

**u3a**  
learn, laugh, live



## Newsletter Autumn 2025

Website: [www.u3asites.org.uk/portsmouth](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/portsmouth)

<https://portsmouth.u3asite.uk/>

## Officers and Committee 2025 / 26

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Group Co-ordinator	Rosemary Sirett	07540 597 804
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### Chairs report for the Autumn term 2025



The summer break is well behind us and now autumn is settling in. We still have lots to look forward to particularly the Mince pie social and our Xmas lunch at a new venue. My first year as Chair has brought about a number of challenges causing difficulties with the summer programme. Issues with the Royal Maritime Hotel meant that the summer lunch had to be cancelled causing disappointment and more work for our Treasurer, Oly. Electrical problems at the Hub caused postponement of Board Games. The picnic was a great success although it was touch and go whether we could hold it in the usual place due to the imminent Victorious Festival. We were surrounded by hoardings but luckily the weather was on our side so we could still enjoy the afternoon. Thankfully the Hub was declared safe to return so the scheduled film could go ahead.

The beginning of the term was dominated by the 40th Anniversary celebration. Thanks to all of you who contributed your time, talent and food to make it an outstanding success. Our distinguished visitors were very engaged with what they saw and full of praise for what we offer.

Another successful event was our coffee morning for the 60+ festival. We attracted fifteen new people and hopefully some of them will become members. Thanks to the group leaders who put their classes forward for potential new joiners as a taster session. Also, thanks are due to all the group leaders, deputies and members of the committee who keep our organisation running. I would particularly like to thank two retiring members of the committee who have given up their time and energy for the benefit of us all at Portsmouth. Oly Quinn as Treasurer and Elaine Lawson as Membership Secretary have carried out their roles efficiently and competently but also with a sense of humour, which is essential for serving on the committee. I am grateful for your dedication to a role which is voluntary. Thankfully we now have three new members of the committee who are taking up the following roles: Lynn Timms has taken over as Treasurer, but Oly has agreed to stand in while Lynn is on holiday. Christine Courtney- Wells will now be the Membership Secretary and Elaine Meredith has replaced me as Social Secretary. Welcome to the Committee.

I would like to wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas break. **Mandy**  
**Mandy Richards Chair 07496 009401**

**Welcome to new members :** Angela Bowyer, Eileen Bradshaw, Angela Brietske Maggie Crompton, Pamela Day, James Edmonds, Jane Evans, Linda Farley, Vicky Frampton, Rosalind Goodall, Mumtaz Jaffer, Gillian Lewis, Margaret Lea, Michele Lyall, Neil Marshal, Alan Provan, Kevin Rogers, Pauline Rogers, Dominique Shipster, Ruth Smith, Shane Smith, and Elizabeth Valette.

**Returning members :** Nigel Scott

**Photos from the anniversary party from setting up, mingling with the dignitaries to cutting the cake.**





## Getting to Grips with Beacon

There's no escaping computers, is there? The u3a Central Office, ever helpful, have designed and implemented a web-based membership and financial management system – Beacon. This provides an easy way for any Group Leader to maintain a record of their group's members and provides a simple way for Group Leaders to email the members of their

group(s) either in an all-group mailing or mailing selected individuals from within the group. Over 700 u3as use Beacon, some are smaller than us, some are much larger, and the u3a Central Office do not insist on any individual u3a using Beacon. The choice to use, or not use, Beacon is up to each individual u3a. We use Beacon very simply, using it just to maintain a list of the current members of our u3a, as well as using it to maintain the individual membership lists for our 34 groups.

When I took over as Beacon Administrator one of my tasks was to train new users of Beacon, whether these newbies were new Group Leaders or new Committee members. This is a task that I relish. Why? Well for 42 years I carried out a great deal of IT training as a staff member of various university libraries in the United Kingdom, Bulgaria and the Middle East. Yes folks, librarianship is a very international profession! So, from my earliest days as our Beacon Administrator I carried out some training, but this training was delivered one-to-one and so was not a particularly good use of my time. Fortunately, the Somerstown Hub has an excellent IT Suite, a quiet room equipped with 12 workstations whose access to the Internet is via Portsmouth City Council's intranet not, thank Heaven, by the Hub's painfully slow public Wi-Fi. And U3a rates for renting the room are very reasonable too.



The first training session, very much an experiment, was carried out on the morning of Friday, November 7th with the group of trainees being the maximum possible, 11. Coffee was enjoyed in the Hub Café before and during the session and, phew, the feedback was good. I very much enjoyed being 'back in harness' again, lording it over a roomful of 'students'. I had produced an 18-page guide and workbook for the session and, as a result of feedback, this will be improved with certain areas being expanded. On mature reflection, yes, I do do this very occasionally, I think the group was a bit too large, and without my wife Jean's help I might have struggled a bit. Future groups will be limited to six participants.

If you are a Group Leader who would like training or refresher training, you know where to find me.

**Andy Barrow**

## Architecture

The seasons change, terms begin and end, but the newsletters are a continuing connection that collect our memories of the past few meetings together to remind us of the varied menu available at u3a meetings. 40 years old but in the flush of youthful enthusiasms still!

It's certainly been a mixed diet since midsummer, from the grandeur and power of Wren's triumphant St. Paul's cathedral to home territory in Southsea with a gentle walk around a few of the elegant villas and terraces of Thomas Elis Owen that grace so

many streets in central Southsea. In total contrast, we came bang up to date looking at the 2025 nominations for the Stirling Prize for architecture plus an overview of the life and work of the late Sir Nicholas Grimshaw, one of Britain's most prolific and eminent architects, who died just a few weeks ago.

Intermittently, over the past years, we've considered the technical problems encountered in architecture and how answers have been found through the ages in buildings from temples in ancient times to modern skyscrapers. From artisan stonemasons to modern futurist creations via the possibilities of the computer, the endless curiosity of the human imagination has achieved these dreams through ingenuity, calculations, however simple or intricate and through total practicality. If it doesn't stay up, it's not a building - it's called a failure!



The dome in particular was a structure that perplexed builders through the ages and, in one session we had a look at how our most illustrious architect, Christopher Wren wrestled with this conundrum. He was inspired by mosque dome structures and the new buildings he'd seen in France, and he was fortunate in having had the opportunity to practice various ways of tackling the problem during the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of London. He designed several smaller churches during this time and to a few he added a dome, gradually discovering what worked and how he could safely span the huge 116-foot width of St. Paul's. His ultimate solution was literally threefold. There would be an inner dome, the painted one inside which we all see above us, a false dome if you like. Above that, invisible from inside the building, he constructed a huge brick cone, springing from the same perimeter and supporting the much lighter 276 feet high outer dome, which is what we see outside - the silhouette we recognize as being the symbol of Britain.

