

Editor: [Sue Anderson](#)

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**E**aster Greetings to all our members - I trust you haven't gone over the top with the chocolate eggs?!

You will probably have received the email from Steve asking for this year's membership fee - it is still £15.00 and represents very good value for money so hopefully you will renew and continue to enjoy the group activities and of course the Open Meetings

I think everyone who attended the March presentation 'Searching for Jo' by one of our members, Val Sinclair, found it emotional, thought provoking and inspiring. Stories such as Val's are often to be found on the television but it's much so more resonant when the people involved are sitting in front of you. Another local member of our u3a will be speaking at our next Open Meeting on Wednesday 17 April when we will welcome Jonathan Walton - details are on page 2.

In May there will be no Open Meeting as there will be a get-together for



Group Coordinators and will give them a chance to catch up and share ideas and future plans. Coordinators and deputies will be contacted shortly.


The Minsterley Hall, which is a venue for many of our u3a events, will be having its AGM on Tuesday 16 April - so if you're a regular hall user or a Minsterley resident you are very welcome to attend - a new committee is being set up following the request for new members a few months ago.

Anyway - back to the chocolate...

[Janet Walsh](#) (Chair)

**Dates for your Diary**

<p>April <b>17</b></p>	Antarctica by Jonathan Walton
<p>May <b>15</b></p>	Coordinators
<p>July <b>17</b></p>	A GM



**April 17**


**Wednesday 2pm**  
**Minsterley Parish Hall**  
 A488, Minsterley, SY5 0EH  
*Refreshments available*  
*Free entrance*

**POLITICS, SCIENCE AND ADVENTURE IN THE ANTARCTIC**

A talk by Jonathan Walton

**OPEN MEETING**

Members & non-members welcome







Our next Open Meeting is on the 17th April, and we are delighted to have as our speaker Jonathan Walton, long term Pontesbury resident, talking about Politics, Science and Adventure in the Antarctica.

His Antarctic experience includes 20 summer seasons and 2 winters over 50 years. He is the holder of the Polar Medal and current president of the UK Antarctic Club.

This exciting presentation includes an overview of the continent of Antarctica plus personal tales of life in a hostile climate with periods of up to 9 months sharing a one room hut with only 3 others!

There will also be the chance to chat with u3a friends over coffee/tea and biscuits afterwards. Non-members are allowed to attend so please bring along a friend.

**Date:** 17th April 2024

**Time:** 2pm

**Venue:** Minsterley Parish Hall

**April 17** Wednesday 2pm  
 Minsterley Parish Hall  
 A488, Minsterley, SY5 0EH  
 Refreshments available  
 Free entrance

**learn, laugh, live**

**OPEN MEETING**  
 Members & non-members welcome

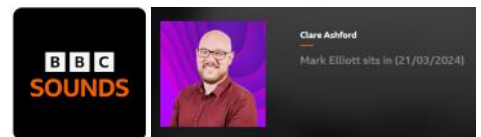
**u3a** Pontesbury & Rea Valley

**Feedback: "Searching for Jo"**

For our March Open Meeting, Val Sinclair and her sister Jo Morrison moved us with a truly courageous and deeply personal story – and we were honoured to hear it. Our deepest thanks to them and Clive Butterworth for an amazing afternoon.

Val and Jo went on the next day to talk with Radio Shropshire. If any of you missed it, you can pick it up on BBC Sounds – it starts about 1h15 minutes in:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0hdgwm3>





**Wanted!!**

**Caretaker for Minsterley Parish Hall**

The Trustees of Minsterley Parish Hall will shortly be advertising for the position of caretaker and would be keen to speak to anyone, on an informal basis, who may be interested in the post, in advance of the advert being placed.

This position is part-time and currently is for 7 hours a week on a flexible basis – it will be paid above the minimum wage. The role could be undertaken on a job share basis. The key elements of the current role involve cleaning, daily locking of the gate, weekly putting out/taking in of bins and occasional unlocking/locking of the building for users, as well as a number of other aspects of the premises oversight and maintenance.

So, if you think you might be interested and would like a bit of further information then please **contact Stuart Carter** [scarter5867@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scarter5867@hotmail.co.uk) who will be happy to discuss things further on an informal basis.

An initial chat will not influence the recruitment process.

