

IN TOUCH

MARCH

2026

Dear All

Spring brings a welcome sense of renewal, friendship, and fresh opportunities for learning together. I do hope I'm not being too optimistic; the sun is shining today and the daffodils are all blooming.

As we look ahead, I encourage you to take part in new activities and reconnect with fellow members.

Your enthusiasm and commitment are what make our u3a community so special.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement.

Warm regards

Libby Hague-Holmes
Chairman

u3a

**Shaftesbury
and
Gillingham**

Forthcoming Events

**TALKS AT THE
CHARLTON
REMEMBRANCE HALL**

**5th March
Dr John Twibell
Electrocution, Electromurder:
accident, suicide**

**2nd April
Trevor Ryder
The Making of the Dorset Landscape**

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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.

Dr John Twibell –

Talk entitled “Electrocution, Electromurder” (accident, suicide)

This talk will explain the circumstances required to cause an electric shock and how this might be fatal. In modern installations chances of getting a shock are very much reduced; it normally needs two simultaneous faults to occur. Dr Twibell will give several instances of electrocutions.

Films and TV often show entirely unrealistic electromurder situations. Most attempted electromurder scenarios are along such lines and the victim usually survives to tell the tale, and various scenes will be described.

Dr John Twibell joined the UK Govt. (Home Office) Forensic Science Service in 1974 and trained as a fire, explosion and electrical investigator. The HOFSS became the FSS Agency in 1991. He left the FSS in 2000 to become a private forensic consultant and taught on forensic science degree courses at three universities. He also taught fire and explosion investigation on specialised courses to fire and police officers.

Trevor Ryder–

Talk entitled “The Making of the Dorset Landscape”

From the point of view of the Geologist, Dorset is included in that part of the British Isles which is often referred to as the Wessex Basin. With the oldest rocks in the county dating from a mere 200 million years ago, it is one of the newer additions to the geological jigsaw which is the British Isles. For most of that 200-million-year period, what is now Dorset lay beneath a warm, tropical sea; what we now call “rocks” were soft layers of sediment. It is only in the last 40 million years that remote tectonic forces lifted Dorset from the seabed, creating the template for the landscape we see today.

Trevor, a graduate in both Geography and Geology, spent his career teaching both subjects in Devon. Following his move to Somerset, he now leads the Somerton U3A Geology group. One of his main interests is the relationship between Geology and scenery which is the theme of this talk.

David Cohen
Julie Crick
Adam Gallimore
Jane Gibson
Lynne Goulding
Jeffrey Hall
Helen Hives

Jacqueline Jeal
Caroline Jones
Susan Kinver
Valerie Ralph
Nicholas Warner
Shirley Yeo
Jillian la Villette Robins



Group News

Spite and Malice



And they look so innocent...

Sue Walker

Literature

Our last session on 'Brave New World' is on the first Monday in March, unless we can't stop discussing some point or other. Then an overview of 'Island', also by Huxley but a Utopian vision, showing an ideal but doomed society. Then a long Shakespeare study: two plays and a study of the player companies, the theatres, something about the life and professional career of W.S. as I think it unfolded. The two plays are 'Two Gentlemen of Verona', his first, and 'The Tempest', nearly his last, both quite short. After the Shakespeare, perhaps 'Jane Eyre'. Who can tell!

Sadly, one of the group, Roger Barrett, has died. Roger started the Literature Group and ran it for two years before asking me to take over. He was in fact instrumental in setting up our u3a and we would like to acknowledge his contribution towards the thriving organisation we all enjoy today. He will be greatly missed.

Peter Rolfe

Church Visits

Our next tour will be to The Priory Church of St Mary, St Katherine and All Saints in Eddington at 10.30am on Friday 20th March. This beautiful



Grade 1 listed church is a fine example of the Decorative style, with a fascinating history. There is no charge, but donations would be very welcome. No doubt some of us will be booking lunch at the local pubs: The Three Daggers in Edington, Longs Arms in South Wraxall or The Duke, in Bratton. Perhaps some hardy souls might also fancy a visit to the famous Westbury White Horse nearby, which offers spectacular views of the Wiltshire countryside.

If you would like to join us, please let me know.

Also, if you are willing to offer a lift. I'm happy to take three people from Gillingham. We aim to ensure that nobody misses out because they don't drive.

