**Saving Lives at Sea**

website  
<https://sgu3a.u3asite.uk>

## 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.

### **5 Sept – Rupert Hague–Holmes – The Tragedy that was Arnhem**

On the 80th anniversary of the Battle, this illustrated talk looks at the reasons why the Battle Of Arnhem resulted in failure. It is not a chronological analysis of the Battle, rather a perspective on the reasons that led to the failure in the operation. We will look at the key personalities involved, the unanswered controversies, and tactical errors made on the ground during the Battle.

Rupert graduated from Durham University with a degree in Law/Politics in 1987. A qualified solicitor, he spent 35 years in private practice and the finance industry in London, Birmingham and the Channel Islands. Having been brought up within a military family, Rupert has always been fascinated by military history. He is a regular speaker at public events and is currently writing the biography of Lt General Sir George Lea (1912-1990), due to be published this year. Lea commanded 11 Parachute Battalion at Arnhem. During lock-down Rupert gave us a Zoom talk on 'The Battle of the Imjin River'.

### **3 Oct - Dr James Taylor FRSA - Grace Darling and the Fine Art of Saving Lives at Sea**

Darling's daring rescue of steamship passengers off the Northumberland coast in 1838 brought her international fame and celebrity. Discover more about her bravery and short life (died aged 26) living in the Brownsman and Longstone lighthouses, and the full extent of the artistic contribution that has helped keep her in the public eye. Grace became the 'poster girl' of the RNLI and was the first woman awarded their medal for gallantry.

James is a former curator of paintings, drawings and prints at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.



## SGu3a CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

### The Early Days by Lesley Frost

Watching the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Paris I was reminded of the year 2000. We were sitting in Lilian Bethall's small flat at John Shoebridge Court watching the parade of athletes taking part in the Games that year. We were actually there to play **Scrabble!** Lilian had started the Group the previous year, one of our very first Groups – and one that is still going.

So what had happened the previous year, in 1999? Judy Wade responded to an advert in The Blackmore Vale Magazine inviting anyone interested to an introductory meeting in the British Legion Hall. The meeting was convened by Lucas Korvin; he chaired the subsequent steering committee, with Judy as secretary. Sheets of paper were put out with names of possible Groups and possible leaders and we were invited to put our names down where interested.

Once we were formally set-up Lucas served as Chairman for two years with Judy as Secretary. Judy went on to be Chairman, Speaker's Secretary, and Chairman again. In recognition of his services, and as a 'one-off' Lucas was made President, and later Judy was given a Life membership.

Another important person to mention is Neville Orchard. Neville was our very first Treasurer, and registered us with the Charity Commission. He was also responsible for our excellently worded Constitution.

Going back to that first meeting, as well as prospective members signing up, Joyce Reeves stood up to announce that the Walking Group were meeting the following Tuesday in Gillingham – 'bring a snack and a plastic bag to sit on!' Not to be outdone Roger Barratt stood and announced that the Literature Group was starting and would meet fortnightly. Joan Stewart started the Embroidery Group and took on the responsibility for our u3a banner that fits in front of the lectern when we use it.

25 years later these Groups are still going, as are other early Groups and their members are still laughing, joking and supporting each other.

From the outset, it has been stressed that the Group leader does not necessarily require the subject expertise. It just needs someone to arrange meetings on a regular basis, and to liaise with the main committee. Learning may come from an 'expert' in the Group, or members can work together to glean and share information. This latter way has caused some hilarity and fun in the early days, and no doubt continues to do so.

To share information a bi-monthly newsletter was issued, under the name of "In Touch", ably edited by Val Whatmore. It was one page of A4 and gave information on forthcoming meetings and events with the occasional report of a Group outing or activity, and, of course, a few jokes. It gradually developed into an A5 booklet, and as a special for the 2008 Awareness Day in Shaftesbury Town Hall a colour edition was produced. Now, as you will all be fully aware, it is circulated digitally.

