



**Cover Painting by Brenda Colman**

## **Newsletter Autumn 2023**

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Secretary	Fiona Rosen	02392 824 414
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Beacon Co-ordinator	Jean Morgan	02392 816 949
Membership Secretary	Elaine Lawson	07976 930 880
Vice Chair & Website	Rosemary Sirett	07540 597 804
Newsletter Editor	Susan Johnson	02392 669 938
Publicity & Information	Jean Barrow	07746 233496
Committee member	Carol-Anne Turner	07767 474792
Speaker Secretary	vacancy	
Social Secretary	vacancy	

### Chair's Letter Autumn 2023



I'm pondering these two questions: How can it be almost Christmas already? What happens to the seasons these days? Moving on quickly before I sound like a querulous, really elderly person ... welcome to another great year of Portsmouth u3a membership. We are delighted that Howard Parsons has volunteered to lead a group "Spoken Spanish for Beginners" which started this September. Going further afield, we have another new group to celebrate.

"Armchair Travel" has involved some super contributions from our members, encouraged and run by Jean Barrow and meeting monthly. Wonderful journeys to enjoy have included Sri Lanka, Israel and even around the world! Twice! (With different members) This past term we have had changes to the committee. We were sorry to have Ivor Grayson-Smith step down as Beacon Administrator. Ivor handled Beacon with an amusing mix of patience and reluctant acceptance as Beacon is certainly not perfect as a computer programme. Ivor was always good company on the committee, and we are grateful to him for his work. Hilary Poley has been a brilliant Speaker Secretary and is now retiring after her three years in that role. We have had a wonderful variety of speakers ranging from the hilarious Malcolm Nelson with his stories about his Customs Officer career to the inspiring workers in local community projects and charities. A warm welcome to Fiona Rosen and Carol-Anne Turner who are our new committee members. Fi will serve as Secretary with Pat Janiec remaining as Minutes Secretary. Membership at present looks good. We have 161 members in total with 12 new members who have joined since September. These figures are an increase on this time last year. Our thanks to Elaine Lawson, membership secretary for her hard work. We have been trying hard to improve our publicity efforts. Earlier in November we gave a presentation to the Portsmouth Pensioners Association. They were meeting in the auspicious surroundings of the Council Chamber, so it felt impressive. Rosemary Sirett had prepared her amazing slides packed full of photos of groups, outings and nuggets of information. Jean Barrow, our Publicity Officer, started off the proceedings with her introduction to how she decided to join the Portsmouth u3a together with the outstanding statistics nationwide about the movement's growth. I concluded with our own different Community Centres over the decades starting from 1985 in Penhale Road Fratton to Southsea Community Centre in St Paul's Square which we left in 2014 to move to the Hub. After reminding everyone to help themselves to goodies on the side table, we answered some questions and left shortly afterwards in their tea break. One thing I ought to mention - we decorated the Lord Mayor's chair with our colourful u3a bunting!

I hope to see lots of you at our annual Christmas Lunch at the Royal Maritime Hotel and Club on Tuesday 12th December 12.30 for 1.00pm which you have previously booked. Plus our Mince Pie Christmas Social on Friday 15th

December in the afternoon. No booking required for this event because it's free. Just turn up to enjoy a free cup of coffee or tea and a mince pie. Have a really good holiday everybody. Happy Christmas wishes!

**Barbara Spiegelhalter**



**Morning classes will continue at 10:00 in the Spring term. You can use your bus pass from 9:00 so should give you plenty of time to get to the hub.**

### **Welcome to new members**

**New :** Judith Button, Gaynor Lennon, John Tims, Susan Loveridge, Dr. Alex Noonan, Anne Branson, Annette Welfare, Norma McVeigh, Esther Acosta, Rona Davidson, Gary Wensley, Tracey Beetlestone

### **Architecture**

After this summer of violent weather contrasts, a very unmerry month of May, relentless sun in June and the usual sullen August, I can't believe that I'm writing this. In the October monsoon season with the curtains drawn at 5pm, against the dark evening, Christmas approaches and the season of calorific intake looms.

However, we can take some intellectual nourishment from the past few meetings before our waistlines spread and perhaps reflect that our subject matter has been nearly as varied as the weather. Some topics were inspired by recent visits, serendipity and by a personal memory of mine.

During our visit to Battersea this spring, some mildly crazy Architecture members decided to be shot up one of the four chimneys in the new high-powered lift.



It prompted me to investigate further these London landmarks we all recognise as part of London's skyline. I discovered that when the power station, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and Theo Halliday, opened in the 30's, there were only 2 chimneys. A 3<sup>rd</sup> arrived in 1941, making it a prime target for the Luftwaffe (although never hit) and the 4<sup>th</sup> only appeared in 1955, a mere 20 years before it was decommissioned. So the Pink Floyd album with the floating pig – called Algy apparently – has fooled us all into thinking that the 4 chimneys were originally in place from its birth.

Travelling a little sideways to another converted power station, now Tate Modern, brought us to the architectural partnership of Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, students together at Basel, one a designer, the other an engineer. Minimalist in style at first, the advance of computer technology has allowed them to develop far more fantastic shapes, as in the Beijing Olympic Stadium, resembling an enormous bird's nest. They describe a lot of their buildings as looking like blown-up pieces of desk art because the computer makes it possible.



However, Tate Modern was a different project. They had to work with an existing, massive structure and add a compatible extension, the Switch House. The brickwork used for this building is complex and textured and combines really successfully with the old powerhouse. The result has been that Tate Modern is now listed in the top 5 London tourist attractions.





A summer visit with a group of u3a friends took us to Dulwich Art Gallery to see the Berthe Morisot exhibition. I had forgotten what a groundbreaking building this is. Built in 1811 to 1813, designed by John Soane, in an age of Neo Classicism where ornamentation was ubiquitous, this building is stripped of all decoration to the point of stark modernity. In fact, I asked the class members to guess when it was built - no-one got it right and most thought it was of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Very little of Soane's lifetime of prolific output, which changed the London landscape,

remains today and Dulwich is one of the most complete examples of his extraordinary style.

In total contrast, we had a session delving into the work of Peter Barber, a contemporary architect with strong political convictions about today's housing problems. His work concentrates on producing affordable social housing and addressing the lack of homeless shelter. He believes that it is completely possible to design these developments in an urban setting at a price and still make them original, attractive and a pleasure to live in. His office, operating from an old Victorian printing shop in King's Cross, consists of himself and just 4 others but they've managed to produce a mass of different projects, mostly in London, often based around the concept of the street or the courtyard where people can live naturally with neighbours and interact in a way the tower blocks could never achieve. The people who live in his houses and apartments in these small-scale developments attest to the fact that their lives have been transformed and that isolation is a thing of the past.



