



Lynne Foord Swan and Cygnet
Art for all Group

Newsletter Spring 2026

Website: www.u3asites.org.uk/portsmouth

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

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Chairs report for the Spring term 2026



Once again, a new year has arrived without any great fanfare. It is always good to come back after almost a month away and catch up with our old friends and begin to make new ones. It has been great to meet new members, but please forgive me if I need reminding of your name!

The mince pie event and Xmas lunch at the Holiday Inn were both well attended and enjoyed by all, thanks to Elaine our new social secretary. Well done to those who were lucky enough to win a raffle prize or get most correct answers in the quiz, take a bow Carol Powell. The money raised in the raffle will be used to buy a new noticeboard just for us. You may have become aware that our space on the current noticeboard has become squeezed and doesn't help with communicating u3a business. We aim to hold other raffles in the future, and we would welcome suggestions on how the money raised could be spent to the benefit of all u3a members.

Unfortunately, one thing we could not wait to purchase was a new laptop, the old one being increasingly unreliable. As you're aware lots of our classes rely on the leaders being able to present information on the TV and often our Monthly speakers need this facility as well.

Some group leaders were able to take part in a meeting at the Mayors Parlour in January. You will see our happy smiling faces in the photo surrounding the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress in the (Oak ?) panelled room. We were treated to tea and biscuits and then a tour of the areas at the Mayor's disposal. There are so many historical documents related to the history of Portsmouth and precious artefacts and the Mayor regaled us with facts and



stories. I am hoping to arrange another visit for those Leaders/ Committee members and deputies who were not able to come in January. By the time you read this some of the Committee will have taken a tour of Parliament. I will report back in the Summer newsletter.

The next social event will be the Hot Cross bun gathering in the Hub cafe on Tuesday 31st at 1:45pm with another raffle to be held. Look out for publicity on this event. The June trip to Mottisfont Abbey is still being organised with a payment deadline of 27th February. Hopefully by now you have confirmed with Rosemary Sirrett that you will be coming.



A significant anniversary for Portsmouth is happening this year, it is one hundred years since it became a city. There was an exhibition about the design of the lions which will be seen around the city in the Aspex Gallery in Gunwharf Quay. The committee has decided we should mark the event by turning our summer cream tea into a birthday party for Portsmouth. We would also like to get members to share their memories/ experiences of the city especially if you are relatively new to the city like me (four years and counting)!

I hope to see you at upcoming social events and wish you a happy Easter. All the best.

Mandy Richards Chair 07496 009401

Apologies to New Member Sylvia Brietske for wrongly naming her as Angela Brietzke in the previous newsletter

Welcome to new members : Andrew Braithwaite, Angela Bowyer, Yvonne Mason, Elaine Hasker, Patricia Huffell **Returning member :** Jean Manchester



Architecture

Have you noticed that that we (optimistically) ignore winter in our newsletters? It's always autumn or spring but never winter! Given the winter we've endured so far, it seems an excellent strategy to aim for the season of bursting buds and possible sunshine. The prospect of meeting friends at u3a classes and gathering a smidgin of new knowledge is another good plan. To that end, we resumed the second half of last term, staring at the inevitability of Christmas and the W- word but diverting our attention momentarily with an in-depth look at an architect undeservedly little known here but a hero in his home, Belgium.

For most of us, Belgium only resonates as the origin of superior chocolate, Hercules Poirot and the EU. However, our

exploration of the work of Victor Horta, Art Nouveau exponent extraordinaire, may have drawn us into a greater appreciation of all things Belgian and M. Horta, in particular.

Born in 1861, as an impressionable teenager he worked in Paris in an architect's practice for a couple of years. He was completely blown away by what he saw, the new building styles, the use of glass and metalwork as a decorative building method and the blossoming creative atmosphere in all the arts, with Art Nouveau as his special inspiration. His concept, drawn from the fluidity and curving lines of this developing style, resulted in houses of fantasy and mystery which also incorporated very practical open plan layouts and modern methods of construction, using the strength of cast iron in their framework.

His first big commission, Hotel Tassel, made his name, using luxurious materials such as marble, bronze and exotic woods, crowned by a magnificent rooftop glass dome which flooded light throughout the interior of this narrow city house. This solution to potentially dark interiors was a device featured in many of his house designs, including his own, now the Horta Museum in Brussels. His fertile imagination designed and decorated every detail of his unique and magical houses and deservedly won him the title of the Father of Art Nouveau in Belgium, as well as the title of Baron Horta.

In contrast, the death in December of one of the world's most well-known architects made the choice of subject for the opening talk of 2026, unavoidable. He was groundbreaking, controversial and completely off the wall., earning worldwide fame and headlines. He created buildings of extraordinary complexity, fuelled by his wild imaginative leaps - and has always surprised us. This was the inimitable Frank Gehry. He was a man of enormous energy who was still working at 96, (who played ice hockey into his 60's), with a very strong ambitious drive, equally strong opinions and a social conscience. But his real breakthrough, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, came when he was already 68.



Coming from a poor and struggling immigrant family, growing up through the Depression, being the only Jewish boy at school in a tough mining town and working to pay for the arduous training as an architect, all this explains his pugnacious character and determination. His imagination was fired by mixing with the young artists in California where he was then living and, in his childhood, playing with wood offcuts from his grandfather's hardware store to build houses, streets and towns. This freedom of approach allowed him to design without constraint, combining unusual shapes and angles and even sometimes recycled materials.

My initial reaction to the Guggenheim was that it resembled a sink full of washing-up - hardly insightful or analytical - but now, 30 years on, I find its juxtaposition of shapes and shimmering titanium tiles beautiful and satisfying. The new can be baffling and strange - perhaps, as time passes, it becomes more familiar and we can see it differently. An open mind is all that's needed.

To quote the man himself, he says, "Architecture should speak of its time and place but yearn for timelessness."



The inspiration for our last session, in February, was via gardens not buildings. In his recent series on Rhineland gardens, Monty Don visited the Landscape Park at Duisburg where an enormous industrial site had been left undemolished and transformed by nature and man into a restorative green space. Architecture has begun to rethink along these lines, about the process of demolition and newbuild in the building industry which is responsible for a huge

percentage of carbon emissions, a whopping 38% . Re-purposing buildings, rather than demolishing them could reduce this amount by half. There is no one way to save the planet from climate change and man's ravages and this is not a silver bullet, but it could make a significant contribution.



Our changing society has made many buildings redundant. We're no longer a manufacturing country to any extent, people work from home and shop online, churches, pubs and banks are closing, hospitals and schools aren't fit for purpose, old farm buildings are left to rot and beautiful, period houses are left empty. If structurally sound, they can all be put to use in many different ways, relevant to how we live today. There is always a title for everything

today and the architecture world calls this adaptive reuse.

Two places that most of us will have visited are shining examples of how well this works. Both were victims of closure because of the need to change our energy sources, and both are of immense size. Today they thrive as Tate Modern, and the Battersea Power Station complex of tourist centre and apartment blocks designed by 2 star architects, Norman Foster and Frank Gehry.