**FOPL Plant Sale**

The FOPL plant sale will be on Sat 4th May and they need plant donations, anything really, annuals, perennial divisions, veg. Plants can be delivered to the Pavilion on Friday 3rd May from 2pm – 4pm or can be left at Jenny Wateridge’s house: The Overs, Hall Bank, Pontesbury, anytime week beginning 29th April. Jenny can also collect from people. Tel No 01743 792767.



**Minsterley Parish Hall Annual General Meeting**  
7.30 – 8.30pm  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024



All hall users and members of the local community are invited to come and meet the new committee members, catch up with some of the changes and challenges of the past year and consider some hopes and plans for the future.

**The meeting will include:**  
Election of officers  
(Chair, Secretary & Treasurer, etc.)  
Annual Report  
Presentation of Accounts

Light refreshments will be on offer after the meeting  
(To be followed by a short meeting of the new committee)  
For further information contact: [minsterleyparishhall@gmail.com](mailto:minsterleyparishhall@gmail.com)



We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our u3a:

- Steve Wright
- Julia Wright
- John Lewis
- Maria Marks
- Helen Lowrie-Herz

A warm welcome to all.

**Membership fees 2024/5**


Renewal reminders for the membership fees due 1st April have been sent out and we would be grateful if members could pay as soon as practicable in April. Please do not pay before the 1 April. Thank you.

The good news is that for the 2024/5 year the membership fee will remain at £15 ( or £10 for those members who also belong to another u3a branch ).

**Membership secretary**

[Steve Anderson](#)



Mon <b>1</b>	10h00	<b>Walking (Short)</b> Pontesbury School Green	Thu <b>11</b>	10h00	<b>Poetry</b> Coordinator's House	Fri <b>19</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 3</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury
	13h30	<b>Table Tennis 1</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury		14h00	<b>Board Games</b> Congregational Church	Mon <b>22</b>	13h30	<b>Table Tennis 1</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury
	14h00	<b>Folk Music</b> Minsterley Parish Hall		16h30	<b>Pickleball</b> Mary Webb School, Pontesbury		14h00	<b>Folk Music</b> Minsterley Parish Hall
Tue <b>2</b>	10h00	<b>Cycling</b> Pontesbury School Green	Fri <b>12</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 3</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury	Tue <b>23</b>	10h00	<b>Cycling</b> Pontesbury School Green
	10h30	<b>Playreading</b> As announced		14h00	<b>Gardening</b> To be confirmed	Wed <b>24</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 2</b> Minsterley Parish Hall
Wed <b>3</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 2</b> Minsterley Parish Hall	Mon <b>15</b>	10h00	<b>Walking (Short)</b> School Green		10h30	<b>Italian</b> Coordinator's house
	10h30	<b>Italian</b> Coordinator's house		10h30	<b>History</b> Pavilion, Pontesbury		14h00	<b>Café Society</b> Mytton Arms, Habberley
	14h00	<b>Photography</b> To be announced		13h30	<b>Table Tennis 1</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury		19h30	<b>Astronomy</b> Bog Visitor Centre, Stiperstones
Thu <b>4</b>	10h00	<b>Walking (Long)</b> As announced		14h00	<b>Art History</b> Venue to be advised	Thu <b>25</b>	10h00	<b>Poetry</b> Coordinator's House
	10h00	<b>Creative writing</b> Pavilion		14h00	<b>Folk Music</b> Minsterley Parish Hall		14h00	<b>Board Games</b> Congregational Church
	16h30	<b>Pickleball</b> Mary Webb School, Pontesbury	Tue <b>16</b>	10h00	<b>Cycling</b> Pontesbury School Green		17h00	<b>Pickleball</b> Meole Brace School, Shrewsbury
Fri <b>5</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 3</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury		10h30	<b>Play reading</b> As announced	Fri <b>26</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 3</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury
Mon <b>8</b>	10h15	<b>Family History</b> Pavilion, Pontesbury		14h00	<b>Local History</b> Minsterley Parish Hall	Mon <b>29</b>	10h00	<b>Walking (Short)</b> Pontesbury School Green
	13h30	<b>Table Tennis 1</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury	Wed <b>17</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 2</b> Minsterley Parish Hall		13h30	<b>Table Tennis 1</b> Congregational Church, Pontesbury
	14h00	<b>Folk Music</b> Minsterley Parish Hall		10h30	<b>Italian</b> Coordinator's house		14h00	<b>Folk Music</b> Minsterley Parish Hall
Tue <b>9</b>	10h00	<b>Cycling</b> Pontesbury School Green		14h00	<b>Open Meeting</b> Minsterley Parish Hall		16h00	<b>Committee Meeting</b> Pavilion
	14h00	<b>Geology</b> Pavilion, Pontesbury			Tue <b>30</b>	10h00	<b>Cycling</b> Pontesbury School Green	
Wed <b>10</b>	10h00	<b>Table Tennis 2</b> Minsterley Parish Hall	Thu <b>18</b>	10h00	<b>Walking (Long)</b> As announced			
	10h30	<b>Italian</b> Coordinator's house		10h00	<b>Creative writing</b> Pavilion			
	14h00	<b>Literature</b> Pavilion, Pontesbury		17h00	<b>Pickleball</b> Meole Brace School, Shrewsbury			

