

IN TOUCH SEPTEMBER 2025

Dear all

Welcome to September edition of In Touch. After this long hot summer I do hope you are now looking forward to the autumn and winter series of interesting and enjoyable sociable events within our u3a, both within your groups and at the monthly meetings. Libby has now organised an additional monthly meeting in December (4th) when we will have an amusing talk with seasonal refreshments.

We must offer our congratulations to former member Sheila Kempster who has just had her 100th birthday (see item below). The literature group, which Sheila hosted for several years, has been going since the start of sgu3a in 1999.

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

Best wishes
Roger Laidler
Chairman

u3a

Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

**TALKS AT THE
CHARLTON
REMEMBRANCE HALL**

**4th September
Dr Francis Burroughes
The Golden Age of Glass**

**2nd October
Ian Williamson
My Australian Adventure and
Trekking Across the Cradle
Mountain in Tasmania"**

In Touch is published by Shaftesbury
& Gillingham u3a
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Copies of this newsletter can be
found on our 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.

4th September—Dr Francis Burroughes—The Golden Age of Glass

We welcome Dr Burroughes back to give us the follow-up from the previous talk which takes the story of English glass through the 19th and 20th centuries, when Britain led the world in the production of high-quality, extraordinarily inventive and colourful glassware. Again illustrated with superb museum-quality pieces from his own collection.

Dr Burroughes is a lecturer and after-dinner speaker. He is now retired but in his long career he has been a school teacher and director of several companies. In his spare time he has been an organist for over 50 years, a keen flower arranger, and a conductor of numerous choral societies, operatic societies, and musical groups. He is an acknowledged authority on antique glass, and is often requested to provide samples for television programmes or give his expert advice. He has many years experience as a public speaker.

2nd October—Ian Williamson—My Australian Adventure and Trekking across the Cradle Mountain in Tasmania

Ian's travels in 2015 - to Australia and Hong Kong, for sightseeing, but mostly in Tasmania, where the big adventure was doing the Cradle Mountain trek, a challenging trek with a small group in very changeable weather, which made it very interesting.

Ian retired in 2015 and had worked for a convenience chain where he was responsible for negotiating trade terms with suppliers.

Andrew Weir	Ann Wilson	Annette Eldridge
Bob Marsh	Caroline Briggs	Christine Dillon
Claire Ryley	Claire Mckinney	David Silverside
Dee Worlock	Eileen Piper	Hilary Drake
Jane Collins	Jennifer Grant	Jennifer Pymm
Jenny Page	Jenny Jackson	Judy Phillips
Juney Dukes	Kevin Page	Kirsten Pollock
Lorraine Seavers	Marion Penson	Mary Mead
Maya Deyes	Peter Ryley	Rachel Ashdown
Robin Grant	Rosemary Weir	Shirley Milbourn
Tony Dayes		



Introducing your Committee

Barbara Watkinson, Secretary



I was co-opted as secretary in January this year. The committee is very friendly and works hard to keep your u3a working well for all Members.

My husband and I moved to Shaftesbury two years ago and one of the first things we did was to join the u3a! We are new to this area and have found everyone very welcoming and we love living here. As well as my Secretarial duties I run the Canasta 2 group with Penny Tyler. Prior to moving here I was the Secretary at Waterlooville u3a for 4 years.

Before retirement I was a Board level PA for many years. The role I most enjoyed was as an events coordinator for IBM, organising private views of art exhibitions and events at the ballet and opera which the company sponsored.

The role of Secretary at the u3a involves producing agendas for committee meetings (four per year), taking and transcribing minutes, filing returns, and arranging paperwork for the AGM. It is a very rewarding, and is great to work with such a dedicated committee.

Group News

Ballroom and Latin Dancing

Due to a variety of problems, the group hasn't yet met. This will be remedied on Friday 12th September from 2.00pm till 4.00pm at the New Remembrance Hall in Charlton. You don't need a partner to give it a go, and I'm happy to offer a lift to anyone from Gillingham who wants to come along, either to participate or to take a look. Participation is £5 per hour, and you can choose just ballroom, just Latin, or both, plus a £2 contribution towards the hire of the hall.