The last building we looked at was Ely Cathedral and this was prompted by a personal memory. My son was christened, late in life, in this magnificent and historic monument. Never having visited it myself, I felt I wanted to walk round it metaphorically with the roomful of friends that are the Architecture class. Here I would like to thank some of those friends who supported me and stepped into the breach and filled in for me at the meeting it was not possible for me to attend.

For more information contact: **Gilly Zeffertt 02392 756856**

## French Experience

This term we have enjoyed a varied and interesting programme of French culture, history, current news and social issues. We were interested to learn that the Parisians have decided to restrict the use of self-service scooters in the streets of the city. Although they had originally considered them practical to avoid using public transport, people found them "too dangerous and not restricted enough".

However, we began with reading about the very modern difficulties facing parents at the start of the new school term - "La Rentree". Traditionally this is the time to provide children with all the essential things necessary in starting school but in France this means funding a long list of essential items. In fact, this has become unaffordable for many families. Some of the most basic things such as exercise books, pens and felt tip pens are products that have increased the most in price (14%). It turns out they need pens with 4 colours as teachers will instruct them to do certain activities in certain colours. Now we know who buys those 4-way pens! Second hand goods and charity shops are now well used.



Another news item we looked at was the recent and alarming emergence of the tiger mosquito in "les chambres" de Paris. It seems these insects and others are increasing in number and finding their way across the channel to our coasts. They bring with them a range of diseases which can be quite serious. Climate change, local environmental conditions and globalisation are all possible causes. In France efforts were underway in September to wipe out these intruders days before the start of the rugby world cup

which involved mass fumigation around the city.

Our sessions include a variety of activities. Working with friends and groups, we translate and discuss items of interest which members have brought to share. One particularly interesting item was to identify the range of mouth-watering cakes and gateaux on sale in many patisseries in Paris and elsewhere, a very useful guide to use when visiting France. Other activities include tackling word games, crosswords, some grammar work with the help of "Alexa", some conversation, listening to French songs and exploring regions of the country with some excellent DVDs.



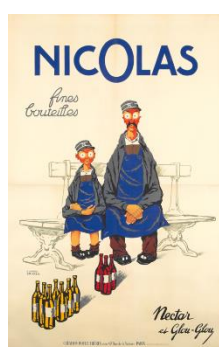
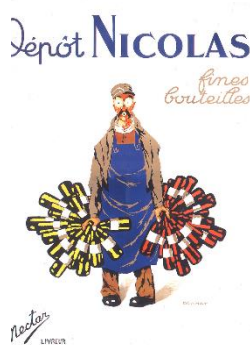
This term we are following the day-to-day dramas of three young French people and an American living in an apartment. The American guy is living with them in order to improve his French speaking. Each episode involves a series of misunderstandings which causes much amusement.

We read an article about how Boris's (let's get Brexit done) father recently became a French citizen. I don't think anything surprises us anymore.

Of course, we had to look at Beaujolais nouveau (no tastings unfortunately) but did you know you originally had to buy a barrel of wine until the Nicolas wine company thought of bottling it and selling it that way. Their logo, a wine delivery man called Nectar is still around. There was a son called Glou Glou which I imagine would be like glug, glug. Both pigeon-toed but in French they say duck-toed. On the hundredth anniversary they added some female delivery people. A dozen bottles at a time is the new normal.

1922

2022



Hilary and Di shared photos and told us about a cruise down the Seine on a ship called the Jane Austen and shared a few idiomatic expressions they had been taught. Apparently "to press on the mushroom" means to hurry up. We also learned that where we say pigeon-toed they say "duck feet". The aim of the class is to have fun, to try and express ourselves in French and learn a bit more about the culture of our nearest neighbours.

For more information contact: **Susan Johnson 02392 669 938**



### The Music Discovery Group.

The Music Discovery Group continues on its merry way, exploring music that is both familiar and unfamiliar. Attendance has stabilised at just into double figures, and as the group members get to know one another better a very informal and friendly atmosphere has developed. Most meetings are themed - some of the themes being obvious, such as the seasons, and there is always Christmas - but next calendar year we are going to investigate whether we should plan the themes well in advance to give the members the time to acquire music for these future meetings. Watch this space! Andy

For more information contact: **Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357**

### FRENCH READING GROUP, Mondays

It's that time again, when one has to conjure up something for the u3a house mag. We were all happy to meet up again after the Summer break, and exercise the little grey cells in French. We have finished reading one classic,



“Gigi” by Colette, and commenced another, “Bonjour Tristesse” by Françoise Sagan. They are very different, but echo each other in ways cleverly delineated by Richard Brooks, below. Richard, one of our members, has kindly offered to share my writing burden:

Perhaps two of French literature’s most celebrated works, even in the Anglosphere: Colette’s Gigi (1944) and Françoise Sagan’s Bonjour Tristesse (1954). Written barely a decade apart, but how very different: one a distraction from the Occupation, looking back beyond the First World War to the vanished elegance of the Belle Époque; the other on the brink of the Trente Glorieuses, not so long before the Swinging Sixties.

The difference shows less in their subject, than its treatment. Both are economic, even lapidary, evocations (182 vs. 127 pages in paperback) of a young girl on the threshold of adulthood, confronting what Hardy (Thomas not the other Françoise) considered the great question of modern life, the relationship between men and women. The contrast comes from the two social settings and their reflection in the text. Gigi is kept on a tight rein, immured in her grandmother’s Parisian apartment, stifled by nineteenth century moral constraints and corsetry, groomed by her great-aunt Alicia, once a grande horizontale, now en retraite. Sagan’s protagonist, Cécile, is left free by her widowed roué of a Papa to run about Paris, swim, sunbathe, kiss young men. The language used to describe the girls’ clothing symbolises the social shift. Pages of dense velvety prose evoke the complexities of Gigi’s wardrobe, fabricated from a plethora of long obsolete materials; Cécile is in her maillot de bain, a chemisier for the evening. One should not make too much of the sartorial contrast: Colette was as liberated a woman as Sagan, and Gigi asserts herself to find happiness (or at least security) with her tonton (the Maurice Chevalier type); whether Cécile will do as well is less clear at the time of writing (check the title).

*Answers next term...*

## Le Monde

Richard continues to provide us with articles from “Le Monde”, giving us a French perspective on world events, leading to some, often heated, discussions! We usually have a break for coffee, when we can catch up with other news, and

perhaps, in our mini-democracy, suggest a topic for our next session. A personal note of sadness! No one has yet suggested Racine or Moliere! Perhaps they were put off at school! I may have to bite the bullet, and push for it myself!

