



## **Newsletter Summer 2026**

**Beautiful bouquet of summer flowers**

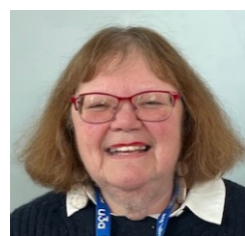
**Pauline Judge from Needles and Pins**

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

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## Officers and Committee 2026

Chair	Mandy Richards	07496 009401
Secretary	Fiona Rosen	02392 824 414
Treasurer	Lynn Timms	07851 069 146
Beacon Co-ordinator and Website Manager	Andrew Barrow	07849 678 357
Membership Secretary	Christine Courtney-Wells	<b>02392 297723</b>
Newsletter Editor	Susan Johnson	07711 300 407
Publicity & Information Officer	Andrew Wiltshire	07767 519 835
Speaker Secretary	Carol-Anne Turner	07767 474 792
Social Secretary	Elaine Meredith	07300 797 715
Group Co-ordinator	Rosemary Sirett	07540 597 804
Committee Member	Oly Quinn	07506 145 293

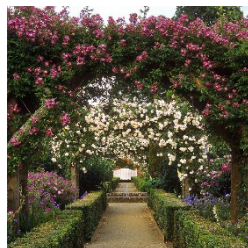


### Chairs report for the Summer term 2026

Apparently, we have to keep on remembering that it is still only Spring, hard to believe in temperatures of 30+ degrees! No wonder the weather is a constant topic of conversation in supermarket queues, at bus stops and of course in the Hub. This is the sixth time I have subjected you to my whimsical musings on life as the Chair and each time I find it difficult to know where to start and then the words flow, luckily! Now for more substance and reflection on the term that is so nearly over before we break for the summer.

I promised to report back on the visit of some of the Committee to Parliament. We were fortunate to have an excellent guide who gave us so much information. It was fascinating to see places that seem familiar because they appear on our TV all the time. Both chambers of Parliament are smaller than you imagine but of course are hugely significant. The monarch's throne is of course lavish, gilded and plush red velvet. I could see myself sitting there for Committee meetings, but don't worry no delusions of grandeur here. We all had a good, if a long, day. More group leaders and deputies were welcomed to the Mayor's Parlour, and I am glad to say they enjoyed the experience.

Portsmouth has officially celebrated the date of its centenary but here at the u3a we are still yet to wish the city happy birthday. The upcoming summer cream tea will allow us that opportunity hopefully with members memories of their time in Portsmouth and their knowledge of the city. Part of the summer programme will include a walk amongst the pride of lions, giving those who are able to take part a chance to see the results of artistic endeavours. The full programme for our summer break will be found in this newsletter with dates, times and locations. Hopefully you will be able to attend at least one of these events which are open to all members.



By the time you read this the much-anticipated visit to Mottisfont Abbey will have taken place. I am assured that the roses will be a magnificent sight and I am looking forward to exploring the Abbey itself. As long as there is no desire to conduct some community singing on the coach all will be well! By now the booking deadline for our summer lunch at the Holiday Inn has passed and a table plan has been produced so everyone will know

where, and with whom, they are sitting.

In the autumn term we will start running our two new classes "A taste of Italy" and "Archaeology" and then in January hopefully we can start Ukulele lessons. There is lots to look forward to throughout the summer and into September.

It only remains for me to wish you a happy and healthy summer. I want to give thanks to group leaders and my fellow Committee members for their hard work throughout the year. I look forward to seeing you at our summer events and sharing a few laughs.

Best wishes

**Mandy Richards Chair 07496 009401**

**Welcome to new members:** Francis Wright, Kenneth Tiplady, Stephen Cox

## ARCHITECTURE and DESIGN

A phone is a very bossy companion. It constantly sprays me with orders to book an appointment, ring the doctor, pay my credit card, remember someone's birthday - to generally get my life in in order. It's less of an aide memoire, more of an unwanted reminder of my lack of organisation. Today it's telling me, among a myriad of messages, that the temperature outside at 10 am is already 29 degrees and rising steadily. The next challenge is the blank sheet of paper that confronts me - empty, that is except for the drops of perspiration falling on it from my brow. However, for you, dear readers, I will attempt to extract some memories of the last few Architecture and Design meetings from the heated mush that passes for a brain and commit them to the aforesaid sweat-soaked page.

