

IN TOUCH

Dear All,

With Advent Sunday now behind us, the countdown to Christmas has begun! At this, the darkest time of the year, daylight wise, Christmas and its lights can symbolize hope for the future.

From the dreadful war in Ukraine, via the joyful events of the Platinum Jubilee and the hottest summer on record, to the passing of our beloved monarch Queen Elizabeth, this year has been a series of ups and downs, with COVID and the antics of our politicians keeping us all on our toes.

Nevertheless our u3a has kept on meeting, and it is very heartening to see that groups are getting together and some are re-forming too. So let us go forward into the New Year determined to expand the numbers in our branch and to welcome the expansion of groups and activities.

In the meantime, I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Liz Greenway Chairman

No IN TOUCH in January

I am taking a break over Christmas and IN TOUCH will not be published in January. The next edition will come out on 1st February. Please let me have your submissions by 23rd January or before please.

Bill McIntyre - Editor

French for Fun

The French for Fun group has been going very well and in December, for our last meeting of this year, we are having a group social meeting- although conversation over coffee and croissants will of course be in French

Ron Beard - Group Leader

Speaker for 5th January 2023

**"Feting The Finns" (1918-2018 - 100 years of intrepid independence)
Christopher Massy-Beresford, MA (Oxon)
MCIL**

This talk is about Finland's geography, history, and its exceptionally individualistic language and culture: and how during the 20C it emerged on the world stage led by a handful of remarkable artistic and political personalities. The talk highlights the outstanding achievements of this remote country with its vast terrain, terrible winters, and relatively small population - along with some of its lovable oddities.

Christopher's degree was in PPE, but modern languages came to be a defining feature of his commercial career and interests. The last phase of his career has been as a professional translator. He lives in Beckington, near Frome in Somerset.

Art Appreciation New Time and Place

Regrettably, the venue we have been using for our meetings has proved unsuitable, so we are moving to the committee room at Charlton Memorial Hall, which will be much more convenient but will mean a change of day.

Beginning on 12th December, we shall meet on the 2nd Monday of each month from 2.00pm till 3.30pm. Hopefully, this will allow some new members to join us, and I am happy to offer a lift to anyone coming from Gillingham.

Barbara Hurst

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Garden Interest Group

Our biggest and best news is that Barbara Hurst has agreed to be the new Leader of the Garden Interest Group. Thank you Barbara!!

For our first meeting back at The Vicarage Schoolroom for the Winter programme we explored Terrariums. Janice surprised us all with her considerable knowledge and experience creating and nurturing Terrariums and Pam brought along her charming small greenhouse planted up with succulents. We followed the demonstration with a general Question and Answer session, and discovered that mint leaves and oil of peppermint could be helpful when trying to eliminate aphids from the greenhouse.

Our next meeting on 12 December will be a Bring and Share social morning, with finger food and a Quiz. So far we have offers for 5 different savoury dishes, one of mince pies, white wine and mulled wine. There will not be a meeting in January so this will be the last opportunity for Garden Gossip until we meet in February. Hope to see you there. Happy Gardening!

Jan Skelton, Leader Garden Interest Group.

Where to get trusted advice on consumer problems?

With budgets stretched we want to make sure we are buying wisely and know what to do to get our money back, or problems sorted, if a purchase goes wrong. This is especially true as we approach Christmas, a time when we all probably spend a bit more.

If you've read the trading standards' editorials before, then you'll know that we often mention the Citizens Advice consumer service, their website and helpline. They are the one stop shop for independent and trusted consumer advice, assistance and to report something to trading standards.

Topics covered include energy, holidays, buying or repairing a car, scams, insurance, water, phone internet and TV, home improvements, issues with your post as well as when something goes wrong with a purchase, or if you change your mind.

Many people access this trusted advice through the consumer section of the Citizens Advice website at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer>. There you'll find pre-shopping advice and what to do when things go wrong, including template letters to help you to sort out simple consumer problems for yourself.

When you need more tailored advice, usually because you have a more complex problem and the general guidance on the website is not specific enough, then you can chat with a web advisor using the Citizens Advice online web chat facility.

