

# IN TOUCH SEPTEMBER 2023

## News Updates

Dear all,

So here we are, about to segue into autumn after what has not been the best of summers weatherwise. However, I must admit that thanks to the wet weather in July, our lawn is a healthy shade of green although the weeds as always continue to grow apace!

It was a pleasure to meet those who attended the summer lunch. It was a very pleasant occasion with efficient service, good food, and, if the noise level was anything to go by, everyone enjoyed themselves. My sincere thanks to Barbara Hurst, who took on the job of organizing the event. She did a splendid job.

Elsewhere in this edition you will see a plea for volunteers to join the committee. **Your u3a needs YOU!**

My time as chairman ends at the AGM in November, and we do need someone who is prepared to take on the role. More importantly, we have been appealing for some time for someone to take on the role of organizing the refreshments for our monthly meetings, to date we have had no response. Should no one step up, then we will be unable to offer tea/coffee from the AGM meeting in November onwards, which would be a great pity.

Finally, a gentle nudge – you should have received a reminder about your membership renewal. Please don't forget to renew your membership. You will save our membership secretary and treasurer a great deal of stress by renewing promptly.

*Liz Greenway.*

Chairman



Shaftesbury and  
Gillingham

## Forthcoming Events

6 September 2023  
Oxford Day Trip

7 September – u3a Talk  
David Bickerton – 'Operation Husky –  
The Invasion of Sicily'

5 October – u3a Talk  
Alan Jones – "Keep Your Hair On!"

*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 OPL – 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.

### Thursday 7 September

#### **David Bickerton – ‘Operation Husky – The Invasion of Sicily’**

Operation Husky was the codename for the Allied invasion of Sicily, with landings taking place in July 1943. General Patton commanded the US Seventh Army and General Montgomery the British Army. Despite the terrain favouring the defenders, the campaign took just 39 days, although the Allies failed to prevent the Axis evacuation across the Messina Strait. It's worth noting that 2023 sees the 80th anniversary of the event.

David is a retired civil engineer living in Waterlooville, Hampshire, who since retirement, in addition to investigating his parents' wartime experiences, has researched his own ancestry and 20 other people's ancestry in what has become something of a consuming hobby. David's interest in Operation Husky was inspired by his father's command of HMML 338 during the Sicily landings.

### Thursday 5 October

#### **Alan Jones – "Keep Your Hair On!"**

Straight, wavy, long, natural or dyed! Wigs, extensions, beards and eyebrows. Smuggling, politics, religion, and fashion collide in a billion-dollar trade. Discover the secretive and lucrative international word of Hair that is guaranteed to grip you by the long, short or curly.

Alan returns having given us a most amusing talk on Hypnosis in 2020. He has enjoyed a variety of careers, each bringing their own unique experiences and events. A trained nurse, hypnotherapist, BBC journalist and more, all providing a wealth of anecdotes to fill his talks with fun, information and discovery.

## Group News



### Shared Interests

Several members have mentioned to me recently that they don't do the things they might enjoy because they don't have anyone to go with and don't want to do them alone. And I was surprised to realise that I'm actually one of those people, too. New to the area and having a partner who doesn't share any of my interests, I simply couldn't bring myself to go off exploring because it's not much fun by yourself, so I remain relatively ignorant about this area. I'm sure a lot of u3a members can identify with my experience for different reasons. That's why I've decided to set up a new group called Shared Interests, to help members find people to do things with.

As group leader, I'll maintain a list of everyone who wants to participate, noting those who can't drive. Anyone wanting to go to an exhibition, lecture, concert, festival, theatre, cinema, stately home, sporting fixture, community event, etc., can contact me and I'll put the word out among group members to see if we can find someone else, or perhaps several people, who would like to go, so that they can arrange their outing. Hopefully, this group will provide opportunities for those who can't drive to participate fully.

I personally would like to try some new experiences and I'm happy to offer others a lift. Who's going to join me?

