



IN TOUCH DECEMBER/ JANUARY

Dear Members

At the AGM on 6th November Roger Laidler stood down as Chairman after two years, with thanks from us for running the Committee and SGU3A.

I have been appointed by the committee as Chairman and look forward to working with the committee and running our U3A as a vibrant and healthy one.

We welcome three new members onto the committee, Ann Taylor, who has taken on the running of publicity, Robin Collins, who will now look after the website and Jennifer Day.

As the evenings close in, and the weather is very seasonal as I write this, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Libby Hague-Holmes
Chairman



u3a

Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

TALKS AT THE
CHARLTON
REMEMBRANCE HALL

4th December
Alan Jenkins
The Royal Visit that went Wrong
(and it wasn't my fault!)

5th February
Miranda Pender
Talk entitled "Censored".

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Registered Charity No 11078452
Editor: Barbara Hurst
01747 825646
barbara@pbhurst.com
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<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 December—Alan Jenkins—The Royal Visit that went Wrong (and it wasn't my fault!)

Alan will give an informative and amusing talk on the complex Police planning that goes behind a Royal Visit. He will then discuss a Royal visit he both planned and commanded - where everything that could go wrong did!"

Alan completed 32 years Police service in both Merseyside and Dorset Forces. He was involved in the Toxteth Riots, Miner's Strike and countless football disorders. He served at various stages in: Public Order, Dog Section Training, Counter Terrorism, the 2012 Olympics and of course Royal Visits!

5th February—Miranda Pender—Talk entitled "Censored"

An illustrated musical talk telling the intriguing tale of the author Norah C. James and the obscenity trial of 1929. A prolific and successful writer of romantic fiction from the 1930s through to the 1970s, Norah hit the headlines when her first novel, *Sleeveless Errand*, was banned under the Obscene Publications Act. The talk recounts how Norah went from being a well-brought-up young lady from a respectable family, to writing a book judged 'filthy' and 'indecent', and looks at how ideas of what is and is not acceptable in literature have changed over the years.

Miranda was born in London and lived most of her life in Essex. She has a BSc in Managerial and Administrative Studies from Aston University in Birmingham, and after a portfolio career in marketing, gardening, dog-sitting, and stable management, reinvented herself as a singer, songwriter, and artist. She has a selection of talks based around songs she has written which she presents to groups such as WIs, U3As, and Probus Clubs. Miranda now lives in Sherborne where she shares an art studio with her husband Mark. She has a particular interest in the subject of this talk, as Norah James was her grandfather's first cousin.

Elizabeth Brown
Karen Butler
Marina Datwiler
Martin Godber
Elizabeth Rose



Group News

Shared Interests

In spite of inclement weather, 20 members visited the Ancient Technology Centre in Cranborne



for a guided tour of this fascinating collection of reconstructed buildings and a glimpse into life in earlier times. Our guides, Colin and Robert, both volunteers at the

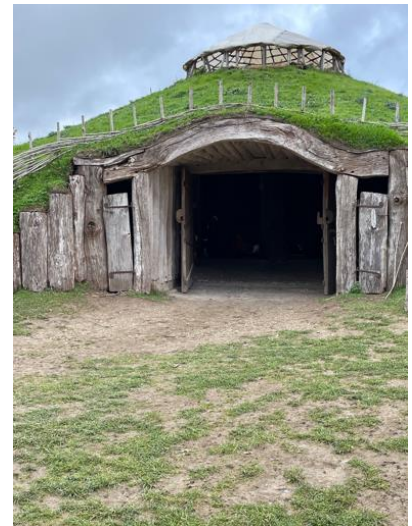
site, explained how it all began with a school project that has developed over time to a valuable educational facility popular



for school visits. In fact, two school groups were staying at the ATC during our visit, which meant we couldn't go into the earthhouse where a lesson was in progress.



We began our tour at a reconstruction created by *Time Team* of a Roman water lifting device, the remains of which were discovered in London. It is operational and children are put to work to draw water during school visits.



