

IN TOUCH OCTOBER 2025

Dear all

Welcome to October edition of In Touch. The nights are now drawing in as autumn is upon us, however we have lots to occupy us with our many groups and meetings.

The November meeting will include the AGM, a time to reflect on the past year and plan for the future of our organisation and how it is run. Can you help? The current members of the committee will be down to six, which means that we will be getting close to the point of having to shutdown sgu3a, which nobody wants, when we are in such a healthy position (our charity status means that we must have a treasurer, secretary and chairman).

Committee meetings are four times a year and last for approximately 2 hours, there is plenty of help and guidance available on the responsibilities of committee members. If you are interested in helping then please don't hesitate to contact myself or any member of the committee, or complete the application form which is on the website.

Best wishes

Roger Laidler
Chairman

u3a

Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

**TALKS AT THE
CHARLTON
REMEMBRANCE HALL**

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

**6th November
Justine Salkeld
The Work of the Dog's Trust"**

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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.

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.

6th November—Justine Salkeld—The Work of the Dog's Trust

Dog's Trust is the UK's largest canine welfare charity, known prior to 2023 as the National Canine Defence League. This talk will share the world of Dogs Trust, covering topics like key moments in our history, an insight into rehoming with Dogs Trust and your local Rehoming Centre, our free services, our campaigns and outreach projects, as well as information on the variety of ways you can support us.

Justine is the local Supporter Relations Officer for Dogs Trust, based out of the Salisbury Rehoming Centre. Her role within the Dogs Trust is focussed on the amazing supporters, providing a point of contact for anyone with queries about the charity, the work we do, and how we help both our two and four legged friends.

Andrew Chadwick
Andy Mead
Debbie Grimes
Gillian Andrews
Hannah Gibbons
Katie Crabb
Martyn Andrews
Pam Peters
Pat Mead
Paul Varney
Ruth Hall
Sandra Mackenzie
Sue Gibson



NEW CHAIRMAN OR CHAIRWOMAN URGENTLY NEEDED!

As those who attended September's monthly meeting will know, our chairman, Roger Laidler, will be standing down at the AGM, on November 6th, having completed the maximum nine years allowed for service on the management committee. If Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a is to continue, we urgently need a new chairman to take on the role. All the other committee members will be continuing, so there is a very experienced team in place, including our excellent secretary. Consequently, we need someone with chairing experience rather than knowledge of u3a management. Meetings take place every three months, so the time commitment isn't onerous. If you think you could take on the roll, or would like more information about what's involved, please contact Roger: 01747 863447 or roger46laidler@talktalk.net.

We are also looking for new committee members, preferably with experience in promotion, publicity and advertising, though any new blood would be helpful. You wouldn't have to join the committee if you have those skills and would prefer not to; you could simply help out when necessary, for specific tasks. If you are interested, please contact the secretary, details below.

Finally, several committee members are nearing the end of their terms, and we would like to plan progression by finding volunteers to 'shadow' key roles with a view to filling them when the time comes. If you would be interested in preparing for a future role in this way, please contact the secretary, Barbara Watkinson: bwatkinson1@sky.com 07747 126470.

Barbara Hurst

Group News

Music for Pleasure

As we usually continue to meet through August, we decided to have a little holiday. So eight of us had a carvery lunch at the King's Arms at East Stour. It was so successful that we agreed to have more social events in the future.

Next Thursday we will go to Mere to enjoy Roger's choice of music.

We are all looking forward to going to Poole to listen to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the end of October.

Eileen Haddleton

Play Reading and Poetry

We have had a fulfilling and enjoyable year. The group remains at a constant number; we lost one member and gained a new one, which was good. During the year I try to give the group a variety of playwrights to look at. The group like Ayckbourn for his humour but his plays often have a darkness about them. A lesser known one called *Man of the Moment* showed human nature at its nastiest, but had a wonderful ending. We've also read *Toad of Toad Hall* and some one acts. We tried some Shaw, *Saint Joan*, and next time we are going to read *Pygmalion*. Poetry sessions are much enjoyed. Individual choices are so varied, introducing us to new works and reminding us of old favourites. We have explored the themes of love, food, water and sea, seasons, etc.

Janet Botterill

Garden Interest

The September visit was to the Black Shed, a cut-flower farm and florest set up in 2017 at Blackmarsh



Farm in Sherborne by Paul and Helen Stickland. It is a huge plot, managed brilliantly with innovative ideas to reduce labour and produce flowers and foliage for customers who can arrange a visit and pick flowers for their bouquets as they wish for a fee. Black Shed also supplies all local flower shops and other venues.

We had the privilege of sharing Paul's knowledge, and we all managed to pick up gardening advice and hints which were invaluable.

My own outstanding recollections are of his amazing dried flower shed, full of his produce carefully bunched

in groups and hung from the ceiling, the very careful way they make use of everything which seeds itself, and the interesting method use to cut perennials down for winter was a revelation.

Irene Gordon

Possible New Music Group

Would anyone be interested in a recorded Classical Music Group? I know we already have Music for Pleasure for those with lighter tastes, and a Concert Outings group - I am thinking of a group for those of us who like to listen quietly in our homes to whole works. Members could take it in turns to present programmes of their choice, for example I particularly like chamber music, so that might feature heavily, along with some musical oddities...

If anyone interested would like to email me at barbara.robson524@gmail.com, I will organise a meeting to discuss possibilities and try and find a time/day that would suit everyone. It might be that an evening or a weekend afternoon would work best, as we all seem to have such busy lives!