*Barbara Hurst*

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

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### The Languages of Planet Earth

Would you agree that language is one of the most distinctive features that defines humanity? If so, would you like to know more about the multifarious language families of Planet Earth – from our own Indo-European group to the Australasian, from African click languages to those of the Native Americans, from Chinese to Arabic? Have you ever wondered why the Polynesians have so few consonants? Did they sell them all to Poland? Then why not join me in watching the DVDs by the ironic, amusing and very knowledgeable Professor John McWhorter? This involves no learning of the actual languages (probably quite glad to know that)– you can just sit back, laugh and listen, and make as many comments (based on your own experiences maybe?) as you like. Meetings will be monthly on the third Friday in the afternoon at 2pm.

If interested, please contact *Denise Sims* at [denisensims@hotmail.com](mailto:denisensims@hotmail.com) or 01747 590266 for more details



### **Cosmology.**

Another look at Professor Mark Whittle's take on the history and nature of our universe – astronomy is large, very large. Would you like to know more about the cosmic microwave background, how the distance to the stars is actually measured, about the conditions during the first few million years after the so-called Big Bang? Come and learn more about primordial sound, giant black holes and the galactic web. What's not to like?

This group will meet on the second Monday of the month at my house at 10am. If interested, please contact me at [simsdenise280@gmail.com](mailto:simsdenise280@gmail.com) or 01747 590266 for venue.  
*Denise Sims*



### **The Celtic World.**

Would you like to know more about the world of the Celts, both ancient and modern? Who were these tribes that produced marvellous art, challenged the mighty Roman empire, and left traces of their DNA in many contemporary British people? This is not just about Picts and Druids, though they will of course feature in the narrative, but will also include politics and literature in modern Wales, the Gaelic revival in Ireland, and a look at Celtic music and dance. (I can't promise lava bread and haggis in the coffee break, just biscuits. Sorry).

This group will meet on the fourth Monday of the month at my house at 10am. If interested, please contact me at [simsdenise280@gmail.com](mailto:simsdenise280@gmail.com) or 01747 590266.  
*Denise Sims.*

## **Spite and Malice**

The Spite and Malice group is fairly small, and we meet in Shaftesbury on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 2pm.

Two, three, or four people can play together, the group can grow to accommodate as many as want to join.

The atmosphere is full of laughter, and it is a good way to meet new people – new members are very welcome.



If this group is of interest to you, please contact *Sue Walker*, Group Leader via the web page.



## Garden Interest Group

Our garden visit to North Cottage was full of surprises. It was in fact a genuine 'small holding' run for over 40 years with the environment always in mind and eating their own produce and, therefore, besides growing their own veg they have supplied most of their own meat and kept rare breed sheep, two calves and lots of chickens. They have also kept a dovecot and two ponies, the welfare of all being exemplary.



Leading to their house was an imaginative hedge and unusual border. They had an air B&B which everybody was charmed by, it being so pretty.



Our next visit is on 14 August to Hill Top' Woodville Stour Provost.

I have visited this garden before and know there will be wonderful borders full of inspiration and planting ideas.



Can't wait to see what Brian Emmerson has designed this year.

*Irene Gordon*

## The Natural History Group – visit to the Meadows at Dunccliffe.

It was a warm morning when we visited this Woodland Trust site and explored a glorious grassy meadow. Although it was currently dry, these fields are usually wet ground on clay and the flower species are typical of 'wet meadow' including Knapweed, Yellow Rattle and Corky-fruited Water Dropwort. As the temperature rose and the sun became stronger, we saw a wide variety of butterflies and moths.



We looked carefully at the differences between the brown butterflies: Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and Ringlet. There were beautiful Marbled White butterflies fluttering between the knapweed flowers. We used a key to try to identify invertebrates amongst the long grasses such as spiders, grasshoppers and flower bugs.



Sadly, this was my last meeting as group leader. There is great enthusiasm from the members to continue their wildlife visits so we are still hopeful of finding a new leader.



