

IN TOUCH

OCTOBER

2026

Dear All

The new season is taking off with great energy and excitement. It's been a fantastic start, with a record number of members attending the September talk, with plenty of fresh opportunities, new challenges, and positive momentum.

We have two new groups starting and we are looking forward to building on this strong beginning and seeing what the season has in store.

I am looking forward to getting to know new members and meeting any visitors.

Libby Hague-Holmes
Chairman



Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

TALKS AT THE CHARLTON REMEMBRANCE HALL

1st October
Dr Peter Guest, FSA MCIfA
The Hinton St Mary Mosaic

5th November
Wayne Newport
Pantomime:
the classic British tradition

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& Gillingham u3a
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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 £3 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 Peter Guest, FSA MCIfA

The Hinton St Mary Mosaic: new insights into an early Christian community in Roman Britain

The unique Hinton St Mary mosaic, on display in The British Museum since 1965 consists of an 8m by 5m high-status tessellated floor with a central roundel showing a man wearing a tunic and cloak in front of the Christogram (Chi-Rho). Scholars have suggested the figure is one of the earliest representations of Jesus Christ from the ancient world, and probably the first to be found on a mosaic. It is one of the icons of Roman Britain and has an important story to tell about the earliest Christian communities in the British Isles. Despite the obvious significance of the mosaic, however, very little is actually known about the buildings to which it belonged, or the people who commissioned it and lived with it. A new collaborative research project led by The British Museum aims to answer the many questions that remain about the mosaic, and to provide a better understanding of its wider context in the history of late Roman Britain. This talk will present some of the ground-breaking results of the recent archaeological excavations at the site that suggests the mosaic adorned the floor of the earliest purpose-built 'church' in Britain.

Dr Peter Guest is an archaeologist and numismatist with over 30 year's experience as a finds specialist, excavator, researcher, teacher and curator. He specialises in the Roman period and is particularly interested in Britannia and the north western provinces, the Roman army and frontiers, as well as Roman coinage and the economy. Author of over 60 publications, Peter has also contributed to various TV and radio broadcasts, including *Time Team*, *Digging for Britain*, *The Story of Wales*, and was historical consultant for Channel 4's *Britain's Most Historic Towns* series.

Wayne Newport

Pantomime—the classic tradition

An illustrated talk exploring the history of Pantomime. From its earliest origins in the Middle Ages, through to the lavish spectacular productions we know today – we'll journey through some fact and fiction of this popular entertainment. The Stories, the Characters, the Traditions – I have lots of tales to tell....Oh, yes I have! There's no business like show-business and there is nothing like Pantomime....after all, it's the only theatrical form we British ever invented.

Wayne is a professional Actor, Presenter, Emcee and Speaker. He has been an actor for 30+ years – predominantly on stage, but has also done his share of TV, Film and Commercials. He has written, directed and produced several shows for himself and other theatre companies. His passion is Pantomime and has played roles from Ali Baba and Idle Jack to Villains and Dames. His favourite roles to date have been King Rat in Dick Whittington and Ugly Sister in Cinderella.



Barbara Ambrose
Rosy Ashley
Laura Bennett
Gail Bignell
Maureen Carrivick
Steve Carrivick
Catherine Currums
Roger Donbavand
Derek Hurst
Toni Hurst
Dawn Lawrence

Michael Lewis
Morag McGregor
Helen Porter
Mark Thistlewood
Craig Tilbury
Julia Tilbury
Fliss Walker
Ann Wrigley
Joseph Wrigley
Judith Yapp
Jo Lennox-Leithead

Group News

Church Visits

I have arranged a tour of St Mary's in Iwerne Minster at 10.30am on Thursday 29th October.



As you can see, this is a beautiful church, dating from 1100CE and absolutely steeped in history. Plus it has a loo!