We looked at a number of other sites developed, reusing viable buildings, with heritage credentials - amongst others, Coal Drops Yard in Kings Cross, now a retail centre, designed by Thomas Heatherwick, (a very enthusiastic supporter of adaptive reuse), the Bird's Custard factory in Birmingham, now part of an area which includes a new and important University of Design and the large scale development of a heavily industrialised part of Lodz in Poland. Other conversions abounded which ranged from a silo complex made into an art gallery, a bath house into an indoor skate park, gasholders to apartments and the old Littlewoods Pools Building to be made into a TV and film studio complex.

These types of buildings are frequently strong, well-built and are loved elements of the landscape. Once you demolish a building the carbon held within the fabric of the building is released into the atmosphere again and so the cycle continues. The building industry's other contribution to carbon emissions and greenhouse gases is in the manufacture of the materials it uses, such as steel, glass, concrete, bricks and plastics, all of which are derived from the planet's finite resources. It makes real sense to retain what's good. In the last decade or so the architectural world has become acutely aware of the need for sustainability and adaptive reuse could just be one of the tools that would help in the fight.

A little footnote here to say what a pleasure it has been to welcome so many new members to our meetings. In the last year, we have had over a dozen new faces join us. (Also thank you to the present members for being so welcoming to them). We hope you will stay with us on our explorations into this fascinating subject!

For more information contact: Gilly Zeffertt 07845 849752

Art Appreciation



We started the term with "Smashing Ceramics" Wedgwood might be out of fashion now but in his time he was a great entrepreneur and the first to offer "buy one get one free" His dinner and tea sets were sought after by the newly emerging middle classes and he also produced sets for both the Russian and British royal families Catherine the Great was amongst his clients. A little known fact about Josiah Wedgwood is that he was a strong supporter of the abolitionist group and produced a medal in support of anti-slavery.



We looked at more 20th Century ceramists such as Moorcroft and Clarisse Cliff and also some of the giant vases by Grayson Perry.

For the next class Mandy Richards told us about an incredible artist called Elizabeth Keith who painted scenes from the far East in the early 20th Century. At a time when Japan and Korea were just opening up to westerners Elizabeth was a pioneering woman who travelled around the Far East painting what she saw. The outfits these young children are wearing in this painting are very different from anything in the west. Scenes of everyday life and people that the west hadn't seen before.



We also looked at how various artists had depicted winter and just how many shades of white are there! Some of the impressionists better known for their sunny paintings also produced paintings of winter. Not so many of course, these were a group intent on painting "en plein air" and not so easy in freezing temperatures. The Norwegians of course had this sussed and knew how to wrap up warm. See Fritz Thaulow dressed for the occasion.



Caspar David Friedrich painted one of the most atmospheric winter paintings. "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog" was thought to embody the romanticism of someone contemplating the future.



Elaine Lawson led a session on Mary Cassatt, an artist from America who made her mark in the Impressionist group in Paris. She was particularly known for her intimate paintings of the relationship between mother and child. This was a time when if you had money, someone else would look after your children.



She was influenced by the interest in Japonism that was prevalent at the time, and this comes through in her paintings. This composition is notable for its close-up, overhead perspective, a technique inspired by Japanese woodcut prints.

The next topic was Hogarth and his famous Rake's Progress. Here a rich man is brought low by gambling and wasting his inheritance. This is him in his final stages in Bedlam where society people came to laugh at the lunatics. William Hogarth

had himself spent 5 years in Fleet debtors prison when his father lost all his money by opening a café where you could only speak Latin! Hogarth turned many of his paintings into etchings and were intended to show people the error of their ways.

We moved to the 20th century with two famous photographers: Dorothea Lange and Steve McCurry. Dorothea Lange documented the suffering of the poor farmers during the great depression when their farms turned to dust bowls. Her most famous photo is of a migrant mother and three of her children. The farmers had to travel to find work in other areas. Dorothea's photos helped open the eyes of her fellow Americans and helped influence Roosevelt with his New Deal.



Steve McCurry is later in 20th and 21st Century. Famous for colour photos documenting life in all parts of the world. His most famous photo is of an Afghan girl. Her eyes are quite startling. This one graced the front cover of National Geographic.

Our group covers a wide range of topics, and we never seem to run out of things to look at. If you feel this might appeal to you, you are welcome to join us.

For more information contact: Susan Johnson 07711 300 407



Music Discovery Group

The Music Discovery Group, now a lusty youngster in its fifth year, continues to thrive, a friendly and welcoming group as the occasional new member testifies. The group is, happily, a very broad church, not in the least academic and there is no genre

of music that is banned or even mildly frowned upon. Average attendance at meetings hovers resolutely around 12, which I think makes the group popular enough to continue meeting. As ever the emphasis of the meetings is on 'discovery' rather than on the more academic 'appreciation', with occasionally humorous tales and vignettes attached to the music. And though not every piece of music we play is to everybody's liking, most sessions seem to be enjoyed by the members. With a heavy heart I have promised never to play again a work that I love, the short Third Symphony by the American composer Roy Harris, largely because some members of the group found it 'frightening'. Discovery is one thing, but being frightened is altogether another! Sorry about that Roy! We are planning, although these plans have yet to come to fruition, to have some slightly more 'academic' sessions in which we will explore the evolution of various musical genres, probably beginning with beginning with the rich seam of material that is the symphony. This is a large canvas to explore, but from its 18th century beginnings up to the present day there are many tuneful examples which illustrate the evolution of this wonderful genre, a genre whose 'death' has been predicted many times yet still it lives on. Long live the symphony! And once again I would like to record my deep debt to Gilly Zeffert for running sessions when I am away and for sharing her huge knowledge of music with me and the group. Once only fond of jazz because it can give you a very high score in Scrabble I am now well on the way to enjoying it as a musical genre. For this awakening, and for all your help, thank you once again Gilly!

For more information contact: Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357



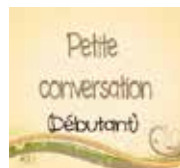
Curry & Craft Ale Club

In my view very few pleasures, no, I won't list them, compare with a meal, drinks and conversation shared with like-minded friends, particularly if that shared meal involves the food of our imperial past, a curry! This being so towards the end of last year I sent an email to all our members testing the waters to see if there was any interest in a group that would meet up for a termly curry, with generous side orders of craft ale and conversation, either at lunchtime or supper time. Response to my initial email was extremely encouraging and thus it was that the **Curry & Craft Ale Club**, for such is the



group's name, was born. The group held its inaugural meal in the **Tap and Tandoor** Indian restaurant and bar in Gunwharf Quays at the end of February, a venue chosen because it is open at lunchtimes, is easy to reach by public transport, and was somewhere I had eaten occasionally and had always enjoyed the food. And the craft ales too! The group now has a membership of over 50, but when approached the restaurant suggested a maximum of 15 diners. This circle was squared fairly easily as eventually only 19 members expressed an interest in attending the inaugural meal, and to be as impartial as possible I enlisted Artificial Intelligence (Google's Gemini™) in selecting the lucky 15 diners from the stockpot of 19 individuals. As compensation for this disappointing news the unlucky four have been assured of a place, should they want one, at the next meal, which may possibly be an evening one. The meal and company were excellent, and the restaurant accommodated our needs by allowing members of our group to pay separately at the end of the meal, rather than having to endure unseemly arguments about who had eaten what and who had drunk what. In my experience nothing spoils a meal like postprandial squabbling over payment! All those who attended seemed to enjoy the meal and I can now start planning one for the summer term. The only 'complaint' about the meal – the portions were too large!

