

IN TOUCH NOVEMBER 2023

Dear All,

This is my last letter to you all as chairman, as I am stepping down at the AGM , having completed my term of office. The last three years seem to have whizzed by! And to think I only joined the committee after the plea went out for more ordinary committee members! A plea, incidentally, which is still valid for the present time!

Looking back over the last 3 years, we have moved from Zoom meetings to face to face meetings, with three changes of venue too, thanks to events outside our control. However, we seem to be happily settled at the New Remembrance Hall - long may it last! Our range of groups continues to change and evolve , with some groups folding, but others opening/re-opening up, which, given that we a rural area with at least 3 other u3a's within 20 miles of us is not bad going! However, we do need to continue to reach out to those who don't know what fun it can be to be a u3a member, and encourage them to come along.

In conclusion, I would like to say a big thank you to my fellow committee members , as well as to you all , for all the support you have given over the last three years. The committee has been, as always, a terrific team to work with. You, the membership, have supported and also give feedback to us, which is helpful.

Liz Greenwa



Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

**Thursday 2 November
AGM
Followed by
Barbara Hurst
"The Women Artists that History
Forgot"**



**Thursday 7 December
Xmas Lunch
Royal Chase Hotel**

link to our web page
<https://u3asites.org.uk/sgu3a/home>

Next u3a Talks

Monthly open meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at The New Remembrance Hall, Charlton, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0PL - opening at 10.00am for 10.30am start. A small charge of £2 per person is made, to cover the cost of speakers and refreshments.

Open meetings provide an opportunity to have a coffee, socialise and to enjoy presentations from invited speakers. Non-members are welcome to attend one open meeting, free of charge, to sample what is on offer.

Details of speakers for the coming year can be found on our website; the next two are shown below.

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Thursday 2nd November

Barbara Hurst - "The Women Artists that History Forgot"

This presentation examines a number of women artists who were very famous in their day, acknowledged as great artists, but who largely disappeared from the historical record until recently, when their work has been re-examined. Far from mere tokenism, these women are now being accorded the recognition they deserve, among them court painters, natural history painters and RA Academicians, though many of their names are scarcely known. But their stories are fascinating, especially considering the obstacles they had to overcome in order to pursue their careers as artists in a strongly patriarchal world.

Barbara is a former lecturer in English and Humanities, with an MA in Literature & Writing Studies. She was a borough councillor at Rushmoor Borough Council in Hampshire for many years, holding portfolios in Health & Housing and later in Economy, Housing Strategy & Planning. She is a governor at Gillingham Primary School, has served as a trustee for a number of charities and as the long-term Secretary of The Farnborough Society. She is currently Groups Coordinator and trustee for Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a and is also leader of the Art Appreciation Group, Reading Group and Garden Interest Group.

Thursday 7th December

Christmas Lunch

Instead of the advertised monthly meeting in December, the committee has decided to organise a Christmas Lunch at the Royal Chase Hotel in Shaftesbury for members and their guests.

Arrival from 12.30pm for lunch at 1.00pm. Drinks are not included but there is a well-stocked bar.

I need to let the hotel know numbers and provide a deposit by 22nd November, so please send me your payment and menu choices before then.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Barbara Hurst

Group News

Churches/Places of Worship

16 members met at the Church of St Mary & St Nicholas in Wilton for a two-hour guided tour, finishing with a brief concert of organ music. The church is unique locally for its Italianate architecture, unusual orientation, and orthodox-influenced decoration. Built in 1840-45 to a design by TH Wyatt and almost entirely funded by Lord Herbert of Lea, later 12th Earl of Pembroke, the church is a basilica with spectacular mosaics in its apse by Miss Gertrude Martin.

Elsewhere, there are details to be discovered everywhere



from the Capocci shrine, purchased specifically for the church by Lord Herbert's Russian mother, the Dowager Duchess Catherine Woronzow. When the church authorities refused to allow her to install it, she had it dismantled and elements can be found



throughout the church, giving it a distinct Byzantine flavour, most notably in its splendid pulpit. In fact, wherever you stand in this church, there are interesting and beautiful things to see.