For more information contact: **Jane Helliwell 07778 484 974**

### German Studies



As I write, this has been a short term for us so far: there have only been 3 sessions. We had to cancel the first session (Covid) and there are two more left. But as always, there has been no shortage of variety of topics from our members. We have looked at the history of making clocks in the Black Forest in the 17th century, rather primitive at first, slowly developing moving figures, then in 1738 one Franz Ketterer incorporated a cuckoo for his clocks and the rest, as they say, is history.

We heard the strange story of Kaspar Hauser who, in the 19th century, suddenly appeared one day and claimed to have grown up in the total isolation of a darkened cell. There were many theories about who, why, where and when, including that maybe he had been hidden away because of Royal intrigue! Kaspar Hauser fits into the contemporary European image of the “wolf child” (despite the fact that he almost certainly wasn’t one,) and as a result his story has inspired numerous works.

We have looked at the ongoing efforts to return works of art stolen by the Nazis to the heirs of the original owners, the most recent being the return of seven works by the Austrian painter Egon Schiele: the family had sought the return of these works for more than two decades. They are valued at between £63,000 - £2.3 million EACH.



Some contributions to our meetings come about entirely serendipitously. A book called “The World of Humanism” by a Myron P. Gilmour hardly seems likely to be of interest. It was a chance purchase by a member and included the history of the Fugger family. (That is one of those names you have to pronounce carefully...) It is a merchant banking dynasty dating from 1367 in Augsburg, Bavaria. They started as weavers, changed to trade – essentially an import-export business - (dealing largely in copper,) and as they became more and more wealthy and powerful, they started to advance credit to rulers of states who were in debt. The Fugger Bank became advisors (and creditors) of the Pope, the Hapsburg Emperors and even Henry VIII. They were Catholics and in the 16th century started work on their most famous Augsburg legacy, “The





Fuggerei”: 110 units of housing for poor families who did not want to rely on charity. The rent was the nominal sum of 1 guilder a year and residents were expected to pray daily for the Fuggers. Spouses of inhabitants who died were allowed to remain in their apartments. Social housing in the 16th century – who knew! The family is still in business today represented by Philipp Graf Fugger Merchants.

And finally: we tentatively broached the idea of a group visit to the Goethe Institut in London so I recently did a “recce” and found myself at a “ (WO)MAN versus the MACHINE translation slam.” A University Professor of German and a Literary Ph.D. student and a translator using IT sites were given three tasks: classical, children’s, and experimental, nine minutes for each. It was light-hearted and such FUN! We voted at the end of each part: no surprise that the “human” translations won , but there was an interesting conversation between the person on the computer, and Chat GBT for the “stream of consciousness” experimental piece. The machine did actually have some votes for that!

Thanks as always to members of the group who continue to inspire and amaze us!

For more information contact: **Hilary Nicklin 02392 297 867**

## Spanish

This term has seen us return to the adventures of Juan and Pamela in Mexico. October gives us an excuse to look at the strange rituals that surround their version of Halloween. Dia de Muertos is a celebration of the people who have died and the sugar skulls and strange costumes are to conjure up memories of the dead and not to scare us.

There is a new beginners Spanish group that has started up this term so we now have two levels and this group can tackle more challenging material. Members have been speaking more and telling us about strange experiences on their travels. You would have to join the class to find out who did what when abroad!

For more information contact: **Susan Johnson 02392 669 938**



## Art Appreciation

I started this term with trying to balance the attention paid to artists who have long been overlooked in favour of their partners. We started with Alfred Stieglitz who was a well-known photographer in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and established photography as an art form. We were intrigued by this photo where the little boy seems to have been put in an expensive coat and cap to cover up his dirty, torn clothes for the photo. Alfred then met Georgia O’Keefe who made her mark in the artistic world and is now much better known than her ex-mentor and lover. Her paintings sell for millions of pounds and her flower paintings are immediately recognisable all over the world. She lived into her 90’s and was producing paintings up until her death.



Alfred and Georgia really were the exception where the woman became much better known than the man. Our next couple were brother and sister, Augustus, and Gwen John. Augustus was by far the better known for his flamboyant lifestyle and his wonderful portraits. He lived with his wife and his mistress in a menage à trois and is reputed to have had 12 children by various lovers. He was very successful and had two studios in his garden – one for family portraits and one for paying sitters. See below for one of his sons and the formal portrait for Lawrence of Arabia.



Gwen John led a much less flamboyant life although she did become a model and then a lover to Rodin, the sculptor. After being abandoned by Rodin she converted to Catholicism and did many paintings of nuns and the congregation. She was in fact told off for drawing in church but said she only did this during the boring bits. Not sure what the priest would have made of that.



Our next couple were the sculptors Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudel. Everyone has heard of Rodin and his famous sculptures such as The Thinker and The Kiss, but did you know these were originally part of a much bigger work called the Gates of Hell that were never

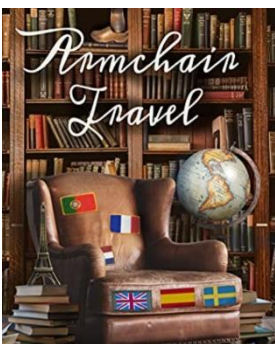


completed. The Thinker was originally Dante looking down on Hell and The Kiss was the two lovers who were thrown in Hell for adultery. The Thinker has a Phrygian cap on his head which was given to freed slaves to wear. Here it symbolizes the freedom to think. This cap is also the mascot for the next Olympic Games in Paris. Camille Claudel worked as a sculptor alongside Rodin but as a woman was much less known and only recently have the French authorities dedicated a museum to her work. She excelled at getting flowing lines into her work. Who could fail to be moved by Le Valse ?



Elaine Lawson gave us a presentation of Paola Rego who painted the mural in the restaurant at the National Gallery. She wanted to make a statement about the lack of female artists on show in the Gallery, so her painting is full of women, mostly sweeping it has to be said. Only one with a paintbrush. So much to see in this 9 metre mural so well worth a closer look.

For more information contact: **Susan Johnson 02392 669 938**

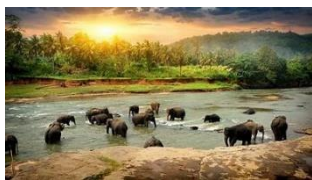


### Armchair travel

I am writing this article on the last day of October and, by the time you are reading it, we shall have had three meetings of our Armchair Travel Group. I was very keen to start a new group which would give those who \*have\* travelled the opportunity to share their stories, those who \*no longer\* travel, but have in the past, the opportunity to reminisce, and those who \*haven't\* travelled, but would love to, the opportunity to travel virtually with the speaker, and perhaps dream.

