

IN TOUCH

JUNE

2026

Dear All

As we reach the halfway point of the year it is wonderful to be enjoying such beautiful warm weather, maybe the heatwave a bit too much! But the sunshine and the longer summer days provide the perfect backdrop for the many activities, outings and gatherings taking place across our u3a. Whether indoors or outdoors, there is plenty to do and something for everyone to get involved in, perhaps trying a new group or supporting one that is just starting. I wish you all a happy and healthy June as we look forward to the second half of another successful year together.

Libby Hague-Holmes
Chairman

u3a

Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

TALKS AT THE
CHARLTON
REMEMBRANCE HALL

7th May
Christopher Lunn
Why Stop and Look at a Statue?

4th June
Paul Barwick
WPC Yvonne Fletcher
And the Search for Justice

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Copies of this newsletter can be
found on our website:
<https://sgu3a.u3asite.uk>



Christine Courage
Kevin King
Janet Way

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.

Paul Barwick

WPC Yvonne Fletcher and the Search for Justice

In this tragic tale we recall the murder of WPC Yvonne Fletcher, a young Police Constable from Semley who was killed by agents of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi as she stood on duty outside the Libyan Peoples Bureau in April 1984. We remember the events and the aftermath that reverberated around the world. We try to uncover the failure of British Intelligence that led to this terrible tragedy.

Paul is a retired Police officer after 34 years service with a career background in the national intelligence and security arena. He is a registered public speaker and is also a London Tour guide.

Steve Herra

The Mysterious Disappearance of the Irish Crown Jewels

What were the Crown Jewels referred to by the Irish locals? Why was the safe kept in the library rather than the strongroom? When waking up after an alcoholic slumber, what did Arthur Vickers find wrapped around his neck? Who left the Crown Jewels on Arthur Vickers desk? Who found the front door and strongroom door open? What was the reward to recover the jewels? Which famous author offered his help in solving the case? Who was the famous brother of Francis Shackleton? What happened to the files in Scotland Yard? What did the King say when presented with the secret report?

Steve is a third generation of Cunard seafarers, his last ship was QE2 where he was one of the Pursers, and on leaving Cunard he served in the Royal Naval Reserve. During the past years he has conducted tours of both Cunard and P&O ships when they are in Southampton, but sadly when the pandemic struck these ceased. He has been delivering talks to U3A, Probus, WI and many local history groups for the last nine years.

Exploring u3a Nationally

As I'm sure you know, Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a is a branch of a national organisation, but have you explored what is on offer on their website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk>? There are all sorts of opportunities for you to enrich your membership, with online learning, interest groups, workshops, a radio podcast and plenty of news from other branches. You can also sign up for *u3a Matters*, the member magazine. It's well worth your time to browse what's on offer, especially if online activity would be more convenient for you than travelling to meetings.

Group News

Shared Interests

If you would like to get out and about more but don't because it's not much fun by yourself, the Shared Interest group could be exactly what you need to brighten your life. Whatever your interests, whether it's sport, art, history, festivals, or just enjoying the countryside, there will be members of the group who would like to join you if you would like company. How it works is this: if you want to do something, just give me the details and I'll put the word out among the group. Then I'll put you in touch with everyone who has responded so that you can make your arrangements. It's a great way to make new friends. Let me know if you would like to join: barbara@pbhurst.com

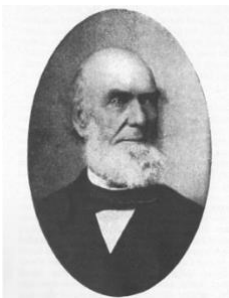
More Shared Interests

Would you like to visit Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens? Jennifer Day would love to go and wonders whether anyone would like to join her. Take a look at their website: <https://www.abbotsburygardens.co.uk> and if that's something that would interest you, please let me know: barbara@pbhurst.com



Still More Shared Interests

I have organised a tour of John Boyd Textiles Ltd in Castle Cary from 2.00pm on 9th June. It may seem a bit strange to tour a factory that makes luxury textiles out of horse hair, but people who have visited tell me it is fascinating. The cost is £10 and you can find out more on their website: <https://johnboydtextiles.co.uk>.



