

BLANDFORD & DISTRICT u3a

Charity no: 1092984 – <https://u3asites.org.uk/blandford/home>

SUMMER 2023

Welcome to our new look newsletter, which we hope in future will be full of not only B&D news, but also reports from members and groups of people met, places seen and local things to do in the coming months. Please do get in touch with news and views. Christine, Editor

A FEW WORDS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A big hello to all B&D u3a members. I know many of you already but undoubtedly there are members I have never met. As the new chair, I see my main task as building on the work and success that earlier chairs and committees have achieved.

There are numerous u3as up and down the country where you can learn languages, play games and visit gardens - so what makes B&D so special? In my opinion it is you (collectively) – we are possibly one of the friendliest u3as in the area. Whether it is the quarterly meeting or a group meeting, newcomers always receive a genuine warm welcome.

Let's get sociable! With the social side of B&D in mind, the committee is organizing two events for future Friday afternoons:

Ascot or Epsom? . . .

On the last Friday of October, we will be holding "*A Day at the Races*". No, it is not an



outing to a racecourse, but a number of pre-filmed races, shown on a screen. Bets

will be made with Monopoly money so you will be able to have a great afternoon, win or lose! The exact details are still being ironed out, but we need to get an idea of the interest and numbers to cater for . . . ideally, we will have around 50 "racegoers" (or more). The venue could either be Blandford Parish Rooms or Durweston Village Hall. We estimate the cost to be £5 per member but again it will depend on numbers. Look out

for updates on the B&D website, by email and in the next newsletter.

Quiz Afternoon



Early next year we hope to hold a quiz afternoon with teams of around six members – if you don't have a full team, we can easily combine part teams – a terrific way to get to know others a little better! Again, keep an eye out for further information in future newsletters.

And finally,

This is your u3a and there are occasions when your hard-working committee and the group leaders need a bit of help – sometimes on a regular basis but often just to help set things up for individual events (eg A Day at the Races, and our Quiz afternoon). Do have a chat either with me or with a committee member if you can offer a little of your time . . . it would be appreciated. With best wishes for the coming summer (?) months.

Rob Clarke

JUNE OPEN MEETING

Durweston Village Hall

Friday 30 June 2023

2.00pm – Doors Open

2.15pm – Notices

2.30pm – Speaker

Followed by tea and cake (£1.50pp) and lots of chat!



SPEAKER:

Steve Oakes on 'The Magic of Bird Migration'

ACTIVITY GROUP NEWS

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR

We have had

four new

members

recently join

the walking group through the website, so we now have over 35 on our email list.

Sadly, we had to cancel one walk earlier this year due to the weather, which really is quite good for an outdoor activity. And by the time you read this, our programme for the second half of the year will be finalised and we do have some very nice walks planned for July onwards.

Phil Allen



TABLE TENNIS

is thriving! We are a friendly group and although we take our games seriously, we have lots of laughs and enjoy our chats between games and during tea and biscuits. Playing table tennis is good exercise, fun and keeps the brain active. The most common phrase heard around the hall is 'Anyone know the score?'

Our membership is close to maximum, but we still have space for a few more players. Elaine Huntriss

ART APPRECIATION

The group continues to meet monthly with meetings consisting of a mix of presentations by members, and videos from the internet. Artists looked at in recent months include Durer, Caravaggio, Goya, Edward Hopper and Eric Ravilious. Jack Shonfield

*One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art –
Oscar Wilde*

HISTORIC VISITS

An archaeological excavation of Cerne Abbey is taking place between 22 July and 13 August

(<https://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/cerne-abbas-a-lost-medieval-abbey-rediscovered/>) - we are

hoping to arrange a group visit sometime during these few short weeks. Most of the surviving buildings of the abbey date from the 14th and 15th centuries; but, who knows, they might find the remains of the early monastery, which is said to have been founded c.600.

If you are interested, please contact Bridget Spiers

DANCING

We have been meeting every second Monday of the month at Charlton Marshall Village Hall from 2.00pm - 3.15pm. We do a variety of dancing: swing jive strolls, ballroom and Latin American dance and I teach swing-dancing partner steps as well. In fact, whatever the group members like to do. You don't need a partner and beginners are very welcome. NB: No dance group in May as on holiday so next date is Monday 12th June.

Pat Luke

FRENCH

This is a long-standing group which meets twice a month to practise the Gallic tongue and to reminisce about happy days in "la belle France".

There are currently no vacancies.

