

IN TOUCH

Dear All,

Whenever the In Touch editor's reminder for my contribution pops up in my inbox, I begin to wonder where the last month has gone! 2023 is now well under way, and despite the weather the daylight hours are beginning to lengthen, hinting at a promise of spring, along with the early flowering of some daffodils at the Stourhead Farm shop!

I commend to you this edition of In Touch, especially the urgent notice!

Liz Greenway. - Chairman.

URGENT: Your u3a needs you!

This is a final appeal for a couple or two or more friends who can take over running the BOOK EXCHANGE at our monthly meetings. Despite various appeals and approaches, no one has yet come forward. Our Treasurer and his wife have been running it recently, but feel that the time has come for someone else to take over.

The Book Exchange has been going for a good few years, and still is a popular feature. However, the committee now feels that if no one is prepared to volunteer to run it - and it is **not** an onerous task - then reluctantly it will cease to exist.

So if you feel you could take it on please let me, Liz G, know.

Xmas Meeting Feedback

In pre-Covid times we used to have a Xmas lunch, however the prices quoted last December were deemed by the Committee to be excessive and we had mince pies, mulled wine and a light hearted talk from Bonnie Sartin. Were you happy with this format or would you prefer to return to the Xmas lunch? Please let me or any member of the Committee know your views so that we can plan for December 2023.

Opportunity of a Lifetime!

For some time now I have been saying we need to attract younger people to squ3a. Come November and the AGM I will not be far off my 8th decade and I am conscious I don't have the social media skills of a younger person.

Do you have those skills?

Would you like to take on the job of In Touch Editor?

Do you know someone who might like to take it on?

Please let me have any suggestions - my details are in the blue box on the last page.

Bill McIntyre

	<u>Current Groups</u>	
Group	Meeting	Leader
Art Appreciation	3 rd Thursday 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	Barbara Hurst
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	4th 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 Janet Botterill
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

Looking for Leonardo

Would you be interested in an art group where members who feel they would enjoy pursuing their art form/s in the company of others could meet regularly. The proposed group is aimed at those members who enjoy painting, drawing, etc. as a hobby and would perhaps like to pursue this on a regular basis with other like-minded members. There isn't an intention to have tutors, etc. but usually painters enjoy feedback from their colleagues and learn from them. This will just be a companionable group of individuals following their own interest but also perhaps enjoying learning from others. If this could be for you please contact our Groups Leader, Barbara Hurst: 01747 825646 or barbara@pbhurst.com If there are enough of us then we may already have a suitable room.

Initiatives to help you improve your digital skills

Dorset Council is offering free 1:1 sessions for anyone wanting help to get online.

Digital Champions are a group of volunteers who are good at explaining computers, without using jargon. They have an enthusiasm for all things digital and look forward to the chance to show you how it works.

They offer digital support for a wide range of issues, no problem is too small.

They can help you to:

- set up and use devices including mobile phones, tablets and computers
-
- get online and show you how to do home shopping
- access digital NHS services

: set up Skype or Zoom to keep in contact with family or friends

You can find the full list of available sessions at: [Digital Champion sessions - Dorset Council](#)

A Visit to the County Museum

Natural History Group members enjoyed a guided visit in the Dorset Museum in Dorchester. A team of volunteers showed us around the huge private collections room. They brought out trays of butterflies and moths which showed the enthusiasm of private collectors who named and displayed many species, often in varied sizes and with slight colour variations. A tray of tiny micro-moths impressed us at the dedication of this collector who preserved the adults of tiny leaf miner caterpillars.



We then visited the public display in the new 'Natural Dorset' room. Here were specially selected examples of the geology of the county and the

work of a few notable scientists and naturalists. These included Alfred Russel Wallace, important in the development of the theory of evolution, Helen and Nelson Richardson's 19th century study of butterflies and moths in Portland and Purbeck, as well as Mary Anning's contribution to palaeontology through her fossil collecting.

Filmed images of Dorset wildlife in different habitats showed the county's great diversity and a selection of landscape paintings reflected the variety of those places we enjoy. We thanked the museum staff and volunteers for making this a valuable morning for our group.

Marion Hammond - Group Leader

Bournemouth Writing Festival

22nd and 23rd April

The festival includes talks and workshops from best-selling authors, screenwriters, journalists and poets as well as writing professionals who support writers to get published. There will be over 60 writing events and activities to inspire people to write.

In addition, there will be quite a few social activities to connect local writers - including writing on the beach, a poetry hunt, genre breakfasts and a literary walk of Bournemouth's famous authors!