Back in the summer term, we had a wonderful and lively talk about our local hero architect Thomas Ellis Owen given by Sue Pike, the author of his authoritative biography. Following on from this, this autumn we were taken on a walk around Southsea, guided by Sue's husband, John Pike, to view a selection of Owen's houses to get



the flavour of his style and see how much he contributed to the look and atmosphere of central Southsea. Undaunted by the latest autumn gale thrashing the south coast, we gathered at The Friary in Marmion Road, a typically quirky Owen design. It was, unusually, a purpose-built lodging house for artisans and servants to the local villas of the prosperous middle classes. Built in 1851, it sported some of Owen's favourite style quotes such as steep gables, stone dressings to the windows, roughcast walls and Gothic doors. It provided generous spaces, flats with 2 or 3 bedrooms, a living room, a scullery with running water plus a communal washhouse and a private garden. Unheard of luxury for working people nearly 2 centuries ago. Our walk took us in a circle via Kent Road, Sussex Terrace and back towards St Jude's Church at the start of Marmion Road, an area where Owen's houses are almost omni-present. From the Portland Hotel and Portland

Terrace, perhaps his most ambitious design, we then passed Dover Court which he designed for his own family, curiously using roughcast on the walls, as at The Friary, a servants' dwelling place, and also passing Kent House which he built for his only daughter Louisa when she married. Turning right we saw the slightly bonkers Swiss Cottage, a complete mix of his style details, we carried on past the charming Sussex Terrace with its elegant cast iron balconies and finished our peregrinations at St Jude's, Owen's church built to provide the middle classes with a place of worship near their smart new villas and a living for his clergyman son-in-law. Owen cherry-picked decorative details from many periods of architecture such as classical Greek dentil courses and Vitruvian scrolls, also, Gothic arches, medieval arrow slits, castle towers and crenellations plus country-inspired half timbering and bargeboards but his pervading style was Italianate, reminiscent of Nash's terraces in Regent's park. Owen-designed areas of Southsea feature enticingly curvy roads and narrow winding footpaths. He was clever with space, creating the illusion of a leafy, country place and because of this, despite the changes to Southsea since then, it still has an intriguingly mysterious air if you care to explore beyond Palmerston Precinct



Each autumn brings the annual announcement of the nominations for the Stirling Prize for architecture. It's become part of our meetings' rituals to review the 6 nominations and cast a u3a vote for the one we feel is worthy of the biggest honour in British Architecture. The results are frequently very disparate! There are often accusations that the choices are mostly in the south and in London in particular and this year is no different, with 4 in London and

2 in the South. The entrants are also very mixed in size and purpose, making comparisons difficult., if not impossible. For example, this year there were 2 small private houses, one a re-use and conversion of an older one, the other designed specifically for a wheelchair user. Contrasted with them was a huge research centre for medicine in Cambridge and in Hackney, the new and extensive London College of Fashion. An eclectic choice was the Elizabeth Tower, AKA Big Ben, for its enormous conservation project. Now 160 years old, this brought together many skilled crafts people to renovate and conserve every part of the building and its contents which has restored it to its original colours of creamy stone and surprising touches of blue. The sixth nomination was a residential development for older people in south London. An almshouse for 60 or more inhabitants, it gives private living spaces and generous facilities for activities and socialising, plus green spaces in a communal courtyard and rooftop allotments. The results were given on the day after our own vote, and I'm delighted to say that the jury's decision was the same as ours - it was the wonderful living environment of the Appleby Blue Almshouse in Southwark.

We had time at this session also to look at the life and achievements of Nicholas Grimshaw, the architect probably



most famous for the Eden Project, who died last month, aged 86. He emerged in the 1960's along with some of Britain's most illustrious names in contemporary architecture, a golden group including Richard Rodgers, Zaha Hadid and Norman Foster. They all trained at architecture's most radical establishment, the Architectural Association they all embraced, in one way or another, the advances that technology and science were revealing. Grimshaw, along with Rodgers and Foster, followed the High-Tech path, saying, in an interview, in his practical, no-nonsense way, "A building should have good bones and look like what it's trying to be." Based on engineering and visible construction, without unnecessary ornamentation and fussy distractions, it's a stripped back way of achieving whatever solutions the building may need. His Financial Times Building in Dockland exposing the mighty presses to the public gaze, his Seville Expo Pavilion with its unique method of cooling a glass structure in temperatures of 40 degrees with recycled water and the geodesic domes of the Eden Project to house a tropical rain forest in temperate England - they're all examples of his problem -solving invention and never-ending curiosity. With a father who was a civil engineer and a mother who was an artist, it was the perfect gene mix to produce a world beating architect. His colleagues described him as a man who had an extraordinary ability to convince others that the most daring ideas were possible. His buildings are living proof, not only of his persuasive abilities, but his vision and his determination to make those visions a reality.

**For more information contact: Gilly Zeffertt 07845 849752**

## Art Appreciation

We started the new term with an old favourite Lowry and a new discovery Eric Tucker who has been dubbed the new Lowry. Both based their paintings on the factories and people in the industrial North. Lowry on the left and Tucker on the right. Both died in relative poverty and their paintings now sell for thousands of pounds. Lowry's work can go for exorbitant sums – a recent example was a drawing on a napkin which went for £10,000 . He did change his style towards the end of his life as you can see in the third picture, but Tucker stuck to the familiar themes.



Lowry



Tucker



Lowry

We then went across the Channel to France to look at two painters of animals: Rosa Bonheur had to get a special licence from the French Government to wear trousers as she was out painting animals . Her most famous painting is the Horse Fair. An enormous painting and you can see a smaller version in the National Gallery. You can almost hear the hooves of the horses.





We compared her work with Henri Rousseau who had a vivid imagination and his paintings had a surreal, dreamlike quality about them and watched a video of young schoolchildren giving their views on his painting. A refreshing take on art appreciation. Picasso bought some of Rousseau's paintings as they appealed to his sense of the unusual.

We then moved on to the power couple Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keefe. When they first met, he was a pioneering photographer and much more famous than her (and much older). He saw photography as a real art form. His most famous painting was "Steerage" Showing migrants not going to America but rather returning to their homelands. The boat people going the other way. Georgia O'Keefe is of course the one we know about now. Her giant flowers are among the most sought after in the art world. Her "Jimson Weed" sold for over \$44 million a few years ago. The highest price paid for a woman artist's work. Her style evolved over the years, and she moved to New Mexico where she fell in love with the landscape and painted the same mountain over and over again to capture the different colours.



As a step into more unusual art, we looked at the art of Persia after discovering that a vault in Tehran has a selection of works by well-known artists such as Rembrandt, Monet, Pollock, Warhol and even Freud. These were collected by the former Shah of Iran's wife but since the revolution in the 70s they have been locked away as degenerate Western Art. As a result of this I thought we would look at the indigenous art of that region. We all know about Persian carpets but how about temples and ceramics and metalwork? There are certainly plenty of things to marvel at that seem to predate the Greeks and the Romans.

There is the Shanameh poem which is illustrated much like an illustrated manuscript we would be more familiar with

It is 50,000 verse poem that took 52 years to illustrate and shows the history of the people and the legends. These scenes are still acted out today and the early manuscripts are highly prized significant works of art and history.

Our next artistic movement was Arts and Crafts, and it seems William Morris took some of his inspiration from the intricate patterns of Persian carpets. This movement was a reaction to the industrial revolution and the dehumanising effect of mass-produced goods.





music playing from a huge database of songs – presenters are required to play jingles and promotional items (‘promos’) at 20-minutes-to, and 20-minutes-past the hour, this being a condition of our broadcasting licence. The promos cover a vast range of public information topics, e.g. public health, mental health, public safety, how to get the best out of the NHS etc., all of them very clear, informative and helpful. And just recently a light-bulb lit up and I thought that a promo advertising the many benefits of joining the u3a might be a useful addition to these. Having suggested the idea to our committee and gained their approval I approached our Station Manager for help, and he very quickly produced an excellent promo explaining the benefits of joining Portsmouth u3a, which I used twice on my November 4th show. I confidently expect a tsunami of new members following this...

And if you’ll allow me a ‘plug’, my show “Teatime Classics”, a classical music show pitched somewhere between Classic FM and Radio Three, airs on QA Radio from 16:00 to 19:00 on most Tuesdays. How can you hear it. Well apart from the rather extreme measure of getting admitted to the hospital you can go to the radio station’s website...