I'll be booking lunch at The Talbot for those who wish to join me: <https://talbot-iwerne.co.uk>

If you're interested in coming to this church, and indeed any others that we visit, please let me know: barbara@pbhurst.com Or 01747 825646

Barbara Hurst

Cups & Conversation



Would you enjoy getting together to chat over a cup of coffee? Perhaps you're new to the area and would like to meet new people, or feeling a bit lost and lonely. Or perhaps you just like a good natter! Whatever the reason, Audrey Cross invites you to her home on the 2nd and 4th Mondays each month, the time to be arranged for chat over coffee or tea. If you would like to join her, please contact me.

Jennifer Day

Garden Interest

The Garden Interest Group had a fine day out at RHS Rosemoor in Devon on 12 September. 50 members of the group were able to



enjoy the beautiful gardens which seemed to have largely escaped the ravages of this summer's drought. Especially lovely were the arboretum and the formal gardens, which were awash with colour this late in the season. For our October meeting I hope we can get to see some autumn leaf colour and in November we have a speaker – the Managing Director of Castle Garden Centre – who will be enlightening us on the subject of Gardening Folklore.

Barbara Watkinson

Sunday Lunch for Singletons



On Sunday 20 September this group met for the first time and we did so at the Benett Arms Semley. There were nine of us. We enjoyed our Sunday lunch; although the service was somewhat haphazard, we did eventually all end up with what we had ordered. Several people opted for a small roast dinner and these were still quite sizable! Conversation kept flowing so we all made some new acquaintances.



Next month we will meet at The King's Arms, East Stour, on Sunday 18 October. If you want to join the group please email me at annctaylor@hotmail.com

Ann Taylor

Philosophy & Discussion

The next meeting of the Philosophy and Discussion Group, will be reviewing John Rawls. An American, born in 1921, dying 2002, he was an American political philosopher in the liberal tradition. His theory of Justice as Fairness describes a society of free citizens holding equal basic rights and cooperating within an egalitarian economic system. His theory of political liberalism explores the legitimate use of political power in a democracy.

Chris Spencer

French for Fun 1

Having finished and enjoyed the first part of *L'Étranger* by Albert Camus, the French for Fun 1 group have now moved on to *La Petite Fille de Monsieur Linh*, a French bestselling novel by Phillipe Claudel. It is a very moving and relevant story about the difficulties faced by people who are forced to flee their own country and the problems of adapting to a strange new home where they don't even speak the language.

Photography

The September meeting was something very different with a member-lead session on getting the best from our mobile phones' cameras. Since most of the group use their phones for photography this was a very worthwhile session and we all learned a great deal. This meant that we did not have time to review our topic of "Outings" but all the photos are on the web site along with previous topics.

A few are shown below to get you going. With stormy skies and misty mornings our next topic already looks to have a number of opportunities to practise those new phone skills!

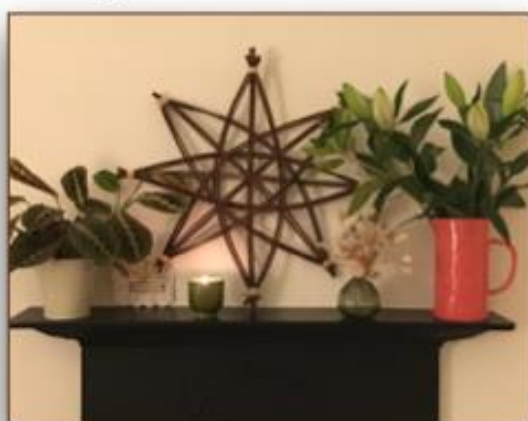
In other news we now have a second Photography Group going with our first meeting on Monday 5th October.



Special Offer for u3a Members



Swedish star workshop



Join your U3A friends in a half-day session making these beautiful willow Swedish stars.

You will have the time to make two Swedish stars, one with two brown willow rods and one with three willow rods of contrasting colours; white, buff and buff-noir.

Not only will Alison guide you through the process but there are clear illustrated instructions to follow so you can work at your own pace.