In March, while impatiently awaiting the reluctant start of spring, we focused a session on a trio of designers and architects who met in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and whose lives and careers became permanently intertwined through their philosophies and family ties - the two brothers Ernest and Sidney Barnsley and their friend Ernest Gimson. (There was a plethora of Ernests in those times so I shall call the friend by his surname, Gimson, for the sake of clarity - I hope). As young men training in the skills of architecture, they were all inspired by William Morris's Arts and Crafts criteria and beliefs. They planned together



to set up a business in London, combining their architecture training with a furniture workshop, producing traditionally made furniture. When this venture failed, Morris advised them to move to the country to find craftsmen with the right skills. The decision was made to move to Gloucestershire, near Cirencester and to set up a community furniture workshop, employing local craftsmen. Eventually this became known as the Cotswold School of Arts and Crafts. Gradually the

various personalities and particular specialities of the three men took them in different directions within the spectrum of the Arts and Crafts. Ernest Barnsley continued as an architect, devoting much of his next twenty years to designing Rodmarton Manor for wealthy stockbroker, Claud Biddulph, probably the last great country house in traditional style, Gimson produced the Bedale's Memorial Library, at Steep, now Grade 1 listed and Sidney continued to produce traditionally designed and crafted furniture. His son Edward carried the banner forward, keeping the furniture workshops operating and the legacy is that the Edward Barnsley Workshop is still thriving today, making bespoke furniture and continuing with a secured apprenticeship scheme in place. You can visit it out beyond Steep, at Froxfield to this day, and commission your own heritage, handmade piece to your



exact requirements but be sure your budget is up to it!

Our next subject for study was at a member's request and although only taking us forward by a couple of decades into the 1920's, was light years away from the traditional designs of the Arts and Crafts Movement. We discovered ourselves in the Bauhaus where the first radical steps towards Modernism emerged in Germany by the establishment of an educational school which

would train young people in the practicalities and techniques needed to connect design and architecture with industrial manufacture. After the destruction of the war, there was a desperate need for housing and the everyday items necessary for normal life and this would set a standard for the way ahead. This was the concept of Walter Gropius, a German architect who had survived the horrors of the war as a soldier, twice awarded the Iron Cross, and who knew at first-hand what was needed to rebuild Germany and in Europe. The new but conservative Weimar Republic, formed after the abdication of the monarch, provided the Bauhaus with its first base but, as the Bauhaus became a focus for left wing socialist ideas, the Government began to withdraw its support and the Bauhaus moved to a more permanent base in Dessau, when offered a huge plot of land and favourable terms by the more liberal city authorities. The Bauhaus buildings on the site and the individual houses built to house the professors (or "masters" as they were called) were all constructed in the new Modernist style, of steel, glass and concrete. They were the first visible examples seen by most people, at the time, of something truly new. Gropius gathered around him some of the greatest names in their respective fields as the teaching staff - such as artists Kandinsky and Klee, the Hungarian Moholy-Nagy, avant-garde photographer and sculptor, Josef Albers designer and brilliant teacher, and Marcel Breuer, furniture designer supremo.

However, Germany in the 1930's was a problematical place to be controversial and different, to be known for Communist sympathies and radical Ideas. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, the decision was made to close the school, now temporarily housed in Berlin, under the directorship of Mies van der Rohe, and as a result the masters and the students left for free Europe and America, to spread the philosophy of modern design and Architecture. Ironically, by banning them in Germany, they were Hitler's gift to the world.



Another regular Architecture member brought us back in time to look at the career of probably England's finest architect since Wren, certainly one of the best known, Sir Edwin Lutyens. Having studied his output before, well before Covid times, I wanted to find another approach to presenting him. Reading through his biography, I was struck with an angle that was probably instrumental in forming his personality, his approach to life and the business of being an architect. From his early childhood and through his life, the strong shaping influences were from the women in his life. The 8<sup>th</sup> son in a family of 12 other siblings, he was a delicate child, suffering long bouts of rheumatic fever and his formal education consisted of a mere 2 years of home tutoring. While his 7 brothers were enduring the rigours of boarding school education, Edwin was left at home in the company of his adoring mother, 5 sisters and a houseful of women servants. He was loved and indulged and as a result, he said he always felt more comfortable with women than in the hearty company of men educated in the public school system. This freedom meant that he wandered