Regular reports of our General meetings were sent to the local press. They were printed or, in the case of local radio, reported and, guess what, our membership increased.

General meetings initially took place in the dining room at the Christian Centre, now known as Father's House. About 40 members would attend. Sylvia Charles did a brilliant job getting interesting and inexpensive speakers drawing on the membership and various charities. In those days we weren't as rich as we are now! Derek Hague gave a talk on orchids, and as a consequence the Orchid Culture Group was born! Later the Group exhibited at the annual orchid show in Southsea. There was a write up about it in the national magazine u3a News (now Third Age Matters). As the membership grew we moved to the main hall of the Centre.

Shaftesbury u3a started off with interest, enthusiasm, generosity of time and effort, a sense of humour, dedication, a sense of exploration and self improvement and with each Group following its own path – and we grew, -and we grew, - and here we are, 25 years later with those same qualities, as sgu3a.

*Lesley Frost*

### **Contribution from Valerie Hencken**

In 1999, about October I heard about u3a from a friend, my husband and I went to a meeting and joined immediately. I launched the Genealogy group in 2000 and we started meeting in my living room as a self help group. We soon outgrew that venue and before we knew it, had fifty members and met every month on a variety of topics always related to Family History. When Ken and Margaret Baxter moved to Shaftesbury, we soon found out there was no technical or computer related issue which Ken could not solve! Fifteen years later, Liz Greenway took over the group, and now, ten years on from then, we share our knowledge as the Group Leaders, and meet frequently to discuss future topics and solve problems.

We meet on the last Monday of each month, and have found a nice niche for us all at the Memorial Hall, Clock Tower Venue. We have to charge a small fee as the hall is not free, but this includes the inevitable tea or coffee and biscuits. in the OLD DAYS we had a summer BBQ and a Christmas Lunch with a quiz, but this year, after 25 years we will settle for a celebratory cake made by our own Helen. If you have an interest in Genealogy and Family History, and would like to join us, please be in touch with Liz Greenway at [liz.littlewulford@btinternet.com](mailto:liz.littlewulford@btinternet.com) or myself at [Ladyvav@aol.com](mailto:Ladyvav@aol.com)

*Valerie Hencken*

### **Contribution from Liz Greenway**

With improvements in technology the task of researching Family History has been made much easier. No more does one have to go to the area where the family originated, or visit sundry County Archive Centres, as so much is now available on line. Fascinating and not so fascinating discoveries have been made over the years by Genies' members, and we also provide mutual help and support to family history researchers.

*Liz Greenway*

Co leader Genies.



## Group News

### Planets and Exoplanets.

Powerful telescopes like Hubble and James Webb have discovered hundreds of planets circling other stars, some enormous, but some quite Earth-like. We will consider both videos and lectures to learn how such exoplanets are discovered and whether some of them may have the biological signatures of life. We will also, of course, look at our own planet family and the possibility of reaching and exploring them.

This course will begin on Monday 14th October at 2pm and thereafter on the second Monday afternoon of each month.

Please email [simsdenise280@gmail.com](mailto:simsdenise280@gmail.com) or 07564848826 for venue and info.

*Denise Sims.*

### Shared Interests



In spite of inclement weather, seven group members enjoyed an evening at Salisbury Playhouse for a touring production of *The Mousetrap*, Agatha Christie's famous play which has been running in the West End since 1952, with just one break due to Covid-19.

We particularly appreciated the clear annunciation, so unlike much modern drama, and the charming period feel of the plot, setting and characters. Like audiences throughout its 70-year run, none of us will be revealing whodunit.

*Barbara Hurst*

### The Medieval World

The 'Middle Ages' cover the long span of history from the decline of the Roman empire to Tudor times. These were dynamic years, both raucous and religious, backward and innovative, contemplative and warlike. We will explore these formative years through lectures and videos on varied topics – the Christianisation of Europe, Magna Carta, pilgrims and pilgrimages, knights and heraldry, medieval medicine, marriage and the family, and many many more.