For more information contact: Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357



Brush up your French Conversation

Brush up your French" is a small friendly group for those who seek to build upon their basic understanding and skill in the language through formal grammar exercises, word games, and practising everyday French conversation. In respect of the "Common European Framework for Reference for Languages" (CEFR), the group is ideally suited to those at levels A2 (Elementary) to B1 (intermediate).

We are currently working through the textbook "Fast French" by Elizabeth Smith (ISBN 978-1-444-14487-1). This text aims to provide the reader with useful conversational skills through listening and practising simple entertaining dialogues about everyday life in France, and by answering exercises related to the vocabulary, grammar and phrases used. In addition to these formal exercises, we also try out some basic conversation between ourselves using common French phrases, tenses and basic grammatical constructs. This provides some experience in speaking the language and improves confidence. Hopefully we can identify any potential conversational "faux pas" (of which some of us may be painfully aware) before innocently using them in front of a native French speaker.

The group also watches a number of excellent entertaining videos created by native French speakers which expand on the exercises, word games and conversation practised in the session. The videos, filmed in several French locations, often involve subtitled interviews with passers-by and are especially useful for improving our pronunciation.

Overall, the aim of the group is to provide an enjoyable and engaging environment in which to practise and learn basic but useful French conversation.

To register interest please email:- hilary@poley.co.uk or phone 02394 008935

The French Experience Group

There is always plenty of news coming from France to give us topics to discuss. Brigitte Bardot, a French icon died this year in her 90s She went from sex kitten to animal rights protector though her lifetime. She was the embodiment



of Marianne, the spirit of revolution in the 60s. General De Gaulle commissioned busts of her to be placed in town halls and she featured on stamps and bank notes.

The other news item that caught everyone's imagination was the Louvre heist. Where are those treasures now? It has been discovered how lax security is in the Louvre. The password to get into the security systems was "Louvre" We also looked at an earlier theft in 1911 when a worker at the Louvre stole the Mona Lisa and hid it under his bed for years. He was Italian and thought the painting belonged in Italy. He was caught when he tried to sell it to an Italian museum but was only sentenced to a year in prison by an Italian court.

A more serious topic was looking at crime and punishment in France. We probably all know the Pink Panther and the incompetent Inspector Clouseau but did you know the death penalty was only revoked in 1981 and the last person to be guillotined was in 1971. Another famous detective was Inspector Maigret, whose latest reincarnation was by Rowan Atkinson or Mr Bean. Georges Simenon, the author was Belgian and was famous for being to write a book in a couple of weeks.



For Valentines Day we looked at the love story of Brigitte and Emanuel Macron. She is 25 years older than him and they met when she was his drama teacher. He was 15 and she was 40, married with three children. Brigitte originally thought it was a schoolboy crush and when he went off to college in Paris, she thought that was the end of it and he would find someone his own age. However, this did not happen, and they met up again, she got divorced and they got married. Not sure what her children thought of it, but maybe living in the Elysee Palace has made it easier.

We went back in time to look at Catherine de Medici or Madame Serpent as she was known. She was married to Henri when they were both only 14. He preferred his older mistress for years but then realised he needed legitimate heirs and he and Catherine went on to have 10 children. She became quite ruthless when she was older but really who could blame her.



Recently there has been a film about the "Black Mozart" Chevalier. The son of a slave who took Paris by storm with his violin playing, his his fencing skills

We looked at the beret – a iconic piece of French headwear but they don't wear it anymore. Phillipe Duc d'Orleans was another character from history that we may not have heard of. He was Louis XIV younger brother. Heir and Spare was a problem in those days too. We finished the term with a look at the life of that icon Jean d'Arc and of course the Easter theme that the bells bring the eggs not the Easter Bunny.



The French Experience covers everything from pop stars, historical people and robberies at the Louvre. We never know what we are going to discover next.

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



FRENCH READING GROUP, Mondays

« Les opinions ont plus causé de maux sur ce petit globe que la peste et les tremblements de terre. » (Voltaire)

(Opinions have caused more ills than the plague or earthquakes on this little globe of ours.)

Oh, Voltaire, you were so right about fake news and ignorant opinions! Still, life has to go on, and the French Reading Group continues to enjoy reading French! We read articles from “Le Monde”, as well as literature: prose and poetry. Recently, the novel “Le Liseur du 6hr 27” by Jean Paul Didierlaurent has proved to be a fascinating, and at times surprising read, although, basically, it is a love story with a happy ending, which makes a change! As Liz Askew, one of our regulars puts it:

“...a man travels on the same train every day, and reads excerpts to passengers from parts of books that haven’t yet been pulped by “the Zestor”. You wouldn’t find chapters on toilet humour in novels by Zola or Balzac. Jean Paul Didierlaurent has no qualms about giving us the sounds made by people using public toilets, as described by the woman who cleans them.”

Le Monde helps keep us up to date with the French political scene. It is almost impossible to acquire a hard copy now since Brexit, but, thanks to Richard, the online version does the job. French short stories figure prominently, too, providing interesting, stimulating and satisfying reads in various moods, sometimes depressing, sometimes edifying but always gratifying! And they don’t take long to read!

So, over the years, we have experienced a large range of French literature and language, which has delighted and perplexed us, or annoyed and vexed us. We are a small group, and would welcome new members – come along, and bring your fresh ideas!

Liz again: “If you want to be surprised, and have an open mind, come to French Reading.”
“Après la pluie, le beau temps.”

For more information contact: Jane Helliwell 07778 484974



German Studies

This is not a German language group: its objective is to learn about and understand Germany - its history, its current and former character and its culture. The method is collaborative: members research an area which interests them and explains that to the group. Sometimes this is thematic, sometimes quite random, springing from some current event. At present the group is looking at the concept and history of

Prussia, a political entity closely associated with our concept of Germany. Each member is researching a topic which interests them and introduces these ideas to the group. Every meeting provides something of interest and lots of surprises.

For more information contact: Hilary Nicklin 02392 297 867

Beginners Spanish

Our first meeting of the Spring Term was on January 5th. In England Christmas was over, in Spain it was still very much Christmas. On the evening of January 5th, in towns and cities throughout Spain processions are held, with floats depicting Nativity Stories, with large crowds celebrating



Epiphany-The Three Kings homage to Jesus. These are the main Christmas celebrations in Spain.