<https://www.qahospitalradio.com>

to listen to the programmes. Or, if you have an ‘Alexa’ in your home, you need just say to her, very politely, Alexa play QA Radio and, obedient to your wishes, she should do so.

Requests? If you enjoy the show and would like to request a piece of music, simply email me at [barrowa@hotmail.com](mailto:barrowa@hotmail.com). If I don’t have that music in my vast collection of CDs and MP3 files, I should be able to find a playable copy of it somewhere. Picture courtesy of Goole Gemini (C)

## Brush up your French Conversation

This autumn we have about 9 members in our group.

Our abilities in Speaking French are A1 A2, B1 – Debutant to intermediate.

We learn vocabulary from a book ‘Fast French with Elizabeth Smith’ published in 1998, old fashioned but teaches us; - Dialogue, new Words and Grammar. The author tells us to learn passages by heart. If we followed her advice in the book every day, we’d be speaking fast and fluently in French in 6 weeks!!! Considering that we meet only once a fortnight, you can guess that our progress is NOT FAST!

Watching YouTube, we learn about verbs and sentence construction from Alexa, a brilliant on-line French teacher and enjoy ‘easy French’ stories.

We listen to ‘Earworms rapid French’ on Audiobooks, tell each other our own stories and practise asking questions.

If you’re interested in joining us, go online and take a ‘What’s your level in French’ test to discover if you would enjoy our group. Leave a message on my landline and tell me your email address.

Hilary Poley

(the group is not suitable for complete beginners or any fluent speakers sneaking in!!)

**To register interest please email:- [hilary@poley.co.uk](mailto:hilary@poley.co.uk) or phone 02394 008935**



## The French Experience Group

We are trying to evolve into a more collaborative group with everyone contributing something and not just being teacher led. We don't have a course book, so we rely on Salianne a weekly newsletter in French and English. This term we



looked at the “sunflower swimming pools” which were a terrific design that came in the 70s as a response to a tragic drowning of 19 children in the Loire River. The innovative design is now showing its age and preservation societies are trying to ensure that these pools are not allowed to fall into disrepair and no longer used. As a follow up to this we looked at Leon Marchand, the golden boy of the Paris Olympics. He won gold medals as a swimmer and broke many of Michael Phelps’s records. He is known as half man/half dolphin and at only 22 could be around for a while.



This led us on to other sports and the tricky grammar problem of which preposition goes with which sport Trev gave us a talk on Pétanque which is apparently played all over the UK. Trev himself was champion of the English league. We look forward to discovering more hidden talents from among the group. Jim and Maggie have a set of interesting DVDs on France that they bring in to show us, and the class are now preparing talks on famous French icons. I am starting with William the Conqueror who is celebrating his thousandth birthday this year. The battle of Hastings is one date we all know but what do we know of the man behind it. Here on the Bayeux tapestry, he raises his visor to show he is still alive. If you have an Intermediate level of French or above and are interested in the language and the culture you might be interested in joining us.



**For more information contact: Susan Johnson 07711 300 407**

## FRENCH READING GROUP, Mondays

“Le bien-être du peuple en particulier a toujours été l’alibi des tyrans.” “The welfare of the people in particular has always been the alibi of tyrants.” (Camus)

“La politique est-elle autre chose que l’art de mentir à propos?” “Is politics anything other than the art of deliberately lying?” Voltaire

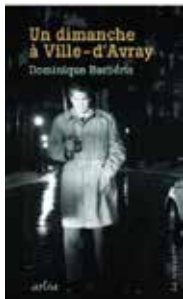
Food for thought from two French wordsmiths. One from the 18th century, and one from the 20th. So, no change there then!



We are a small, friendly group who enjoy reading and speaking French. We are interested in the language and culture, and we try to keep up with current affairs as well. French newspapers are incredibly difficult to acquire in England now since Brexit. Remember when “Le Monde” and “Le Figaro” were proudly displayed in many newsagents? Seems like a bygone age. Ooops! Sorry! It is a bygone age!

Fortunately, we are able to access French newspapers online. It is always interesting to read the French take on Trump, for instance,

as well as the recent shenanigans of the French Parliament. We've also looked at commentary on the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Maria Corina Machado, the leader of the opposition in Venezuela, and have been slightly jealous of the French imprisonment of their ex-president (2007 – 2012) Sarkozy.



On the novel front, we have recently looked at “Un Dimanche à Ville d’Avray” (A Sunday in Ville d’Avray). We all admired this subtly haunting novel, with its beautiful and compelling description of the landscape, worthy of Jane Eyre. We hear how two sisters meet as the light is fading in a detached house, and how each is filled with the memory of their childhood hopes and fears, and how they are consumed with a mad love, concealed beneath the appearance of a sensible life. Don’t we all dream!

It is probably worth repeating that we are a very democratic group, open to suggestions from all as to what we should look at, read and discuss next. We have read plays and poetry, we sometimes play French Scrabble which seems to bring out our competitive instincts!) and we reveal our ignorance with French Trivial Pursuits (well, some of us do!)

If you enjoy speaking French, and delving into French literature, ancient and modern, we are the group for you. Do come and join us, and remember:

« Petit à petit, l’oiseau fait son nid. »

**For more information contact: Jane Helliwell 07778 484974**

## German Studies

The new theme for this term came from seeing by chance a new book in Waterstones: The Alienation Effect. It is a fascinating study of how central European emigrés transformed the British Twentieth Century. Of course, not all of them were from Germany, and we looked particularly at those who arrived in the late 1920’s and 1930’s, but they all came BECAUSE of the rise of National Socialism.



It has proved not only a rich source of interest to us, but also many surprises.

Andrew Sachs, Gerard Hoffnung, Judith Kerr, the founder of Gordonstoun School in 1934, Kurt Hahn, to name but a few. Architecture: St Thomas’s Hospital in London, designed by the firm Yorke Rosenberg Mardall (YRM) Rosenberg escaped to England in 1939. Art – quite a

complicated subject to summarise, but an exhibition of “Twentieth Century Art” in the New Burlington Galleries, London in 1938 was very influential. Cinema, Photography, print design – the list goes on and on of areas hugely influenced by those emigrés. And something as “ordinary” nowadays as the discovery of Penicillin. We all KNOW it was Fleming, but as one of our group explained, how many people know that Fleming was “just” a doctor, not a chemist, and for the development of Penicillin, the Nobel Prize in 1945 was shared between Fleming, Florey (an Australian,) and Ernst Boris Chain a Biochemist, who arrived in London in 1933 with £10 in his pocket.



There is so much more! The topic led to a very interesting discussion about the huge difference between the England those emigrés found in the 1930's and now, and of social history of the post WW11 era, here and "on the continent". (Do you remember when we called it that?) Apparently at the end of the war, there were 10.5 MILLION German POW's. There were privations all over Europe, not just here. We were very surprised to hear even Switzerland was badly affected: they were surrounded by Axis countries and had not been allowed to import food, so even they suffered near starvation levels.



On a completely different topic, a member found an article about a famous railway in Wuppertal – the HANGING railway. It sounds so counterintuitive, doesn't it – a railway hanging FROM the rail. And as it happened, one member had just recently travelled on that railway on a visit to a family member! Small world.

We never know what to expect, from session to session!

**For more information contact: Hilary Nicklin 02392 297 867**



### **Beginners Spanish**



We are a small and friendly group who spend the first half of our meeting studying a single subject which might give us more confidence interacting with Spanish speakers on holiday such as checking into a hotel, buying tickets for museums or public transport, understanding and choosing items from menus etc.