As I have said before every meeting, no passports are required! Although we may not have armchairs, from the comfort of the chairs at the Hub we have travelled over the past three months to Israel, Sri Lanka, Peru, Pomerania and experienced life in California, Panama and Bahrain.





In the Spring term there are plans to travel to Argentina, South Africa, Bulgaria, Oman, Minehead, and many other destinations, depending on volunteer speakers. It is not essential to have power point presentations or slides. Enthusiasm can take your audience travelling with you, and bringing the occasional souvenir would be lovely. As leader I am happy to "fill a gap", if necessary, with stories of my own travels - from over 50 years ago to just last month. But my great hope is that from our widely travelled members, we shall never run out of volunteers to speak, and places to go, both abroad and at home.

The theme tune of our group really should be "It's a Small World"! Written by Richard and Robert Sherman for a Disney ride at the 1964 World Fair in New York, it has these well-known lyrics:

It's a world of laughter, a world of tears  
It's a world of hopes and a world of fears  
There's so much that we share that it's time we're aware. It's a small world after all!

There is just one moon and one golden sun  
And a smile means friendship to everyone  
Though the mountains divide  
And the oceans are wide

It's a small world after all For more information contact: **Jean Barrow 07746 233 496**

### History

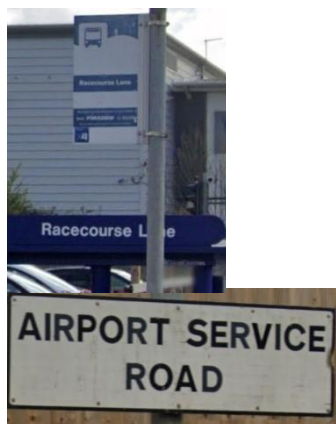
"Hidden History" has been the theme for this term's History presentations. Portsmouth is a city where history is hiding just around the corner, behind road signs, street names and many buildings. Some are obvious, like Nelson Road, Prince Albert Road or Victoria Road, others are less well known.

Portsmouth and Southsea developed rapidly during the 1800's starting from the dockyard and the military garrison town of Old Portsmouth and spreading across Portsea Island east and northward.

Many of the road names have military and naval connections such as the areas known as Havelock Park and Nelsonville, there are roads named after admirals and the battles they fought. Roads are also named after Landowners, Farmers, Authors, Politicians and Royalty.

There are other interesting themes such as the Isle of Wight estate in Cosham where Totland, Freshwater and Colwell are used. The mineral estate around Kings Road where skilled workers lived, the roads are named Gold, Silver, Copper, Flint and Stone. At Eastney there are roads named after towns in the New Forest including Ringwood Road, Fordingbridge Road, Cadnam Road and Minstead Road and in Southsea a group of roads are named after Walter Scott novels, St Ronans, Waverley and Kenilworth.

In January the history group began to look at this Hidden History of Portsmouth and Southsea. Before the First World War there were two racecourses in Portsmouth at Paulsgrove and Farlington, and both had their own train station. The only clues to their existence today are the names of the roads – “Racecourse Lane” at Paulsgrove, and “Railway Triangle” at Farlington.

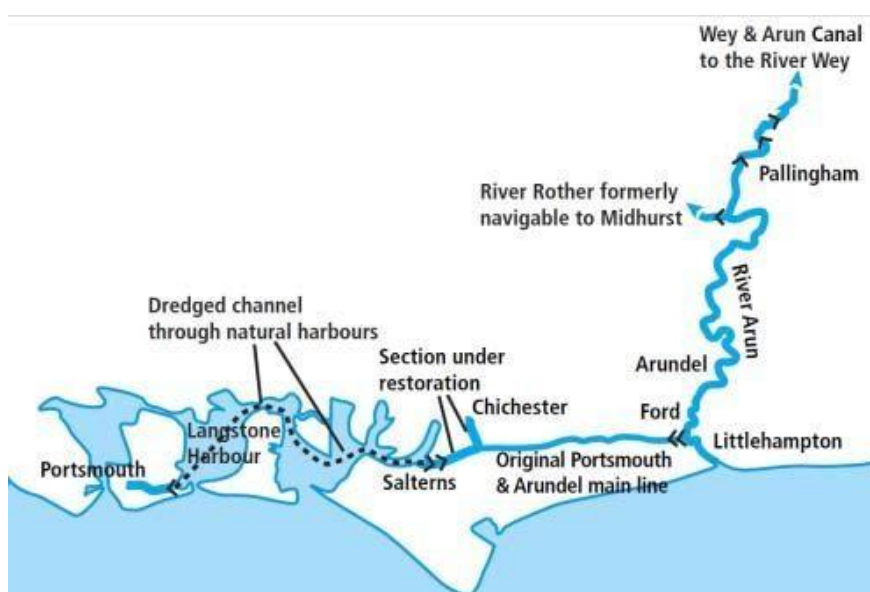


Along

the Eastern Road, where Anchorage Park is today, the road names provide clues to the location of the long, lost Portsmouth Airport “Airport Service Road” and “Airspeed Road” where Neville Shute Norway once had a factory, and where he employed Amy Johnson to fly passengers to the Isle of Wight.



In Southsea you can follow the route of the lost Southsea Railway branch line from Fratton Station across Goldsmith Ave, along Pepys Close, across Albert Road to Old Bridge Road and Parkstone Ave to Chewter Close where East Southsea Station is remembered by a mural on the old station wall. There were station halts at Jessie Road and Albert Road and bridges under the roads.



From “Arundel” Street you can track the route of the Portsmouth to Arundel Canal across Portsmouth. It was built between 1818 and 1822 and ran along what is the railway line today. From Portsmouth and Southsea Station, where the canal basin once was and along “Canal Walk” and Goldsmith Avenue, then parallel to “Locksway Road” and on to Langstone Harbour where the locks can still be seen. The local pubs, “The Oyster House” and “The Old Canal Inn” also remind us of the canal which closed in 1830.

Tram Lines can still be seen in Rugby Road and The High Street in Old Portsmouth they are the only remaining reminder of the many trams that carried passengers around Portsmouth and up Portsdown Hill to as far as Horndean, from 1865 to 1936.



In October we continued with the Hidden History theme and looked at buildings around Portsmouth. In the nineteenth century there were five windmills in Portsmouth providing flour for the navy and local population, "Rudmore" and "Mile End" were the names of two of them and The Dockyard Mill, by the dockyard walls, was funded by the local dockyard workers. When this was forced to close, as the dockyard grew they built another mill in Southsea where today the " Dock Mill Cottages" still exist off of Napier Road.