Homemade bakes and refreshments will be available

Thursday 12th November 2026

(2 workshops of 8 places)

9.30 am -1.00pm or 2.00pm - 5.30pm

Workshops will be held at The Barn, Ludwell SP7 9ND

£15

Booking requests to alison@welig.co.uk (from 1st October)

Membership Renewal

A reminder that membership fees were due on 1st August for the 2026/27 membership year.

If you haven't renewed your membership, please be advised that membership will **close on the 31st October 2026**. 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.

Individual subscription is the same as last year, £12.00. **If you wish to receive a printed copy of our own "In Touch" newsletter rather than receiving it by email the total fee is £18.00.**

You can renew your membership through the following routes:

- Online by following "Membership Renewal" from the home page on the web site (<https://sgu3a.u3asite.uk>).
- 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, Senlac, Frog Lane, Motcombe, SP7 9NY. 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 to have wish a card printed 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.

If you do not renew your membership by 31st October 2026 it will lapse along with your membership of any groups to which you currently belong, and your membership card will not pass the scanner at the AGM on 5th November 2026.

Kind regards

Steve Veness

SGU3A Membership Secretary

Community News

Once again, I must thank the stalwart members of our RUG (Really Useful Group) who manned our stall at the Gillingham Wellbeing Fair on 17th September. Unfortunately, the pitch we were assigned in the vast RiversMeet hall wasn't ideal, but the fair was judged a success by the organisers and it was important that u3a was there to promote the many benefits of our activities for older people.



I shall be providing feedback, so if you were there and have any comments do please let me know: barbara@pbhurst.com or 01747 825646

And if you are happy to be called upon to lend a hand when we need it, with no obligation, I'd be delighted to add you to the RUG.

Barbara Hurst

Gillingham Museum celebrates 30 years at Chantry Fields

The 23rd October will mark the 30th anniversary of Gillingham Museum's move to its current location where it shares the building with Gillingham Library. This was a huge undertaking, made possible by the **very first grant** from the newly formed Heritage Lottery Fund.

Largely responsible for this achievement was then Chairman of Gillingham Local History Society, Peter Crocker.

To commemorate the anniversary, the museum will host an Open Day and Celebration Tea on Saturday 24th October. Free of charge, visitors to the museum will get the opportunity to watch a film of the move,



look behind the scenes, see items not currently on display, handle some of the artefacts and enjoy fun activities. There will also be the opportunity to learn all about Dorset buttons and have a go at making one, with Penny-Jane Swift in historical costume.



Visitors will also be invited to a Celebration Tea at the Chantry Office next door, where the guest of honour will be the Mayor of Gillingham, Cllr Donna Toye, along with her consort. Cllr Toye happens to be a trustee of the museum, and in an extraordinary coincidence, her consort happens to be

her father, Peter Crocker, the man who was so instrumental in achieving the funding that made the move to Chantry Fields possible and overseeing the entire project. No doubt he will have plenty of memories to share.

The Open Day at the museum will run from 10.00am till 2.00pm, with the Celebration Tea from 2.00pm till 4.00pm.

For further information, contact secretary@gillinghammuseum.co.uk

Advice from Trading Standards

Your cancellation rights

If you arrange for a business to do some work for you then you may be legally entitled to a 14 day cooling-off period which must be given to you in writing. This includes services such as gardening, roofing, home improvements, and many more.

You have this legal right to cancel and get a full refund if you agreed for this work away from the trader's premises, so for example you agreed for the work to be carried out when you were in your home, or garden, or on the street.

You don't automatically get a cooling-off period if you have something specially made, for example made to measure curtains or windows, or if you invite the business into your home for urgent repairs, such as immediately mending a burst pipe.

Your cooling-off period begins the day after you agree to have the work done. The business must give you details of how to cancel in writing. If they don't provide these then your cooling-off period is extended by 14 days from the date you do receive them in writing.

