

# IN TOUCH

Dear All,

Bill's reminder email to me about my contribution to "In Touch" seems to come ever faster time wise!  
Anyway, here we are!

November seems to be a time for taking stock, in a variety of ways. The clocks have gone back, poppies are on sale, and although at the time of writing Hallowe'en has not arrived, shops are beginning to display Christmas wares - something which continues to annoy me!

S & G u3a also has its AGM - a chance for us to look back and to look forward. We have had an upheaved 12 months, with regard to monthly meetings. However, we hope that we have now found a more permanent home at Charlton. On the other hand, many of our groups are now back to face to face meetings and we are seeing new groups start up, or is it old groups re-form? So let us all try to reach out and welcome new members, so that our u3a may continue to flourish.

*Liz Greenway Chairman.*

## Group News

### German Conversation

The German conversation group is looking for new members. Some prior knowledge of German is essential, but don't worry, you don't have to be fluent, just willing to join in the conversation!

**Robert Light—Group Leader**

## Do you know someone who needs transport?

The Committee considered setting up a scheme whereby members could obtain a lift to our meetings in Charlton. However after much discussion it was decided that a formal scheme would be difficult to administer. It was thought offering transport could be an informal agreement between members so if you know of anyone without transport would you kindly consider offering a lift.

Also given the cost of fuel, car sharing may be preferable.

## **Book Exchange**

The book exchange table is well used at each of our meetings but we need a volunteer to take over organising it. Do you use the book exchange and would you be prepared to take this on? If so please contact any member of the committee.

## **Art Appreciation**

### **New Schedule for Art Appreciation.**

The Art Appreciation group will now meet just once a month, on the third Thursday, at the new time of 2.00pm till 3.30pm. The venue remains the same: Fern Brook Lodge.

**Barbara Hurst**

01747 825646

[barbara@pbhurst.com](mailto:barbara@pbhurst.com)

## **Health & Safety**

Now we are established in our new meeting place at Charlton a new Health and Safety Document is being prepared and details will be posted on the website in due course.

We need to have a first aider in case there is a minor emergency when we meet. Do you have any suitable background/training. If so and you would be prepared to volunteer your services please contact any member of the Committee.

## **Visit to North Wales**

As soon as schools had restarted 38 intrepid U3A members and friends left Gillingham and Shaftesbury by coach for their 5 day tour of North Wales. Would you believe we only got soaked through once! After a lunchtime stop in Gloucester - and detours round the M6 because of accidents - we reached our hotel in Bodelwyddan just in time for dinner.

On Day 2 we took a canal boat ride to Llangollen crossing the famous Pontcysyllte aqueduct followed by a visit to Powis castle.

Day 3 was spent in Llandudno using the open top busses to take us round the town and as far as Conway. Minibuses took us up the Great Orme, where we were assured you can see Anglesey, the Isle of Man and even Blackpool. On a clear day perhaps.....

For Day 4 we had the services of a professional tour guide who took us through Snowdonia, stopping in Betws y Coed, the National Slate Museum and Caernarfon. Brilliant.

Friday dawned and the time had come to return home. The lunch-break was in Hereford, a beautiful city for sightseeing and last minute shopping. We had a cup of tea and a biscuit at the new Gloucester Services and were home by 6.30pm.

Where to next year, I wonder...

**Steve Hale**

## **Lunch Group**

This group now has 10 members and the group meets on the fourth Friday of each month. The first meeting will take place on Friday October 28th 2022. Ten is a very nice number to have in a lunch group, as generally, everyone can be accommodated on one table in many venues. The group already has a list of possible venues to visit so we should be busy in the next few months! We will keep you informed of our activities!

**Ros Ham**

	<b><u>Current Groups</u></b>	
<b>Group</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Art Appreciation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday Afternoon	Barbara Hurst
Canasta	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday Afternoon	Hazel Baker
Digital Photography	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday Morning	Andy Newton
Embroidery	3 <sup>rd</sup> 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 <sup>nd</sup> Monday Morning	Jan Skelton
Genealogy	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday Afternoon	Liz Greenway
German Conversation	Wednesday alt. weeks Afternoon	Robert Light
International History	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Morning	Richard Sim
Literature	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday Morning	Peter Rolfe
Lunch Club	Last Friday	Ros Ham
Mah Jong	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Friday Afternoon	Marion Pace
Music for Pleasure	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday Afternoon	Eileen Haddleton
Natural History	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday Morning	Marion Hammond
Philosophy	Arranged by Agreement	Chris Spencer
Poetry and Play Reading	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday Afternoon	Audrey Cross
Reading Group	1 <sup>st</sup> 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**

## Garden Interest Group

We could not have had a more beautiful day for our October visit to Frankhams Farm, Ryde Intrinsica. We were greeted generously with coffee before our tour of the garden started and had more, plus memorably delicious coffee and walnut cake and home made Jammie Dodgers, afterwards!! All served with a smile and good "garden gossip". We went round the garden with our hostess, learning much as we went, and also had time to wander at will on our own.

Next month we will meet again at the Vicarage Schoolroom, Queen Street, Gillingham. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. I shall endeavour to demonstrate planting up a Terrarium. Next week I am visiting Salisbury where I am told there is a shop devoted to terrariums, near the Cathedral Close. I hope to learn more to pass on to you. I'm gathering old shiny garden magazines to make paper pots for plant gifts. Please bring along any projects that you can share, any tips you may have learnt, and success stories or disasters you might be willing to divulge. My vegetable gardening this year was an expensive failure. It would have been cheaper to buy best Duchy Organic - and that is what I shall be doing in future....!!