the Surrey countryside around Thurlston, constantly drawing the details of the country-style buildings he saw, developing a vocabulary of rustic methods. He spent 2 years at art school and a year training with a prominent architectural practice in London, opening his own practice aged only 20. Now, he was ready for the next female influence in his life. She was a formidable spinster in her late 40s, an artist, a writer and a plantswoman. She was Gertrude Jekyll - he just called her "Bumps". She became his mentor, his social connection and his close friend for the rest of his life. He designed his first house, in the traditional, vernacular style they both loved, for her at Munstead Wood and this became, in effect, his calling card. When put together with her artistic and social contacts, this meant that the commissions came rolling in. By the time he was 35 he had designed over 200 houses, more than a hundred of them with gardens planted by Jekyll.



His designing trajectory encompassed many directions - the Cenotaph and the many war memorials in France, Belgium and England, his public buildings, such as banks, apartment blocks, head offices for businesses and the huge 20 year commission to build a complete new imperial capital in India, New Delhi. So, who was the third female influence in his life, do I hear you ask? He married the eccentric Lady Emily Lytton, daughter of the previous Viceroy of India and later the English Ambassador to France and she was less of an influence and more of a pressure.

He felt a constant need to be worthy of her and to support her in the style to which her family believed she should expect. He worked tirelessly to provide enough to pay for her entourage of servants and that expected lifestyle. She was a feminist and a liberated woman who nevertheless could only organise her life sufficiently with this retinue of staff. However, there are over 5000 letters that he wrote to her whenever he was away, full of jokes and little cartoons and drawings. These are touching evidence of his lifelong devotion to this dotty woman.

Reflecting on the last few meetings, if the suggestions for subject matter keep coming from the members of the class, I'll have no excuse to plead a lack of inspiration. It's more the excess of perspiration that bothers me at the moment.

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

## New Classes starting in September



### A Taste of Italy

I Plan To Talk About Each Region Of Italy Covering Places Of Interest, Culture And Cuisine

Members will be invited to discuss anything about their Italian experiences and any suggestions for future dates.

-Recipes -Favourite Dishes -Language -although not a language course

-Music - Popular Songs and Singers - Famous Italian Personalities

- Beauty Spots - Lakes, Holiday Destinations -Pompeii -Sicily - Sardinia - Islands

I look forward to greeting you Italian Style **Elaine Meredith 07300 797 715**

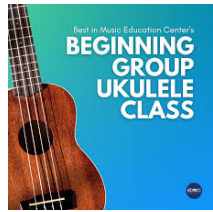
**The Archaeology Group** is a new venture for u3a Portsmouth, and anyone is welcome to join! Running in close collaboration with the History group, we will be looking below ground at all aspects of the findings made in the UK as well as abroad and not forgetting the many LOCAL digs and discoveries made over the years. Each meeting we shall discuss the stories behind each dig, as well as the applied science and technology utilised to enhance

our understanding of the distant (and not so distant) past. As a new venture, we anticipate having guest speakers when available, but would also welcome contributions from u3a members as well. There may also be a number of "Field trips" on the agenda soon as well!

**For more information contact: Andrew Wiltshire 07767 519835 or Andrew Barrow 07849 678357**

**The "Time Team" dig at the Governor's Ground next to the Garrison Church, Old Portsmouth.**

## New class starting in January



### Ukulele lessons for beginners

The ukulele is a small, portable and inexpensive musical instrument which is fairly easy to play. There's no need to read music or learn complicated theory - once you learn how to play 3 or 4 chords and strum to the beat you can accompany yourself playing hundreds of popular songs. It's a great little instrument for singalongs and there's various ukulele jams to play with in and around Portsmouth.

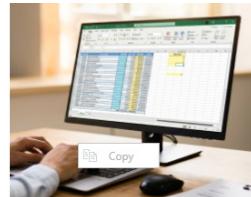
## Beacon? What's that?

I'm sure that some of you, indeed possibly many of you, will have heard the word 'Beacon' muttered darkly at our meetings and you may well be puzzled as to what exactly Beacon is. Allow me to enlighten you. Beacon, developed by a team of volunteers at the u3a's national level, is a Web-based database used for managing the membership and the finances of any u3a that chooses to use it. Many u3as use it and some do not. Small u3as may well be able to manage their membership and finances perfectly adequately without recourse to Beacon, but, even though we are a small u3a, we make use of it to maintain our memberships details. We do not, may the gods be thanked, use Beacon for managing our financial affairs as our recent Treasurers have all managed our finances very well with nothing more complicated than the odd Excel™ spreadsheet. (I may be guilty of oversimplifying things here, for which I can only plead for their forgiveness).