We discussed this at our meeting, in English and Spanish, noting how different Christmas is in the two countries. However we recounted our individual celebrations in Spanish,

which was appropriate.

Our Group is progressing well. We place emphasis on speaking correct Spanish as we feel it is important to do so. We have some new members and are enjoying our meetings

For more information contact: Howard Parsons 07784 760947

Spanish

This year our classes resumed on the 6th January, Epiphany, and this is a major celebration in Spain. The three wise men not only bring presents for the baby Jesus, but it is also a time for Spanish children to get their presents. A traditional cake called el roscón is also eaten on this day. It is in the shape of a crown with figures hidden inside. This symbolises the family hiding from Herod when he sent out the order to kill all the baby boys.



We use a course book Pasos 2 but add videos and news articles to bring variety. The Spanish Christmas lottery provided more material. The tickets are very expensive, so people buy a tenth of a ticket and then find they are sharing the prize with friends and family, or half the village. The first prize El Gordo (the fat one) is worth millions of euros and is a life changing amount. A man who doesn’t need to win the lottery is Amanacio Ortega one of the richest men in the world. Hardly anyone has heard of him but know his brand which is Zara. One topic which proved a rich vein was talking about objects we had lost and found (or not found) The class prepared very interesting talks on this – it wasn’t just glasses or keys as I was expecting. The objects ranged from sofas to laptops, dogs and everything in between.

Recently Zara has introduced an app that allows you to see what you would like in their clothes. We looked into the founder of Zara Amancio Ortega who is the founder of Zara and one of the richest men in the world – but most of us have never heard of him. We follow a young Mexican couple on video who take us through various scenarios and we look to broaden our vocabulary and fit in some grammar.



For more information contact: Susan Johnson 07711 300 407

Armchair travel



Armchair Travel Group meet once a month so, as I write this in late February, we have only had 2 meetings in 2026. BUT we have already travelled far and wide, and we will be travelling even further before you read this!

In January we “sailed” on the Queen Mary 2 with Elaine Lawson to New York, and then up the Eastern seaboard of America to Quebec. Returning by way of New York again, we arrived safely back in Southampton. Accompanied by photos, it was a fascinating introduction to a luxury



way to travel across the Atlantic. We also shared travel memories and souvenirs of volunteering at a summer camp for young people in California!

In February we “travelled” even further when Andrew Wiltshire took us along the Inca Trail from Cuzco to



Machu Picchu in Peru. As with his previous talks, we wondered at his stories of adventure and admired his photography. The students he accompanied on these school trips were very lucky young men and we, at Portsmouth u3a, are lucky to share Andrew’s experiences!



In March our travel plans were to stay slightly closer to home, with just a brief return visit to New York City to walk the Highline, a disused rail track, now a linear park above the streets of Manhattan. We planned to explore railways lines in England which have found new travellers - on foot, on bicycles, on horses, or riding behind a powerful steam engine! Closest to home we were to learn about the history of the Hayling Billy Line, the disused railway line from Havant to Hayling Island.

I am looking forward to several other contributions from members of our group at the March meeting. As always, I am grateful to the volunteers who offer to talk at our meetings but, as I always emphasise, we welcome all “travellers”. You can offer to share travel stories through photos, souvenirs or just recalling memories. Or you can just sit, relax and listen! All are welcome to join us and, as I have always said, “ no passports are necessary.”

For more information contact: Jean Barrow 07746 233 496



History

In 1926 after three failed attempts Portsmouth was at last awarded City Status and this year (2026) it will celebrate its 100th Anniversary. In January the History Group looked at some of the things that have made Portsmouth a city. In 1194 it was Richard 1 (the Lionheart) who granted the first Royal Charter to John de Gisor which established Portsmouth as a town able to hold fairs and markets. In 1531 Thomas Carpenter became the first Mayor of Portsmouth and he built the first town hall. Stained glass windows in Portsmouth Cathedral commemorate these three men “Letters Patent” officially making Portsmouth a city were granted by King George V in April 1926, as part of the birthday honors. The first Lord Mayor in 1927 was Frank Privett. The traditional Mayor Making ceremony takes place annually at the Guildhall

The Portsmouth Town Hall (Guildhall) stands on land that was formerly the residence of the Commanding Officer of Artillery. Originally called the Town Hall, it was completed in 1890. Designed by Leeds architect William Hill, who was inspired by the almost identical Bolton Town Hall that he had designed in 1873. It was renamed The Guildhall in 1926. The Portsmouth



Lord Mayor’s regalia includes a gold chain and badge, two sets of ceremonial robes (black damask and scarlet fur-trimmed), three maces, a sword, a lace jabot/cuffs, and a plumed hat. The large pendant badge, hanging from the centre of the chain, has a blue enamel shield with the city’s arms and is supported by miniature mace and sword of state. Portsmouth’s Coat of Arms reflects its links to Richard 1 and the Navy. It is thought that the crescent and an eight-point

star (as appear on the city’s Coat of Arms) were to be found on the seals of King Richard. The city also has the privilege of bearing a maritime version of the Royal Coat of Arms, a sea lion and a sea unicorn. The unicorn wears a Naval Crown and the iron chain that in Tudor times stretched across the harbour from the Round Tower to Gosport. The mural crown worn by the sea lion refers to the land defences around Portsmouth. Later this year Sculptures of Lions (a reference to Richard LIONheart) will be displayed on a trail around the city all painted by local artists with scenes from the area.

In February Elaine’s talk was about Transportation and how prisoners were treated in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ships hulks were used as prison ships and prisoners, some young children, were transported to the colonies of Australia and the Americas for often what seems to us quite minor offences. The First Transportation Fleet with 11 ships left Portsmouth in 1787 carrying approximately 750–780 convicts and 550 crew/marines. They arrived at Botany Bay in 1788 before settling at Sydney Cove. The initial voyage took about 8 months. Conditions were often brutal, with cramped, unhygienic hulks leading to deaths from diseases like cholera and typhoid. Convicts were responsible for building much of the essential infrastructure



for the early colonies, and many remained as free settlers after serving their sentences. It was interesting to hear some of the prisoners’ individual stories. Transportation ended in 1868



In March the presentation was about the development of hospitals in Portsmouth. From the Domus Dei (Gods House) looking after the poor and sick and welcoming pilgrims and travellers in the 1500s up until today with the NHS. There was a scarcity of provision after Henry VIII closed the monasteries and the burden fell on local communities and parishioners who had to provide for the poor and sick locally often in an Alms house. It was not until the 1800s that hospitals began to appear. St Mary’s Workhouse opened in 1846 and by 1898 it had gradually evolved into a major infirmary with significant expansions - a maternity block was added in 1908 and more wards in 1911. It formally became St Mary’s Hospital in 1930

The Royal Hospital began as the Portsmouth and Portsea General Dispensary which was founded at St George’s Square in Portsmouth in 1821. It moved to Commercial Road and opened there as the Royal Portsmouth, Portsea and Gosport Hospital in 1849, and it became the Royal Portsmouth Hospital in 1866. The Portsmouth and South Hants Eye and Ear Infirmary was established in 1884. It occupied several sites in Clarence View and later Pembroke Road in Portsmouth. Eventually in 1944, the hospital took over the former Convent of the Cross building in Grove Road North. In the 1960s the hospital



closed and the building became part of St Johns College, which closed in July 2022. St James Hospital in Milton opened as the Portsmouth Borough Asylum in September 1879 it also housed a sanatorium for infectious diseases. When attitudes changed and there were fewer inpatients in the early 1980s, the hospital went into a period of decline and in 2019 the site was sold to a property developer. Queen Alexandra hospital was mostly a military hospital until after WW2. In 1950s it transferred to the NHS and in the late 1960s plans were unveiled to transform the hospital into a general hospital with a major accident and emergency department. In the 1970s work on building the new hospital began, and In 1979, patients were transferred from the Royal Hospital. In 1999, it was decided to rebuild the QA. The new Queen Alexandra Hospital opened in 2009.

