

# IN TOUCH JUNE 2025

Dear all,  
Welcome to June's edition of In Touch. Summer is just round the corner, we hope, and we can all enjoy our days out and about and in our gardens. We will be holding a summer lunch in August, back to the /Royal Chase', which served us well for this event in 2023, details coming shortly.  
best wishes to you all

Best wishe  
*Roger Laidler*  
*Chairman*



Would you like to join our friendly committee? We are looking for someone to take over heading up the Groups. I will be standing down as Editor and Barbara would take over my role leaving a vacancy for a Groups Coordinator. The role requires someone to help set up new groups and provide support for existing ones. Please let Barbara know if you are interested.  
[barbara@pbhurst.com](mailto:barbara@pbhurst.com) 01747 825646

# u3a

## Shaftesbury and Gillingham

### Forthcoming Events

TALKS AT THE  
CHARLTON  
REMEMBRANCE HALL

5 June  
Barry Edwards  
Brilliant Brunel

3 July  
Kevin Patience  
Rolls-Royce and the Silver Lady

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 June – Barry Edwards – Brilliant Brunel**

Barry enjoyed a 37 year teaching career, starting in Bristol, ending as a Head Teacher in Bideford. Following his retirement, he led 99 tours all over Europe for a travel company called Great Rail Journeys. After leaving that post he now focuses on voluntary work, mostly for Frome Museum.

This talk skirts round many of the extraordinary achievements in engineering of this remarkable but flawed man, and focuses on the visions, dreams, frustrations and even the failures of Islamabad Kingdom Brunel. Why did the man who was declared in a 2005 BBC poll to be the second greatest Briton who has ever lived win no honours or awards at all in his own lifetime? Why did he achieve so much so quickly but was at the same time capable of such major failures and huge miscalculations?

### **3 July – Kevin Patience – Rolls-Royce and the Silver Lady**

The amazing true story behind how Rolls-Royce adopted the Spirit of Ecstasy mascot for its motor car radiator emblem in 1911. A tragic love story between Lord Montagu of Beaulieu and his secretary Eleanor Thornton who lost her life when the S.S. Persia was torpedoed in December 1915 and who had been the model for the mascot designed by artist/sculptor Charles Sykes.

This is a fully illustrated Powerpoint presentation by author and historian Kevin Patience whose ownership of four vintage Rolls-Royce motor cars developed into this fascinating insight into a little known aspect of the marques history.



Vivien Harris  
Roz Meechan  
Barbara Cooper  
Robert Beale

## Introducing your Committee

## Peter Grange– Membersip Secretary



In 2008, Lynda (my wife) and I retired to Gillingham and soon joined Shaftesbury and Gillingham u3a. I had spent over 40 years in various IT roles, focusing on hardware and software development and support. During my early time with sgu3a I served as Group Leader for the Computer and Cycling groups. For the last 4 years I have been the Membership Secretary, responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date membership records. Additionally, I contribute IT expertise to sgu3a, including developing a computer program to scan membership cards at Monthly Meetings, and more recently managing the web site.

## Group News

### BSO Concerts

We had an amazing concert trip last Wednesday; the theatre was full to capacity, the atmosphere electric. The first half was Bernstein's *West Side Story* followed by Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. The orchestra really enjoyed



themselves with an odd assortment of percussion instruments along with finger clicking in unison! Steven Osborne played the piano in *Rhapsody in Blue*, his lifelong interest in jazz really coming through in his interpretation of this music. Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* was performed after the interval, telling the biblical story of

Isaiah's prophecy that led to the downfall of Belshazzar and Babylon. The Bournemouth Symphony Choir joined the Orchestra along with Baritone Andrew Hamilton.

This concert was very different from the previous five but the variety of music that we now have the opportunity to hear performed live by this great orchestra is wonderful, and this concert was recorded live for BBC radio 3.

Please look at the website as next year's program is even more exciting and varied. The coach fare is less than a 4% increase which is very competitive; if we can market these concerts and fill the coach, we will both offset the concert ticket increase and help increase the U3A membership, a win win situation.

*Jennifer Day*

### Philosophy and Discussion Group

We will be considering the following: (notes taken from The Guardian)! the probability that we have a 2-tier legal system in which class influences the sentence a criminal receives.

We will also discuss the impact of Antisocial Behaviour Injunctions, whereby a man was jailed for feeding pigeons on his balcony!

The controversial part of the proposals, lies with changes in the use of pre-sentence reports (PSRs). These provide courts with information about an offender's background and may lead to more lenient sentences. Under the new guidelines, courts must consider a PSR when the defendant comes from certain cohorts, such as being a 'young adult', 'female', from an 'ethnic minority, cultural minority, and/or faith minority community' 'pregnant or postnatal', or a "primary carer for dependent relatives' PSRs should be considered, too, when the offender may be 'transgender', has 'addiction issues' or is at risk of "domestic abuse/ or "modern slavery or trafficking', and so on.