So, given that we don't use all the features of Beacon, what do we do with it? The list of things is actually quite short, but they are nevertheless all very useful. Only Group Leaders, Deputy Leaders and Committee members can access Beacon which they do using a personal username and password. No-one who lacks these essentials can gain access to Beacon. Beacon is, and I have been assured of this by folk much more expert than I, a very secure system.

Once inside the Beacon database a user (with the appropriate privileges) can: create a new interest group; delete an interest group that has ceased; add members to or delete members from any group for which they are the designated Leader or Deputy Leader; print the address labels used for this newsletter; prepare a spreadsheet for submission to the printers of u3a Matters so that the national magazine can be mailed out to those members who have said that they would like to receive it, and finally Beacon can generate a register that can be used to record attendance at the meetings of any group. A useful feature if you are one of our u3a's 'heavyweight' groups.

Which brings me to the question of training. Group Leaders and



Deputy Leaders who would like to know how to use Beacon, or who would like to refresh their knowledge of the system. should contact me (barrowa@hotmail.com) and I will arrange a training session. The Hub has an excellent training room which can take up to 10 trainees, so training can be carried out in bulk, if you'll excuse that rather ungainly expression. Training will be unhurried, and there's always coffee and cakes available in the café, plus I have written a small training manual which is used for the training session but can be taken away to serve as an aide-memoire for future use of Beacon. **Andy Barrow**



## Art Appreciation

At the end of the Spring term Lin Schofield intrigued us with her presentation on what appear to be spacemen in carvings from BC and left us wondering what was happening. What do you make of this Mayan Palenque Astronaut? What are all those tubes for?

This is a 16<sup>th</sup> century tapestry. Are those spaceships? And in a 17<sup>th</sup> century painting what sort of battle is this?



The summer term started with a trip to ancient Egypt. There is an exhibition on Ramses II in London, and this sparked an interest in the art works that were never signed and mostly decorated the inside of tombs and only meant to be seen by the dead. It was a style that didn't change for thousands of years. The stylised way of standing immediately tells us this is Egyptian. The paintings are full of symbols and with a wide range of gods there was plenty to depict. The taller you were in the painting the more important you were.

Ramses II was one of the most powerful pharaohs and even if he lost a battle, he would order a frieze showing the Egyptians had won! Does this remind us of any modern day leaders?



Lin Schofield led another session this term telling us all about David Shepherd.

Most famous for his paintings of elephants but in fact he painted planes, landscapes, farm and domestic animals in this country and then lions, tigers in Africa as well as trains. In fact, it seemed he could turn his hand to anything. He was maybe a bit ahead of his time as it is this century that worries more about nature and conservation. He would have been very in tune with David Attenborough. There is a slight irony in that he was flown out to Africa to paint the wildlife which was probably to promote safaris. He also painted the Queen Mother in a mink stole. Not sure that fitted in with his conservation conscience. He reached his peak in the 60s and 70s but seems to have gone out of fashion recently, however

he will always be remembered for his paintings of elephants even though there was much more to him than that. This elephant painting was sold by Boots in the 1960s and it sold more prints than any other painting at the time.



Elaine Lawson gave a presentation showing that there is a lot more to Edward Lear than just Limericks. He travelled widely and painted landscapes and birdlife with great success. I have been practising the art of delegating and my efforts have finally paid off with several members



offering to lead sessions which adds to the eclectic nature of the group. My thanks to Mandy Richards, Lin Schofield and Elaine Lawson.

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

## Music Discovery Group

The Music Discovery group prospers and has continued its exploration of music of all genres with a small, and I like to think devoted, attendance, which is currently averaging around 10 people per meeting. A small, but by now very friendly, group.

I have also started to advertise local concerts etc. to the group and I have been gratified to occasionally take one of the group's members to a concert, or, as happened in mid-May, to see a group member in the audience of a concert that I had brought to the group's attention.