Moving on, we visited the neolithic log cabin, the Saxon



workshop, the Iron Age roundhouse, the Roman forge and we peered into the earthhouse,

before ending in the magnificent Viking longhouse, where we gathered around the fire pit for refreshments and to learn more about the project.

We were all very impressed by the quality of the reconstructions, certainly, but equally by the ingenuity and incredible skill of the people who lived in buildings just like these long ago.

Barbara Hurst

Photography

Our fledgling Photography Group now numbers eight and we're gathering photos to review at our first meeting in December. We're still sorting out stuff like meeting dates and venues but once that's done more information will appear on the web site's Group page.

The general aim is to explore a wide range of photo topics and subjects over the year, learn about different techniques and try stuff we may not have considered previously.

We'll also spend a bit of time looking at works by some of the famous names of history as well as many talented contemporary photographers.



Robin Collins

Garden Interest

Irene Gordon is stepping down as leader of the Garden Interest group. As many of you will know, she has done an incredible job over the past few years and will leave very big shoes to fill. But, hopefully, there is someone out there who would enjoy taking on the task of organising garden visits and winter meetings. The reason I'm reaching out via the newsletter is because that person may not now be a member of the group because Mondays aren't convenient. The new leader would be free to organise things differently, and moving to an alternative day would offer more opportunities because many gardens aren't open on Mondays. If you are interested in gardening, or just enjoy beautiful gardens, please consider volunteering to become the new leader. Although I need a nominal leader, this is something that a small group of friends might manage, and I would be happy to help in any way I can.



Barbara Hurst

Spanish

I've received enquiries about starting a Spanish group and would like to know whether there is sufficient interest to make it viable. If this is something that appeals to you, please let me know, especially if you would be willing to be its leader.



Barbara Hurst

Literature

We've finished our study of 'Far from the Madding Crowd' and our overview of Hardy's poems. Now we are halfway through Arthur Miller's 'Death of a Salesman'. Responses have been mixed on this one, though we have found plenty to discuss, as always. We much admired the Dustin Hoffman film of the play, available on YouTube. Next will be Utopia and Dystopia, courtesy of Aldous Huxley's 'Island' and 'Brave New World'. I wonder how many parallels we shall see with today's world.

Peter Rolfe

BSO Concerts



I am delighted with the response to the autumn trips: an average of over 40 per concert. Along with the 30% discount on the tickets this number helps keep the coach fares down, which makes it a very affordable evening out. I am delighted that enough members have booked for the January 14th concert, a lively Spanish themed concert for a dreary January evening.

Jennifer Day

Church Visits



21 members of the group recently had a very interesting tour of St Michael's, Mere, which dates from Saxon Times.

Following coffee and cake, we had a talk by one of the church wardens on the history of the church and how the local community shaped it over the years. A video presentation highlighted the recent work to carry out essential repairs to the tower, stonework and clock faces, all funded by an award from the National Lottery. The church warden then took us around the interior of the church pointing out many interesting features.



Roger Laidler

Quiz Group

Only three people have expressed an interest in forming a Quiz group so far. Obviously, that isn't enough to make it viable, so if that is something you would like, please let me know as soon as possible: barbara@pbhurst.com or 01747 825646.

POSSIBLE NEW GROUP!

Gold Hill Shanties



Volunteer singing crew wanted for a new group
Singing is good for the brain, the memory, the soul and the body.
It floods the brain and body with endorphins that
make you feel good and truly last.

You may think that you can't sing. But, firstly, a shanty group is not a choir and, secondly, sailors were not chosen for their voices.

With the interest and expansion of Shanty groups such as Tic –Toc's (Nathan Evans') Wellerman and the Fishermen's Friends, the vision for the new group is to get together and sing and explore the beauty of new and old sea shanties and songs of the sea *and occasionally also Shaftesbury, Dorset and Country Life*. We will be voices only, both male and female, but, with other occasional instruments welcome if they fit in with the group and any particular shanty. We will also explore shanty writing and processes, with encouragement (but, definitely no obligation) to write new songs.