All the details are on the website:
[https://
www.bournemouthwritingfestival.co.uk](https://www.bournemouthwritingfestival.co.uk)

Garden Interest Group

Snowdrop Walk(s)

The Garden Interest group will be exploring snowdrops in Shaftesbury on Monday, February 13th. We shall meet for coffee at the Grosvenor Arms at 10.00am and set off at 10.30am, using whichever of the four routes created for the Snowdrop Festival to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee best suits our mobility. There is an exhibit, Snowdrops in Art, at the Arts Centre that members may wish to visit afterwards. Although there is no charge, we will each pay for our own refreshments.

The March meeting of the Garden Interest group will take place from 10.00am till 11.30am in the Vicarage Schoolroom, Queen Street, Gillingham on 13th March. Along with the usual refreshments, I shall give a presentation on Gardens in Art. And for those who aren't much interested in art—there will be cake! The charge is £3, on the door.

Help with setting up and clearing away would be greatly appreciated, and new members are always welcome.

For further information, or to book a place on the Snowdrop Walk, contact Barbara Hurst: 01747 825646 or barbara@pbhurst.com.

Speaker for 2nd February

Peter Gill - "Private Godfrey's Real War"

To the legions of fans of 'Dad's Army', Private Godfrey was that wonderfully endearing, kind and gentle retired tailor who lives with his two sisters in Cherry Tree Cottage, Walminton-on-Sea. However the Great War experience of William Arnold Ridley, as a combatant in the front line trenches of the Western Front and who played Godfrey, would leave him both physically and mentally scarred for life.

Peter Gill lives in Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire. His first published works were of local historical interest commencing with "Cheltenham at War" in 1994. He has been writing and producing for the theatre stage for the last twenty years and continues to tour and perform in many of his productions. Amongst his successes are "The Jerry Lee Lewis Story, Seance, Talbot House - a home from home" and "Meet Tommy Atkins". The last two of these are inspired by his passionate interest in the Great War of 1914-1919. Peter is also an experienced pianist/vocalist and spends much of his working life touring the country in a variety of theatre shows.

Alan's humour column

Some perks of heading towards 70/80/90 years of age and beyond!

Kidnappers are not very interested in you, in a hostage situation you are likely to be released first

No one expects you too run anywhere

People call at 9am or 9pm and ask did I wake you?

People no longer view you as a hypochondriac

There is nothing left to learn the hard way

You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge

You quit trying to hold your stomach in, no matter who comes in to the room

You sing along with shop music

Your joints are more accurate meteorologists than the weather forecasters

Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either

And the most important thing to remember is: never take a laxative and a sleeping pill on the same night!

News from Trading Standards

Buy safe

A survey by the Chartered Trading Standard's Institute found that many people did not understand what to look out for to make sure that the goods they bought online were safe.

Counterfeit perfumes have been found to contain dangerous levels of methanol, which can cause irritation to the skin, eyes and damage the nervous system. Counterfeit toys have been found to contain illegal levels of phthalates, a plastic-softening chemical than can cause cancer, asthma and fertility problems. Toys and other electrical items which are operated by lithium-ion button or coin-cell batteries are also a particular concern; by law they must have lockable battery compartments, because if a button battery is swallowed by a child it can cause serious internal injuries.

Products such as electronic scooters that use lithium batteries also pose a risk to safety, and there have been several recent cases of these devices catching fire while charging. Poor-quality chargers have also been known to cause electrical shorts, which can lead to house fires.

Consumers are urged to:

- Only shop at reputable retailers, as not only does this increase the likelihood that the product will be safe, but it also means that you will be entitled to a refund if there is a fault.

- Don't always trust online reviews, these can easily be faked.

- Look for the UKCA mark on products such as toys, electrical goods and cosmetics. This ensures that the product has been tested to comply with safety standards.

- Make sure toys and other goods are suitable for children by checking the age range of the item, and never leave a child unattended with a toy that contains small parts.

- Ensure that any item that uses button batteries has a lockable battery compartment.

- Do not buy fakes or counterfeits, it funds criminality, can be poor value for money and is a serious potential safety risk.

If you have seen or have bought something that you think is unsafe, then report it to Trading Standards, by calling the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 2231133.

Lunch Group

The group re-started in October 2022 and now meets on the fourth Friday of each month.

We meet at different venues around the area, trying different cuisines, finding new venues and talking to different members of the group each month. We all seem to be open minded about the menus and happily rate dishes and venues differently amongst ourselves. Price ranges are accommodated. In keeping with U3A aims, "we come together and learn for fun"!



Ros Ham - Group Leader

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The next edition of *In Touch* will be published in March. Deadline for submissions is 20th February 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>