It has been so lovely to see so many of you at the History meetings this term, I hope you've enjoyed them. I'm looking forward to the Summer Term and hopefully more sunshine.

For more information contact: Rosemary Sirett - 07540597804

POETRY and POETRY & DRAMA Groups, Wednesday & Thursday

As usual, let's start with a quote or two (may I suggest you fill in the gap at the beginning with the name of your least favourite politician, and then hope for the best!):

"-----, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more." (Macbeth 5 vs 5)



And with the state of planetary affairs at the moment, this seems apposite:

"Defer no time, delays have dangerous ends." (Henry VI pt 1)

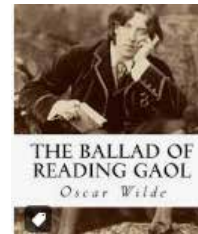


So, onward. As usual, we have covered a lot of ground in our Wednesday poetry sessions. Since the last newsletter, we have enjoyed 'Humorous Poems', 'Haikus' and 'Limericks'. We have, with great difficulty, found 'Things to Celebrate, and, as usual, enthusiastically embraced 'Free Choice' – always quirky and interesting sessions. Certain lines stay with me (greatly helped by the fact that I jot them down at the time!): Roger McGough's complete short poem "Cake" is a memorable, and topical, example:

I wanted one life
you wanted another
we couldn't have our cake
so we ate each other

Note the lack of punctuation and use of lower case. e e cummings gets everywhere!

Our group members' favourite poets have been as various as Robert Frost, e e cummings, Kipling, T S Eliot and Housman. Then, inevitably, they change and evolve as new discoveries are made.



We have also looked at two great and famous (not always the same thing!) long(ish) poems: Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol", and Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". The former still topical in its condemnation of prisons, the latter raising interesting questions about life, belief and morality. It also, surely, raises questions about the reliability of tales of revelation.

And now, a delightful contribution from Jane Evans, a new member of our poetry group:

I have always loved poems, especially reading them out loud, the language, the flow of words and unusual punctuation! I love the way they make me feel - happy, sad, nostalgic, yearning. You name it, I've got a whole stash of poems around my home ready to pick up when the need comes. But I detested the way I was taught at school, so, it was with some trepidation I phoned Floyd to talk about the group, and was relieved to hear him say, 'bring a favourite poem to read out loud if you like'. I am so pleased I took the first step. The group is great, people are supportive, and we have great fun. Reading poems that I wouldn't usually consider my thing is a joy. Who would have thought that the "Ballad of Reading Gaol" was so lyrical? Or "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" so thought-provoking? Looking forward to what comes next.



Our Thursday group, as I have mentioned before, concentrates mainly on plays, and otherwise enjoys "the poetry of the gaps". We often "do" a Shakespeare and have just challenged ourselves with "Hamlet". It was, of course, unedited. Kenneth Branagh "recently" showcased a complete version which lasted about four hours. Our collective opinion was that we now know why they edit it down! We have only started one other play since the last newsletter, "Arsenic and Old Lace"

by Joseph Kesselring. I'm sure many of you will remember Cary Grant's wonderful over the top film version! Great stuff! We are enjoying it immensely.

Until the next time, au revoir.

(Nb The Winchester Guildhall is hosting John Cooper Clarke on the 27th April 2026 and Brian Bilston on the 26 Sept 2026)

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

Writing Group

Each meeting of the Writing Group gives us eager anticipation. There is often a new member trying us out for the first time. Then we are curious to hear how everyone has responded to the challenge of our new suggestion from the month before. How about our January choice - "How I survived Christmas" or maybe "Burns Night"? We are not always topical or seasonal. February's idea was that of Pioneers. Some inspiring and moving writing followed. Equally fascinating were the contexts of these pieces. Such personal backgrounds being shared, bringing us closer to each other. Next month we have "Well, I don't know ..." or "Mothers". Would you like to join us?

For more information contact: Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764





Philosophy

To follow our recent trapeze through Alain de Botton's amusing take on Romanticism, which owed a lot to Hollywood, we briefly touched upon the on/off friendship of Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau.

This famous breakup encapsulates the way the rationality of the

Enlightenment, represented by Voltaire, led to the emotionality typified by the Romantic Revival.

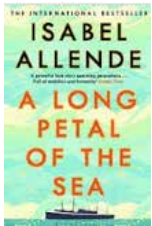
Unrestrained emotion clearly characteristic of Rousseau. Though he advanced the cause of his fellow man he was incapable of maintaining cordial relationship with anyone. He was a man of many parts that he was unable to shape into a sociable being.

Notwithstanding, Rousseau is now recognised as one of the most influential thinkers of all time. This term we will be able to pick the bones out of this parcel of contradictions.

For more information contact: Tony Stutters 07739 832 774

World of Books

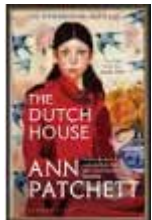
Book Review after Christmas and before the Easter Break 2025/2026



After half term we read 'A Long Petal of the Sea', which has very little to do with flowers and a lot more to do with personal interactions, love, lust and all bits in the middle. The story covers the horrors of not only the Spanish Civil War but of the political upset and subsequent genocide which occurred in the country our hero was exiled too, which resulted in him being arrested and incarcerated as a political prisoner.

The interactions between the rich of their adopted country and the poor of those exiled to there is outlined very cleverly resulting in an illegitimate child which is taken away and sold by a catholic priest under the guise of keeping the family respectable.

This book is a balanced mix of fact and fiction which makes for a very interesting read along with a human element which does help to lift the destruction of a dictator regime.



Our second book while exploring human interactions took on a different slant. This book was called The Dutch House and outlines the effect that parents' actions have on their children and the subsequent actions of 'The wicked Stepmother'. A brother and sister were ostracised by their adopted parent but both went on to be very successful, and very supportive of each other. While their meeting again with their natural mother who

had abandoned them when they were very young did not go down as well as could be expected she was finally accepted back into their lives. The Dutch House figures very much in their lives and they do manage to bring the house back into their family by way of a very successful young member of the family who is not completely privy to all the history of the house and what happened to the siblings. A very good read not too heavy but with a certain amount of substance.