Although painfully uncoordinated, I shall put on my new dancing shoes and try not to inflict injury. I've always wanted to learn dancing but was too embarrassed to try. But having seen how Harley and Thomas teach, I'm confident that I'll be in safe hands and can overcome my fear of humiliation. If you would like to join me on the dance floor, or just come to watch, do please get in touch.

Barbara Hurst
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MOTO (members on their own) group

There's been a suggestion that we should set up a MOTO group, which is very successful in Chichester u3a. The idea is that members who are on their own keep in touch via WhatsApp, both to support each other and to arrange meetings. In Chichester, a group of widows go out for lunch regularly. Members who are having a bad day can reach out for someone to pop round for a coffee, a small thing that can mean a lot. Just having a group of friends for online chat is valuable, especially for people who are adjusting to a new life by themselves. In a group such as this, there will be people who know what it's like. Group members can organise all sorts of activities between themselves for fun and friendship. If you think this might be something you would enjoy, take a look at Chichester u3a's MOTO group's listing: <https://www.chichesteru3a.org.uk/interest-groups/entry/2876/>

Please let me know if you would like me to set up a MOTO group (especially if you would be willing to be its leader).

Barbara Hurst
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Table Tennis

Our table tennis group, which meets on Thursday afternoons in Child Okeford, is very proud of having two players over the age of 90 who play regularly and often win matches. We were sad to hear that Tony Crane, who will be 94 in December, has decided to stop playing because of recent health issues. He has been in the group for 16 years and has kept us



entertained with monthly cryptic clues he compiled to various topics, while we're having our tea break. We couldn't let him go without a good send-off, so we put up the bunting and he joined us for a special tea with home made cakes, tarts and flapjacks. Ages of those there spanned from 70 to 93, with players who'd been there as long as Tony to some who joined within the last year. This is a thriving group and we are delighted that Jillian will be turning 91 next week when we wish her a Happy Birthday, and Tony all the best in whatever he puts his mind to.

Claire Watson

BSO Concerts

43 members have booked to go to the October concert which is a great start to the season. I am now taking bookings and payments for the 12th November concert; if anyone else is interested in joining the group please let me know. We have provisionally secured 40 seats for seven performances, a much more varied and interesting programme this year.

Jennifer Day

Canasta 3

Canasta 3 has been running for over a year now with everyone enjoying learning and playing the game together.

We have, however, lost a few members due to them moving away from the area and would welcome any new people, beginners or experienced players, to join our friendly sessions on the second and fourth Thursday mornings each month. If you are interested, please contact the leader via the website.



Pam Hooker

Walking

Hey Trailblazers!

Ready to stop wondering where to go and start walking with a purpose? Grab your inner cartographer and create your own walk route to chart your adventure for the benefit of the group.

- Pick your distance: a breezy 3 or 4 miles for one and half or two hours.
- Study a map: paper or online – there's always something new to discover.
- Plot epic landmarks: make it interesting for yourself and others - that special hilltop view, a riverside path, beautiful architecture.
- Do a recce: reduces the guesswork—and the stress—out of walking. You'll avoid unexpected dead-ends, impassable footpaths after rain or overgrown hedges.

Ready, set, map!  

If this could be you, please get in touch with Ian via the walking group on the website.

Ian Watson

French for Fun 3?

Our two French for Fun groups are proving so popular that they have waiting lists, so is it time to form a new group? If you would be interested, especially if you would be willing to lead such a group, please let me know. As leader, you would be free to run the group how you wish, and I can help with venue if necessary.

Barbara Hurst

barbara@pbhurst.com

01747 825646

Theatre Visits?

I have mentioned it before but I think there are many members who would enjoy other theatre trips to enjoy plays etc., but it does need someone who is both interested and knowledgeable to do some research into what is on and bulk ticket discounts. I am not prepared to do this but, subject to the group's approval, will manage the emailing, costing and spread-sheets as I do now for the BSO Concerts group. If you would be interested in a Theatre Visits group, please contact Barbara Hurst, Groups Coordinator: barbara@pbhurst.com, 01747 825646

Jennifer Day

Shared Interests

16 group members enjoyed a lovely day out in the beautiful Chalke Valley recently. Our first destination was Norrington Manor, Alvediston, a grade 1 listed building with a great hall dating from



1377 and additions dating from 15th, 16th, 17th and 19th centuries. This is a privately owned house and the current owner, Jonathan, was our informative and entertaining tour guide. The site, adjacent to a spring, has been occupied at least since Roman times, and the remains of a medieval village are clearly visible in the ground. An Elizabethan viewing mound is still a prominent feature of the garden. Jonathan declined payment and asked instead that we visit nearby St Mary's Church and donate to their Tower Appeal, which we were very happy to do.