When you haven't access to the internet, or if you would just prefer to speak with an advisor, then you can call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133. This is also the number to use to report something to trading standards.

If you would just prefer to speak with someone in person, then this is supported through the network of local Citizens Advice offices found in Dorset's larger towns.

As you can see there are many ways to receive independent and trusted consumer advice from Citizens Advice. Hopefully nothing will go wrong with your purchases this Christmas, but if it does then Citizens Advice is here to help.

	<u>Current Groups</u>	
Group	Meeting	Leader
Art Appreciation	2nd Monday Afternoon	Barbara Hurst
Canasta	1 st & 3 rd Monday Afternoon	Hazel Baker
Digital Photography	3 rd Thursday Morning	Andy Newton
Embroidery	3 rd Wednesday Afternoon	Lesley Frost
French for Fun I	Tuesday alt. weeks Morning	Ron Beard
French for Fun II	Wednesday alt. weeks Afternoon	Chris Stotesbury Elizabeth Lewer
Garden Interest	2 nd Monday Morning	Jan Skelton
Genealogy	4 th Monday Afternoon	Liz Greenway
German Conversation	Wednesday alt. weeks Afternoon	Robert Light
International History	3 rd Wednesday Morning	Richard Sim
Literature	1 st & 3 rd Monday Morning	Peter Rolfe
Lunch Club	Last Friday	Ros Ham
Mah Jong	2 nd and 4 th Friday Afternoon	Marion Pace
Music for Pleasure	2 nd & 4 th Thursday Afternoon	Eileen Haddleton
Natural History	2 nd & 4 th Wednesday Morning	Marion Hammond
Philosophy	Arranged by Agreement	Chris Spencer
Poetry and Play Reading	1 st Thursday Afternoon	Audrey Cross
Reading Group	1 st Friday Morning	Barbara Hurst
Rummicub	Weekly Tuesday Afternoon	Avril Fletcher
Scrabble	Weekly Friday Morning	Yvonne Hill
Spite & Malice	3rd Thursday Afternoon	Sue Walker
Table Tennis	Weekly Thursday Afternoon	Elizabeth Lewer Christ Stotesbury
Walking	1st Tuesday Morning	Barbara Robson

All leaders can be contacted via the website

Music for Pleasure

We had a lovely afternoon with Lesley who played Norwegian music while relating a potted history of Scandinavia. For the first time, we had a 'full house' of 10 members. Pam is our next presenter, and we will be celebrating Christmas with Patsy, who is planning a programme of music to remember past holidays and present times. We would like to wish all U3A members a happy Christmas and a successful New Year.

Eileen Haddleton - Group Leader

Poetry

Do you like to read or write poetry? You may not be aware that the Third Age Trust run an annual poetry competition and now is the time to submit your entry. It should be a maximum of 16 lines on any topic and submitted by 23rd January to the Third Age Trust using the u3a website : u3a.org.uk/learning.

The poem must be in **English** and must not have been published before or submitted to another competition. It must be a **maximum of 16 lines**, plus the title. It should contain no swear words and should be suitable for a mixed audience. Additionally it should not contain photographs or pictures. There is no theme specification for your poem.

Any poem not conforming to these guidelines will not be read by the judges.

Want to learn about writing Poetry? Join author Sophia Blackwell on Tuesday 13th December at 2pm for a free 2 hour masterclass called 'Writing Poetry for Publication and Performance' which can be booked on the u3a online events webpage.

Spite and Malice

The group continues to welcome new members and meets once a month to wreak mayhem round the card table over coffee and cake.

Sue Walker - Group Leader

Natural History Group

The Natural History Group recently visited Garston Wood which has a huge variety of fungi with a range of colours and forms. These pictures were taken by Gordon Cryer.

Marion Hammond- Group Leader



In Touch is published by Shaftesbury and Gillingham u3a Registered Charity No. 11078452

The next edition of In Touch will be published in February. Deadline for submissions is 23rd January 2023.

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Remember you can view a copy of this NEWSLETTER on our web page at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/sgu3a/home>