Richard Pearson

GERMAN

This is a relatively new group which operates in a similar fashion to the French group. We are now hitting our stride and our eager learners are bravely tackling the complexities of German grammar. One group member commented that he would like engraved on his tombstone “He tried to master adjectival endings in German”. (There are 49 different contexts in which a simple adjective like “klein” / “small” can be used and the form of the word varies accordingly.) We have just recruited our eighth learner so there are currently no vacancies. Richard Pearson

*The Norwegian language is
merely German spoken
underwater - Jed Larson*

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Joyous The theme for our April meeting was an antidote to a rather sad wet Spring. The group members’ suggestions for Dennis to download for the programme illustrate the range of music we enjoy together. The joy of dancing was apparent in some



pieces: “I could have danced all night” from My Fair Lady and the Mazurka from Coppelia by Leo Delibes. There is a joy in finding music and musicians new to oneself such as Stravinsky's Violin Concerto played by the effervescent Patricia Kopatchinskaja. Biber's Passacaglia, one of the earliest pieces for solo violin, added to the musical knowledge of most of us. What is more joyous than Beethoven's Ode to Joy played not only by a ukulele orchestra but their audience as well? We are a friendly group and enjoy a chat over coffee and biscuits - we should love a few more to join us.

GARDEN GROUP

We have been meeting at different members’ homes and been discussing our gardening projects, plants suitable for the different types of soil, pruning and division of plants. For future meetings we are each going to choose a topic to be researched via internet, YouTube etc. Our first topic will be plants for dark corners. We continue to meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month. New members welcome
Ann Green

STROLLERS

We meet on the 4th Friday of every month except for December when we have a Christmas Lunch. We walk for about 3 miles and sometimes manage to find a place nearby to have a coffee and chat at the end of our walk. We are a very friendly group and welcome new members.

Pam Rees

BADMINTON

We currently have 15 members (with space for a couple more) with an average attendance of 10/11. We spread attendance over the three hours with least experienced early on. Pimperne Village Hall has a light court with good roof height and, conveniently, the village coffee morning, visiting post office and Eco van run alongside and there’s a large car park. Sessions cost £3 for hall hire and equipment. Please remember that all activities are undertaken at your own risk.

David Shepherd

CRAFT

We continue to meet on a Tuesday afternoon twice a month at the Parish Centre, Charlton Marshall (opposite The Charlton Inn). With two

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new members recently joining us, we now have a membership of 16. If you have a needlework or craft project you just don't sit down to do, come and join us and for two hours you can't do anything else! Apart that is from enjoying a cup of tea in a comfortable room with likeminded fellow crafters. We each pay £2.00 for the afternoon, which covers the rent and refreshments, and this year we are saving towards a demonstration and "hands-on" class in September to learn Dorset Button making.

Diana Berridge

CYCLING

Unsurprisingly, the recent unsettled weather has disrupted our pedalling rhythm, but we still managed to enjoy 3 local rides (some muddy!), plus one from Crossways to Wool (which we last enjoyed pre-Covid) and one from Wimborne to Ringwood, covering 90 miles since mid-February, with an average of 5 riders. A record was set on 19 April, when ladies outnumbered gentlemen for the first time! Our planned destinations for

the summer also include Wareham, Poole, Corfe Castle, and the usual S's – Sturminster Marshall, Shapwick, Stourpaine, Shillingstone & Sturminster Newton.

Peter Aldous

LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING

We are now meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month (in Shillingstone), so if you'd like to join us, please get in touch.

David Shepherd



DORSET ARCHAEOLOGY

A short course has been arranged on the archaeology of Dorset. This is open to all members and will be held at a local village hall during the afternoons of 4th and 18th October, and 1st and 15th November. For further details, please contact Bridget Spiers, leader of Historic Visits.



BANKING IN BLANDFORD

I have been asked by a concerned fellow u3a member to include a note about banking in Blandford. With the closure of HSBC in April (nearest HSBC banking hub is now in Poole) and the

upcoming closure of NatWest on



1st August, we will have just Lloyd's and Nationwide. For those who don't do on-line banking or prefer not to, the Post Office in Blandford can provide you with an appropriate envelope for the bank concerned for paying in cash and cheques with a paying-in slip, and you can use your debit card to withdraw cash and check your balance at the counter.

CONTACTING GROUP LEADERS AND OTHERS VIA THE WEBSITE

You may have noticed that neither the newsletter nor the website has telephone numbers, thereby protecting members' privacy. However, group leaders and committee members can be reached by using the pigeon post icon on the appropriate page, which sends an email message through to the person in question.

*Three o'clock is always too late or too early for anything you want to do –
Jean-Paul Sartre*