A while ago some concern was voiced that the group was becoming too Leader-led, so after some lively discussion among the group, aided by a few cups of coffee, a new format has been adopted for the group's meetings, with the first half of each session devoted to music chosen by me and Gilly Zeffertt (my Deputy Leader) this music generally presented in the form of videos downloaded from YouTube™. It's always nice to have something to watch as we listen to the music and a video can be as revealing as attending a live concert with regard to seeing how a particular composer uses an orchestra to achieve certain musical effects. Then after a break for coffee the remainder of the meeting is devoted to music, of any kind, brought by other members of the group. And should they fall down in this respect I have a stand-by, an SSD (Solid State Hard disk) with, now, in excess of 8,000 music tracks, mostly classical, but with some folk and popular music thrown in. There's something for everyone on my SSD!

One genre we haven't explored much is opera and I hope to persuade the group to listen to an entire opera in one of our meetings. The shortest opera at the present time is by the Welsh composer Peter Reynolds. Its title is The Sands of Time and it concerns a couple (Stan and Flo') arguing over how long it takes to boil an egg. The opera lasts just 3 minutes and 34 seconds, which to my mind is a very soft-boiled egg indeed! This however is not the opera I have in mind, rather I would like to play the whole of Bela Bartok's early 20th-century opera Duke Bluebeard's Castle, which lasts just under an hour and is a very powerful, dark, and – dare I say it – erotic work. At one point Bartok makes C major more exciting than almost anything I have ever heard. Watch this space.



**For more information contact: Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357**

## Curry & Craft Ale Club

We have now held two curry lunches at the Tap & Tandoor restaurant in Gunwharf Quays and both lunches have been judged 'very successful'. The group's next meeting will be an 'end of term' meal, but celebrating with a supper rather than a lunch, the better to enjoy a summer evening together. I am already doing the necessary research to find a venue for this. Quite frankly it's a wretched job – all that eating and drinking – but someone has to do it! The Tap & Tandoor has been most welcoming on both occasions and has been prepared to allow each diner to pay their part of the bill separately which is very helpful and gets rid of much of the stress when eating out as a large group. We have helped by meeting the restaurant halfway in regard to payment by my making a little chit for each meal and handing these out to the eager diners before their ordering starts. Using these chits each diner can record what they order and then just pay for their share when they leave the restaurant. This is a very flexible system, enabling diners to leave the group at any time of their choosing, but it may not be acceptable to every restaurant, so this is where I have to do my research. And although the word 'curry' is in the group's name we are looking at trying other cuisines given that there is such a wide choice of them in our fair city.



**For more information contact: Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357**

## Brush up your French Conversation



We have been brushing up our French on only 2 Mondays unfortunately because of the Bank Holiday breaks.

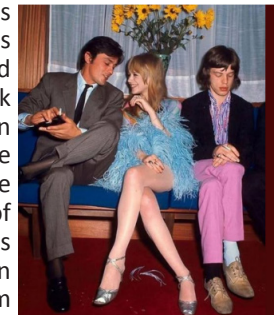
Phil Davies has shown some excellent You Tube clips giving interesting street conversations by a lovely clear French speaker chatting to passers-by. Cheryll has made useful word cards which help us with sentence construction, and we moved to Room 5 where the light is dimmer and conducive to watching TV.

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

## The French Experience Group



Our class continues to be a collaborative group with different people presenting items in turn This term we started with Johnny Hallyday, who was known as the French Elvis. He sold over 110 million records worldwide and headlined numerous sold-out concerts. His music took us all back down memory lane. We have also had a look at famous Brits and Americans who speak very good French and try to get some tips on how to become that fluent. Bradley Cooper is one and Jodie Foster speaks such good French and has starred in French films that the French think she is French. Her secret is that she went to an international school from the age of 8 where she was taught all her subjects through French. On the flip side of the coin, we have Alain Delon one of the handsomest/sexiest men in the world who was turned down by Hollywood as he couldn't learn English without a French accent. Part of the charm



I would have said! This photo of him with Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithful seems to show she was far more interested in Alain than an abnormally subdued Mick. Perhaps it was his odd socks that put her off! Jim and Maggie gave us a great presentation on Chagall including his wonderful memorial window in a church in a tiny village in Kent. He went on to do all the windows in this church.

The French experience of course has to include food, and we had the opportunity to share our favourite meals in France and look at the amazing range of fruit they grow. There was a quest to grow early strawberries to rival the Spanish ones and now of course with the focus on fresh local food and distance travelled these strawberries are very successful. The topics ranged from the famous scientist Marie Curie to the French Banksy called JR. He recently transformed the Pont Neuf in Paris to a mountain range. We also had a look at Lalique and his amazingly beautiful glass ware with everything from altars to perfume bottles.