After the coffee break, the second half of the morning is spent presenting and discussing / correcting our homework. The results may not be perfect but it's surprising how much confidence we each build as we prepare for the next meeting, and hopefully we gradually improve. We then choose the subject for our homework for presentation at the following meeting.

And of course, we meet new friends and share experiences from the previous 2 weeks.

We hope to see you at one of our lessons soon!

**For more information contact: Howard Parsons 07784 760947**

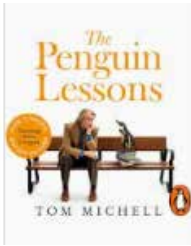


### **Spanish**

The Spanish class is slowly growing, and we are working our way through the course book Pasos 2 supplemented by a variety of videos and other articles. Oly Quinn gave a fascinating presentation on her home country of Peru. We know so little about this country and there is far more to it than Machu Pichu and the Nazca lines.

There are the multicoloured mountains that global warming has uncovered and the variety of food on offer is astounding. There are over four thousand varieties of potatoes of all different shapes and colours and taste. The Spanish they speak in Peru is very similar to





the Castilian of Spain so we can easily understand each other, and it is great having a native speaker in the class to answer any queries.

We do look at stories from all over the Spanish speaking world and we visited Argentina to look at the story behind the film Penguin Lessons. The original book was of course published by Penguin Books . This deals with an English teacher who rescued a penguin and took him back to his school in Argentina. The people at the school seemed to learn a lot from the penguin named Juan Salvador.

This lead to people telling us about their pets – no penguins this time but of course divided into cat or dog fanciers

We do throw in a bit of grammar and are focussing on the future tenses at the moment. I think most of us are hoping our future will contain a trip to Peru.



**For more information contact: Susan Johnson 07711 300 407**

## **Armchair travel**

We have stayed in England with Armchair Travel this term - but still roamed widely.

As we meet once a month there have only been 4 meetings this term, but our destinations, and the input from our u3a members, have been great!

At our first meeting of the term, in September, we traced the history of the Severn Crossing, from the earliest ferries across the river, through rail tunnels, to the now much used road bridges. Once in Wales, we “visited” Dewstow Gardens and Grottoes, and Usk.

In October we were fascinated to see photos, and hear some fascinating stories, from a visiting speaker, Ann, who has travelled much around the world, including time spent introducing tourists to the wonders of the night sky in Namibia. Now she and her husband are happy to holiday in England, visiting castles, churches and nature reserves. She has found some lovely self-catering accommodation, including a cottage owned by Kate Humble, known for her television appearances, and an enormous apartment in Alnwick Castle, with an equally enormous bath! We can learn much from her in appreciating what we have close to home, with no need for passports. Indeed, she plans to take me soon on a guided walk around Bedhampton! At our October meeting we also found time to discover more about the three counties of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland!

In November I was thrilled to have three volunteer speakers from our group who, in turn, talked about the industrial heritage of Norfolk, living in the county during the Great Freeze of 1963 and childhood holidays in Suffolk, staying in Southwold, with memories of there, as well as Minsmere and Dunwich. Thank you, Quentin, Gilly and Barbara. Time flew, and we plan to revisit East Anglia in the Spring Term.

As I write this, we look forward to our December meeting. We had planned to «go» to Machu Pichu under the excellent guidance of the group's deputy, Andrew, with his equally excellent photos. We all wish him well and we are sure that we will get there in



2026! For the time being, the alternative plan is to share memories of the best, worst, and distinctly strange, accommodation which we have encountered on holidays. And who knows, like last year, Father Christmas and his travels may feature at our “Christmas meeting”!!

In Armchair Travel we shall never run out of stories of our travels at home and abroad. Indeed, I already have offers from members of our group to talk about Bath, Leicester and Marwell Zoo at future meetings! It is amazing where you can get to from the comfort of your armchair ( or the slightly less comfortable stacking chairs in Room 3 at the Hub!). Please do join us! Fellow travellers are always welcome!

And as the saying goes! EAST WEST HOME’S BEST!

**For more information contact: Jean Barrow 07746 233 496**

## History

In September an interesting talk was given by Terry Halloran about Portsmouth during the Blitz, particularly the night of 10<sup>th</sup> January 1941 when the house at 101 High Street Old Portsmouth was bombed and the inhabitants killed. Il let Terry speak for himself this his contribution to the Newsletter:-



### 101 High Street by Terry Halloran

Terry Halloran met an old soldier, Tony Voaden, and dragged out of him that he had gone to France in 1944 just after D-Day. He was driving a scout car 20 miles in advance of the main allied forces and quite humbly said he had ended up (with his officer) being the first British soldiers to free the town of L’Aigle from the Germans.

Terry took him to the 65th Anniversary in August 2009 of the liberation of L’Aigle in Brittany where there were a number of dinners and medal presentations with Tony at the head of the parade in a wheelchair.

On return to Portsmouth Tony lamented that we in England didn’t do as much as the French in remembering the war dead and pointed out a stone hidden in the Anglican Cathedral grounds which was not only overgrown but inaccurate and asked to Terry ‘to sort it out’! After much research involving TV, Radio, the News and house to house collections Terry raised the £3,000 needed for a Portland Stone memorial to the 11 people who died sheltering in the basement of 101 High Street in the Portsmouth Blitz of 10th January 1941.

A service was held at the Cathedral on the 70th anniversary in 2011 which included some family members of those who had perished.

In October we looked at Portsea Island in the 1700/1800s when most of the Island was rural with farms and villages





scattered across the landscape. Hilsea, Baffins, Milton, Eastney, Kingston, North End, and Fratton

Hilsea at the Northern end of Portsea Island was in the 19th century still a small Hamlet. Green Farm believed to date from 1630 was located in the area, it is now a restaurant, it was the last working farm on Portsea Island, working until the 1990s. The area was

home to barracks for the Royal Field Artillery charged with defending the land entrance to Portsmouth along the Hilsea Lines.



Milton on the eastern side of Portsea Island was one of the last farming villages on Portsea Island. 'Goldsmith's' Middle Farm, Milton, dated 1870 to 1890. When James Goldsmith died in 1911 the estate was split up.

Milton Park and Bransbury Park now occupy farmland, previously part of the estate owned by the Goldsmith family in 1808. The Portsmouth to Chichester and Arundel Ship canal followed the route that is now the railway line along Goldsmith Ave and through Milton to Langston Harbour and on to Chichester and Arundel. The local workhouse, the asylum and the prison were all on the Eastern side of Portsea in Milton



Baffins was farmland with Baffins Farm and Tangier Farm in the area. Baffins Farm, has a history stretching back to the 12th century and Baffins Pond was on the farm, During the 1930s Baffins was part of urban development, but a public campaign ensured Baffins Pond survived bought by the council for £5,500 for use as a public park

Copnor was settled by the Saxons in the 6th century, and it is listed in the Domesday Book in 1086 as a tiny village named Copenore, with a population of 100 and it had a saltpan worth 8 pence at that time.

The Portsea village of Kingston, by the mid-18th century saw naval officers and other wealthy people who wanted to escape the grime and noise of the main town begin to move into larger houses in the more attractive areas. Stubbington Avenue is named after a farm which as early as the medieval times was held by the manor of Southwick Priory. The area has links to Winchester and Oxford Colleges and College Park and several of the roads have college names.



Eastney is mentioned in historical records as being mostly farmland, farmed by the tenants of James Goldsmith. The population grew when it became the site for Eastney Barracks built for The Royal Marine Artillery in 1867.