Regrettably, the tour is not suitable for those with mobility problems.

If you would like to join us, please let me know: barbara@pbhurst.com or 01747 825646. I encourage ride-sharing and I'm happy to offer a lift from Gillingham if anyone needs it.



Barbara Hurst

BSO Concerts

The series of concerts, chosen by the members, that the group will attend next season is as follows:

28th October: Eastern Odyssey
Mozart: Don Giovanni Overture
Saint-Saëns: Piano Concerto No. 2
Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade

19th November: Imperial Majesty
Walton: Crown Imperial March
Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5 'Emperor'
Tchaikovsky: Suite No. 3

9th December: Winter Warmers
Corelli: Concerto Grosso 'Christmas Concerto'
Vivaldi: Autumn/Winter from The Four Seasons
Mussorgsky: A Night on the Bare Mountain

20th January: Kissed by a Rose
Bizet: Carmen Suite No. 1
Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 4
Rachmaninov: Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini

3rd March: Roman Snapshots
Khachaturian: Sparacus Suite
Berio: Folk Songs
Respighi: Pines of Rome

17th March: Beethoven Ascending
Beethoven: Coriolan Overture
Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'
Beethoven: Cantata on the Death of Emperor Josef II

To be clear, there's no obligation to go to *all* of these concerts if you join the BSO Concerts group. It's entirely up to you which, if any, you go to, so why not join the group, via the website, so you can be kept informed?

Jennifer Day

Literature

We're making rapid progress through *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, after two sessions of discussing Shakespeare's early life and his arrival in London at a time when the playhouse world was beginning its sensational rise in popularity. We've looked at some of the player companies and have discussed the theatres and how Shakespeare's plays changed with time and performance. We now have a better idea of the relationship between the quartos and the First Folio and collaboration between playwrights. We've looked briefly at the authorship question and concluded that Shakespeare did in fact write his plays but with considerable help from other writers for some of them. When we have finished this early play, we'll discuss how his career developed and then look closely at a favourite late play, *The Tempest*.

Peter Rolfe

Sunday Singletons' Lunch Club



Some u3a branches have a Sunday Lunch group especially for people who are on their own, and I'm wondering whether this is something we could start. Much like our lunch club, the group would meet at a local pub to enjoy whatever is on offer in a warm, friendly environment with pleasant company. It's just not worth the time and effort to cook a Sunday roast for one, and rather lonely eating it alone, too, so this would be a great way for singletons to make Sunday special. If that's something you might be interested in, please let me know: barbara@pbhurst.com.

Church Visits

I have arranged a church visit to Semley church on Thursday 11th June



This is to compliment our monthly talk on June 4th, given by Paul Barwick, about the shooting of WPC Yvonne Fletcher.

I suggest we meet at the church at 2.00pm to look at her grave before Andrew Oatts, the Church Warden, meets us at 2.30pm to show us the Henry Hagg window in memory of her and tells us a lot more about this very interesting church, particularly the statue in the church grounds – it is quite a story.

Donations to the church would be appreciated, either as cash or there is a card reader.

I have arranged lunch for those that want to join us at the Benett Arms nearby – meeting at 12.15pm for a meal at 12.30pm, which will need to be chosen in advance.

If this interests you, please email me at jennifer@farmadmin.co.uk.