Our guide was the church organist, who told us that theirs is an exceptional instrument, even better than that in Salisbury Cathedral in his view. At the end of the tour, he played us two lovely pieces to demonstrate the range and quality of the organ. Afterwards, several of us went to the Wilton House Garden Centre for a very nice lunch at their Origins restaurant. The combination of church and garden centre make a delightful afternoon out, which I highly recommend.

Barbara Hurst

Literature

The Literature Group continue to meet on Zoom twice a month and we have added screensharing to our technical skills. We've finished our look at 'The Lyrical Ballads' of 1798, by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and are currently enjoying Arnold Bennett's 'Old Wives' Tale', led by one of the group. Then it's Henry V for our annual Shakespeare play. The Literature Group was one of the founder members of the Shaftesbury and Gillingham u3a and has always been a friendly and welcoming group. We enjoy each other's company and our lively study of the whole range of marvellous novels, poetry and plays of literature in English - translations of great foreign works included.

Peter Rolfe

Philosophy

The next meeting of the Philosophy and Discussion Group will not be until January. This is mainly due to the absence of the Chairman.

At our last meeting we started to discuss the legacy we have left to the empire. In particular we started to investigate the legacy we gave to the USA. We started by asking why were their gun laws so different from ours? When I, some time ago, asked an American that question, the only answer I received was that: "It is in the Constitution!" In fact I believe that it is explained in the Bill Of Rights!

At the time that the Bill was written the philosophers at the time believed that it was wrong for the British King to use the army against his own citizens. So the way to avoid that happening was simply not to have an army. That, then begged the question as to how the new country should defend itself. The answer was to have a Citizen's Militia. So the men would be trained, but keep their personal weapon on hooks above the fireplace. Logically therefore the USA should either disband its army or change the gun laws. However, if we look back to the time of the Vietnamese War, the State Governor deployed the National Guard against students that disregarded their call up papers. Indeed live ammunition was fired!

Another aspect of our legacy is the difference between the states in the North and those in the deep South. There is a great deal of prejudice. Indeed, within my lifetime, a black woman in Alabama sat in the wrong seat on a bus. The bus was halted, the woman was taken from the bus and hanged from a tree!

So in the next meeting in January we will be looking at the USA today. In the UK we have recently had a Prime Minister who by definition was a criminal. Today Trump is facing a raft of criminal charges including acts that threaten their democracy. Are the current challenges facing the house a symptom of this? Is the USA approaching a situation where it is becoming ungovernable? Will Trump supporters risk driving the country towards a second civil war? All of this is happening at a time when mankind and its institutions have to face up to the impact of climate heating!

The January meeting could be interesting.

Chris Specer

Garden Interest

Tower Hill Garden - Our last garden visit of the year, 18 people took the opportunity to join us on this last visit.



The garden was on different levels and on chalk. Some of the beds were on a deep slant and we wondered how amazing that these difficult zones were cultivated so well.



This garden was much loved and couldn't have been easy to manage but manage they did.

The hostess took photographs of

the plants earlier in the year and so we were able to gauge the life of some of the wonderful roses for example. As we walked around there was no space nook or cranny that hadn't been planted with some little gem. The paths were gravel and lined with old bricks and wound around all the garden. There were many places to sit and enjoy the view and lower down the garden was a little shelter which had been painted and filled with a seat and cushions which gave a completely different view of the garden.



I Have to mention that the tea and cakes were exemplary, Sue our hostess even made cafetière coffee and a great atmosphere ensued with lots of chatter; I can't thank her enough for the effort she put in to the day.



November Meeting.

We are as last year in the Vicarge School Room, Gillingham's Church Hall. What an exciting meet it shall be with Sue Carter a florist of some distinction making a Xmas Wreath and a demo from me on planting 'Paperwhite' bulbs. There will be a draw and an opportunity to win some of these bulbs and try planting them yourself and enjoying some lovely scent from them over Xmas.

Irene Gordon

Knitting/Crafts

Our second group meeting and this time an interesting group of 5 people who were seasoned crafters.