Fratton is mentioned in The Domesday Book as farmland belonging to a William de Waren. The more recent history of Fratton is linked to the railway. Fratton Station was opened in the 1880s and provided a vital link for Portsmouth to the national network.

Portsmouth gradually grew and the farms and villages were taken over by urban development but evidence in names and buildings can still remind us of the past.

On 11th November, “Armistice Day” the group looked at some of those people who had received the highest Military Honours for bravery and courage – The Victoria Cross or the George Cross. The Victoria Cross was created by Queen Victoria during the Crimean War in 1856 awarded for bravery when facing the enemy.



There are fourteen Victoria Cross recipients who have links to Portsmouth. They were either buried in Portsmouth cemeteries or cremated in Portsmouth. The first presentations of the medal by Queen Victoria took place in London Hyde Park in 1857.

Highland Road cemetery has the graves of eight Victoria Cross holders including three of the very first recipient - Henry James Raby, Sir William Nathan Wrighte and John Roberts. Two more are buried in Milton Cemetery and one in Kingston Cemetery. One was buried in Mile End cemetery which is now the site of Portsmouth Ferry Port and two were cremated at Portchester.

The George Cross was created in 1940; it is equal in status to The Victoria Cross and is awarded for acts of greatest heroism in extreme danger but not in the presence of the enemy. It can be awarded to the military and to civilians including police, emergency services and merchant seamen.



It can also be awarded collectively which has happened three times to the Island of Malta in 1942 and by Queen Elizabeth II to The Royal Ulster Constabulary in 1999 and the National Health Service in 2022 .

There are many other awards and medals. One of the most famous is the ‘Dickin Medal’ given to animals who have served in conflicts. One of those is held at the D Day Museum, it was awarded to the pigeon, Gustav, who delivered the first news of the D Day Landings in June 1944 to his handler in Cosham, Portsmouth.



**For more information contact : Rosemary Sirett - 07540597804**

## **POETRY and POETRY & DRAMA Groups, Wednesday & Thursday**

“Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.” (Hamlet)

“Woe to that land that’s governed by a child.” (Richard III)

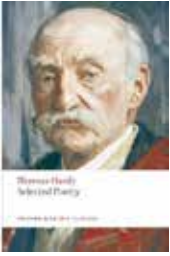
“Faith, there have been many great men that have flattered the people who ne’er loved them.” (Coriolanus)

Shakespeare’s at it again! No further comment required!



As I may have mentioned before, our Thursday Poetry and Drama group now sticks mainly to drama, falling back on poetry when there is not enough time for a play, or we finish early one session. So, having finished off Ibsen’s “Ghosts”, our cunning plan was to have a bit of a challenge. And what could be better than “Blackadder” – the Elizabethan sequence? Who would have thought that Good Queen Bess was so bloodthirsty!

Next, we could not resist attempting Bertolt Brecht’s “The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui”, with its critique of Nazism. Created



in 1941 in Southern California, where he had fled fascism, after a brief period in Scandinavia. As a Marxist, he would not have been popular with Adolf. It is, of course, very resonant of today's populist climate, delineating vain, narcissistic characters seizing power in any way they can. He uses the metaphor of Capone style gangsters using any means necessary to achieve their ends: money, power, influence and violence. Our next drama choice, "Hamlet", will be a change in many ways – however, its central theme is avenging an illegal seizure of power by murder.

Our Wednesday poetry group, as usual, had a mixture of themes / poets and free choice. One notable session was devoted to Thomas Hardy, who regarded himself more as a poet than a novelist. After acquiring a comfortable lifestyle writing novels, and perhaps peeved at the critical, negative and controversial reception to "Jude the Obscure" in 1895, he settled into writing poetry. Many of his poems, including the great poems of 1912 to 1913 were written after the death of his first wife, Emma, in 1912, recollecting and reappraising their life together.

For a mood uplift, we had a session devoted to song lyrics, which is always fun. Yes, I remember it well.....! "Autumn" was perhaps a more predictable theme, and soon we shall be amusing ourselves with "Humorous Poetry". "Haikus", in the same session, will provide a reflective counterbalance.



Finally, I should mention our group's contribution to u3a's 40th Anniversary celebration. We performed Simon Armitage's "Theatre of the Sea". The title gives the game away: written for Southsea's new promenade walk, it required a dramatic treatment. We studied it, rehearsed it, and even related it to Shakespeare's prologue to "Henry V", letting it work upon our "imaginary forces". However, Shakespeare wanted the theatre to help conjure up the reality of war, whilst Armitage's poem wants the sea to conjure up the atmosphere of a theatre. We decided to arrive at a stage where any colleague's absence on the day would not affect the performance: our familiarity with the poem was such that, declaiming one line each in turn, it would not matter who said what line!

**For more information contact: J.M. Floyd Pattison 07778 484968**



## Writing Group

Perhaps it was that the darker evenings, the more opportunities for reflection, the compelling choice of theme, all contributed to a heightened sense of attention for our last session earlier in November. Someone had been impressed by a famous photograph shown in Art Appreciation, “The Steerage” taken by Alfred Stieglitz in 1907.

It prompted her suggestion that we use a photograph or a painting as the stimulus for a piece of writing. We have a month to consider our new themes. Initially many ideas were tracked through as the range of possibilities was broad! Eventually options narrowed to be written and then shared in the Thursday afternoon group. Our small group had covered the subjects of: a photograph of the art installation of “20:50” by Richard Wilson; the response to a poem by Yeats by the taking of a long memorable walk in Ireland; the purchase of a National Gallery jigsaw reproduction of the painting of Bacchus and Ariadne by Titian; the tracing of a personal family history through census returns over the decades; an account of the history of “The Steerage”, the ship, the camera and the subsequent development of this internationally famous photograph and finally the use of this photo to develop a narrative of a family history of ancestors who travelled to another country. We are a small group, loving the practice of writing regularly to share with each other. New members are especially welcome.



**For more information contact: Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764**

## Philosophy

We are taking an American turn this year. The unique but disparate philosophy called Pragmatism has captured our attention and it has been well received. Names associated with Pragmatism include C S Pierce (pronounced purse), William James, John Dewey and, for me particularly, Justus Buchler. Unlike the majority of the famous philosophers, we have glanced at the pragmatists who took the notion of truth rather casually. Pierce thought it came as the result of prolonged communal action. James thought it was more a matter of a belief confident enough to risk a wager. John Dewey thought that circumstances or results of actions were a guide to the truth of things. Practicality and utility ranked highly with them. Philosophy had to earn its keep.

One reason for the favourable reception could be that, like Epicureanism and Stoicism of the Classical Age, it gives some insight into our psychological make-up but against a recognisable background. This remains to be seen

**For more information contact: Tony Stutters 07739 832 774**

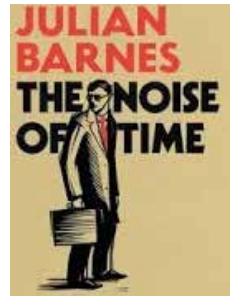


## World of Books

Our first book on our return after the summer was 'Klara and The Sun'. Now this book could either be viewed as a look into the future which if it is a bit scary or just a fantasy without very much substance at all. The book centres around an 'Artificial Friend' called Klara who is purchased by a family with a daughter called Josie (who is portrayed as very ill but you never get to the bottom of her illness) she is also a very demanding child. She has a friend called Rick but she can be very abusive towards Rick who it seems is not of the same 'class' as Josie, but you never get to know for sure why or what is really going on with in his life. It traces their time together while Josie and Rick are still living with their parents at home but does not explain what happens to Klara when Josie goes away to school and Klara is no longer needed. The relationship between Josie and Rick is very hard to understand as she can be quite abusive to him, but he still comes to visit her and appears to accept whatever friendship she is prepared to give him. Depending on your view of the book it is either a light-hearted look at what could our future be or quite disturbing as many a 'true word is spoken in jest'.