As you can see, we have a good variety of topics and a tiny bit of grammar creeps in occasionally, but the focus is much more on culture and communication.

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

## FRENCH READING GROUP, Mondays

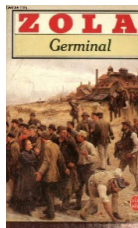
As usual, a couple of topical French quotes:

On résiste à l'invasion des armées; on ne résiste pas à l'invasion des idées." Victor Hugo  
(We resist the invasion of armies, but not those of ideas).

Bit depressing at the moment, Victor! Let's hope you're wrong! Moliere, I think, is spot on:  
L'hypocrisie est un vice à la mode, et tous les vices à la mode passent pour vertus.  
(Hypocrisy is a fashionable vice, and all fashionable vices pass for virtues.)



The French Reading Group continues to enjoy reading books in many different genres. Our most recent has been "Du Rêve pour les Oufs" by Faïza Guère (Dreams for Crazy People, or Dreams for Fools). It captures the lives of immigrant youth in the Parisian suburbs, and their attempts to balance ambitious dreams with harsh realities. The narrator is a spirited young Algerian woman navigating life, love and economic struggles. It is a book for our time, tackling coming-of-age, family loyalty and the immigrant experience, whilst dealing with the cultural clash between life in France and returning to Algeria. We have all really enjoyed this book, written with warmth and humour. And, it has expanded our vocabulary with some interesting slang expressions: for example, "une clope" is a frog, "un plouc" a redneck and "les keufs" are cops – itself, slang, of course!



In complete contrast, we have been reading the odd chapter of Emile Zola's "Germinal" – not many laughs there! As Liz Askew says: "'Germinal' offers some social history, looking at the lives of miners and their hard labour. Zola even visited the mines to better understand their working conditions, as well as the poverty they endure. Most of the novel is accessible, but we do need a dictionary for a lot of the mining terminology." It has certainly been a delight to read the prose of such a wonderful wordsmith.

We also read articles from "Le Monde", provided by Richard Brook. As I have said before, it is very difficult finding foreign newspapers since Brexit. It is instructive to access a different perspective, though the articles often impart bad news about the state



of the world, be it the economy, the environment, politics or just a general malaise, (so, no difference there then!).

The prose in "Le Monde" can be quite dense, and the sentences tend to be overlong. For instance, the next one we will read is about, "The risk of a political pincer movement between the 'National Rally' and 'La France In Soumise' (in rebellion). They each believe their best chance of victory in 2027 would be a runoff election between them. By developing this "us and them" idea, the two parties reduce the election to a dangerous choice." It is a good exercise for us to decipher the dense French, and when we do, we find a striking resonance!

We catch up with each other during the break. We are a friendly group, and we would welcome new members. So as Liz says, "Come along and expand your knowledge of French literature and newspaper articles from "Le Monde" – and have fun!

**For more information contact: Jane Helliwell 07778 484 974**

## German Studies



As I think most of you know, this is a group effectively run by the members: I keep the register! Members bring contributions from a variety of interests and sources: I try to suggest themes which some members choose to use as a basis for their researches. This term the theme was PRUSSIA. A familiar enough word, but where exactly was Prussia, how did it evolve, what are the most commonly held ideas of what a "Prussian" is? Are there any particularly famous Prussians – and why and when did it all end?

It turns out that "Prussia" is a pretty moveable feast – an amorphous shape-changing area in the north of present-day Germany, depending on the vicissitudes of the political views at the time, the powerplay of national and international rulers, battles lost and won. (Plus ça change!) The abolition of Prussia finally occurred in February 1947 by decree of the Allied Control Council.



But sometimes the range and variety of contributions is extraordinary, and that happened at the first meeting after half-term. I started by mentioning something I had caught quite by chance on TV – The Antiques Road Show – a piece of fairly modern-looking pottery by a 20<sup>th</sup> century potter Hans Coper. I had not heard of him, but of course one member of the group (whose hobbies include pottery and art) had, and could tell us a lot about him. Born in 1920, he arrived in Britain in 1939. Interned as an "undesirable alien" he was transferred to Canada for 2 years, came back here and served as a Conscientious Objector in the Non-Combatant Corps. But eventually became a famous and influential potter.