Barbara Hurst
barbara@pbhurst.com
01747 825646

Quizzers

The newly revived Quiz Group has 16 members and we have our first outing to Compton Abbas Airfield on 27th February where the entrance fee will be donated to the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. Should anyone wish to join the group please email me on billmc239@gmail.com.

Bill McIntyre

Photography

Our February meeting was a very varied and interesting one with Seasonal Snaps covering everything from hot summer sun to Christmas decorations - with frosty mornings and a little bit of flooding thrown in for good measure. We also had a bit of time to catch up with our 'In the Kitchen' topic from the January meeting that didn't happen. These subjects are chosen to challenge people to 'think outside the box' when it comes to photography and our group rose to the occasion very well. One of our members also turns out to have a seemingly encyclopaedic knowledge of plants, which goes to show you never know what new things you'll discover at a u3a group meeting!



Robin Collins

Canasta 2

Are you a canasta player? Canasta 2 is a very friendly group who enjoy playing in pairs. We play twice a month.

We are looking for two players to join us on the second Wednesday of the month in Shaftesbury, and one player to join us on the fourth Wednesday of the month in Gillingham.

If you are interested in learning more about us please contact Barbara Watkinson on bwatkinson1@sky.com

A MESSAGE FROM THIRD AGE TRUST

(the national representative body for the u3a movement in the UK)

We would like to invite your members to take part in a national u3a survey that explores what u3a means to them and how being part of u3a has impacted their lives.

This survey is open to **all members** and is a great opportunity for members to share their experiences and support their u3a to thrive into the future. The feedback will be used to grow membership, demonstrate the impact of u3a and raise our profile.

To take part:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/u3a-me>

To thank members for their time, they will be entered in a John Lewis £100 prize draw. The survey closes on the **31st March**.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Port Regis Concerts

The next concert is on Saturday the 14th March at 5.00pm. Adrian Brendel (cello) and Viv McLean (piano) will be performing works by Beethoven, Prokofiev and Faure.

The concerts are organised by Ruth Rogers, who grew up in Shaftesbury. All the performers are international artists, and tickets are available at the door. The cost is £20, which can be paid on the door, and includes a glass of wine in the interval. It is advisable to arrive at about 4.30pm and the concert finishes around 7.30.

A message from The Exchange, Sturminster Newton

Dear U3A Members,

We are delighted to invite you to an Evening with Edward Fox OBE on Friday 13 March, where he will join us for a conversation filled with insight, reflection, and stories from his remarkable life in the arts.

Edward Fox is one of Britain's most distinguished stage and screen actors, known for his roles in *The Day of the Jackal*, *A Bridge Too Far*, *Gandhi*, and many acclaimed theatre productions. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear him speak about his craft, his career, and the experiences that have shaped his work.

Date: Friday 13 March - 7:30pm

Venue: The Exchange, Old Market Hill, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1FH

Tickets: £25 Per adult

Box Office Number: 01258 475137

https://theexchange.savoyssystems.co.uk/TheExchange.dll/TSelectItems.waSelectItemsPrompt.TcsWebMenuItem_0.TcsWebTab_0.TcsPerformance_1466270.TcsSection_1135

A message from Gillingham Library

To mark Women's History Month, for the whole of March Gillingham Library is celebrating recipes and the role they have played, and continue play, in women's lives. There will be a display of the historical recipes of the local Freame family, and a display of recipes passed down through generations of women, including pictures of Gillingham Library staff's attempts to make these historical dishes. We will also be honouring the female chefs who've made it onto our screens with a vibrant book display. Come and be inspired!

Join Gillingham's Great British Spring Clean

Volunteers Needed

Please join us for our
Community Litter Pick

Saturday 21st March 2026
Meet at the Town Hall 10am

To get involved, please contact
the Town Hall on 01747 823588

Let's work together to keep Gillingham
clean, green, and litter-free!

**EQUIPMENT
PROVIDED**



**KEEP
BRITAIN
TIDY.**

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
Churches/Places of Worship	To be Arranged 4 visits/year	Barbara Hurst
Embroidery	Wednesday – pm week 3	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	Barbara Watkinson
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–12.15am weekly	Alison Rigby
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
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
Spanish	Fortnightly Tuesday 10.30-11.30	Maya Deyes
Spite & Malice	Thursday – 2.00pm – Week 3	Sue Walker
Table Tennis	Thursday 2.00pm - weekly	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury
The Quizzers	By arrangement	Bill McIntyre
Writing for Pleasure	Mon 10.30am Weeks 2 & 4 via	Peter Rolfe

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

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