Our second offering was completely different a book called Noise of our Time by Julian Barnes, this outlined the struggles of Russian composers during the Russian Revolution, where 'The Party' felt that music should be composed for the people and therefore stifling any individuality or creativity. The story focuses very much on Shostakovich and his struggles both in his personal life and with the restrictions he experienced with regard to his music. Shostakovich is portrayed as slightly neurotic both concerning his own health and his life in general and when he had an Opera banned as it was not seen as suitable for the masses this hits him very hard and he attempts to withdraw from public life. He does travel abroad and experiences what is considered to be the decadent west but finds it hard to accept the differences between East and West. Shostakovich is eventually invited to 'Join the Party' an invitation he is unable to refuse but remains very unhappy about it. This book is not written as a story but more in line with journal entries which tend to jump from one experience to another without any real flow. Not a book for the faint hearted or for a cold night in by the fire.



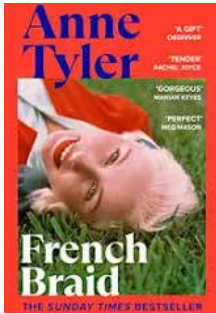
**For more information contact: Christine Courtney-Wells 02392 297723**

## Pelham Book Group

Five books and authors to share with you from our summer reading to, perhaps, guide your winter reading enjoyment.

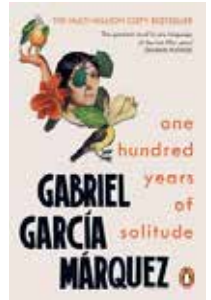
Our first read in July, "The Librarian" by Sally Vickers, 2018, fitted the season for most members of the group, a light, undemanding read with a few interesting plot twists. The plot may have been predictable to some but the themes of the power of books to change, inspire us and the joy of reading are self-evident. Sally Vickers is a popular writer, a Sunday Times Top 10 Bestseller, with novels that are rewarding as long as you aren't too critical.





In August we all enjoyed “French Braid” by Anne Tyler, 2022, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and one of her twenty-five novels. Set in Baltimore, as are many of them, this is a perceptive study of a family over three generations as each character responds to life events. The reader is able to share Tyler’s sympathy and understanding of them as each muddles through. There is humour as the characters develop and we increasingly feel for their predicaments. Anne Tyler is a master at making the ordinary, extraordinary, demonstrating each family’s uniqueness. Twenty five novels to choose from, most highly recommended.

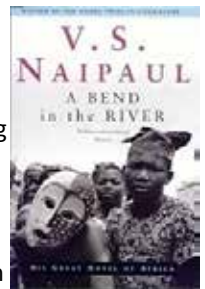
September’s book, “One Hundred Years of Solitude” by the Colombian author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, 1967, was a challenge for us all. I was daunted by this novel from the start, not the light summer read I needed at the time and gave up after the first chapter. Many group members valiantly read on to be defeated by the number of characters and prose style, not finishing the book. Salman Rushdie says this is “The greatest novel in any language of the last 50 years” and obviously a significant work. One for us to return to when we feel in a more scholarly mood. Perhaps one of our u3a members who has read the book can tell us what we are missing?



With relief October provided another Iris Murdoch, “Under the Net”, 1954, her debut novel. This was our third Murdoch novel as we had enjoyed two others. There was a mixed response to this read. Some irritated by Jake, the central character, a struggling young writer, the circumstances he created fuelled by much heavy drinking and the exploitation of other characters and situations. The plot reflected recovery from the war years with characters desperate to find a place and fulfilment in 1954 Britain. There were touches of comedy, a little too much philosophising for some but the positive ending appealed to us all. This was an interesting read, showing Murdoch as an accomplished writer from the start.



Now November takes us to Africa with “A Bend in the River” by V. S. Naipaul, 1979, to be discussed later this month. The post-colonial, mid-20th century African setting is vividly conveyed; Salim, the narrator, an ethnically Indian Muslim owning a shop in a remote interior but growing city is intriguing. Who knows what will happen and how it will end? I do hope some of these titles and authors might be new to you. They are all worth following up.



The group would not function without Maggie MacBeth’s tireless liaison with Havant library for our books then their collection and distribution. Thank you from us all. Happy, enjoyable reading over Christmas and the New Year.

The group is full currently but **For more information contact: Judith Wise tel: 07530854969. judewise1@googlemail.com**

## **Art for All - Tuesday mornings**

This group continues as a self-led gathering where members bring their own work to focus on during our fortnightly meeting.

We displayed a variety of our work at our recent Portsmouth U3A 40th Anniversary which was enjoyed by our guests and members.

We are a welcoming and sociable group having arranged extra-curricular activities during this term including a Behind the Scenes Tour of Chichester Festival Theatre, a half-term breakfast and information on the Portsmouth Open Studios 2025 trail.

We can certainly accommodate new members so please do contact us if you would like to join us.

**For more information, please contact either of the co-leaders**

**Lin Schofield 07909 537215 or Lynn Timms 07851 069146**

## **Behind the Scenes Tour of Chichester Festival Theatre**



A group of us from Art for All and Needles and Pins enjoyed this trip in early October.

We learnt about the creation of the building; visited the wardrobe and wig rooms plus dressing and green room; we heard about the colour coding of each actor's outfits; the quick washing and ironing turnaround between each performance; explored on and under the stage and discussed the touring and CFT's own productions.

Our tour guide, Judith, was both entertaining and informative and the 90-minute tour flew by. We recovered with a lovely meal in the Bell Inn pub!

If you are interested in booking this event, the details are on the Chichester Festival Theatre website <https://www.cft.org.uk/offstage/backstage-tours>

Lin Schofield Patagonia



Brenda Colman



Maggie Macbeth



Needles and Pins- Joint effort to make a banner for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



A selection of patchwork cushions and knitted figures



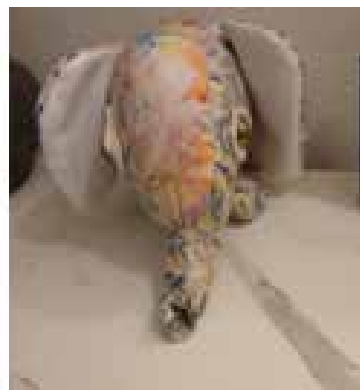
As you can see, the group produces a wide range of crafts. The crystal picture needs a meticulous attention to detail, the card holder is a clever way of upcycling old CDs and the little knitted figures would enchant many a grandchild as would the patchwork elephant. Patchwork cushions are a way of using up old bits of material and brightening up a home. This is a friendly creative group with a wide range of skills, and we have access to two sewing machines and an iron and ironing board to finish off our creations. If you would like to come and join us, you would be very welcome. **For more information contact: Oly Quinn 07506 145 293**



**Card Holder  
Jean Bancroft**



**Crystal work  
Heather Lewis**



**Patchwork  
Elephant  
Penny Scipio**



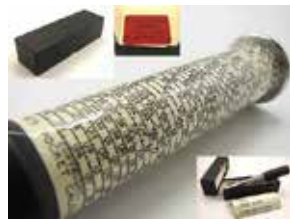
**Mountaineer and Mr and Mrs Frosty  
Fiona Brown**



**Lynne Timms  
Oly and Ivy**

## Science and Technology

In order to celebrate the 40 years of the u3a Portsmouth, although only 20+ for the group, we had a table of articles used throughout 70 years of calculating. We started with an Otis King equivalent of a 5ft slide rule and ended with a laptop shown in pieces so that one could see how difficult it was to remove heat from the processor. Our local MP Steven Morgan said he recognised most of the articles and he was in a group putting pressure on industry to make devices modular so that the likes of laptops could be easy to repair especially as industry would have to maintain a stock of spares.