Based in Shaftesbury's Mitre pub, weekly for an hour or so and led by an experienced musician with special interest in shanty writing and singing; the idea is simply to sing and enjoy ourselves, expand our friendships and learning and entertain the public occasionally. (Any profits to selected charities.)

The first meeting is on Thursday 4th December at 4pm (and then weekly.) The Mitre (SP7 8JE) is close to the top of Gold Hill, in central Shaftesbury. We will have a quick discussion on the way forward, give introductions and register interest etc and follow this with a sing-along session comprising of a few well known shanties. Song sheets and explanations will be provided.

The cost is £2 per person (cash) per session to cover expenses.

David Wall
dorsetnvs@hotmail.com

RUG (Really Useful Group)

If you're new to Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a, you may not be aware that we maintain a list of volunteers willing to step in if the committee needs help. Some act as stewards, some assist with the sound system and recently some manned our stall at the Gillingham Wellbeing Fair, to give a few examples of how valuable these members are. If you would like to be added to the list, you will only be contacted should we need an extra pair of hands, but you would be under no obligation whatever. If you would like to help in that way, please get in touch.

Barbara Hurst

barbara@pbhurst.com

Advanced Italian



Unlike the other three courses offered, this is not a taught course but more of an opportunity for members who have previously lived/worked/studied in Italy to keep up their spoken language. The aim is to share our interest in and knowledge of both the country and the language and have fun along the way!

Meetings will be weekly on Tuesdays, from 3.15–4.15pm. If you are interested, please contact me via the website.

Alison Rigby

News from Trading Standards

Food traceability from farm to fork

Food traceability has become a cornerstone of the UK food industry, ensuring safety, quality, and consumer confidence.

Food traceability involves documenting and verifying each stage of production, processing and distribution. For the UK meat market this means that when farmed livestock such as sheep, cattle and pigs are born, each is given their own identification, such as unique ear tag numbers. All the animal's movements are then recorded throughout its life. When given feed and medicines this too is recorded, so checks can be made to make sure that nothing compromises the safety of the finished product that we eat.

The Dorset Council Trading Standards Animal Health and Welfare Team regularly check livestock keepers to make sure that all necessary records are kept. When on farm they also check on the welfare of the livestock to ensure that they are fit and healthy and are kept in suitable conditions.

In other areas of food production, the Animal Health and Welfare Team carry out checks on arable farms to make sure herbicides and pesticides are used safely, and also to check that the finished products are stored in a safe environment, so preventing any chance of contamination.

Advanced technologies like blockchain and radio frequency identification tags are increasingly being used to enhance food traceability. These tools allow real-time tracking and can provide consumers with detailed information about the meat they buy. Consumers can scan QR codes on some meat packaging to view its full history. This helps people make more informed choices, supporting local farmers or opting for ethically sourced products.

The importance of traceability became clear during past food safety crises, such as the horsemeat scandal and more recently with animal feed contaminated with botulism. These incidents showed the importance for robust systems to maintain trust in the food supply chain.

Read Easy Christmas Appeal



Our Christmas wish is for more books for our adult readers to borrow while on their journey to becoming confident readers

If you would like to gift us a book or two this Christmas we've teamed up with Amazon to make it happen

Follow the link below to gift a book to Read Easy

https://www.amazon.co.uk/registries/gi/guest-view/1AJV5R036YYR7?ref_=cm_sw_r_cp_ud_ggr-subnav-share_EWK9T35HRBFFW7HYKVD2_1

or use the QR code



The Celtic Fire Festivals

An exploration by Barry Reilly of the magical, mystical world of the Celts through their myths, their legends and their festivals. Join us as the first festival of the year, Imbolc, draws near. Followed by refreshments.



Gillingham Library

Tuesday 27 January
2:30pm - 3:30pm

Booking
available via
eventbrite



For further information:

 gillinghamlibrary@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

 **01747 822180**

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 dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/libraries

Could you lay an extra place at your table this Christmas?