**Notes:**

- Changes from last month are marked in red.
- Please check in advance with the coordinator if a session is to go ahead.
- Details of the Interest Groups are on the last page of the newsletter or website.



## Interest Group news



Our group is now live. The first meeting was held on March 14th. Our next meeting is Thursday 11th April and thereafter every 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 2.00pm.

Members played Super Scrabble, Banana Words and Mancala. We intend to play a wide variety of games chosen by the attendees at each meeting.

We are a small, friendly group and new members are welcome to join us.

Learn new games, re-visit old favourites and bring along games you think the group will enjoy. Please contact me if interested.

**Coordinator**

Neil Bates

[neil@bandbproperties.co.uk](mailto:neil@bandbproperties.co.uk)



Here are some of the plays that the new play reading group will be tackling. Going forward, we intend to try a range of writing genres.

We will meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday's of the month at 10.30 am to 12:30pm..

If you fancy joining us, there are a few spaces left..

**Coordinator**

Jane Simms

[veronicajane@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:veronicajane@hotmail.co.uk)



## Interest Group news



The u3a folk music group meet every Monday (not bank holidays) to share songs and tunes.

We have occasional 'showcases', when individuals have an opportunity to present their own slant on folk music.

Once a month we have a themed session when members are challenged to perform something on a

pre chosen theme (love, sea song, mining, transport etc.).

The theme for April will be 'Apparel' (April 8th).

Although we are a participation group, if you wish to join, we welcome visitors to observe us.

**Coordinator**

[Mal Brown](#)



Please note that Pickleball will take place at Mary Webb School on Thursdays April 4th and 11th from 4.30 - 6.00 pm as usual.

However, due to the Sports Hall being used for examinations, all future sessions from Thursday April 18th up to and including Thursday June 20th will be at Meole Brace Sports Hall for

the shorter time of 5pm - 6pm.

In order to cover the expense of hiring the courts the charge per session will increase to £4 from April 11th onwards. I hope this won't deter anyone from coming along.

**Coordinator**

Helen Critchley



The team in action. The next Short Walking dates (from 10h to 12h) are:

Monday 1st April - still going ahead even though it will be Easter Monday.

Monday 15th April

Monday 29th April



**Coordinator**  
[Irene Windows](#)



## Interest Group news



Continuing our current theme of decisions or events in history which could have gone either way, the History Group were treated to two presentations at our March meeting.



John Balmond presented a very thought-provoking scenario of, 'What if China had discovered America first'.



Sue Smith then gave her presentation detailing the impact of the strike by women machinists at the Ford

Dagenham car factory in 1968 and the change in the law and attitudes that resulted from it.

Both presentations resulted in much enjoyable debate.



At our April meeting Sue Anderson will give a PowerPoint presentation on the decision to appoint **Joan of Arc** to lead the French army against the English in the 100 year war in the 15th century – a pivotal moment in history with far reaching consequences for England, France and Europe.

We meet every third Monday of the month, 10.30am at the Pavilion. If you are interested to join us, please do come along.

**Coordinator**  
David Taylor

# learn, laugh, live



If you fancy a bit of a discussion, the Café Society meets on Wednesday 24 April at 2.00pm at The Mytton Arms in Habberley – new members welcome for civilised, and often jolly, discussion over coffee and cake – or even a pint or a glass of wine.

New members always welcome.

**Coordinator**  
Janet Walsh



# Interest Group news



Another eventful month with a trip to The Abbey in Shrewsbury gave us the opportunity to take some fantastic photographs as well as learning something of the history surrounding the building and the area in general. This was followed at the next meeting with a review of some of the wonderful pictures captured.

We also took the opportunity to review some photographs taken

earlier this year.