We had a group meeting the day before the celebrations and as usual we found humour in most of the topics we looked at. "How to poop in space" we looked at from the early days when Alan Shephard was told to pee in his brand-new spacesuit with the result that his heart monitors all malfunctioned during his orbit. Things improved after the first moon landing when they used diapers with a new absorbency agent, Sodium Polynerilate.

We came back down to earth to study the clothes moth and then looked at another moth, the Tibetan Ghost Moth which surprised us all that none of us had heard of it when we found its parasite was worth 140,00 American dollars a kilo.

Not for the first time, we discussed Dark matter, Dark energy and Black holes. We decided that anything we did not understand we could put dark or black in its title. We investigated plants that ate insects and then looked at insects that were eaten by humans. Cambodia and Thailand lead the way and even the tarantula is regarded as a fried delicacy. The group needs more members but with reduced numbers everyone gets more time to put forward their views. If you think this group might interest you, do get in touch.



**For more information contact: Brian Greener 02392863381**



## Religion, Spirituality and Life

Last month, the tiny Anglican Church of St Francis, North End, where I am the temporary priest in charge, was lent out for the day, not for more customary pursuits of ballroom dancing or dog training, but for celebration by the local Indian community of the Hindu Festival of Divali. As a mark of respect, and (to be honest), somewhat obsessively fascinated by other peoples' religions, I

asked if I could attend. I was overcome by the warmth of the welcome I received. And to show my respects for all that was being done, I decided I must not be late for the start of the service. I still don't know exactly when the service did start. It became clear to me gradually that the celebration did not have a beginning in the way of Christian religious services. I gradually witnessed astonishingly elegant women dressed in richly colourful saris appear. Some positioned themselves in postures of respectful worship before images of gods and goddesses, set amidst flowers and incense candles. Others took no notice and carried on chatting to each other, perhaps admiring each other's outfits and complementing



each other's children. At some stage, a gently spoken priest dressed in matching light trousers and jacket, the very image of the thin boned and emaciated looking Mahatma Gandhi, appeared at the altar with what looked like a Tesco bag full of prayer books. Slowly, he sat down on a tiny stool, three inches high, folding his lower infinitely flexible lower legs up alongside his upper ones and sat down like a matchstick man. He slowly chanted passages from the ancient Sanskrit hymns of the Rig Veda, near three thousand years old, kore ancient even than the Hebrew Bible. But no-one took much notice.... Unless I was missing something? Some of the women in Saris went up to the altar, where our Christian communion table had been transformed into a sea of colour, figure and flower; and they quietly sat, praying perhaps for their families and children - much like Christians might. It was explained to me that families from many parts of India, were gathering with their very different languages: Bengali, Punjabi, Bangla, Tamil, and their quite different deities. But they all seemed to pray in the same way and to reveal the devotion in their heart, in the way in their faces. When I asked what was it that they all had in common they laughed, with some embarrassment, until one said: "Well, we all come from Portsmouth." I didn't entirely understand the answer - but it encouraged me enormously. But If you want to know more, come and join us on alternate Friday afternoons.

**For more information contact: John Strain 07834 637 744**



**Mahjong** is a tile-based game that was developed in the 19th century in China and has spread throughout the world since the early 20th century. It is played by four players. The game is played with a set of 144 tiles based on Chinese characters and symbols. Help will be given to beginners. **Mah Jong** still takes place Friday mornings. Come along and give it a go.

**For more information contact: John Hall on 02392 732980**

## Board Games and Rummikub

Remember the summer of 2025 which seemed as if it would last forever with glorious sunny days for what seemed like



month after month? Well, the group's final meeting in the last week of the summer term saw a small attendance due that same weather. We played just one game called Blume, in which players plant and nurture their plants and decide upon either increasing their stock or affecting the local market with the aim of having the most valuable flowers.

Unfortunately the U3A Summer programme's featured board game event was cancelled for the second year in a row, this time due to the closure of The Hub due to electrical problems.

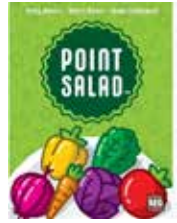
The group returned for the Autumn term with a new theme to the games I bring, that being Food and Drink. Once more the first meeting had a limited attendance due to the weather, again just one game was played, entitled Smoothie Wars in which the players needed to manufacture the smoothies and decide upon the best venues in the area to sell them, with pitching the price of the products and the numbers produced also being key factors for them to decide upon. The result was a very close finish to make the largest profit with the game being decided upon on the very last turn.





The second meeting of the term saw a record attendance, which included two new members, both of whom are very keen Rummikub players, which led to a good series of the game being played. In addition, the other eight players were engaged in playing Soda Smugglers. In the latter seven players at a time were either trying to deceive a customs official that they were within the legal limit of importing bottles of pop into the country or were trying to entice the official into making a false arrest in order to extract compensation. Some players showed a natural ability to deceive.....!!! their names are withheld to avoid a multi million-pound claim being made against Portsmouth u3a.

Our November meeting saw another new face joining us for Rummikub, which is an extremely good game for exercising the little grey cells. The other players were occupied by Point Salad, a fairly new game which gives the players multiple choices of possible actions on their turn, decisions which can turn the game need to be made very quickly, the quandary being which choice to make and how it will affect the game.



There is just one gaming session left this term, on Wednesday, 3rd December at 2.00pm in Room 3 of The Hub, that decision is yours to make.

**For more information contact Tony Valvona 02392 822641**

## Film Club Starts at 1:45

**Wed 28th January.** “ The Scent of Green Papaya” 1993

A Vietnamese servant girl, Mui, observes lives within two different Saigon families: the first, a woman textile seller with three boys and a frequently absent husband; the second, a handsome young pianist with his fiancée. He soon finds himself growing fond of Mui, more than he should.



**Wed 25th February.** “ Midnight in Paris” d2011.



Midnight in Paris is a 2011 fantasy comedy film written and directed by Woody Allen. Set in Paris, the film follows Gil Pender (Owen Wilson), a screenwriter and aspiring novelist, who is forced to confront the shortcomings of his relationship with his materialistic fiancée (Rachel McAdams) and their divergent goals, which become increasingly exaggerated as he travels back in time to the 1920s each night at midnight.

**Wed 25th March.** “ Atonement” 2007.

The 2007 film **Atonement** featured a «starry cast» that included **James McAvoy, Keira Knightley, Saoirse Ronan, Romola Garai, Vanessa Redgrave, and Benedict Cumberbatch**. Directed by Joe Wright and based on Ian McEwan’s novel, the critically acclaimed romantic war drama tells a story of love, guilt, and the power of narrative.

**For more information contact: Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764**



## The Walking Group

Since I last put pen to paper we have been on some lovely walks in glorious sunshine. As mentioned in the previous article we have been back to Compton and the lovely cafe has reopened and is bigger and better. The menu has been extended, and they have some delicious food. We were so enjoying ourselves that we almost forgot the walk. Anyhow, backpacks back on and off up Trafalgar Hill. The walk was proceeding well until we were accosted by an angry man who said we were in his back garden. There was no fence just a digger on some land. He did eventually let us pass to the road. Of course we were in need of more refreshments after this.