UK charity seeks hosts to share Christmas with
an international university student far from home

Festive Stays 2025 – Short Version

Could you lay an extra place at your table this Christmas for an international student? Each year the charity EIL UK receives hundreds of applications from international students studying at British universities hoping to experience Christmas or New Year in a British home. If you could offer friendship and host an overseas university student for a 3-night stay between 24th and 27th December 2025, drop us a line at host@eiluk.org to find out more about this rich and rewarding experience and how you can be part of the HOST UK programme.

Longer Version

Could you lay an extra place at your table this Christmas for an international student? Each year the charity EIL UK receives hundreds of applications from international students studying at British universities hoping to experience Christmas or New Year in a British home.

Calvin Hewitt, EIL UK's Volunteers Manager says "Volunteer hosts tell us how much international students add to their Christmas and New Year festivities. Hosts enjoy sharing their festive traditions and the students are so appreciative and grateful for the friendship and fun at a time of year when everyone who's far away from their family hopes to find a home from home."

Christine and Gervin have been hosting international students for 28 years for festive and weekend visits. Christine told us "We have enjoyed meeting people from all over the world giving us a greater understanding of the students' countries and cultures and even tasting food cooked by some of the students. They in turn have much appreciated meeting a British family and learning about our traditions and food, especially at Christmas."

Would you like to welcome an overseas student into your home this year? If you could offer friendship and host an overseas university student for a 3-night stay between 24th and 27th December 2025 or a weekend stay at any time of the year, email host@eiluk.org to find out more about this rich and rewarding experience and how you can be part of the HOST UK programme.

Current Groups

Group	Date	Leader
Art Appreciation	Monday 2-3.30pm – week 2	Gil Watkinson
BSO	To be arranged	Jennifer Day
Canasta I	Monday pm – weeks 1 & 3	Hazel Baker
Canasta II	Wed p.m. – weeks 2 & 4	Barbara Watkinson
Canasta III	Thursday am – weeks 2 & 4	Pam Hooker
Church Visits	To be Arranged 4 visits/year	Barbara Hurst
Embroidery	Wednesday – pm week 2	Lesley Frost
French for Fun 1	Tuesday/fortnightly - 10am	Ron Beard
French for Fun 2	Wednesday /fortnightly-pm	Chris Stotesbury
Garden Interest	Monday – am - week 2	Irene Gordon
Genealogy	Monday – pm – week 4	Liz Greenway Valerie Hencken
German Conversation	Wednesday - fortnightly-pm	Robert Light
International History	Wednesday–am week 3	Richard Sims
Italian - Beginners	Tues 10am–11am weekly	Alison Rigby
Italian Intermediate	Tues 2-3 weekly	Alison Rigby
Italian Intermediate Plus	Tues 11.15am–12.30am weekly	Alison Rigby
Italian Advanced	Tues 3.15-4.15pm weekly	Alison Rigby
Knitting/Crafts	Tuesday – pm – week 2	Irene Gordon
Literature	Mon-am on Zoom Weeks 1 & 3	Peter Rolfe
Lunch Club	Friday – week 4	Michael Pittman
Mahjong	Friday – 2pm weeks 2 & 4	Marion Pace
Medieval World	Monday 10.15am – week 4	Denise Sims
Music for Pleasure	Thursday – pm – weeks 2 & 4	Eileen Haddleton
Natural History	Wed - 10-12.30pm – week 2	Janet Fenton
Philosophy	By arrangement	Chris Spencer
Photography	TBA	Robin Collins
Poetry & Play Reading	Thursday – pm – week 1	Janet Botterill
Reading Group	Friday 11-12pm – week 1	Colin & Anne Marsh
Really Useful Group	Anyone who would like to help	Barbara Hurst
Scrabble	Friday – am - weekly	Jill Page
Shared Interests	Varied	Barbara Hurst
Spite & Malice	Thursday – 2.00pm – Week 3	Sue Walker
Table Tennis	Thursday 2.00pm - weekly	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury
Walking	Tuesday - 10:30am - week 1	Ian Watson
Writing for Pleasure	Mon 10.30am Weeks 2 & 4	Peter Rolfe

For availability and further information, contact the group leaders via the website:

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