The next two subjects are 'Portraits and Portraiture' along with 'Design an Album Cover.' The latter will extend our personal limits of design with inspiration.

New and existing members are always welcome to suggest subject matter.

**Coordinator**  
[Roy Forbes](#)



At the last Family History meeting we looked at recollections of our youth, parents and other living ancestors.

Colin STEGEMAN recounting his time in the RAF as a conscript National servicemen for two years (October 23 1957 to Oct 22nd 1959). More recently, the RAF, Benevolent funds have been tremendously supportive to him since the death of his wife, Margaret. Colin recalled how he learned a lot when in the RAF - comradeship played a big part in his

life and made life long friends .

Merle TRAVES shared her reflections about her parents and grandparents.



The group discussed what they might find if they returned to the place they were born.

**Coordinator**  
Merle Traves





# Interest Group news



The weather thankfully shone on us for a lovely afternoon browsing around the **British Iron Works** in Oswestry followed by – you’ve guessed – tea and cake!

Our current membership is now a staggering 33 people. That said, it is not often that all members will be able to attend due to other commitments, holidays or illness. The recent talks and indoor meetings have been incredibly well attended with 20–28 people.

Some gardens we visit (or our own) will have restricted access due to the size of the garden, but others require much larger minimum numbers. So in many ways it is advantageous to have a larger group profile and it also has led to some very lively fun meetings.

In the ethos of the u3a, in order that we can continue to accommodate new members, the group has agreed a two tiered membership:

**Full members:** These are the existing members, who will have first right to attend a meeting.

**Affiliate members:** We already have a few people who participate on this basis – normally partners of a gardening group member. These members will be invited to join a session when space permits.. All affiliate members will also need to be u3a members as a requirement of the u3a insurance. Then when

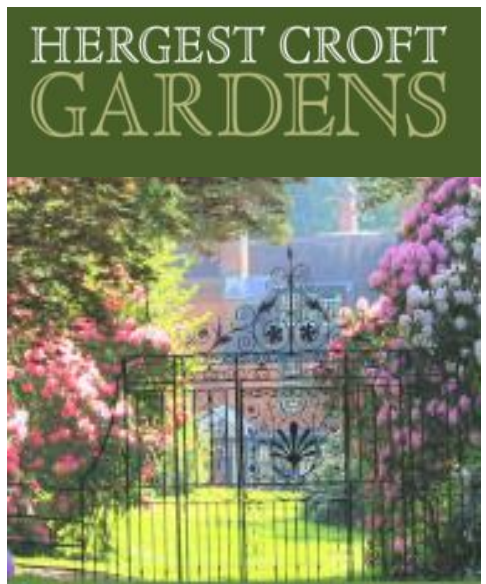
space allows, an affiliate member can then become a full member if they wish.

Thankfully most meetings will be able to accommodate all the members whether full or affiliate.

If a particular venue limits the number of participants, attendance will be on a first-come first-served basis,.

If you would like to join on an affiliate basis or have any queries about the gardening group, please contact myself.

Unfortunately April’s meeting to Alan and Claire Terrill’s Folly garden in Hope Valley has been postponed to the 7th June, due to the waterlogged ground making visiting dangerous.



So we are now planning a visit to **Hergest Croft Gardens** in Kington on Friday 12th April at 2pm. This will be open to all gardening members.

**Coordinator**

[Sue Anderson](#)

Tel: 07762 977 432

u3a national news



April sees the launch of Friends Extra - a new offering exclusive to those members of the u3a Friends Newsletter community. Friends Extra includes a wide range of new offers and services so please sign up directly to the Friends newsletter, if you wish, so you don't miss a wide range of offers exclusively including discounts on holidays, insurance and more:

[www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter](http://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter)

Online Learning Events

There's something for everyone with lots of interesting free u3a online zoom courses: [Click here for this months events](#) and to reserve a place:

- **Laughter Yoga Judith** - Wed 10 April 10am
- **Laughter Yoga Merrie Maggie** - Tues 30 April 3.30pm
- **Aviation Network Meeting: Milestones in Aviation:** Tues 2 April 10am
- **From pleasure Gardens to Theme Parks** Fri 5 April 2pm
- **An introduction to AI Chatbots** Thur 4 April 3.30pm
- **Electing the President in 2024— an update** Tues 9 April 2pm
- **Using AI to Fight Climate Change** Tues 19 March 10am
- **Live Cookery Demonstration— spring recipes** Thurs 11 April 10.30am
- **A remarkable women: the arts and crafts designs of May Morris** Thur 11 April 2pm
- **AI News: April** Thurs 11 April 3.30pm
- **Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance** Mon 15 April 10 am
- **The Road to Clean Water: Beginnings of a sewage system** Wed 17 April 10am
- **Mindfulness and Meditation continuation sessions** Dec 23 to May 24—Thursday 18 April 10 am
- **Live Cookery Demonstration— more spring recipes** Thurs 18 April 10am
- **From despair to delight: the sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins** Thurs 18 April 2pm
- **The Climate Crisis and some solutions** Fri 19 April 10 am
- **Secrets of the Human Brain ; Talk 4: The blood-brain barrier** Wed 24 April 2pm
- **u3a Radio Podcast** 17th of every month

Southport Flower Show  
u3a members discount code

This August is the 100th anniversary of the Southport Flower Show (15th - 18th August 2024) and Southport u3a are doing a show garden again this year - a really big one - a 17 meter curved garden.

As it is the 100th anniversary, this promises to be a very special show and some of our Pontesbury & Rea Valley members plan on attending.

Courtesy of Southport u3a, all u3a members can get 30% off tickets online up until July 31st by using the Promo Code SFSu3a; when purchasing an any day ticket on line (£19 instead of £29): [www.southportflowershow.co.uk](http://www.southportflowershow.co.uk)



learn, laugh, live

# Interest Groups Listing

There are a wide range of friendly groups, run by the group coordinators. Please check out the activities available and if anything takes your interest or you wish to suggest a new activity, please contact the Support team.

Please always check beforehand if the activity is being held and the venue before attending, as this could be subject to change.

**Groups Facilitator Support:**

Pat Frost 07971 751978

David Taylor 07746567788

<b>Art History</b>	3rd Mon of month 2pm–4pm Venue to be advised		<b>Local History</b>	3rd Tue of month 2pm–4pm Minsterley Parish Hall	
<b>Astronomy</b>	Last Wed of month 7:30–9.30pm Bog centre, Stiperstones		<b>Painting &amp; Drawing</b>	Every Tues when in session 2pm–4pm Coordinator's House	
<b>Board Games</b>	Every 2nd & 4th Thurs month 2pm–4pm Congregational Church		<b>Photography</b>	1st Wed of month 2pm–4pm Venue to be advised	
<b>Café Society</b>	Last Wed of month 2pm–4pm Mytton Arms Pub, Habberley		<b>Pickle Ball</b>	Every Thu 4:30pm–6pm Mary Webb school	
<b>Creative writing</b>	1st & 3rd Thu 10am–12 noon Pavilion		<b>Play reading</b>	1st & 3rd Tues of month 10:30am–12:30pm Venue to be advised	
<b>Cycling</b>	Every Tue 10am– around 1pm Pontesbury School Green		<b>Poetry</b>	Every 2nd & 4th Thurs of month 10am–12 noon Coordinator's House	
<b>Family History</b>	2nd Mon of month 10:15am–12:15pm Pavilion, Pontesbury		<b>Table Tennis 1 Pontesbury</b>	Every Mon 1:30pm–3:30pm Congregational Church	
<b>Folk Music</b>	Every Mon 2pm–4pm Minsterley Parish Hall		<b>Table Tennis 2 Minsterley</b>	Every Wed 10am–12 noon Minsterley Parish Hall	
<b>Gardening</b>	Second Fri of month 2pm–4pm As announced		<b>Table Tennis 3 Pontesbury</b>	Every Fri 10 am–12 noon Congregational Church	
<b>Geology</b>	2nd Tue of month 2pm–4pm Pavilion, Pontesbury		<b>Walking (long)</b>	Alternate Thu 10am–12 noon Venue to be advised	
<b>History</b>	3rd Mon of month 10:30am–12:30pm Pavilion, Pontesbury		<b>Walking (short)</b>	Alternate Mon 10am–12 noon Pontesbury School Greer	
<b>Italian</b>	Every Wed 10:30am–12: noon Coordinator's house		<h2>Potential groups</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilates</li> <li>• Bridge</li> <li>• Railway Modelling</li> <li>• Sunday Lunch</li> <li>• Seated Yoga</li> </ul>		
<b>Literature</b>	2nd Wed in month 2pm–4pm Pavilion, Pontesbury				