*Marion Hammond*



## Churches/Places of Worship

The first visit by our newly formed group saw 13 members travel to Moreton for a guided tour of beautiful St Nicholas Church and the grave of T E Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), who lived nearby at Cloud's Hill, now owned by the National Trust.



St Nicholas Church is rightly famous for its etched windows, designed by Laurence Whistler (brother of the artist Rex Whistler) over a period of some 40 years in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. A bomb had fallen on the churchyard in 1940 causing severe damage; all the windows were blown out and the entire north side of the church demolished. It wasn't until 1950 that restoration was complete, when the church was re-opened and re-dedicated by the Bishop of Salisbury. However, the congregation didn't like its new semi-opaque windows at all.

It was the Oxford architectural historian Howard Colvin who suggested that the Parish Church Council (PCC) should invite his friend Laurence Whistler to design new windows for the apse. His designs, appropriately on a theme of 'light', were approved by just one vote and the work was completed in 1955, the cost being met by War Damage funds. In 1974, Whistler completed the *Four Seasons Window*, in 1975, *The Light and the Darkness Windows*, in 1982, the *Trinity Chapel Window*, in 1984, *The Lightning Window* and the *Galaxy Window*, and in 1987, the *Porch Windows*. His most contentious work is the *Forgiveness Window*, showing Judas hanging from a tree while his pieces of silver fall to the ground, where they turn into flowers.



Whistler completed it in 1993 but the PCC could not agree to accept it and it was placed in Dorchester Museum on permanent offer to the church. In 2012, the offer was again considered, and the PCC unanimously agreed to accept, and the panel was installed in 2013 in an exterior wall, as Whistler had specified. It is believed that St Nicholas is the only church in the country where all the windows are designed by the same person.

Other features of note are the 12<sup>th</sup> century font, the Coats of Arms, mainly relating to the Frampton family, who have lived at Moreton House for generations, the Royal Coat of Arms, the *Betty Friend Memorial*, (a small window designed by Simon Whistler, Laurence's son, to commemorate a generous benefactor of the church), and an exceptionally fine tiled floor.



The main entrance to the Walled Garden is right beside the New Cemetery and some members took the opportunity of visiting the lovely Walled Garden and its cafe.

T E Lawrence's grave lies at the far end of the New Cemetery, just a short walk from the church. He died in a motorcycle accident on 19 May 1935 at the age of 46. The funeral took place at St Nicholas and was attended by many dignitaries including the Rt Hon Winston Churchill and his wife, and George Bernard Shaw.



Our next visit will be in October, the venue to be decided. St Nicholas will be hard to beat but I'd welcome any suggestions for a truly memorable experience.

*Barbara Hurst*

## **Summer Lunch**

51 members attended our Summer Lunch at the Royal Chase Hotel in August. We were seated in a lovely, light-filled room, and both the food and service were excellent.

From the comments I received afterwards, it was clear that the event was a success, with many enjoying making new acquaintances. I wrote to express our thanks to all the staff involved in making our lunch a hit.

*Barbara Hurst*





## Fresh Blood Needed

Several long-standing members of the committee decided to stand down at the AGM in November. This will put considerable pressure on those remaining to maintain the kind of experience you have come to expect from Shaftesbury & Gillingham u3a. Indeed, it may prove impossible to continue at all unless volunteers come forward to fill the key roles being vacated. The committee meets every three months, and the posts that will fall vacant are:

- Chairman
- Secretary
- Web Support
- Refreshments Organiser
- Events/Outings Organiser

If you have experience in any of these areas and have some spare time, please consider joining the committee to help us secure the future of the u3a that you clearly value. If could take on one of the posts above, we can put you in touch with the current post-holder so that you can find out exactly what is involved and the time it would take.

If you are unable to commit to joining the committee in any formal capacity, perhaps you have skills, in design, finance or IT, for instance, and could offer occasional support for specific projects. Any help would be greatly appreciated

## Philosophy

Has The Power Structure In Society Changed Through History?

