IN TOUCH
NOVEMBER 2026

Dear All

As we head into November, I hope you are all keepng well and enjoying the many activities and friendships that make our u3a so special. As the evenings draw in and the weather turns colder and more exciting with gales and warnings, I hope our meetings and groups will continue to bring a little extra warmth, companionship and enjoyment to your days.

If you haven't tried a new group or activity yet, why not give it a go? You may discover a new interest and make some lovely new friends along the way.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our AGM and the talk afterwards.

With best wishes

Libby Hague-Holmes
Chairman

u3a
learn, laugh, live

Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

TALKS AT THE CHARLTON REMEMBRANCE HALL

5th November
Wayne Newport
Pantomime:
the classic British tradition

3rd December
Chris Walker
The Great American Christmas

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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 £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.

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.

Chris Walker

The Great American Christmas

Chris Walker has been playing the clarinet since the age of 15. After school he played regularly around the London jazz scene – then became a professional musician with the London City Stompers and with the Mike Daniels Big Band and Colin Kingwell's Jazz Bandits. After moving to Hampshire he worked with most of the local jazz personalities, and has run his own highly successful 5-piece "Swingtet" for the last 21 years. In 1987 he was musical director for an historic BBC "Songs of Praise" from The Maltings in Farnham and between 1980 and 2019 has produced a series of music and information based jazz programmes for BBC Local radio all across the South. These days he runs The Pedigree Jazzband and tour show titled "A Salute to Trad Jazz".

His talk entitled "The Great American Christmas" traces a fond look back how the Great American Songbook treated Christmas over the years with stories and rare Audio/video examples from his own collection.



Marigold Clevely
Janine Dawn
Michael Henton
Timothy Hill
Sally King
David Lacey
Alenka Pecaric
Rhiain Price
Jackie Shell
Brian Smith
Debra Williams

Group News

Shared Interests

The Hall & Woodhouse brewery in Blandford Forum turns 250 next year, and Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a has been invited to share in the celebrations with a private guided tour to bring its long history to life in the new year.

The story runs from the Napoleonic invasion scare and a near-disastrous fire in 1900 to the First and Second World Wars, when members of the Woodhouse family served with the Dorset Regiment, and beyond. Along the way you would hear about family loyalty, a famous wedding gift and a few surprising connections to Dorset's wider history. Yet to be planned, the tour would take place in both the Victorian maltings and the modern brewery beside the River Stour, and end with a tasting of the beers. Our group would also be welcome to stay on at the Brewery Tap.

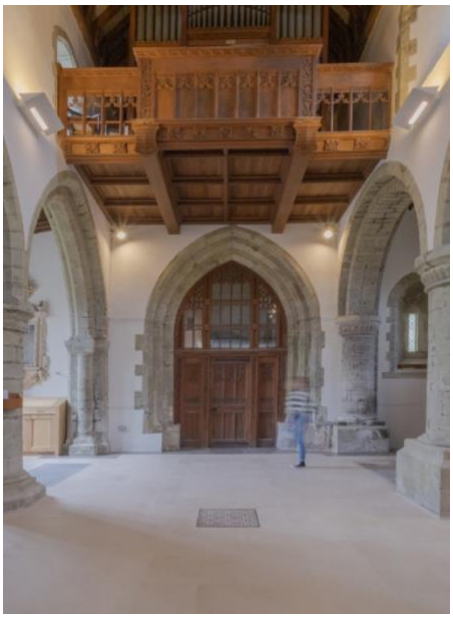
At this point, we would like an idea of likely numbers, so please let me know if you would interested: barbara@pbhurst.com or 01747 825646

Barbara Hurst

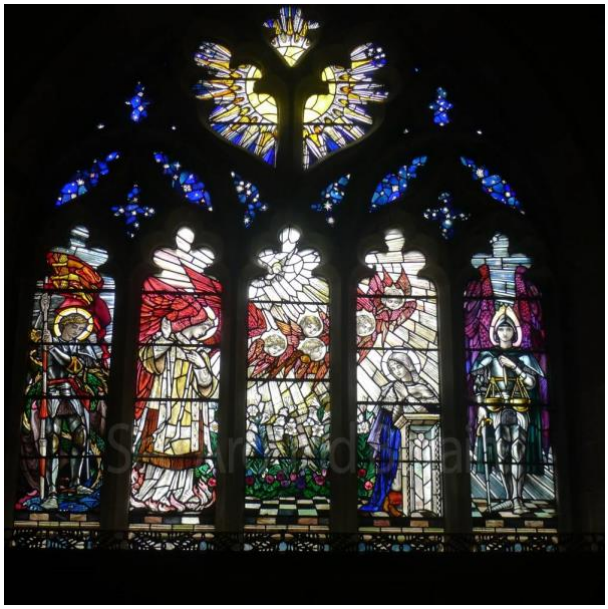
Church Visits

A perfect Autumn day found 20 group members at grade 1 listed St Mary's Church in Iwerne Minster, where our tour guides, Jenny and Mike, were waiting to greet us with a welcome cup of coffee, before telling us a little about the church and the two families that have