**Compton September**

Our next trip wasn't without incident. We headed off to the Isle of Wight with a walk that Hilary had planned. After taking the Hovercraft over we realised we had missed our bus to East Cowes and so reluctantly found ourselves in a fabulous chocolate bar where we had drinks and cake. I can thoroughly recommend the Florentines. We did manage to catch the next bus and after crossing on the chain ferry we walked into Cowes and then on to Gurnard Bay. We had lunch in a lovely pub overlooking the water and then headed back to Cowes via the ice cream booth. The problems started with the return bus which didn't show up. We were there about one and a half hours and eventually got on a bus to the racetrack and changed there.



**IOW August**

By the time we arrived at Ryde the last ferry was about to leave, and we only caught it as it was delayed. Who knew that the last ferry was at 7 o'clock in summer. No harm done though and we had a great day.

By comparison our next outing was without incident and we walked from Emsworth to Westbourne. We had walked this way before and enjoyed seeing the Alpacas again and this time there were chickens roaming around. We have five new members, and we are a merry bunch.

Our most recent walk was at Stansted on a glorious November day.



**November walk in Stansted Park**

The two walking groups, regular and ambling, joined forces to walk together. We all met at Portchester Castle and began with tea, coffee and in some cases cake, at the lovely little cafe in St Mary's Church within the castle walls. Whilst admiring the Norman arch at the entrance to the church, one of the cafe volunteers, who is also a guide, was able to give us some interesting history about the church. I had often attended Church Parade here in my youth as a Sea Ranger Guide, but had not, at this time, been inclined to find out more.



We sallied forth for our walk along the fore shore at the top of Portsmouth Harbour. We walked at a reasonable pace, the ambling group (all two of us) with the regular walkers chatting as we went along.

Soon we were at our destination - 'Salt', the cafe at Wicor Marina. Despite it being October, we were able to sit outside to enjoy a very pleasant lunch and talk a little more. I came across Salt a few years ago, I would certainly recommend an outing, the food was very good, and outlook interesting (however, beware, it might be a little smelly on a hot summer's day when the tide is out, the mud here is definitely niffy!) The marina looks to have been there for some years, but certainly wasn't there all those years ago when I lived just across the field from here



**Saturday 11th October Portchester to Wicor and lunch at Salt Café**

At this point the regular walkers walked back along the fore shore to the castle, whilst the amblers (all two of us), stopped for a cup of coffee before driving back to meet up again at Portchester Castle. (Hilary's car having been left earlier at Wicor)

**For more information contact: Jackie Forsyth 02392 666 680 or Hilary Poley for Ambling Group 02394 008935**



### **Speakers' Programme**

**23<sup>rd</sup> September Speaker - Julian Le Good - A Portrait of the Architect as a Young Man** Julian is a local man living in Southsea who began his career in 1978 when he started as a "Part 1 Student"

This was rather a 'light-hearted look at his career and all the mad & bad stuff which went on'. A jog down memory lane 'punctuated with the funny, the dotty and the downright ridiculous', and included portrayals of many different characters he has encountered along the way, some of them in the construction industry itself. We all thoroughly enjoyed it, The sum total raised was £110.00. This was split between

Macmillan Cancer Support and Cancer Research UK, each receiving £55. Julian would like to thank everyone for their generosity.

## October 21<sup>st</sup> Peter Rann, Archivist at the Kings Theatre - A Brief History of the Punch and Judy Show

We had a very interesting talk from Peter about the origins of Punch and Judy and were astonished that it went as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During the 1700's, Punch was part of the fashionable marionette puppet shows performed across the country, his name had by now been anglicized to the shorter version we know today. Punch's wife, then called Joan, was also a well-known character at this time. By the 1800s, Punch was no longer operated by strings, but now



appeared as a glove puppet, alongside his long-suffering wife, now named Judy, and their baby. Although no longer so popular there are still about 30 Punch and Judy Professors creating shows. Early storylines had a moral angle and featured Punch fighting the devil. But they gradually became more slapstick, and new characters were introduced. Like the policeman, who fails to arrest Punch, the crocodile, who steals Punch's sausages, and the clown based on famous London clown Joseph Grimaldi. The puppets are all hand puppets and can cost a couple of hundred pounds. The heads and hands are usually made of wood and are surprisingly heavy.

Speaker Secretary Carol-Anne Turner



### What is on offer in the Hub café served by Molly, Brendon, and Jo



#### Breakfast

2 Bacon, 1 Sausage, 1 Egg, Hash Brown, Beans or Tomatoes, & Toast. Served with Tea, or Filter Coffee £6.50  
Bacon, Sausage or Egg Bap £2.80  
Cheese on Toast £3.00 • Scrambled Egg on Toast £3.00  
Beans on Toast £2.90 • Toast & Jam/Marmite £1.20  
Plain Omelette £3.00 Add fillings for £1.00 extra Cheese & Onion, Ham, Bacon, Tomato, Mushroom, Onion

#### Main Meals

Chilli Con Carne, Chicken Curry, Spaghetti Bolognese & Garlic Bread, Macaroni Cheese & Garlic Bread Ham, Egg & Chips, Omelette & Chips served with a side salad.

All main meals are served with a Tea or Filter Coffee **£6.75**

#### Light Bites

Sandwiches -£3.20

Toasties -£3.35

Baguettes -£3.40

Paninis -£3.40

Salad Box- £4.00

Fillings; Cheese, Ham, Egg Mayo, Tuna, Prawn Mayo Extra Fillings 0.90p

#### Jacket Potatoes

Plain Jacket Potato £3.00 Fillings; Cheese **£1.00**, Beans 0.90p, Tuna £2.00 Prawn £2.20 Salad Garnish £1.50

#### Homemade Soups

Please ask a member of staff for which options we have available.

Served with Bread & Butter **£4.20**

#### HOT LUNCH EVERY WEDNESDAY

Served with a Tea or Filter Coffee **£6.75**

Please speak to a member of staff for any Allergen or Dietary requirements. Brandon, Molly and Jo in the café.

## Social Programme

Having taken on the role of social secretary in June I soon came to realize there was more to it than just being social!

The first event I was charged to do was organizing the Christmas luncheon. Although only July I had trouble finding a suitable venue that wasn't already booked up. Hopefully all will go well at the Holiday Inn and our Mince pie social.

2026 will have many social events for our members to enjoy, to meet and make new friends together.

**Social secretary Elaine Jessica Meredith 07300 797 715**



**Cream Tea July 22<sup>nd</sup>**



**Picnic August 19<sup>th</sup>**



## Members' Meetings Speakers in 2026

20/01/2026	Mike Williams	Pheobe Marks / Hertha Ayrton A Brilliant Scientist, known for her Sparks
24/02/2026	Kerenza Faram	Spam Awareness
17/03/2026	Kelly Nash Portsmouth City Council	Redeveloping Hilsea Lido
21/04/2026	Hugh Cull City of Portsmouth College	Digital Privacy
19/05/2026	Gareth Edwards Portsmouth History Centre	Childhood in Portsmouth during WWII
16/06/2026	Dave Allen - Leader of Southsea Skiffle Orchestra	Summer in the City



## **Principles of the u3a Movement**

➤ The u3a Movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

### **The Third Age Principle**

➤ Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full-time employment has ceased.

➤ Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.

➤ Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.

### **The Self-help Learning Principle**

➤ Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire, by the members, for the members.

➤ No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.

➤ There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

### **The Mutual Aid Principle**

➤ Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust,

which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.

➤ No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.

➤ Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.

➤ Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.