Both Mother Nature and human beings can inflict great changes to societies. Societies have had their established order overturned and then replaced with new ways of living, their particular chaos caused sometimes by the ravages of nature, sometimes by the inhumanity of man himself and sometimes a mixture of both.

The power structure in society is deeply influenced by the power structure that exists between nation states. The interstate power structure can be seen as two types of power: positive power (that which makes another state do something that it does not want to do); and negative power (that which it allows a state to resist that actions of another state).

The Black Death killed off both rich and poor. Before its arrival in Great Britain the serfs were very much under the control of the land-owning aristocracy. There was a surplus of workers so they dare not offend their employer as the result could easily be starvation of themselves and their family. Other employers would not want disruptive serfs. However, after the Black Death, there was a shortage of labour. The power was reversed.

Ireland suffered a great famine when the potato was infected by a potato blight. Ireland had been a monoculture, so the staple diet of the majority of the population was affected. Despite action of the British prime minister to purchase large quantities of grain so he could hold down the price of grain, many died. Others emigrated to avoid starvation. This has had a lasting impact. One outcome was a revolution that resulted in the creation of the Republic of Ireland. That, in turn, has created the unstable political structure in Ulster, and civil war (which for political reasons called "The Troubles"). Those problems exist to this day. It also produces a power structure that includes the President of the USA.

Some people believe the conspiracy theory that the world is controlled by a secretive elite. However, if we modify that idea to include a number of elites, it has more the ring of truth. Among others, the governments of China and Russia are surely secretive elites. Furthermore, western governments including those of the US and Britain have a system of government that is not perfect. Here the foundation of governments are political parties. These are, to a large extent, funded by wealthy donors. Information comes from a media owned by reclusive billionaires. Lobbyists can have privileged access. In the USA this resulted in the worry that everything that the American public had been told about the Vietnam war was untrue. All governments are obsessed with secrecy, and so all governments are, by definition, elites. So, is the associated secrecy, a change in the power structure?

*Chris Spencer*

## Other groups / items for interest

### Trading Standards news: Protected Food Names

What do Champagne, Parma Ham and Scotch Whisky all have in common? They are protected food names. Dorset and the South West are also home to some fantastic traditional foods that carry the same legal protection as some of these well-known foods, such as watercress!

Dorset and the surrounding counties are home to the watercress industry, with several of the largest growers based here. Between them they supply the majority of all watercress sold in UK supermarkets. Watercress using 'Nasturtium Officinale seeds' has been grown in flowing water to a traditional production method used for over 200 years. Recently this industry came under threat from cheaper imports of 'Landcress' being passed off as Watercress. Other cresses may look similar but are not produced in the same way, and do not have the same characteristic 'peppery' taste or contain the same levels of nutrients. To counter this the industry came together and successfully applied for the name 'watercress' to be protected and it was awarded the status of 'Traditional Speciality Guaranteed'.

Other foods produced in Dorset that are protected include Dorset Blue Cheese, West Country Farmhouse Cheddar Cheese, West Country Beef and Lamb, and the newly registered 'New Forest Pannage Ham' made from pigs that are fattened up on acorns whilst roaming the New Forest!

Looking more widely across the region there is also the famous Cornish Pasty, Exmoor Blue Cheese, Wiltshire Cured Ham, Fal Oysters from Cornwall, Cornish Clotted Cream and Cornish Sardines.

There are three different types of protection. These are Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and 'Traditional Speciality Guaranteed' (TSG). You can recognise protected food as it must carry an appropriate logo.

Anyone wishing to produce a food that carries a protected food name must be audited against a published specification before they start to sell the food. Trading Standards typically carry out these audits to help both protect food names and the interests of local food producers.

## **Dorset Museum**

4 August – 28 September 2023

Showcase display | Collections Discovery Centre

Discover a rare Roman coin hoard recently acquired by Dorset Museum, and find out about the work going on to preserve, research and catalogue it, in this special showcase display outside the Collections Discovery Centre.