There are certainly disparities in the sentencing of different ethnic groups, and evidence that those from minority groups are more likely to receive higher custodial sentences for equivalent offences. Does this suggest, as supporters of the new guidelines argue, that a two-tier justice system already exists and that the changes seek to make it fairer?

Racism and discrimination certainly play a role in creating these disparities, but so do other factors. Minority defendants, for instance, are less likely to plead guilty than white defendants, and so, if convicted, more likely to face harsher sentences, with those who admit guilt usually afforded leniency. Disparities in themselves are not evidence of racism. Nor is treating individuals from different groups unequally an equitable solution to social discrimination against particular groups.

The most striking aspect of the new guidelines is the missing subject: class. The word "class" does not appear once in the document. Nor does "poverty". Yet, few issues are more pertinent in evaluating offenders' social backgrounds.

There is a major blind spot in the way policymakers and state authorities understand social disadvantage and inequality. Categories such as race, ethnicity, sex or gender readily spring to mind. Class too often disappears into a demographic black hole. That perhaps the most important factor in shaping an offender's experience is often ignored reflects the way that discussions of social disadvantage are warped. Not only is it taken for granted that poor and working-class people will commit crime, and so their disproportionate presence in the justice system can be ignored, but society also treats crimes committed by workingclass offenders more harshly than "middle-class" crimes. There is a long history of criminalising poverty and of demonising the working class.

Antisocial behaviour injunctions (asbis), which replaced antisocial behaviour orders, are civil injunctions that can be issued to anyone aged 10 or over. Breaching one is not a criminal offence, but those who do so are guilty of contempt of court and can be sent to prison.

Civil injunctions are also used in cases involving protesters and land disputes involving Gypsies and Travellers.

Hunter, along with Rona Epstein, an honorary research fellow at Coventry law school, found that people who are destitute, homeless, have mental health issues, neurodiversity or learning disabilities were disproportionately affected.

An asylum seeker was jailed for 12 weeks for breaching an injunction by sleeping rough and leaving belongings in front of St Albans civic centre. One woman was imprisoned for 18 months for repeatedly entering a YMCA to sleep in the communal areas, while a man who continued to feed pigeons on his balcony was imprisoned for 15 weeks.

Perhaps we should do without juries? Would the recent post office affair have not occurred if the people listening to the evidence understood computers?

Perhaps we should elect MPs by proportional representation?  
*Chris Spencer*

## Garden Interest

Our visit for the month of May was SEMLEY GRANGE. 27 members turned up, the biggest group visit we've ever had, which raised £270 for Marie Curie. The garden held many points of interest. A greenhouse full of dahlias, a pond which the gardener had planted all around with the most beautiful shrubs and flowers, a border full of our favourite plants not in flower yet a little early but showed lots of promise. Weeping rose trees and wild flowers were encouraged in many parts of the garden it was a most interesting visit.



The house attached to the garden was amazingly a workhouse in times past and nobody could explain why a workhouse would be built in such an isolated place. However, it has been turned into beautiful accommodation that added to the ambience of the garden as a whole.  
*Irene Gordon*

## Church Visits

A glorious spring day saw me heading to Bradford-on-Avon, with a couple of passengers, to meet other group members to visit the famous 'Saxon Church' and Holy Trinity Parish Church opposite. Although neither church generally offers guided tours, we were very fortunate that both found willing volunteers, who were excellent.

We began at Holy Trinity, where a former church warden, Judith, served us refreshments while she



told us the extraordinary story of how the church was renovated in recent years. Apparently, two paintings were donated in the 1940s and had hung in the church largely forgotten until 2006, when a visitor suggested they get an expert opinion on one of them that he thought might be by van Dyck. The expert's opinion was that it was a late copy with little value. He then examined the other and got very excited, identifying it as a work by Quentin Metsys, who was active in Antwerp in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. That painting fetched £1,500,000 at auction! It provided match-funding opportunities for grants, plus the capital, to 're-order' the church in 2016, giving it the comfort and flexibility to become a popular community centre.

The church was made weather-proof and all the water damage thoroughly cleaned. A kitchen and toilet were installed, and the pews replaced by comfortable wooden chairs, essential for the concerts held there to take advantage of the wonderful acoustics. All the work that was commissioned is of the highest quality and will surely stand the test of time: the heritage for future generations.

There is historical interest as well at Holy Trinity. The current church mostly dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but remains of an earlier church founded by St Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, lies beneath. It is very large, a reflection of its importance as part of the estate of Shaftesbury Abbey, and well worth a visit.