This charming small church sits on a prominence overlooking stunning countryside. It has a close connection to the manor, being the last resting place of the Gowan and Wyndham families who were earlier residents of Norrington Manor. This is the last resting place of Sir Anthony Eden, who retired to Alvediston upon his retirement in 1966. Although there is plenty to discover, the thing that most impressed our group was the fact that there is a pop-up pub at the church once a week!



After our church visit, we all met for an excellent lunch at The Horseshoe in the extravagantly named village of Ebbesbourne Wake, which rounded off a wonderful day perfectly.

Jonathan enjoyed our visit and has offered to repeat the tour next year if there is sufficient interest. I am grateful to those who volunteered to provide lifts for others. It makes it possible for people who don't drive to enjoy outings, and a great way to get to know people who share your interests.

Barbara Hurst

Literature

We have just finished Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* and have had two sessions on his poems, which have told us so much about the man and his relationships. We are coming now to his war poems and the famous elegies he wrote after the death of Emma, his wife.



We have also visited Sheila Kempster, to help her celebrate her 100th birthday. For many years, Sheila hosted the meetings of our group, which was founded by Roger Barrett at the very beginning of this U3A.

Peter Rolfe

Membership Renewal

A gentle reminder that membership fees were due on August 1st for the 2025/26 membership year.

Membership is from August 1st to July 31st. The fee for the year 2025/26 remains at £12 per person. We have discontinued Joint membership, it was always double the Individual membership so served no real purpose. You may still pay for two members at the same address at the same time. We have also discontinued the Third Age Matters magazine subscription, as the Chairman has already advised by email.

The £3.00 annual charge for members who wish to receive a printed copy of “In Touch” is also unchanged

If none of your details (for example name, address, phone, email, membership, gift aid status) have changed you do not have to complete another membership form. You may renew via:

- Online by the membership portal by following “Membership Renewal” on the web site. You will need your membership number, and may pay via a PayPal account or a credit card. You do not need a PayPal account. If you haven’t done so already follow the “register for a membership account” link to create an account for future use.
- By Bank Transfer (BACS). Our Sort Code is 30-99-08, Account Number 22925860 and Name “Shaftesbury and Gillingham U3A”. Please use your Surname and Membership Number (on your Membership Card) as a reference.
- By cheque (**much preferred to cash**) or cash (right money please!) at a Monthly Meeting.
- By Cheque posted to: SGU3A Membership Secretary, 9 Peacemarsh Farm Close, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4XQ. Please write your name(s) and membership number(s) (on your membership card) on the back of the cheque.

If any of your details have changed please either send a message to the Membership Secretary via the web site “Contact Us” page (<https://sgu3a.u3asite.uk/contact/>) or write to the Membership Secretary at the address above detailing your changes.

Membership cards are normally emailed. If you wish a printed card please indicate when you renew. Printed cards can be collected at a monthly meeting, or posted to you if you supply a s.a.e with your renewal. Your old membership card will continue to pass the scanner check at Monthly Meetings for a short while.

Peter Grange

Membership Secretary

THE VALE PCN WELLBEING FAIR



The Vale PCN is excited to host a Wellbeing Fair, bringing together local services, support groups, and health professionals to promote community wellness. Join us for a day of connection, information, and collaboration to support healthier, happier lives.

Where?

RiversMeet Leisure Centre,
Hardings Lane,
Gillingham,
SP8 4HX

Join us!

All patients registered with The Blackmore Vale Partnership and Gillingham Medical Practice welcome.

When?

Friday 19th Sept 2025
13:00pm - 17:00pm



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'FRAGMENTS': a lecture by Dr Jonathan Foyle

Wednesday 24 September 7pm Shaftesbury Arts Centre

We are thrilled to welcome back architectural historian, Dr Jonathan Foyle to deliver Shaftesbury Abbey Museum's autumn lecture. He is a passionate advocate for heritage, an erudite and engaging speaker with a deep knowledge and love of English medieval buildings and artefacts and the stories they tell.