played important parts in its history, the Wolvertons, whose home is now Clayesmore School, and the Ismays, who have been great benifactors of the village. The splendid neo-gothic South Chapel is a memorial to the second baron Wolverton, and two commemorative panels depicting the biblical figure Boaz and St George and the dragon, both fine examples of modern mosaic inlay work, are memorials for members of the Ismay family.



The first thing you see as you enter the church is the impressive Norman arcade along the North Aisle, believed to date from c. 1150 with a 16th century clerestory above. The 15th century font, with quatrefoil panels, is located here. The Nave, North Aisle and North Transept are of the mid-12th century, the South Aisle was added in late-12th century, the present Chancel and West Tower are of the 14th century, and a variety of modifications have been made over the church's long history.



Looking towards the chancel, with its wonderful 19th century waggon roof, you are drawn to the beautiful east window, created by Christopher Whall, a leader of the Arts & Crafts movement and a key figure in the modern history of stained glass. The window depicts St George crushing the jaws of the dragon and St Michael weighing our sins to either side, with a triptych in the centre showing the Archangel Gabriel with five angels at the annunciation of the Virgin Mary. The effect is simply stunning.

Those intrepid enough to venture up the narrow staircase were rewarded with the Walker organ, considered one of the finest in the country, the carrilion, the clock, dating from 1690, the ringing chamber and finally the six bells, the oldest of which dates to c.1310 and is a rare survival from pre-Reformation days.

This church is exceptional and well worth a visit. Some of us had lunch afterwards at The Cricketers in Scroton, which we can thoroughly recommend.

Barbara Hurst

BSO Concerts

Our first concert of the season was titled *Eastern Odyssey*, and what a feast of oriental exoticism it provided, under the baton of Charlotte Corderoy and with soloist Junyan Chen at the piano.



Conductor Charlotte Corderoy

The programme began with Mozart's overture to *Don Giovanni*, with its shifting moods and dramatic contrasts. This was followed by Saint-Saëns' *Second Piano Concerto*, a tempestuous piece by a composer, himself a virtuoso pianist, that allowed our soloist to shine. Perhaps inevitably the finale was *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, from *The Arabian Nights*, a suite of bewitching 'pictures' bound together by a recurring melody from a solo violin, played beautifully by Amyn Merchant, Leader of the BSO. The perfect end to a superb concert.

Charlotte Corderoy was mesmerising. Incredibly dynamic and clearly inspiring for the musicians, she has a gift for communication.



Junyan Chen solo pianist

Junyan Chen gave us a virtuoso performance. By turns powerful, playful and delicate, she showed the full range of the piano and of her extraordinary talent.

Our next visit to the Lighthouse will be for *Imperial Majesty*, on 18th November, featuring Walton's *Crown Imperial March*, of course, Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 5* and Tchaikovsky's *Suite No. 3*. Although this is already booked, sometimes tickets become available at short notice when members aren't able to go, and it is worth joining the group so that you can be informed of these opportunities.

Barbara Hurst

Photography

Photographers like autumn (mostly) with the promise of some lovely golden light and the colours changing day by day. We'll have to wait a while to see how the members of Group 1 have risen to the challenge! We reviewed our photos on the subject of Clouds and Skies this month and it has definitely been a funny couple of months with all sorts of cloud types from both above and below competing for space. A tricky subject well handled as can be seen by the photos in the links on the web site.

October also saw the first meeting of Photography Group 2, welcoming five new members. This group is taking a slightly different path with long term personal projects as well as a huge list of topics being taken in a more free-form way than Group 1. It meets on the first Monday of the month at the Walnut Tree in Mere.













Community News

Gillingham Library

Here are details of a series of talks at Gillingham Library during November. They will take place on Tuesday afternoons from 2.30pm-3.30pm, with refreshments provided.