Our next read was 'A Gentleman in Moscow' by Amor Towles when I first saw this, I was expecting a spy story but no, it is a story about a Russian Aristocrat Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov who was put under house arrest by the Bolsheviks in the Metropol Hotel in Moscow. Not a man to be crushed easily he sets about building a new life for himself although quite

limited due to his circumstances. He makes friends with staff at the hotel and eventually becomes the 'head waiter' in one of the restaurants that his hotel has to offer, often used by high-ranking members of the 'party' a position he puts to good use as table gossip can be very useful. This did come in very useful when he was charged with being the only guardian of a young girl who was the daughter of someone with whom he had become friends with while she was staying at the hotel and assisted greatly in him being able to smuggle her to the west. Although the ending of the book is quite predictable it is not the ending I was expecting. This is not a particularly easy book to read, very well written and descriptive but it needs time to appreciate the work that has gone into this book.



Our last one for this term was The Rotters' Club by Jonathan Coe. Coe really gets to grips with life in the 1970's and more importantly growing up at that time, school life with all it's up's and down's. Unrequited love, ruined friendships and normal teenage dramas. He also investigates the effect that interactions with others have on those around them like the pebble in the pond and all the ripples that feed out from it, these include relationships with parents and their relationships with others, and the aftermath of the IRA pub bombing. An unforgettably funny and painfully honest book with its hero of Benjamin Trotter struggling to

actually find himself in amongst all this mayhem, furtive sex and many bottles of Blue Nun. A feel-good book and really worth a read.

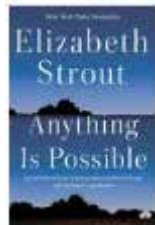
For more information contact: Christine Courtney-Wells 02392 297723

Pelham Book Group



We have a few suggestions to distract you from the very grey, damp days we have been suffering this winter. A few signs of spring on the way, perhaps?

Our November book, listed in the last magazine and was about to be read, "A Bend in the River", V. S. Naipaul, 1979, had a mixed reception. A worthy read, if a little disappointing as Naipaul can write with wit and humour. The theme of being an outsider, living where you don't belong, was interesting even depressing. His "A House for Mr Biswas" was much preferred.



The December book was a treat for me, the American author, Elizabeth Strout's "Anything is Possible", 2017. This is a sort of sequel to her "My Name is Lucy Barton" (read by us in 2021), as she writes a series of different but interconnected stories using the characters mentioned in Lucy Barton. They live in small town America shaped and haunted by their past longing to say how they feel and be understood. Some members of the group share my enthusiasm for this writer, her understated style and reflections on human vulnerability. Others found following the characters and their associations difficult, but we would all encourage you to sample this powerful writer.



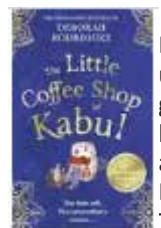
In January we had the classic "Vanity Fair", William Makepeace Thackeray, 1848, to read. The post-Christmas and New Year stupor most of us felt was not conducive to reading the whole novel of 624 pages and have parked it to return to and finish. We had an enthusiastic discussion of the chapters we had read, enjoying it as a classic Victorian novel with a strong satirical, authorial voice. The range of characters and plot demonstrated

the society's obsessions with money, class, status and appearance. Thackeray was praised for his ironic, realistic portrayal of society and this his first work was well received. The book's full title of "Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero" might guide your response.



February gave us a complete change, a short, semi-autobiographical novel, "All Quiet on the Western Front", Erich Maria Remarque, 1928. Most of us were new to this and horrified we hadn't read it earlier as it is one of the most compelling, terrifying descriptions of WW I trench warfare and its consequences told through the eyes of the German, Paul Baumer, a seventeen-and-a-half-year-old recruit. The novel's opening sentence is 'We are in camp five miles behind the line' and you share events from then on. We had an enthusiastic, lively discussion of the text noting points such as Paul never talked about 'enemies', they are the

French or English, made to fight as he is; they fight and die but make minimal progress over a small piece of muddy ground; life for these very young men has changed forever as they become isolated from the family and world they have known. We would encourage you to read this to add to your understanding of the brutal effects of war.



With some relief in March we have "The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul", Deborah Rodriguez, 2013. The blurb suggests it is heart-warming and uplifting although set against the dangers and conflict around a diverse group of women who bond at the coffee shop. We are all looking forward to being uplifted as the weather improves and we continue with our reading and viewing.

I hope these few suggestions from our book group have prompted interest. The group would not run as smoothly as it does without Maggie McBeth's stamina in collecting and delivering our books us and Havant library each month. A huge thank you from the members.

To quote George R. R. Martin: "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies.....The person who never reads lives only one"

The group is currently full. For any information contact: Judith Wise, tel. 07530854969 or judewise1@googlemail.com

Needles and Pins



Jean Bancroft
girl's jumper



Gill Pridmore - Bag



Jeannette Beveridge
Child's jacket



Fiona Brown
Baby's blanket



Liz Valette Poppies



Lynn Timms
Knitted set for a baby

We continue to meet for 1.5 hours every two weeks. You can bring any hand craft you're working on. The group has two sewing machines, an iron, an ironing board and some magazines with patterns. At the moment, most of us are knitting or crocheting, but we love to see new crafts. None of us is an expert yet members happily share patterns or give advice. We are a very friendly group, so do come and joins us!

For more information, please contact: Oly Quinn 07506 145293

Art for All - Tuesday mornings



Maggie Macbeth
Nuthatch



Brenda Colman
Waterlilies



Lin Schofield
Tommie the Tortoise



Heather Lewis
Crystal and parchment cards



Lynn Timms
3D Valentine Card

We are a small friendly group who use many types of media, but self-led and always ready to help. You can see from the variety of styles shown in these art works that we cover a wide range of styles. We can certainly accommodate new members so please do contact us if you would like to join us, we can guarantee a warm welcome.

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

Lin Schofield 07909 537215 or Lynn Timms 07851 069146



Science and technology

Once again we investigated many different subjects, and every member took turns to provide the starting point. We looked at "A Simple Blood Test To Aid Alzheimer's Diagnosis", and decided it was akin to snake oil in the wild west days. Lithium batteries provided lots of novel information especially about the other uses of Lithium starting with Roman doctors over 2000 years ago. Then there were little snippets on the American Fleet, some of them

in the Gulf or is it golf on how many dinners a day. Yes, only 93,000. And top choice across the eleven carriers, yes, only steak and lobster tail. I would like to see a menu for our carriers when away from home port but is that covered with a D notice? As a group leader should I censor whatever we publish. Should I stop any political discourse? We have had anti vaxers and on YouTube videos, we can have everything up to flat earthers. With President Trump in charge, it is very difficult not to mention aspects of his radical policies. But we will try to avoid them, so join us, and see how successful we are.