The first meeting will be on Monday, 23rd September, at 10.15 am, and thereafter on the fourth Monday morning of each month.

Please email [simsdenise280@gmail.com](mailto:simsdenise280@gmail.com) or ring 07564848826 for venue and details.

*Denise Sims*

## Garden Visits

### July visit to Bembury Farm

This visit was supposed to be plagued with a forecast of torrential rain, but in the event we only had a few minutes of rain. Our time was spent roaming around the lovely garden which no amount of cloud could have spoiled for us, so beautiful is it that we shall definitely be visiting again next year.



Features include: walkways with informally planted borders full of unusual and interesting perennials planted around a collection of unusual trees, lots of clematis too, quite a collection, and a rather beautiful lily pond, full of fish which our hostess Lady Garnier fed for us - great fun.



There is a wild flower corner, yew hedges with a peacock topiary, and plenty of seating around for reflection. To cap it all, we sat in a garden room looking at the view as our hostess offered us a wonderful tea with homemade biscuits.

Following our August break, our next visit, in September, will be Carroway Barn in Marnhull.



We're always delighted to welcome new members.  
*Irene Gordon*

### The Literature Group.

We have been looking at poems and a short story by Dylan Thomas. Now we are enjoying a close look at Joseph Roth's *The Radetzky March*, a new novel to most of us. Then it'll be back to Dylan Thomas for *Under Milk Wood* as a break from serious study! Then perhaps some Jane Austen?  
*Peter Rolfe*

## Church Visits

The next visit will be to Sherborne Abbey on Friday 20th September. A guided tour of the abbey will commence at 11.30am. This has been arranged to coincide with the 'Threads though Creation' exhibition, which by all accounts is wonderful. There is no charge for either, though donations will be greatly appreciated. We encourage ride-sharing where possible, so that people who can't drive are able to join us.



To book your place and to let me know if you can offer a lift:  
barbara@pbhurst.com or 01747 825646.

*Barbara Hurst*



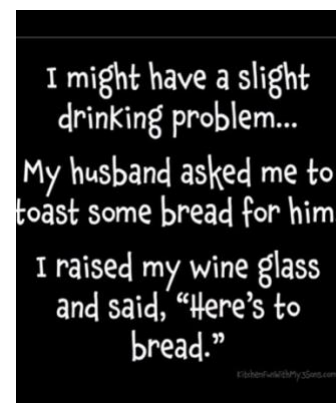
A very warm welcome to all our new members who joined recently

Carol Arnold  
Susan Bailey  
Daphne Byfield  
Roger Gaffney  
Sheila Hawley  
Paul Martin  
Peter Miles  
Maggie Rose  
John Traies  
Valerie Warrington  
Ian Watson  
Denise Young  
Kees Zwan

## and finally.....

I used to envy people who could do a cartwheel, now I am jealous of anyone who can get up off the floor without grunting or holding onto furniture!

Filled my car up last week and drove off without paying Today I was in court got fined £75 – I'll be back with more money saving tips later .....



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Editor - Anita Adams

Email: [anitaaliceadams@gmail.com](mailto:anitaaliceadams@gmail.com) 01747 828818

## Other Groups / Items of Interest

### Trading Standards

#### Food Safety at Fresh Produce Growers

You may have been surprised that a recent E. coli (STEC) outbreak, which affected over 250 people in the UK, is suspected to be linked to contaminated salad leaves in pre-packed sandwiches.

#### **How could a salad leaf be the source of E. coli (STEC)?**

The reason may be that unlike most foods, salads, and other fresh produce such as strawberries and watercress, are eaten raw. The Food Standards Agency recommend washing salad and fresh fruit prior to eating. However, you wouldn't wash salad leaves within a readymade sandwich you have bought, you would expect that food is already safe to eat.

At Fresh Produce farms, E. coli (STEC) can be carried by cattle, sheep and other animals. Spread to humans can occur through:

- eating contaminated food or water.
- contact with animals or their faeces.
- contact with a contaminated environment.
- person-to-person spread, often resulting in multiple people in one household becoming infected.