Barbara Robson

Literature

I had a sabbatical in September, but I'm back in October to finish our study of Hardy's poetry. Then it's Miller's 'Death of a Salesman '
After that, who knows! Something good anyway.

Peter Rolfe

Walking Group

The Gillingham Walking Festival occurred in September and walkers from many walking groups, including S&G U3A, and individuals went along.

By chance, our October walk takes some of us back there. We will meet at the public car park by the library, near to Waitrose at 10.15 and will set-off at 10.30. The walk is about 4.5 miles long, taking in 3 stiles.

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

Ian Watson

Update on Italian at U3A

Thank you to all those of you who responded to the advertising for the Holiday Italian Course which I ran at the Abbey Museum and Gardens in Shaftesbury in August. The course was very successful. Additional lessons were offered beyond the course to more advanced students too. All proceeds went to the Abbey Museum and Gardens where I am a volunteer and several participants have now joined the three U3A Italian groups at the appropriate level this term.

All three groups have got off to a good start and you can see two members of the Beginners' group below already enjoying a game of Serpenti e Scale (Snakes and Ladders) almost entirely in Italian. Invaluable practice for the numbers from 1-100!!



Ciao e a presto!

Alison Rigby

MEMBERS AT PLAY (THOUGH DEADLY SERIOUS!)

Scenes from Scrabble



Photos provided by Jenny Page

Spite and Malice (Living up to its Name?)



Photos provided by Sue Walker

PROMOTING U3A AT GILLINGHAM WELLBEING FAIR

By any standards our participation in the Wellbeing Fair organised by the Social Prescribing Team at the Gillingham Medical Centre in Peacemarsh was a great success for u3a. Held at Riversmeet, there were plenty of visitors and our wonderful team of volunteers, drawn from the Really Useful Group, were kept busy all afternoon explaining who we are and what we can offer people in their 'third age'. I'm am very grateful to Jill, Jan, Jennifer, Sylvia and Bob for giving up their time to help promote u3a and being such marvellous ambassadors. The Social Prescribing Team are very impressed by what we have to offer, took a supply of our leaflets and are actively recommending u3a to their older patients.



In Aid of



Quiz Night Saturday 4 October Trinity Centre, Bimport, Shaftesbury

7.00 Start

Doors Open at 6.30

Gather your team of 6 and join us!

Quiz Master: Colin Fletcher

£18 per person includes a £10 Fish and Chip Supper (or vegetarian option)

Contact Lydia on
events.regs@gmail.com 07748 981935

Membership Renewal

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

If you haven't renewed your membership, be advised that membership will **close on the 31st of October 2025**. If you haven't renewed by then you will cease to be a member of SGU3A and your name will be removed from any groups of which you are currently a member. **Your membership card will not pass the scanner check at the AGM.**

Membership is from August 1st to July 31st. The fee for the year 2025/26 remains at £12 per person, plus £3.00 if you wish to receive a printed copy of "In Touch".

If none of your details (for example name, address, phone, email, membership, gift aid status) have changed you may just renew your membership 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 the October 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. You may then renew as above.

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 pass the scanner check at the October Meeting.

Peter Grange

Membership Secretary



Remembering Eric Midwinter, co-founder of u3a

Eric, alongside Peter Laslett and Michael Young, established u3a in 1982 with the belief that later life should be a time of continued learning, connection, and contribution. Eric's commitment to challenging negative stereotypes of ageing, and to creating spaces for older adults to share skills, knowledge, and friendship, has shaped the lives of hundreds of thousands of u3a members over four decades.

To many Eric was seen as the face of the movement. He was instrumental in promoting the concept to the wider world and, in his later life, continued to be an advocate for what u3a could achieve. In a conversation with Liz Thackray in 2022, as part of our 40th Anniversary celebrations, Eric reflected on the origins of u3a, recalling, “The starting point was the sense that older age should be looked on more positively, and less negatively... I find it difficult sometimes now to believe how bad the imagery of older age was in the 1970s... There was a sense of older age being over the hill, and oldness was very much identified as illness.”

Eric's vision has flourished over the years and we know that his legacy will continue to inspire new generations to embrace lifelong learning and positive ageing.



Gillingham Community Christmas Lunch

Three Rivers Community Partnership

Charity No. 1106977

Last year, some generous u3a members volunteered to help provide a full traditional lunch on Christmas Day for people who would otherwise be alone, and I'm hoping that we can again call on your support. This year will see us at North Dorset RBC, which we have booked for three days:

Christmas Eve: Prepare vegetables and set up.

Christmas Day: Transport guests to and from the venue

Register and welcome guests

Serve drinks

Help in the kitchen

Pot scrubbing and washing up (shifts of one hour)

Serve the guests and clear away

Hand out Christmas gifts

Boxing Day: Thorough clean (excluding the cooker, which will be professionally cleaned)

I'm the organiser this year and would be delighted to welcome volunteers willing to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in. People who helped last year told us they enjoyed the experience, especially those who brought younger family members along for a spot of spud-bashing.

At this point, I'm asking you to just think about whether you could help us. Anyone who helps on Christmas Day is welcome to join us for lunch if they would like to.

If you can help, or would like more information, please get in touch.

Barbara Hurst

barbara@pbhurst.com

01747 825646

Here be dragons

An exploration by Barry Reilly of Tolkien's Middle Earth and it's origins in the period of history known as "The Dark Ages".
Followed by refreshments.



Gillingham Library

Tuesday 7 October
2:30pm - 3:30pm

Booking
available via
eventbrite



For more information

 gillinghamlibrary@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

 **01747 822180**

 @DorsetLibraries

 DorsetLibraries



 dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/libraries

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