That sparked the contribution from a member about a close family member who was born in Berlin; at 15 he was befriended by what to him was "an old man", who gave him work in his workshop (at great personal risk.) In 1939 he was helped to escape but entirely on his own (not with a group like the Kindertransport) and arrived knowing no-one. (Several members of his family died in Auschwitz.) He eventually joined the British army, married, had a family. Many decades later, the whole family went back to Berlin and found a Coffee Shop he remembered, and there bumped into an old schoolfriend from 1939, who told him the "old man" was still alive. There was a very emotional reunion.

For a moment or two none of us could speak. Then on the next: the member had found a list of common German surnames, and guess what – many of them, like ours are associated with trades, occupations. The next person had something on Humboldt: a little frisson

ran through those of us who have been in the group for years. We knew about Humboldt and the famous university named after him in Berlin! But wait – no, not him: he had a BROTHER! Alexander von Humboldt was a polymath, geographer, naturalist, and explorer! A sort of 16<sup>th</sup> century David Attenborough, who developed the first Botanical Garden in the world. A nutrient-rich current flowing north along the western coast of South America is named after him.



The next item looked at why the Fuchsia is so called. It turns out that 16<sup>th</sup> century Leonard Fuchs is considered one of the fathers of modern Botany. The plant, found in 17<sup>th</sup> century by Charles Plumier, was named after Dr. Fuchs!

Then on to a member who had been looking at a booklet about Portsmouth, which mentioned Browndown camp in Gosport. Being interested because he had known it well as a youngster, he investigated and discovered that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, about 9,000 German mercenaries were recruited for the British army there! One man charged with recruiting these German became extremely rich (he was paid £40 per person; he banked £20, spent the rest on recruiting agents etc.) Unfortunately, he spoke no German because (- and with not so much as a wink or a smile, ) the member said, “Because there wasn’t a u3a German Studies Group at the time!” It took us a moment or two to catch up...

Then on to the Black Death, and finally a member had found a TAPE (remember those?) of Hans Eisler Music (we had heard about his film music the previous week,) and Jim, bless him, remembered a tape player in the cupboard.

All in one session. Just “a day at the office”, you might say.

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

## Beginners Spanish



The Beginners Spanish group is small and friendly. Our leader, Howard, has decades of experience of living in Spain and so, whilst in the first half of the class we follow the subjects in our textbook (Collins Spanish Conversation), in the second half we each present a short composition in Spanish about some aspect of Spanish life. This is interesting because it also allows us to improve our vocabulary, our pronunciation and our use of verbs. There are no rules about the length of our write up, so it’s all very relaxed! At our recent meeting

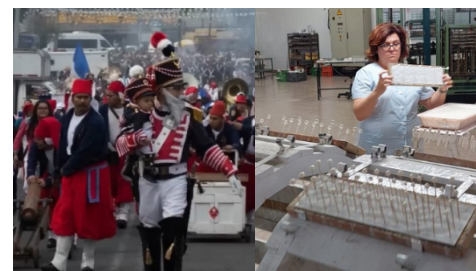
we discussed the weather in Spanish, comparing England with Spain ,and how it effects how we live in both countries. At our recent meeting we discussed the weather in Spanish, comparing England with Spain ,and how it effects how we live in both countries.

We discussed the difference between the lifestyles, and we are developing the confidence to talk and converse in Spanish. We like visiting Spain talking in Spanish about our experiences. We prepare agreed topics for our meetings and enjoy talking about them in Spanish in our own individual ways.

You can join us with little or no knowledge of Spanish, so come along and join us sometime!

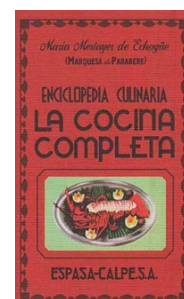
**For more information contact Howard Parsons 07784 760 947**

## Spanish



The class continues to grow and is now 50% men. We continue with our course book but supplement it with videos and articles from the press. We did have a memorable “Show and Tell” session with a great range of objects that people had brought back from Spanish speaking countries. We had decorated gourds from Peru, scarf from the

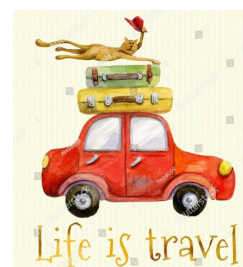
Pamplona bull fights, a fan - no straw donkeys thankfully and a Mallorcan pearl earring. This led to us discovering that Mallorcan pearls are in fact glass beads dipped in a solution of fish scales, polished up, put in quality settings and people think they are buying real pearls. Apparently 4 million are sold every year. The method was discovered by a German scientist, and the business is owned by a French company. The 5<sup>th</sup> May is a significant date in Mexico, and a Mexican army beat a much larger French army. This is now celebrated every year with re enactments and lots of eating and drinking. We had a class on this date so had to fit in with history.