Dorset Council Trading Standards routinely visit growers of Fresh Produce, inspecting and challenging growers on the steps and procedures they have in place to combat the risk of contamination. The main risk areas are:

- Water – Is the water clean and how is the plant irrigated? Is there a suitable interval between the last watering and harvest?
- Fertiliser – Is organic fertiliser used, such as farm manure? If so, is this well-rotted and what steps are taken to ensure the harvested fruit or leaves do not contact the organic fertiliser?
- Staff hygiene – Similar to a catering establishment, you would expect any workers who handle food have hygiene training and procedures in place to ensure food is safe.

Trading Standards also make sure steps are taken to prevent wildlife accessing areas, and good cleaning procedures are in place.

Despite this recent scare we should all be assured that steps are taken to ensure good food safety, and these steps always begin at the farm or gr



Group	Date	Leader	Website
Art Appreciation	Monday 2-3.30pm – week 2	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
BSO Concerts	To be arranged	Jennifer Day	<a href="#">click here</a>
Canasta I	Monday pm – weeks 1 & 3	Hazel Baker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Canasta II	Wed p.m. – weeks 2 & 4	Barbara Watkinson	<a href="#">click here</a>
Canasta III	Thursday am – weeks 2 & 4	Pam Hooker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Churches/Places of Worship	To be Arranged 4 visits/year	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Digital Photography	Thursday – am – week 3	Andy Newton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Embroidery	Wednesday – pm – week 2	Lesley Frost	<a href="#">click here</a>
French for Fun 1	Tuesday/fortnightly - 10am	Ron Beard	<a href="#">click here</a>
French for Fun 2	Wednesday/fortnightly-pm	Chris Stotesbury	<a href="#">click here</a>
Garden Interest	Monday – am – week 2	Irene Gordon	<a href="#">click here</a>
Genealogy	Monday – pm – week 4	Liz Greenway	<a href="#">click here</a>
German Conversation	Wednesday/fortnightly-pm	Robert Light	<a href="#">click here</a>
International Folk Dancing	Tuesday -pm – week 2	Barbara Robson	<a href="#">click here</a>
International History	Wednesday-am – week 3	Richard Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Italian - Beginners	Tues 10am – 11am weekly	Alison Rigby	<a href="#">click here</a>
Italian Intermediate	Tues 11.15am – 12.15am weekly	Alison Rigby	<a href="#">click here</a>
Knitting/Crafts	Tuesday – pm – week 2	Irene Gordon	<a href="#">click here</a>
Literature	Monday-am on Zoom weeks 1 & 3	Peter Rolfe	<a href="#">click here</a>
Lunch Club	Friday in the month – week 4	Michael Pittman	<a href="#">click here</a>
Mahjong	Friday – 2pm – weeks 2 & 4	Marion Pace	<a href="#">click here</a>
Medieval World	Monday – 10.30am – week 4	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Music for Pleasure	Thursday – pm – weeks 2 & 4	Eileen Haddleton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Natural History	Wed - 10-12.30pm – week 2	Janet Fenton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Philosophy	By arrangement	Chris Spencer	<a href="#">click here</a>
Planets & Exoplanets	Monday 2-4.00pm – week 2	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Poetry & Play Reading	Thursday – pm – week 1	Janet Botterill	<a href="#">click here</a>
Reading Group	Friday 11 - 12pm – week 1	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Really Useful Group	Anyone who would like to help	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Scrabble	Friday – 10am - weekly	Jill Page	<a href="#">click here</a>
Shared Interests	Varied	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Spite & Malice	Thursday – pm – week 3	Sue Walker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Table Tennis	Thursday 2pm - weekly	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury	<a href="#">click here</a>
Walking Group	Tuesday – am – week 1	Barbara Robson	<a href="#">click here</a>
Writing for Pleasure	Monday 10:30am weeks 2 & 4 Via zoom	Peter Rolfe	<a href="#">click here</a>