The December meeting will be a festive Bring and Share. We have to vacate the hall by 12:30 so simple finger food, not lunch.

I decided to continue leading the Group for one more year. Hopefully during that time someone younger will come forward to take over.

Happy Gardening!!

Jan Skelton - Garden Interest Group leader

## Speaker for 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 : Sheena Dearnness

### **A Red Haze and the Haze of Publishing**

Sheena has had a lifetime of writing from essays at school, college and university, preparing lectures and submissions to latterly reports and appeals. Now allowing her imagination to flow and enabling it to evolve into short stories and novels. She writes articles for local magazines, runs writing courses and helps others to start writing. She was born in the Orkney Islands but now considers Dorset her home.

Her talk is about her two Dorset based novels the first being (A Red Haze) which starts in 1946 just outside Sturminster Newton in the jubilant atmosphere of post-war Britain and her second (Shadows) picks up the main protagonist's story from 1953 to the early 1960's. Threaded throughout both books is a portrayal of the social history of these years.

## Speaker for 1st December Bonny Sartin

### **A Slightly Alternative Christmas**

An illustrated talk, poems, songs and readings old and new for the festive season.

Bonny was for 50 years a member of **The Yetties** folk band, 46 of them full time. He toured the UK, Europe, Africa, the Far East and Canada during this time with the Yetties particular brand of Dorset songs, stories and music. The talk, as the title suggests, is a slightly askance look at the festive period with readings, songs and poems.

The object is to raise a smile before Christmas.

## Dorset Archaeology

Blandford & District u3a has arranged a four session course on the archaeology of Dorset from the Stone Age to the Norman Conquest, starting in February; and wonder whether any of our members would like to join them.

The cost per person will be moderate, and includes both the course fee and the hire of a local hall in the Blandford area.

For further information please contact Bridget Spiers

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## Alan's humour column

I took my Labrador to the cinema and it started laughing at the film. The man next to me said "That's amazing", I said you're telling me, he hated the book!

I still do a daily workout. Every morning I have to work out who I am and where I am!

I've still got what it takes to get a lady into the bedroom... a stair lift!

At my age the biggest problem with stand-up, is trying to stand up!

Photo of a Garden Snail by Gordon Cryer

## Natural History Group—Gastropods in the classroom!

At a recent indoor meeting of the Natural History Group we brought along some snails found in our gardens. These are fascinating creatures to observe and learn about. With a drop of water each snail was gently woken up and started to explore. Using a key we recognised some larger ones were Garden Snails (*Cornu aspersum*) with mottled brown colouring while others were Banded Snails (*Cepaea nemoralis*) with a series of stipes running round their spiral shells.

Gliding on a muscular foot we watched a snail move over a transparent surface so we could notice its rasping tongue, or radula, searching for lettuce. Two pairs of tentacles were unwrapped, the upper, longer pair with eyes on the end could sense light and dark. The lower, shorter pair were touching, sensing the way ahead. Looking carefully we saw the breathing hole under the shell and saw another opening extruding waste.

You can imagine the chatter and wonder as we read about snail biology and way of life. Some lively snails got given names but with some uncertainty as they turned out to be hermaphrodite! Snails do not need to mate with each other! They were also all right-handed snails, growing their shells in a clockwise turn. Lefties are rare.

Later they were all taken for a walk in the next-door lane and released into hedges. They will soon hibernate for the winter. (Lucky snails)

**Marion Hammond – group leader**



## Book Club

I have formed a new book club that will meet on the first Monday of each month from 11.00am till 12.00 at Gillingham Library. There is free parking at Waitrose opposite, where there happens to be an excellent café for those who want to continue their discussion over lunch or meet up for coffee beforehand.

My reading list covers the next 12 months and I hope you find my choices interesting and thought-provoking. I'm not able to arrange books from the library unless we have sufficient numbers, so please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested.

**Barbara Hurst:** [barbara@pbhurst.com](mailto:barbara@pbhurst.com) or 01747 825646.

## Christmas Lunch

Now we are no longer able to use The Olive Bowl enquiries have been made of local venues but nothing was available at a reasonable price. Therefore the Committee decided that a social event should be held at the New Remembrance Hall, Charlton, on 1st December. Mince pies and mulled wine etc. will be provided.

Entertainment by **Bonny Sartin** (See page 4)

## Philosophy Group

A number of members are away - some abroad so the next meeting is planned for January and the date will be announced early that month. We will then continue our discussion and analysis of the subject: "What is the role of government?" By that I mean: What is the Output of Good Government? How useful is GDP as a measure of a country's wealth, or productivity? I suspect it could be a lively analysis.

I also hope it to include such information as: on average how many votes do you need to elect a Conservative MP, a Labour MP, a Liberal Democratic MP, or an MP in the Green Party?

The group still has a couple of vacancies.

**Chris Spencer**

## Petanque/Boules

As you may already know, work is underway to build two petanque pitches in Gillingham, due for completion early in November. As part of the project, a website is currently under development, equipment will be made available and a bench installed nearby. Best of all, these facilities will be free!

Petanque is a very popular and sociable activity, suitable for all ages and abilities, and there are a number of local leagues for those who are competitive. So the question is, should Shaftesbury & Gillingham U3A set up a Petanque Group, either for fun or to compete locally?

If this is something that appeals to you, please let me know your thoughts.

**Barbara Hurst**  
**Groups Coordinator**

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