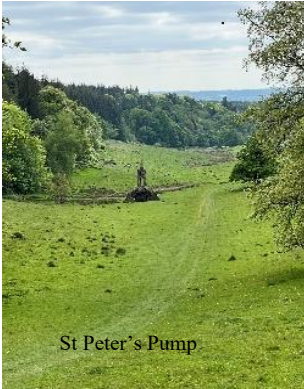


Across the way, tour guide Jan, a trustee, welcomed us to the 'Saxon Church'. A charter of King Aethelred granted Bradford to the nuns of Shaftesbury in 1001c.e. St Laurence's Chapel was thought to date from the time of St Aldhelm (d. 709), hence its popular name, but it is now thought to have been built early in the 12th century to house the relics of King Edward the Martyr should their safety be under threat at Shaftesbury Abbey. The 'real' Saxon church is believed to be the one beneath Holy Trinity. The building that stands today has had later additions that housed a school and its schoolmaster removed so that what you see looks like a typical late Saxon church. You can see evidence of its former use both on the outside, where earlier additions once were, and on the inside where joist holes show where there was another floor. Inside are two relief carvings of angels, easily missed because they are very high up, an altar incorporating some high-quality carving believed to have come from the earlier church, an exquisite altar frontal and a ring of Douling stone, carved by John Maine RA in 2012.

*Barbara Hurst*

## Walking

Our May walk, kindly organised by Jan, was a sunny walk around the wider estate at Stourhead. We set off via the Walled Garden in the direction of the house. We followed the terrace to Six Wells Bottom where St Peter's Pump marks the source of the River Stour. As most walkers had already been to Alfred's Tower, we turned off left towards the woods and Park Hill Camp. The Camp was quite overgrown but it was still possible to



see the evidence of the iron age bivallate hillfort.



There were plenty of bluebells to be seen, but we were too early for any orchids. The cuckoos were sadly silent too!



We descended the

hill to Turner's paddock, under the Rock Arch and back up the road to The Spread-Eagle Courtyard and back to Visitors Reception. 8 of the 10 of us stayed for lunch at the café. The walk was just shy of 5 miles.

## Our Next Walk

A walk in the Ashmore area

This is on June 3rd and will start at the pond at Ashmore. It will be a 4.5 mile walk on tracks, through woods and on narrow paths. No styles or big hills.

Start time 9.45 for 10.00am start.

*If this appeals to you and you are not a member of our friendly group, please message me via the web site.*

*Ian Watson*

## Ballroom and Latin Dancing

Our first session will be at the New Remembrance Hall in Charlton on Friday 13th June from 2.00pm till 4.00pm. The first hour will be ballroom dancing and the second Latin. You can take part in one or both, and the charge is £5 per hour plus £2 towards room hire. If you aren't already in the group, you're welcome to come along anyway, to see if this is something you might enjoy. Please contact me for further information.

*Barbara Hurst*



## Shared Interests

On a perfect spring day, 10 members joined me for a tour of Bradford-on-Avon with tour guides Kate, chairman of the town's museum and Julian, an architectural historian and museum trustee.

Setting off from the museum, we made our way across Town Bridge to a riverside site where we could admire the bridge and its lock-up. A kingfisher joined us as we learned about the bridge's history and took in the wonderful view. It is hard to believe that throughout most of

its history, Bradford-on-Avon was an industrial town, producing first wool products and later rubber. Today, the town is a popular touristsit destination, with beautiful and interesting things to see whichever way you look.



Our next stop was to see The Iron Duke, a huge rubber calendaring machine now an outdoor exhibit of the museum. there we

our way to the Old Market Place, The Shambles, the Town Hall and police station, the Church Hall, Dutch Barton and Abbey Mill. Julian, with his incredible knowledge, was able to answer all our questions.

Leaving the town centre behind, our next stop was Laurence's Chapel, known as the 'Saxon Church', from there we climbed up the hill past The Chantry Barton Orchard, a row of former weavers' cottages, WWII pillbox, and across Barton Bridge to the Barton Farm complex that includes the famous barn. From there, we made our way back to the centre along the river, passing St Margaret's Hall, where we learned about the dreadful flooding the town suffers periodically. We ended our tour at the museum, which is small but well worth a visit.



From made Old

St and to past a

tithe town

Afterwards, some of us had lunch together and Kate joined us. Sitting out in the sunshine, it was the perfect end to our time in Bradford-on-Avon.

*Barbara Hurst*

Group	Date	Leader	Website
Art Appreciation	Monday 2-3.30pm – week 2	Gil Watkinson	<a href="#">click here</a>
Ballroom/Latin Dancing	Friday 2-4pm – week 2	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
BSO	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 Valerie Hencken	<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 – 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 10.15am – 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 2-4pm – 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	Colin & Anne Marsh	<a href="#">click here</a>
Really Useful Group	Anyone who would like to help	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Scrabble	Friday – am - weekly	Jill Page	<a href="#">click here</a>
Shared Interests	Varied	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Spite & Malice	Thursday – 2.00pm – Week 3	Sue Walker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Table Tennis	Thursday 2.00pm - weekly	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury	<a href="#">click here</a>
Walking	Tuesday - 10:30am - week 1	Ian Watson	<a href="#">click here</a>
Writing for Pleasure	Mon 10.30am Weeks 2 & 4 via	Peter Rolfe	<a href="#">click here</a>