Dotted around Portsmouth are five of the remaining City Gates, the last features of the defensive walls that surrounded Portsmouth in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries." Landport" Gate is the only one in its original position in St Georges Road, it was the main gate into Portsmouth for travellers coming from London and the North. Nelson would have come through it on his last journey to The George Hotel, that once stood in the High Street, before he joined HMS Victory, going on to fight the French at the Battle of Trafalgar.

King James Gate once stood across Broad Street separating the town of Portsmouth from the Point. The Point at the time was notorious, filled with eating houses, cookshops, pawn shops, drinking dens, brothels, tailors and other services for the Navy, it was Not a nice place to be. King James Gate is now in Burnaby Road providing an entrance to The United Services Recreation Ground

Other gates were "Unicorn" Gate now at the entrance to the Naval Base and "Lion" Gate which was later built into the base of the Semaphore Tower in the dockyard. Both these gates once gave access from the town to the houses of Portsea outside the town walls. "Victory" Gate is now at the entrance to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

King Williams Gate now demolished gave access to the East and the newly built Croxton Town, later to become Southsea. And Quay Gate which was built next to the original Tudor Gate once gave access to the Camber on the western side of Portsmouth. Both were demolished when the walls were removed.

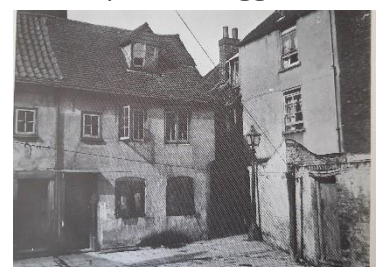
Other buildings in Old Portsmouth with a hidden past include The Still and West which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century opened at 4am to serve the fishermen who were unloading their catch at the quay nearby and Spice Island Inn, known as The Coal Exchange in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the place where spices from around the world were unloaded. Both these pubs were places where the Press Gangs found people for Nelson's navy.



Bath House in "Bath Square" was built with donation from the public and provided bathing facilities for local people.



In the High Street some buildings survived the bombing of WW2 including The Greyhound once known as Ye Spotted Dogge , the place where the Duke of Buckingham, George " Villiers" was assassinated by Lt John "Felton". It is now a small hotel. The Dolphin Hotel also survives and claims to be





the oldest pub in Portsmouth, displayed inside is a window where Nelson scratched his name on the glass with a diamond.

Long gone are the slums of Portsea, but the road names still remain, such as “Blossom Aly” and “Rosemary Lane.” They were replaced by the first council houses in Portsmouth in “Curzon Howe Road”



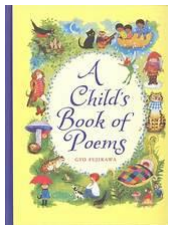
So as you travel around Portsmouth take a closer look at the street names. They could hide a secret story of a battle fought, an Admiral who led the charge, a person who wrote a famous book or helped to build Britain. Portsmouth’s history is hiding in plain sight !

For more information contact: **Rosemary Sirett 07540597804**

### **POETRY and POETRY & DRAMA Groups, Wednesday & Thursday**

They all tell such dreadful lies,  
It makes one gasp and stretch one’s eyes!

When writing these snippets for u3a, I have often commented on how the world has rushed on since the previous one, and our helplessness in the face of monumental events over which we seem to have no control. Perhaps, one day, I’ll be able to say, “Not much has happened!” Only a slight paraphrase of Belloc’s “Matilda” (above, and a recent treat) seems to sum up the current state of play. Lies and liars everywhere, AI and fake news...”The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.”

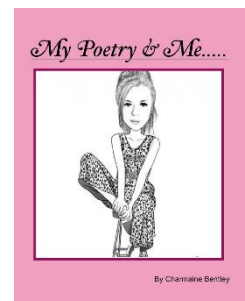


How then, to relax and do poetry and plays – and why? Well, a hint of justification is in my comments, above, and their mining of literary allusions. Of course, they can also lighten one’s mood, and, shortly, our Thursday group will be looking at Children’s poetry and Limericks. We need a break! We didn’t even feel like having a whole session on War Poetry, even though the session almost overlaps Armistice Day. One or two may crop up, however, I’m sure.

It has been said that current events make satire redundant, however, we shall give it a go, and we’ll also be looking at the Liverpool Poets, McGough, Patten, Henri et al. We do like a bit of drama on Thursdays, and we have just finished “Macbeth”, where “Fair is foul and foul is fair!” Oh dear! It’s those allusions again! Is it just me, or do you feel slightly sorry for Macbeth? I do love the opportunity these plays (especially Shakespeare, whom I love!) give me to research the text, and watch various versions.



Our Wednesday group decided to look at some famous female poets: Scovell, Jennings and Raine. They all seemed to be quite spiritual, with a fairly religious background. Spiritual, but not orthodox, searching but not there yet. We are lucky to have a fairly young new poet in our midst, Charmaine Bentley, and we have enjoyed some of her poems too, on city life, nature and the quirks of family celebrations. Then we



decided to go for “Food”, which can, of course be viewed metaphorically. But, we started with a famous nutritional poem by Marriot Edgar, “The Lion and Albert”, relating how a naughty boy is swallowed whole by a lion. The traumatised mother informs us that she does not want any more children merely “to feed ruddy lions!” Luckily for her (and Albert!), he is regurgitated, and comes back in a sequel.

So, there you have it, another term come and gone (well, almost at the time of writing). I leave you with some thoughts from Dolly Parton: the first has something to say about the current political situation, and the second is for everybody!

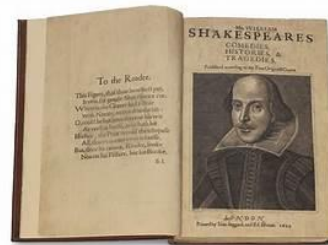
“If you don’t like the road you’re walking, pave another.”

“If you see someone without a smile, give ‘em yours!”

### **SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES IN A NEW ROLE To celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first folio**

One

Twelfth Night,  
 (Or what you will!)  
 Two Gentlemen of Verona,  
 In fact,  
 Two Noble Kinsmen,  
 Embarked on a  
 Comedy of Errors  
 When they commenced  
 Taming of the Shrew.  
 Fortunately, it was  
 Much Ado about Nothing,  
 In fact, merely  
 A Midsummer Night's Dream,  
 And,  
 As You Like It,  
 Measure for Measure,  
 All's Well that End's Well -  
 Love's Labour's were not Lost -  
 Though  
 The Merchant of Venice,  
 Troilus and Cressida,  
 And  
 The Merry Wives of Windsor  
 Were NOT amused



For more information contact: **J.M. Floyd Pattison 07778 484968**

## Philosophy



It's pleasant for me to get down and dirty in the Garden. Especially in the garden, or grove, that was the creation of Epicurus. It was similar in many ways to the communes that sprang up in the sixties. Epicurus's gardens flourished over forty-four centuries ago.