We had a variety of knitting patterns available and I'm pleased to say enthused two of our members who took a pattern each and a new project for both. We are looking forward to seeing the finished articles, which of course will be photographed and put on the website. Another finished piece is Jackie Dolan's crochet blanket which I am hoping to photograph soon. She has also started a new sock project of which the wool is fascinating as it knits up and look like fair isle; a very clever product. Our embroiderer Lynda Gardner has started a small project and was able to demonstrate how to correctly do a French Knot.



This meeting is just what I had hoped in that a few ideas were swapped, inspiration for all and different members with different skill sets. I have to admit that chatter was non-stop, not always about crafting, and really extremely enjoyable company. Long may it continue.

Irene Gordon

Spite and Malice

Tea break at this friendly and enthusiastic group.



Other groups / items for interest

Trading Standards news: Digital Switchover scams

The UK's telephone network is changing. Between now and 2025 most telephone providers will be moving their customers from old analogue landlines to new upgraded landline services using digital technology. Services that rely on the old landline system such as home phones and healthcare devices will be switched over.

The new network will provide a future proof, more reliable and dependable broadband service that will support the UK for decades to come.

The Local Government Association (LGA) says the change will be straightforward for most people. However, they have warned that criminals are using misinformation about the switchover to confuse people vulnerable to scams.

The LGA says people who use healthcare telephony devices are particularly at risk of being targeted by scammers, who trick victims into disclosing their personal and financial information over the phone. Around 2 million people use these devices across the country.

The switchover is free of charge and councils and their homecare alarm providers or contractors will never ask for personal or financial information over the phone.

The LGA says it has seen reports of fraudsters calling people claiming their bank details are needed as part of the switchover or their service will be disconnected. It has also received reports of residents being contacted over the phone by callers claiming to work for the NHS, asking for their personal information.

The LGA expects scam attempts to increase as the switchover date nears. In addition to phone calls, criminals may create phishing emails and fake websites to try to obtain peoples' personal data.

Telecoms providers such as Virgin Media, O2 or BT should contact customers before the switchover to check in to make sure their service isn't affected.

Anyone with telecare services should check how the switchover will affect them, and what they need to do to be ready, so their care isn't disrupted.

Seen a scam? Report it to Action Fraud online or by calling 0300 123 2040.

If you want advice because you have been affected by a scam, then call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 2231133, or visit citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer

Dorset Museum

Lecture Archaeology

Several Months in the Country | Richard Osgood

16 November 2023, 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Operation Nightingale was founded in 2011 and designed to utilise the many aspects of archaeology to assist in the recovery of military personnel after conflict. A decade later and several hundred participants have moved through the project -several on to archaeological degrees and to careers in the discipline. This talk will look at some of the major projects, findings and participants.

Richard Osgood is the Senior Archaeologist for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation – part of the Ministry of Defence – where he has worked since 2004. He leads ‘Operation Nightingale’, a programme to assist the recovery of military personnel using archaeology. In 2019 he won the Current Archaeology ‘Archaeologist of the Year award and in 2021 was given an MBE. Prior to working for MOD, he worked as the Research Assistant to Professor Barry Cunliffe. Richard lives in Winchester.

<https://www.dorsetmuseum.org/event/several-months-in-the-country/>

Special Exhibition

2 December 2023 – 21 April 2024

Elisabeth Frink: A View from Within

Experience the inner world of famous sculptor Dame Elisabeth Frink (1930-1993) in a major new exhibition exploring her artistic and personal life in Dorset. Showcasing over 80 sculptures, drawings and prints, it will explore her artistic process, personal life and the influences that shaped her work.

Gain unique perspectives on Frink’s life and art at her home in Woolland, North Dorset. Discover how Frink’s creative freedom flourished in the privacy of her light-filled studio and how her garden became a gallery where animal sculptures mingled with real horses, chickens and dogs. Experience objects that have never been on public display including original plaster sculptures, personal possessions and photographs showing the life she shared with family and friends. Learn about Frink’s interest in the relationship between humans.

<https://www.dorsetmuseum.org/event/elisabeth-frink-at-woolland/>