5 September 2023, 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Community Space

Capturing Dorset's marine life through underwater photography

Explore the wonderful marine wildlife of the Dorset coastline through the underwater photography of Sandra Stalker in this afternoon's talk.

## **Workshop**

15 September 2023, 10:00am – 3:00pm

Inspired by Wildlife Photographer of the Year to make better use of your digital camera. Improve your photography skills, learn to use your camera and gain experience during this digital photography workshop at Dorset Museum, led by Nick Mathews. This course is perfect for anyone with beginner to intermediate photography skills. You will need to bring along your own digital camera.

## **Lecture**

### **The Return of Beavers to Dorset**

21 September 2023, 7:00pm – 8:30pm

History was made in February 2021 when Dorset Wildlife Trust released a pair of Eurasian beavers – *Castor fiber* – into an enclosed site as part of a scientific study to assess the impact beavers have on their environment. This is the first time that beavers have lived in Dorset for over 400 years. In this lecture, Stephen Oliver will tell the fascinating story of how the beavers have settled into their Dorset home and explain how these unique mammals can play a vital role in river ecology and nature-based solutions to flooding, pollution and species loss.

## **Roman Town House Tours**

Discovered in the 1930s, one of the best examples of a Roman Town House in England is situated here in Dorchester.

For all the above and other event– please visit the website for more information

<https://www.dorsetmuseum.org>



.....and finally

Did you hear about the cheese factory that exploded in France?

There was nothing left but de Brie.

I told my girlfriend she drew her eyebrows too high. She seemed surprised.

Q: Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building?

A: Of course. The Empire State Building can't jump



Group	Date	Leader	Website
Art Appreciation	2nd Monday 2-3.30pm	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Canasta	1st and 3rd Monday – pm	Hazel Baker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Celtic World	4th Monday – am	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Churches/Places of Worship	To be arranged 4 visits per year	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Cosmology	2nd Monday – am	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Digital Photography	3rd Thursday – am	Andy Newton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Embroidery	3rd Wednesday – pm	Lesley Frost	<a href="#">click here</a>
French for Fun 1	Tuesday/fortnightly – am	Ron Beard	<a href="#">click here</a>
French for Fun 2	Wednesday /fortnightly pm	Chris Stotsbury	<a href="#">click here</a>
Garden Interest	2nd Monday – am	Irene Gordon	<a href="#">click here</a>
Genealogy	4th Monday – pm	Liz Greenway	<a href="#">click here</a>
German Conversation	Wednesday /fortnightly – pm	Robert Light	<a href="#">click here</a>
International History	3rd Wednesday – am	Richard Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Knitting/Crafts	2nd Tuesday – pm	Irene Gordon	<a href="#">click here</a>
Languages of Planet Earth	3rd Friday – 2.00pm	Denise Sims	<a href="#">click here</a>
Literature	1st & 3rd Monday – am on Zoom	Peter Rolfe	<a href="#">click here</a>
Lunch Club	Last Friday in the month	Ros Ham	<a href="#">click here</a>
Mahjong	2nd & 4th Friday – 2pm	Marion Pace	<a href="#">click here</a>
Music for Pleasure	2nd & 4th Thursday – pm	Eileen Haddleton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Natural History		Janet Fenton	<a href="#">click here</a>
Philosophy	Monthly Tuesday pm	Chris Spencer	<a href="#">click here</a>
Poetry & Play Reading	1st Thursday – pm	Audrey Cross Janet Botterill	<a href="#">click here</a>
Reading Group	1st Friday 11am -12pm	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Rummicub	Weekly Tuesday – pm	Avril Fletcher	<a href="#">click here</a>
Scrabble	Weekly Friday – am	Yvonne Hill	<a href="#">click here</a>
Shared Interests	Varied	Barbara Hurst	<a href="#">click here</a>
Spite & Malice	3rd Monday – pm	Sue Walker	<a href="#">click here</a>
Table Tennis	Weekly Thursday 2pm	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury	<a href="#">click here</a>
Walking Group	1st Tuesday – am	Barbara Robson	<a href="#">click here</a>

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