The trader may provide you with the written cancellation notice and then ask you to agree to them starting the work before the 14 days cancellation period is up. If you decide to sign to agree this then you'll have to pay a part of the agreed price if you later wanted to cancel. The amount you pay will depend on how much was already completed.

If the business began the work during the 14 day cooling-off period without your signed approval, you then have the right to cancel and get a full refund of all costs.

If this has affected you then you can speak with an advisor, access suggested letter templates, and report to Trading Standards by visiting the Citizens Advice consumer helpline at citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer or phoning 0808 2231133.

Gillingham Community Christmas Lunch

We will again be organising lunch for up to 60 local residents on Christmas Day at North Dorset Rugby Football Club. This annual event is great fun for volunteers and guests alike, and perfect for anyone who is on their own. There will be a full traditional Christmas dinner with entertainment, and transport can be provided. I will share full details later, but I'm asking all u3a members to start thinking about how they, their family members, their friends and neighbours would like to spend Christmas Day. Nobody needs to be on their own, or miss out on a delicious free Christmas dinner, so let's spread the word.

Barbara Hurst



Shaftesbury & District Music Society

North Dorset's latest charity was launched on 19th September to the sonorous tones of the Double Bass as BSO bass player, Mark Thistlewood, gave a fascinating talk about, and played on, this remarkable instrument. Earlier, Debbie Jones, chair of the trustees, described to around 40 people in the

Assembly Room of the Grosvenor Arms Hotel just what the new society proposed. It will produce concerts, recitals, talks etc but also help to promote all the music around the area – between Warminster, Blandford, Fovant and Sherborne. The website www.shaftesburymusic.org will be an information hub. Full Members will be given extra benefits, while Associate Members simply receive Newsletters.

To join the Society or to send information about music events, contact hello@shaftesburymusic.org.

PRESENTED BY
© Clive Conway

BACH, BOWS & ARROWS

**AN AUDIENCE WITH
JULIAN & JIAXIN LLOYD WEBBER**

**THU 19 NOV 2026, 7.30PM
THE EXCHANGE, STURMINSTER NEWTON**

GILLINGHAM
RISING
HARVEST
ON THE
MEADOW

COMMUNITY • FOOD • WELLBEING

KIDS YOGA • FACE PAINTING • SENSORY TENT
INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE • POTTERY PAINTING
ANIMALS & ICE CREAM FROM MADJESTON FARM
VINTAGE TRACTORS • CUPCAKE DECORATING
SWEET TREATS • HOT FOOD • VEGAN/VEGGIE
ARTS & CRAFTS • GIFTS • LINE DANCING DEMO
INTERACTIVE ART INSTALLATION • CRAFT STANDS

27 SEPT. 10AM - 3PM TOWN MEADOW FREE ENTRY
HELLO@GILLINGHAMRISING.CO.UK @GILLINGHAMRISING



Do you find it hard to follow speech in noisy settings or take part in conversations?



We invite you to be part of an online study. The study aims to improve two new listening and thinking games for people with hearing loss.

To take part ➡ <https://tinyurl.com/PLUS-Optimal1>
Or email: Natalie.Lerigo-Smith1@Nottingham.ac.uk

CURRENT GROUPS

Contact group leaders via the website: <https://sgu3a.u3asite.uk>

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
Cups & Conversation	2 nd & 4 th Mondays 2.00-4.00pm	Audrey Cross
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
Philosophy	By arrangement	Chris Spencer
Photography 1	3 rd Thursday	Robin Collins
Photography 2	1 st Friday 10.00am-12.00pm	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
Singletons Sunday Lunch	3 rd Sunday	Ann Taylor
Spite & Malice	Thursday – 2.00pm – Week 3	Sue Walker
Table Tennis	Thursday 2.00pm - weekly	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury
Writing for Pleasure	Mon 10.30am Weeks 2 & 4 via	Peter Rolfe