For more information contact : Brian Greener 02392 863381

Religion, Spirituality and Life

The hot news is that we have an exciting new agenda for our Group! I have always tended to steer the group towards approaches which minimise scope for religious controversy within the group, whilst recognising there is religious conflict in the world. Being interested in the history of ideas, in religion and spirituality in particular, I

have sought to encourage the group to explore the history of different religions and the sources of conflicts between different religions or spiritual traditions.

I'm also very interested in the more fundamental aspects of religion and spirituality such as The Existence of God and Hell; Suffering and the escape from it through Buddhist Philosophy; Religious Sectarianism and Free will; How do we achieve happiness? Humanism and Morality; Is paganism the really natural religion? Spring, and Life, Death and everything in between.

Ten of the above topics emerged as favoured by members of the group for discussion in the group. That will involve us in a little philosophy of religion to examine the existence of God, morality, free will, happiness, and escape from suffering. It could indeed lead us towards other topics.

We shall begin by exploring what the Mediaeval world inherited about the existence of God from the ancient world. Then we shall explore how it all changed with modernity. What's modernity? If there is anyone philosophically minded who would like to join us - do come along.

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

Cast your mind back to pre festive December for the group's final session of the Autumn Term, yes it was wet windy and colder which affected the lower than normal turnout



for the game, however those members in attendance were treated to Sundae Split, a card game with mouthwatering depictions of ice creams, toppings, various fruits plus penalty cards showing broccoli, celery and sweet corn. The game cards were certainly a precursor for the impending overindulgence which, for many, was to follow during the following few

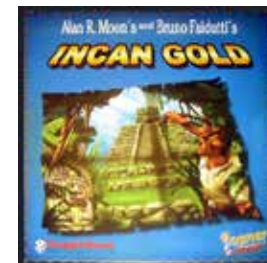
weeks. The game itself was played three times with the same player winning all three games.

The return from the Christmas break saw a new theme of Archaeological Theft?

in place., the first game in this series being a 'push your luck' game called Incan Gold. Our adventurer seeking alter egos went in search of Incan treasures located in a series of mine shafts which were the home hazards such as snakes (and you just know how snakes are an adventurer's worst nightmare), scorpions, poisonous gases, explosions, rock falls and yet more snakes. Only the very daring would be victorious in this game and who might that have been you may ponder, well it was

none other than the editor of this very newsletter, Susan Johnson, whose tactics won the game by a country mile, or more!! There is no truth in the rumour that Susan was later seen in the corridors of The Hub wearing a brown Fedora, however those regarding the cracking of the whip still persist.

Rummikub was played on two tables with one player in particular being completely dominant on their table's games.



Our second game under the new theme was heavily influenced by a film, the game being Indiana Jones, the Sands of Adventure, in which the hero and friends sought to save The Ark of the Covenant from falling into the hands of the evil enemy, the Nazis. This game was the group's first encounter with a co-operative game, one where the players act as a team in order to beat the game, unfortunately we suffered a resounding loss and the Nazis made off with The Ark which would give them world domination. Fortunately for us it was just a game, and the world will not be celebrating the 137th anniversary of the Fuhrer's birth in a few weeks' time.

The Rummikubers enjoyed several keenly contested games with each player winning a game.

News of the third and final game in this series will appear in a later issue of the newsletter.

Several enquiries have been made since the group was formed nearly four years ago regarding playing card games using standard decks, such as whist and Canasta, if you are a player of such games and wish to attend the group, please contact me as it may be possible to have a table playing these games. Please note that gambling for money is not permitted.

For more information contact Tony Valvona 02392 822641



Film Club Starts at 1:45

Wednesday 23rd April The Exterminating Angel

A surrealist Luis Buñuel film from 1962 After a night at the opera, Edmundo and Lucía Nóbile host eighteen wealthy acquaintances at a dinner party at their mansion. The servants inexplicably begin to leave as the guests are about to arrive; by the time the meal is over, only Julio, the majordomo, is left. Lucía cancels a planned surprise involving a bear and three sheep upon discovering that guest Sergio Russell does not like jokes, but there are a few strange occurrences, such as the guests somehow entering the mansion and going upstairs twice, Edmundo repeating his toast to the opera singer Silvia, and Cristián Ugalde and Leandro Gomez greeting each other three times (as strangers, cordially, and antagonistically).



Wednesday 13th May Bridge of Spies

Bridge of Spies is a 2015 historical drama film directed and co-produced by Steven Spielberg, written by Matt Charman and the Coen brothers, and starring Tom Hanks in the lead role, Mark Rylance, Amy Ryan, and Alan Alda. Set during the Cold War, the film tells the story of lawyer James B. Donovan, who is entrusted with negotiating the release of Francis Gary Powers—a convicted Central Intelligence Agency pilot whose U-2 spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960—in exchange for Rudolf Abel, a convicted Soviet KGB spy held by the United States, whom Donovan represented at trial. The name of the film refers to the Glienicke Bridge, which connects Potsdam with Berlin, where the prisoner exchange took place



Wednesday 10th June Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a 1998 British biographical historical drama film directed by Shekhar Kapur and written by Michael Hirst. It stars Cate Blanchett as Elizabeth I of England, with Geoffrey Rush, Christopher Eccleston, Joseph Fiennes, John Gielgud, and Richard Attenborough in supporting roles. The film is based on the early years of Elizabeth's reign, when she is elevated to the throne after the death of her half-sister Mary I, who had imprisoned her. As she establishes herself on the throne, she faces plots and threats to take her down.



Wednesday 8th July The Queen

The Queen is a 2006 docudrama film directed by Stephen Frears and written by Peter Morgan. The film depicts the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997. The royal family regards Diana's death as a private affair and thus not to be treated as an official royal death, in contrast with the views of Prime Minister Tony Blair and Diana's ex-husband, Prince Charles, who favour the general public's desire for an official expression of grief. Matters are further complicated by the media, royal protocol regarding Diana's official status, and wider issues about republicanism.

For more information contact: Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764

The Walking Groups The Ambling group

Nov. 2025 Amble on the Hamble

An excellent choice which we all enjoyed. The village was tiny but quiet at this time of year. We paused for coffee overlooking the river, still warm enough to sit outside. Then we walked back through the sunlit woods.

Dec. 2025 Queen Elizabeth Country Park

Starting our amble, we had help from the folk in the Information Centre. We found the right path in spite of unclear signposts, enjoyed our amble, had fun and felt better for the fresh air and good company.

Jan. 2026 Meon Valley Trail, Wickham

We found lovely, wide, flat, paved paths, excellent for ambling past the river and fields and ending in the quaint village and a visit to Chesapeake Mill with its vintage and antique shop and tearoom.

Feb.2026 Warnford Snowdrops.

The river near The Bucks Head, Meonstoke was racing furiously. We were quickly inside having a wonderful lunch in this ancient pub. Outside again, the February greyness engulfed us.