'Shaftesbury Abbey is a fragment of what it used to be. But the history that surrounds us is inevitably fragmentary: documentary records are inevitably incomplete, all buildings change over time, and their relics are usually broken and dispersed- to the great advantage of museums. Nevertheless, though they can be 'lost in plain sight', or misattributed, piecemeal survivals from the past can be full of invaluable information when we inspect them closely. This talk discusses the information that can be gleaned from historic fragments from the abbey and beyond.'



Dr Foyle is a lecturer at the University of Bath, specialising in Building Conservation and Architectural History. His early career included eight years as Curator of Historic Royal Palaces, which led to a television career, contributing to 'Time Team', and presenting series such as BBC's 'Climbing Great Buildings'. He has authored numerous books and articles on English medieval buildings and cathedrals and is a well-known broadcaster and speaker.

Jonathan has been a great friend to Shaftesbury Abbey over the years, advising and collaborating on the SAVED excavation project and the recent installation of the fragmented Mass of St Gregory sculpture in the Abbey Museum. We are delighted he is returning to lecture on such a fascinating and relevant subject, 'Fragments'.

Tickets from Shaftesbury Arts Centre Box Office <https://shaftesburyartscentre.org.uk/>

Tel: 01747 854321

Adults £15 Friends of Shaftesbury Abbey & Students £13

Group	Date	Leader	Website
Art Appreciation	Monday 2-3.30pm – week 2	Gil Watkinson	click here
Ballroom/Latin Dancing	Friday 2-4pm – week 2	Barbara Hurst	click here
BSO	To be arranged	Jennifer Day	click here
Canasta I	Monday pm – weeks 1 & 3	Hazel Baker	click here
Canasta II	Wed p.m. – weeks 2 & 4	Barbara Watkinson	click here
Canasta III	Thursday am – weeks 2 & 4	Pam Hooker	click here
Churches/Places of Worship	To be Arranged 4 visits/year	Barbara Hurst	click here
Embroidery	Wednesday – pm week 2	Lesley Frost	click here
French for Fun 1	Tuesday/fortnightly - 10am	Ron Beard	click here
French for Fun 2	Wednesday /fortnightly-pm	Chris Stotesbury	click here
Garden Interest	Monday – am - week 2	Irene Gordon	click here
Genealogy	Monday – pm – week 4	Liz Greenway Valerie Hencken	click here
German Conversation	Wednesday - fortnightly-pm	Robert Light	click here
International Folk Dancing	Tuesday -pm – week 2	Barbara Robson	click here
International History	Wednesday–am week 3	Richard Sims	click here
Italian - Beginners	Tues 10am–11am weekly	Alison Rigby	click here
Italian Intermediate	Tues 2-3 weekly	Alison Rigby	click here
Italian Intermediate Plus	Tues 11.15am–12.15am weekly	Alison Rigby	click here
Knitting/Crafts	Tuesday – pm – week 2	Irene Gordon	click here
Literature	Mon-am on Zoom Weeks 1 & 3	Peter Rolfe	click here
Lunch Club	Friday – week 4	Michael Pittman	click here
Mahjong	Friday – 2pm weeks 2 & 4	Marion Pace	click here
Medieval World	Monday 10.15am – week 4	Denise Sims	click here
Music for Pleasure	Thursday – pm – weeks 2 & 4	Eileen Haddleton	click here
Natural History	Wed - 10-12.30pm – week 2	Janet Fenton	click here
Philosophy	By arrangement	Chris Spencer	click here
Poetry & Play Reading	Thursday – pm – week 1	Janet Botterill	click here
Reading Group	Friday 11-12pm – week 1	Colin & Anne Marsh	click here
Really Useful Group	Anyone who would like to help	Barbara Hurst	click here
Scrabble	Friday – am - weekly	Jill Page	click here
Shared Interests	Varied	Barbara Hurst	click here
Spite & Malice	Thursday – 2.00pm – Week 3	Sue Walker	click here
Table Tennis	Thursday 2.00pm - weekly	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury	click here
Walking	Tuesday - 10:30am - week 1	Ian Watson	click here
Writing for Pleasure	Mon 10.30am Weeks 2 & 4	Peter Rolfe	click here