What I specially admire about Epicurus was the way he tried to reverse the inward and ethical quest after notions such as The Good that had such a firm grip on the followers of Socrates. With the distance of over a hundred years between himself and Socrates, Epicurus clearly saw that it was a mistake to limit study into words and their meanings. Philosophy needed to return to the investigation of the world and it needed to rethink the old histories of the gods of Olympus.

In particular Philosophy needed to replace the silly explanations of the gods' interactions with humans and the miscegenated heroes who cast such a spell over Homer. His plan was to give a reasoned and comprehensive account of natural phenomena, of human nature and of the gods.

What is rather astounding is the degree to which he came within an ace of pulling off his plan in such a way as to satisfy a modern reader.

**Tony Stutters 07739 832 774**



## World of Books

We've read both by ourselves and as a group chose passages from 3 books.

- 1) Old Baggage by Lissa Evans
- 2) Animal Farm by George Orwell
- 3) The Little Coffee House of Kabul by Deborah Rodriguez



I think the group enjoyed “Old Baggage”, its humour and memorable characters as well as the informative knowledge of the aftermath of the Suffragette Movement following the First World War, which brought the movement to an abrupt end.

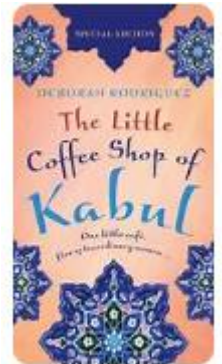
This term we revisited the short “fairytale” novel “Animal Farm” by George Orwell and marvelled at its ingenuity (perhaps aided by his wife’s contribution?) and relevance for today.

“The Little Coffee House of Kabul” by Debora Rodriguez also found favour in the group apart from one member for whom the acts of violence against a large portion of the population in Afghanistan and the

subjugation of women was too much. However, it was generally agreed the plot was well contrived and gripping, with a large cast of disparate characters giving vivid insight into life in Afghanistan in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. This was recounted by an American author who had lived in Kabul for five years at this time and set up shop there, thus strengthening the book’s authenticity.

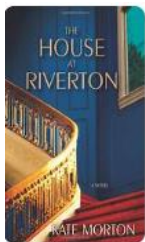
Also, thanks to Tony who continues to amuse and entertain us with poetry.

For more information contact- **Audrey Thorpe 02392 372954**



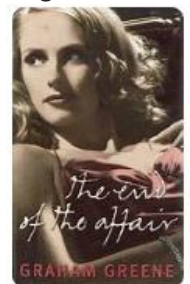
## Pelham Book Group

Another fascinating range of books has kept us reading over the last few months, with thanks to the Hants Library Book Group resources and Maggie Macbeth who does the leg work collecting and distributing books.



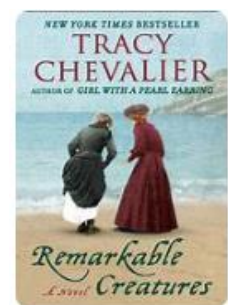
Our summer started with a ‘light’ read, ‘The House at Riverton’ by Kate Morton. Her 2007 debut novel centres on a dying 98 year old maid, Grace Bradley, who has kept hidden a terrible secret within the upper class family she serves and is ultimately connected to. The novel is carefully plotted between the past and present with mysteries resolved as Grace makes a tape for her grandson sharing her secret with him. We would recommend it as a relaxing, entertaining read.

There was much debate over our August read, ‘The End of the Affair’, Graham Greene’s 1951 novel based on his own affair with Catherine Walton and the last of his ‘Catholic novels’. A minority in the group lost patience with the painful deliberations of the three main characters but all agreed their obsessions, jealousies and search for meaning in a war blighted society were shared profoundly with the reader. Many critics labelled the book a masterpiece and we concurred.

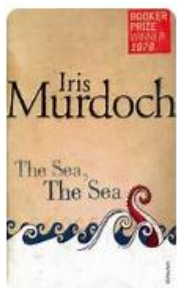


September’s ‘Moon Tiger’ by Penelope Lively, the 1987 Booker Prize winner was applauded by us all. The novel is rich with characters, settings and themes covering multiple points of view, moving backward and forward through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the two World Wars. The female central character, terminally ill, sets herself the challenge of writing a history of the world with her own life as a blueprint. What an amazing life she had! We were surprised this fascinating novel had passed most of us by and we resolved to investigate more Penelope Lively novels.

In October we visited the Jurassic coast with ‘Remarkable Creatures’, by Tracy Chevalier. Based on true events we were introduced to the two female protagonists who revolutionised fossil hunting, identification, and categorisation in the late Regency period. The young, uneducated but instinctive Mary Anning builds a unique collection of fossils is paired with an older, educated spinster Elizabeth Philpot who also begins collecting fossils in Lyme. Shades of Austen as Elizabeth’s reduced circumstances were explored. These two females, historical figures survive the prejudice of the male dominated society and scientific world steeped in outdated theories. Their supportive, friendship bond lasts despite male interventions with reconciliation and recognition for their efforts at the end. A novel that educated us all in palaeontology as well as being a very satisfactory, enjoyable read.







We now embark on the 1978 Booker Prize winner, 'The Sea, The Sea' by the prolific Iris Murdoch. I anticipate much deliberation over the self-obsessed, self-satisfied, smug central character totally unable to empathise with the other colourful characters in the novel. It is a compelling read as you are drawn into Charles's world and his machinations.

What a list of novels! If you don't like the sound of these ones read, all the authors have many other novels you may find more appealing. What is better than a good book to transport you to other worlds and experiences?

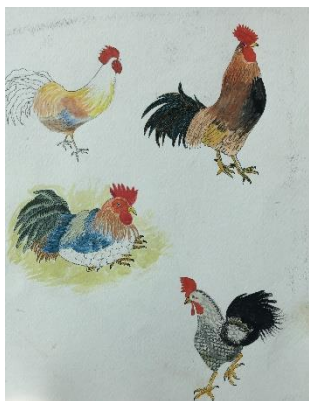
Happy reading over these dark, gloomy Winter months.