Jennifer Day

And Even More Shared Interests

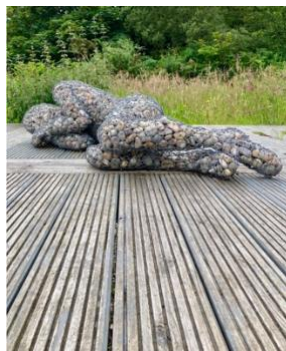
I wish to tell you about a visit four of us made to the Cotswold Sculpture Park at Somerford Keynes just



north of Malmsbury. The entry fee was just £8.00 for us older ones and we were transfixed by 173 sculptures created by many artists and set in this beautiful 10 acre, lightly managed, garden/woodland setting. Each artist had their own style,



working in many different materials, and prices ranged from £25.00 to £22,000.00. We were amazed by the whole thing and enjoyed a very reasonable vegan lunch and cakes. Barbara, Sylvia, Ann and I will definitely be going back there again; I highly recommend it. I was the driver and we all shared the fuel costs.



Jennifer Day

Italian Groups Update



Now that we are in early summer, several members of our groups have been heading off to Italy to try out their Italian. Those who haven't made it to Italy yet, enjoyed a Viva Italia! evening at Shaftesbury Arts Centre on 8th May which included a cultural quiz, singing Bella Ciao! in Italian and sampling a range of 'aperitivi'. In addition to our regular groups, we are now meeting for an Italian 'Drop-in' every Friday (in term time) from 2-3.30pm at Shaftesbury Arts Centre and this is a good opportunity to keep up our fluency. We are very grateful to Rosemary for offering us her home and garden for an end of term Italian lunch in early July.

Members of the U3A French groups may be interested to hear that we intend to run a French cultural evening at Shaftesbury Arts Centre in the autumn. More details to follow in due course.

Alison Rigby

Photography

I'm pleased to report that the group continues to grow. This month we reviewed members' pictures on the theme of 'Textures'. In the end this included everything from sea shells to duck feathers and cauliflower to rusty gate catches.

The full set of pictures can be viewed at [Textures May 2026](#) .



Robin Collins

Community News

Lots of Advice from Trading Standards

Food allergies and intolerances

If you have a food allergy or intolerance, it is important that you have the information you need to make safe food choices. There are allergen labelling laws that require food businesses to provide you with information about what is in your food, whether you are eating out or making your own food at home.

In the UK there are 14 legally identified allergens that food businesses should inform you about if they are used as an ingredient in foods. These are:

Cereals containing gluten such as wheat, **Eggs, Fish, Milk, Celery, Crustaceans** such as prawns, **Molluscs** such as oysters, **Mustard, Sesame, Peanuts, Soybean, Lupin, Tree nuts** such as walnuts and **Sulphites** and sulphur dioxide

There are lots of ways that businesses can provide allergen information to their customers. They can be emphasised in an ingredients list on the packaging, be listed on menus or signage next to the food, or be given on websites. In some situations, signage may tell you how you can obtain the allergen information verbally, for example, you may be advised to speak to a member of staff who will ensure the information is made available to you.

If you have an allergy or food intolerance it is important that you check the allergen information that is given carefully and if appropriate ask staff about your own particular needs, so you can be sure that the food you buy is safe for you to eat. If you are unsure or you don't feel the person you are speaking to understands your needs, don't be afraid to ask for the manager or someone who may be better able to help you.

If you come across a business who is not meeting allergen information requirements you can report this to Dorset Council Trading Standards by visiting www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer or phoning the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133. Your information will be passed to Trading Standards.

Support when caught out by scams

Anyone can be caught out by a scam, but support is there for you. Criminal tactics can affect people of any age or background, and these crimes are becoming more sophisticated.

Incidents range from doorstep callers to fake online offers and misleading phone calls, and they are getting more sophisticated by the day. Learning what to look out for can help prevent harm before it happens, such as:

- unexpected calls, emails or messages asking for bank details, passwords or PINs
- anyone pressuring you to act quickly, for example to pay a bill, transfer money, or click a link
- offers that seem too good to be true, including prizes, investments or discounted home repairs
- callers claiming to be from your bank, a delivery company, or the council, but refusing to give verifiable details
- doorstep visitors who will not leave, insist on starting work straight away, or ask for cash up front

Dorset Council's Trading Standards team works closely with Citizens Advice, Dorset Police, Victim Support Dorset and Age UK. Reports through the Citizens Advice consumer helpline help the council understand the latest scams and who may need support.