At Warnford it was like walking into a picture from the past where people had once lived in grace and style surrounded by trees and fields. Flint walls, a remote pool with swans. The land scape stretched outwards, dotted by hundreds of snowdrops.

We ended our long walk in the church where everyone was chatting. It was jolly to be served with tea and homemade cakes while being entertained by lively music played by the organist.

Jo Vernon and Hilary Poley for further information contact Hilary on 02394 008935

The Walking Group



Well, what a wet winter we have just experienced. I was starting to think we might need to build a new Ark! We have only managed two walks as of March 1st. But things do seem to be improving weather wise. Six of us brave souls set off on a walk at Prinsted in early January. There wasn't a cloud in the sky but it was very cold. It was very muddy underfoot but we pressed on cracking through icy puddles. It was a short walk along the coast past a boat yard and a circular around the fields. We were so grateful for The Huts, a collection of cabins with a static van selling hot drinks and snacks.

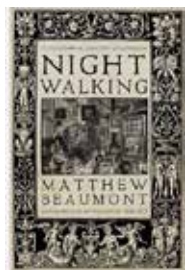
Our second walk was in full sunshine but was not without incident. Having arranged for four cars to meet at Emsworth Marina and coffee in the lovely Nest cafe, this was thwarted by an unexpectedly full car park and local roads crammed. It turned out to be due to a running event taking place that I hadn't heard about. Having to think on the spot with Jean Morgan



in the car behind us and another on its way I decided to rearrange to meet up at a Farm Shop on the Chichester Road. At Tuppeny Barn they served us coffee and tea. They are completely organic and sell fruit and veg from a kitchen garden outside. They are a community project and very friendly and helpful. We then drove down to Prinsted again with the aim of walking in an easterly direction. What did we find but the runners coming from the opposite direction. They were mostly stragglers but we decided to walk along the pebbles out of their way for a while. We then went up to the main path but couldn't finish the circular due to the fields mostly flooded so we walked back to the scout hut for a cup of tea and sat outside in the sun.

Hoping for more walks in warm weather and sunshine without incident.

For more information contact: Jackie Forsyth 02392 666 680 -



Speakers' Programme

At our AGM last November, we had the pleasure of having a talk by one of our members, Fi Rosen, who shared her interest in Charles Dickens' life and love of his work,

Inspired by a fascinating book entitled Walking. A Nocturnal History of London, by Matthew Beaumont, Fi had participated on a night-time tour in the capital. Dickens, who suffered from insomnia, was an inveterate night walker and traversed many miles during his perambulations.

Fi described the walk she undertook and told us how 'night-walking' was an actual crime in bygone days, when the curfew bell would demand that people should be inside and not abroad attempting nefarious acts!

In addition to Dickens, Fi also spoke about other night walkers including author Jean Rhys (1890-1979), English poet David Gascoyne (1916-2001) and an East End criminal, turned poet, named William (Spring) Onions (c.1834-1916).

A fascinating subject, peopled by many fascinating people, this talk was thoroughly enjoyed by the membership.



Tuesday 20th January. At our first Monthly Meeting of 2026, we were pleased to have Mike Williams return to give us another of his talks. This time the subject was Hertha Ayrton, teacher, mathematician, physicist, electrical engineer, inventor and suffragette, not to forget wife and mother, were among her many achievements! This inspirational woman was born in Queen Street, Portsea in 1854, went on to be educated at school in London, at Girton College, University of Cambridge where she studied mathematics and also at Finsbury Technical College where she took classes in electricity, Ayrton was also granted

an external BSc from the University of London in 1881. The first woman to be elected to the Institute of Electrical Engineers, Ayrton was also elected a member of the MIEE and was the first professionally recognized female electrical engineer. A true tour de force, her work led to her being granted 26 patents. Amongst her friends and associates were pioneering woman including, Marie Curie, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, Barbara Bodichon, co-founder of Girton



College and George Eliot. Mike brought along a replica of the fan Hertha designed to help disperse poisonous gas from the trenches. This was a fascinating and interesting talk which was very much enjoyed by the members.



Tuesday 24th February Scam Awareness. Kerenza Faram gave a very informative and interesting talk about Scam Awareness. Kerenza currently works in the domiciliary care sector and has found that her previous experience working as a Fraud Analyst in the telecommunications sector has proved invaluable in her care role. Discovering that amongst her clients were some who have

already been scammed, are in the process of being scammed or have been approached by scammers, prompted her to do something about it.

Thus, she became a Scam Champion with Friends Against Scams, an anti-fraud initiative created by The National Trading Standards fraud team and now initiates training for her colleagues and raises awareness through her talks within the community.

Her talk outlined many ways that fraudsters use, e.g. via the telephone and internet, through skimming machines and phishing, to mention a few. She also included information of how to spot if you have been scammed and, importantly, gave details of the help available to victims. Her free information booklet Scam Savvy, containing lots of information including contact details for victims, was distributed to the members.

Speaker Secretary Carol-Anne Turner

South East u3a Forum Summer School 2026

The dates for 2026 are:

Thursday 2nd April 2026.- Course list and details will be posted on the Forum website at **11.00am**

Friday 8th May 2026.- Bookings will go 'live' at **11.00am**

Courses The finalisation of courses for this year is moving forward at a steady pace, with 4 courses confirmed at this point; we have 3 returners and a completely new tutor and topic. A list of confirmed courses will be available in early March on the website, with the full complement by the end of March.

Costs - The prices for 2026 summer school are as follows:

En-Suite Accommodation £390.00	Standard Accommodation £360.00
Non-Residential with dinner £220.00	Non-Residential no dinner £175.00

The residential prices include accommodation, all meals and refreshments offered at break times and a 'Welcome' drink on the first evening, with a 'Farewell' drink on the last evening, both prior to dinner. Also, the evening entertainment is included; available on campus each evening at 8.00pm.

As mentioned above the next update for this webpage will be in **early March** and then the following one at the **end of March**. No further information is available at present.

Full information on all aspects of this Summer School can be found on the South East u3a Forum's website: [2026 - South East u3a Forum](https://www.south-east-u3a-forum.org.uk/)





All images are from Summer School 2025



Information updated: - 23rd Feb 2026

Social Programme

Mince pie social and raffle and Christmas lunch at the Holiday Inn December 2025



Upcoming Social Events



Hot cross buns on 31st March with Easter raffle 1:45 in the Hub cafe

Summer cream tea 21st July

Social secretary Elaine Jessica Meredith 07300 797 715

Members' Meetings Speakers in 2026

Tuesday, April 21st 2026: Hugh Cull from Portsmouth City College will give a talk entitled *Digital Privacy* focusing on using the Internet in a safe and private way.

Tuesday, May 19th 2026: Gareth Edwards of the Portsmouth History Centre will give a talk entitled *Childhood in Portsmouth during World War II*.

Tuesday, June 16th 2026: Dave Allen, Leader of the Southsea Skiffle Orchestra, will give a talk entitled *Summer in the City*. In the centenary year of Portsmouth becoming a city Dave will discuss life in Portsmouth in the summer of 1926.



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.