The group is currently full but if you wish for any information

Contact: Judith Wise tel. 02392 357 463 or 07530854969. [judewise1@googlemail.com](mailto:judewise1@googlemail.com)

## Art for All

**Lois Saunders**



**Vikki Ellie**



**Maggie McBeth**



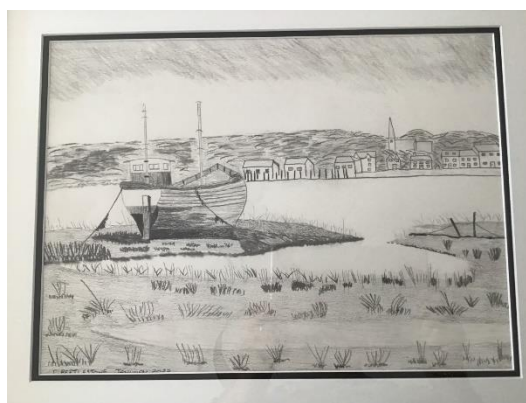
**Sheila Robinson**



**Clara Mak**



**Craig Beetlestone**



For more information contact **Brenda Colman 07342 976 255**

## Needles and Pins Group

**Brenda Colman**



**Carol Jones**



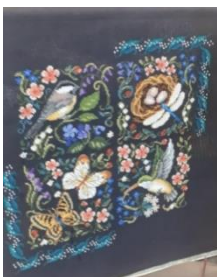
**Jean McQuoid**



**Penny Scipio**



**Jean Bancroft**



**Lynn Timms**



The group have been busy knitting hats for the premature baby unit as well as making items to keep warm this winter.

**Heather Lewis**

**Crystal Work**

**Fiona Brown – Fireman Sam and cute elephants**



For more information contact **Penny Scipio 02392 832 500**

## Science and Technology



Great Science pushes us to ask questions that we never knew we needed to ask. That's true but I think not just Great Science but everyday science and especially young children pushes us. They ask questions we have to answer and then this opens the can of worms and we're pushed to verify the answers. Our group often asks questions that appear childlike, and we end a session heading off home determined to find the answer before the next meeting. Examples of the questions we ask are:

Why do we use Irish names for our storms, and did you notice we alternate the genders.

Why does a cup of tea taste different during a storm.



Why are they replacing a caesium clock with a ytterbium clock and would you be able to pronounce, let alone spell, these two elements.



Our group discuss most of what is new in the technological world. This includes AI and how it is used as the fall guy when things go wrong. The latest satellites and their purpose. Global warming and how we are mitigating the inevitability of exceeding 1.5C . Oh and how long can you stay awake, and what is the world record held by Randy Gardener.

Come along on alternate Thursday afternoons and join in the fun - It really is.

For more information contact: **Brian Greener 02392863381**

**Religion, Spirituality and Life** We are now up to thirteen members attending but several more come occasionally.



We continue to bond well and welcome new members and my perception is that the diversity of our group in respect of beliefs and values is increasing, although we don't do any belief and value monitoring !

This term we have taken two approaches to Religion, Spirituality and Life: a synchronic approach and a diachronic approach. The first of these draws on sociology, attempting to describe the different dimensions of religion which create a sort of stable lens through which religions can be analysed over time. Then we have taken a diachronic approach to see how

religion emerged over the last ten thousand years or so, since early human beings discovered they could become meaning makers, drawing pictures, making languages, writing holy books, developing rules to live by, doing science. All this persuades some, quite understandably, that religion is all man made. Others feel that we can apply all these dimensions to the sun, the stars, the wild animals and to the people we love most in the world. But we don't just invent those – hmm ? Do we ?

Our next session (Nov 10th) will be lead by a consultant in pain management speaking about Pain, Spirituality and Life. Come and join us. For more information contact: **John Strain 07834 637 744**

## Interest Groups Online



Formally known as Trust u3a, these groups are usually presented on Zoom and are nationwide activities. Initiated in April 2020 when local groups were unable to meet, they have continued to meet weekly/fortnightly/ monthly as required or how offered by the group leader. They offer a huge variety of subjects and can be attended alongside the local group meetings.

I lead a group 'C19 British Social History' which, since October 2022 will meet on the last Monday of the month 2-3pm For information about these groups use:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/trustu3a/welcome>

**Elaine Lawson**



This term the group has participated in playing a wide range of board and card games, both modern and some relatively old titles. We are slowly attracting more members to the sessions which appear to be viewed favourably by those who attend.

Readers who remember the group's report in the Summer Newsletter will recall mention of some controversy involving a game which featured donuts, I

am pleased to inform you that this was not an isolated incident as this term also saw some discord, this time involving Rummikub, a popular mass market game which has its own dedicated groups at a number of u3as', including our own at one point. The issue was caused by one of the game's rules, which was subject to dispute. The key factor which caused this is there are at least 94 manufacturers of the game worldwide, many of which include in their contacts with the copyright holders the right to amend rules where they see fit. In such circumstances the usual etiquette is to play the game under the host's set of rules. So no harm done and the group continues to play on in a good natured manner, after all they are only games.



I wish everybody has an enjoyable festive season , and if you enjoy playing that annual board game during this period why not come to the group's opening session on Wednesday 10th January 2024 starting at 2.00pm to see what we are about. **For more information contact: Tony Valvona 023 92 822 641**

**Mah Jong** still takes place Friday mornings. Come along and give it a go.  
For more information contact: **John Hall on 02392 732980**



## Film Club

**Wednesday 17th Jan 2024 at 1.45 pm**



**"Hit the Road"** ( 2021) Directed by Panah Panaki. An Iranian road comedy-drama film. Follows a chaotic, tender family that is on a road trip across a rugged landscape and fussing over the sick dog and getting on each others' nerves. Only the mysterious older brother is quiet.

**Wed. 7th Feb. at 1.45 pm**



**"I am Love"** (2009) Dir by Luca Guadagnino and starring Tilda Swinton. An Italian romantic drama film set in Milan around 2000. Emma left Russia to live with her husband in Italy. Now a member of a powerful industrial family, she is the respected mother of three, but feels unfulfilled. One day, Antonio, a talented chef and her son's friend, makes her senses kindle.

**Wed. 6th March at 1.45 pm**



**"A Simple Favor"** (2018) Dir by Paul Feig. An American crime comedy thriller with many twists. Stephanie is a single mother with a parenting vlog who befriends Emily, a secretive upper-class woman who has a child at the same elementary school. When Emily goes missing, Stephanie takes it upon herself to investigate.