The council has also signed the national Fraud and Scams Victim Charter. The Charter sets clear standards for how organisations should support anyone affected, recognising the emotional, financial and practical impact these crimes can have.

Cllr Gill Taylor, Dorset Council's Cabinet Member for Health and Housing, said:

"By signing the Fraud and Scams Victim Charter, we are making a clear commitment to treat every victim with dignity, respect and compassion. No one should ever feel ashamed to come forward. If you are worried about yourself, a friend or family member, please reach out. Support is here for you, and we will do everything we can to help."

If you have made a payment in response to a scam, contact your bank as soon as possible. Get advice from the Citizens Advice consumer helpline – call 0808 223 1133 or find out more on their website at citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer

Trading Standards, real gold

The hallmarking of gold and silver dates back to 1300. Introduced by King Edward I it aimed to protect standards and prevent craftsmen committing fraud when making jewellery. The first hallmark stamp was a leopard's head which symbolised the King's mark of authentication. The actual word 'hallmark' didn't come into use until the 15th century when craftsmen took their artefacts to Goldsmiths Hall in London to be checked for quality and content. Once checked to be of the correct standard the quality mark was applied at the Hall, hence the word 'hallmark'. Today there are four hallmarking offices, known as assay offices, in London, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Sheffield.

Hallmarking techniques and regulations have been fine-tuned since those early days. The current legislation that governs hallmarking was created by the 1973 Hallmarking Act. Hallmarking is enforced by Trading Standards.

If a jeweller makes items of silver, gold, platinum or since 2010 palladium, and wants to sell them, then must get them assayed to guarantee they meet the relevant precious metal standard. The hallmark is then applied so it is legal to sell.

The last national survey carried out looking at fake jewellery confirmed that up to a third of precious metal products supplied online were un-hallmarked and could therefore be fake. Jewellery fraud has consistently been an issue in the precious metal industry where counterfeit items can be made and sold at a high price to the unsuspecting customer.

Since that survey the price of gold has risen by well over 200%. That is more potential profit for fraudsters wanting to pass off fake precious metal. Some fraudsters even try to promote investments in precious metals. When prices rise so do people's interest, so scams can become more common.

If you believe you may have bought fake jewellery or have fallen to an investment scam, then please report it at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer or phone the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133.

PRESENTED BY
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SIR DEREK JACOBI

IN CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD CLIFFORD

We would be delighted to welcome you to The Exchange on Wednesday 10th June for a conversation filled with insight and wit. Sir Derek will be exploring the roles that defined his career and the experiences that shaped his life in the arts.

With the venue conveniently located in the heart of Sturminster Newton, this is a wonderful chance to experience West End-calibre storytelling without the travel.

Tickets are available now for £30: <https://stur-exchange.co.uk/events/sir-derek-jacobi-in-conversation/> **Box Office:** 01258 475137

We look forward to seeing you there.

CURRENT GROUPS

Group	Date	Leader
Art Appreciation	Monday 2-3.30pm – week 2	Gil Watkinson
BSO Concerts	To be arranged	Jennifer Day
Café y galletas	Tuesday mornings weekly	Anita Adams
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
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 Advanced Conversation	Tues 3.15-4.15	Alison Rigby
Italian Complete 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
Music for Pleasure	Thursday – pm – weeks 2 & 4	Eileen Haddleton
Natural History	Wed - 10-12.30pm – week 2	Janet Fenton
Photography	Thursday 10.00-12.00 week 3	Robin Collins
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 Intermediate	Fortnightly, currently flexible	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
Theatre Visits	Matinees, 3-4 times per year	Roger Laidler
Writing for Pleasure	Mon 10.30am Weeks 2 & 4 via	Peter Rolfe