- Tuesday 3/11/26 Arthur, the Sleeping King by Barry Reilly - This will be an exploration of the early roots of the Arthurian legends and how Arthur changed from a Pagan, Celtic Warrior to a Christian King of Camelot.

- Tuesday 10/11/26 Travel and Pilgrimage by Gillingham Writing Group member Anthony Mitchell

- Tuesday 17/11/26 Bath, a virtual tour of a Georgian city. Join Martin Sharo, one of the Mayor of Bath's honorary guides for an interesting and informative virtual tour of the city.

- Tuesday 24/11/26 Close encounters with wild animals, a talk by the explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell.





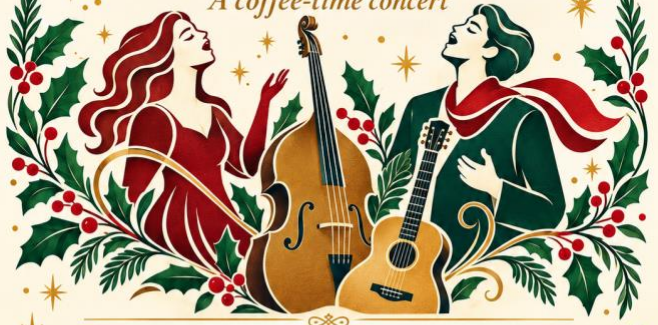
SHAFTESBURY & DISTRICT MUSIC SOCIETY

A Celebration of Christmas

featuring

Thistlewood

A coffee-time concert



Wednesday 16 December • 11.30am

Assembly Room

Grosvenor Arms Hotel, Shaftesbury

Tickets in advance £11 / £9 members
On the door £12 / £10 members

www.shaftesburymusic.org

KALASUDHA PRESENTS · A HUNDRED STRINGS

Ragas by the Sea

Sitar, santoor and tabla in Bournemouth



Saturday 21 November 2026

Doors 6:15 pm · Music 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Palace Court Theatre, Hinton Road, Bournemouth BH1 2EN

Adnan Khan, sitar
Vinay Desai, santoor
Ustad Akram Khan, tabla

Adnan Khan plucks the sitar and slides between notes, the way a singer does. Vinay Desai strikes the santoor's hundred strings with two light mallets. Ustad Akram Khan, seventh generation of the Ajrada gharana, plays tabla for both.

Town centre: car parks within 200 m, bus stop opposite.

Early bird £20 until 6 November · **£25** after
Students £15, student ID at the door

Scan the code or book at kalasudha.com

Presented by KalaSudha, an independent, unfunded organisation keeping serious live Indian classical music accessible. Enquiries: rajeev@kalasudha.co.uk

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Gillingham Community Christmas Lunch

BOOK NOW!

Why spend Christmas Day alone when you could enjoy a traditional Christmas Dinner at the Rugby Club with all the trimmings, seasonal entertainment and perhaps a gift to take home?

Booking forms are available from:

The Town Hall (mornings only)
Gillingham Library
RiversMeet
The Foodbank
Eden Café
Post Office
Gillingham Churches
You can download a form from: threeriversgillingham.org
(link at the bottom of the page)
Or request one via email:
christmaslunch@threeriversgillingham.org

If you know of someone who could use a Christmas treat, why not pick up a booking form for them?

Transport can be provided

Three Rivers Community Partnership
Charity No. 1106977

Gillingham Community Christmas Lunch

North Dorset Rugby Football Club

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

If you have some spare time over Christmas, could you help us provide a free traditional dinner for up to 60 local people on Christmas Day? And let volunteering be your gift to the community.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas begins with a surprisingly enjoyable food preparation session from 11am, followed by set up for tomorrow. Refreshments will be provided.

CHRISTMAS DAY

We will need kitchen help, pot scrubbers, waiters and drivers as usual, but this year will be different. Each table will have a 'table host', who will be eating with us and responsible for welcoming their guests and making sure they all enjoy themselves by leading conversation, ordering drinks for the table, ensuring food is shared fairly and encouraging carol singing.

BOXING DAY

Help us do a thorough clean to leave the North Dorset RFC clubhouse spotless. Let's show our appreciation for their support.

If you can help, please get in touch:

christmaslunch@threeriversgillingham.org

Heading 'Volunteer'

Three Rivers Community Partnership
Charity No. 1106977

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	2nd & 4th 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	3rd Thursday 10.00am-12.00pm	Robin Collins
Photography 2	1st Monday 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	3rd 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