For more information contact: **Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764**

## The Walking Group

We had two lovely walks during the summer break. The first was a return to Winchester with some who hadn't been on the previous one. As before we fuelled up



on coffee in the cathedral cafe garden before starting the walk. It is a lovely walk along the river and sat with lunch in the garden of St Cross. We then carried on along the Itchen Navigation and found a lovely new cafe just up from the water. I can recommend the milkshakes with ice cream, it seems to have become a recurring theme for me this summer as some of you know. Fiona remembered a route back to the Park and Ride bus so we didn't have to go back through the city. This dropped us by the train station which is very handy for people who don't want to walk too far. The second walk was to a lovely old village secreted down a country lane called Ovington near Arlesford. The old pub called The Bush let us use their much needed facilities before they opened as we had all gone slightly adrift



on the way and were desperate. Too much information !,! perhaps. They also said they would reserve a big table for us for lunch later. We were a larger group that day. We then walked along the river bank and crossed over a bridge with the clearest water, a fabulous view. After following the river we eventually turned off towards the road. Fiona pointed out a church to us at Itchen Abbas which had been copied from St Chappell in Paris. It was a lovely place and we crossed the road and paid a visit. We then completed the circle and returned to the The Bush for lunch, delicious. Things have been quiet this autumn due to unusual weather . I had to cancel a walk in September due to very hot weather and a further one due to heavy rain. It has been a strange year. This month I have been away on holiday and have been curtailed due to having a new bathroom fitted. However I am hoping we can get going again as at the moment I write the sun has been shining for three days!,!. I look forward to meeting any new members, you will be most welcome.

For more information contact: **Jackie Forsyth 02392 666 680**



## Speakers' Corner

### Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023: 5-minute vignettes

Our scheduled speaker, **David Bailey** was unable to attend as he had received a last minute request to be in London to give evidence for the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) HOL Bill 119 currently making its way through Westminster at a Select Committee Hearing. So about 10 u3a members rallied round with some 5-minute timed vignettes to fill the spot. Jean was the 'time's up' bell-ringer.

First up was **Hilary** with a brief account of her recent trip to Israel including many sites in Jerusalem, floating on the Dead Sea and enjoying swimming in the Sea of Galilee.

**Olivia** then briefly recounted her trip to Caen in May-June this year where she enjoyed visiting a Normandy Fair, Omaha Beach (one of the sites of the Normandy D-Day landings), a trip to Bayeux, site of the famous tapestry.

Next up was **George**, who commenced with a recording of le chanson 'Il pleut sur Nantes' sung by the famous French singer 'Barbara'. Her song 'L' Aigle Noir' became a big hit selling 1 million copies in 12 hours!

**Ivor** spent Christmas 2022 in the Exotica Hole & Resort in Goa. He described this amazing hotel, set in stunning grounds. The hotel offers a golf course, football & cricket patches, & a lovely inviting swimming pool along with a thatched roof restaurant.

**Barbara Ford** gave us a run down of her eventful life from studying at Portsmouth College of Art she went on to be a window dresser at Peter Jones in Sloane Square then an au pair in Paris. She later returned to London and met William, a photographer. He went to work in Kinsasa and Barbara stayed in London working for a bilingual telephone service. Met her first husband and travelled to Panama, Peru, Bahrain. Dubai UAE. During this last period of time, they holidayed in Penang, Malaysia.

**Susan J** was fascinated by the island of Cuba. On her journey out she discovered that she had been sitting behind Carlos Acosta (CBE), a Cuban-British ballet director & retired dancer, who is now with the Birmingham Royal Ballet. She landed in Havana with its gaily painted exteriors hiding long-neglected buildings and big American cars.

**Quentin** shared with a brief account of his holiday in Bulgaria in 1991. In Sofia, he saw many contrasts at a concert, such as Balkan instruments being played alongside musicians playing Mozart, & folk songs accompanied by a piano

**Peter** gave us an account of one year in his life when he was seconded to the Royal Marines in 1970. Then, after one year of being on war alert, he found himself on a guard ship to the Royal Yacht in the balmy Indian Ocean for the Queen's Jubilee year.

**Gilly** went on the recent Architecture Group London visit and gained permission to visit St George's Church, Bloomsbury, near the British Museum, to inspect a lovely example of the work of the famous British architect Nicholas Hawksmoor. The church (built in 1711-1731) replaced a church destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666. In 2002 it was beautifully restored right down to all its intricate details.

**Rosemary** described her 2019 visit to Lisbon, Portugal. She & her husband negotiated 3 train transfers & several nights in night sleeper cabins, then arrived in Lisbon. They enjoyed staying in a hotel near the football 'Stadium of Light'. They visited the National Tile Museum, the Sao Jorge Castle with beautiful gardens & lovely vistas of the city.

## October 17<sup>th</sup> Readeasy



Susie Quinlan, the group's Secretary and Volunteer Recruiter, told us about this charity that helps adults to read on 1 to 1 basis without any charge to the reader. The purpose of ReadEasy is to help adults to learn to read as long as they are over eighteen. This is

an organisation that Mandy Richards been involved with for over two years, firstly in London and now here in Portsmouth. In her role as a Reading Coach, she meets with her reader twice a week and works systematically through a manual. So many things are closed to adults who have a literacy problem, and this program can make a real difference to people's lives.

## Tuesday 19 September



Keith Roberts, a National Trust Guide at Uppark House, gave us a very interesting talk on the history and architecture of this remarkable building. It was built in the time of Queen Anne by a rich mercantile family who acquired many properties, married well and bought themselves a title. The nineteenth century incumbent was part of the Prince of Wales's coterie, and the building was the scene of riotous behaviour and unsavoury liaisons with courtesans and domestic staff.

However, these women proved to be most efficient managers. Later, when the deceased owner proved to have no legitimate heir, huge numbers of claimants came forward. The building had to be rebuilt after an extensive fire in 1987 and is now used for filming; and is open to the public to view the artefacts rescued from the flames.

## Social Events

### Christmas Lunch

Christmas lunch at the Royal Maritime Hotel 12:30 for 1:00



### Afternoon social



Mince pie social Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December in the Hub café 2pm. Free but if you feel able please donate a reading book suitable for under 5's to go to the Homestart charity which helps local families with young children.

## Just for fun

What did Santa do when he went speed dating? *He pulled a cracker.*

What athlete is warmest during winter? *A long jumper.*

What happened to the man that stole an advent calendar? *He got 25 days.*

Who's Rudolph's favourite pop star? *Beyon-sleigh!*



Why can't Christmas trees knit? *Because they lose their needles.*

What does Santa spend his wages on? *Jingle Bills.*





## **Principles of the u3a Movement**

- The u3a Movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

### **The Third Age Principle**

- Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full-time employment has ceased.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.
- **The Self-help Learning Principle**
- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire, by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.
- **The Mutual Aid Principle**
- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.