Another topic we covered was the Spanish equivalent of Mrs Beeton, although about a ten years later. María Mestayer de Echagüe was born into a rich family and had travelled around Europe dining in the best restaurants however she realised that all the Spanish cookbooks were aimed at professional cooks and there was nothing for the housewife. She set about remedying this and brought out a series of books that are still used today. She had 11 children and as well as compiling recipe books opened a famous restaurant that even ran during the Civil War. She entertained people like Hemingway, Marcel Proust, and Buffalo Bill.

The classes do cover some grammar and role play to act out possible scenes in shops and bars and we follow a course book Pasos 2 .

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



## Armchair travel

As always, our Armchair Travel Group has been travelling far and wide! And, as always, I am grateful for all those members who have shared their travel stories!

Meeting monthly, we have had just three opportunities to “travel” since Easter.

In April, Sue, illustrating her presentation with excellent photographs, described the holiday she took earlier this year to Australia, from West to East, and New Zealand, from North to South. It brought back memories for them from when they lived in Melbourne and also jogged memories for others in the group of visits to New Zealand. We admired the journeys Sue and her husband made by train, and the energy they exhibited on the walking holiday they joined on South Island. In contrast, Andy described how influential the Strait of Hormuz is internationally. Having worked in Oman for nearly three years, and travelled widely whilst there, he has many stories to tell. Watch this space! Again, his talk was

illustrated with photos! But I am always keen to say that it is not necessary to create a photo presentation... souvenirs, postcards, leaflets to share and stories and memories are always appreciated.

In May another group member, Mandy, stayed closer to home when she told us about visits she has made to Leicester and Bath. We learned about architecture and history, and we shared thoughts on both cities as destinations for weekend trips. During the second half of the meeting in May we heard stories of lost passports in Pakistan and Oman. Andrew showed us that even seemingly very black clouds can have silver linings. The three weeks it took for him to get a replacement passport led him to the Khyber Pass, amongst several other fascinating places. Andrew's presentations should not be missed! In contrast my stolen passport was replaced in just two days, and it did not stop me admiring turtle eggs and turtlings! The meeting ended with a brief history of passports from biblical times to the present day. It's a long story!

In June, Ann returned for a second instalment of her illustrated description of the "unusual and interesting" which she discovered in churches, whilst travelling around England and Wales. In contrast Elaine recalled the many holidays she and her husband have enjoyed on Madeira since the 1980s. This was followed by Andy and Jean describing the holiday they took to Madeira in March 2020.

Diaries can be so evocative of past travels! Andy used his diary to recall the days following Jean's stolen passport in Oman. Reading from her holiday diary Jean reminded us of the early days of the Covid pandemic, and how it affected the holiday island of Madeira. But the Armchair Travel Group can be an opportunity not only to recall memories but to think about where we would like to go!

Where is on your bucket list I wonder?

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

## History

This term the History Group have been finding out about the many Monuments, Memorials and Statues in Portsmouth. Have you ever wondered what the difference is between a Monument and a Memorial? Apparently, a Monument celebrates a person or an event and a Memorial is designed to honour or preserve the memory of individuals or groups killed in tragic circumstances

Locally Portsmouth documents over 1,000 commemorative structures, and the Imperial War Museum lists 159 war memorials in the city. They heavily feature the city's rich military heritage and famous literary roots.

The range is enormous there are the very large memorials including Portsmouth Naval War Memorial on Southsea Common and the Guildhall War Memorial both remembering those who died both world wars. Then there are memorials to groups of people including sailors from specific ships who were killed taking part in past wars around the world and finally there are statues and Monuments to heroic groups and individuals.

In April we had a virtual walk along the Millennium Way from The Hard to Southsea and on to the newly created Memorial Walk along the seafront.

The Millennium Promenade takes you on a walk from Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, through Gunwharf Quays and Old Portsmouth to Southsea



Some of the statues along the walk include -Just inside the gate of the historic dockyard is a memorial that remembers explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott CVO "*Scott of the Antarctic*" he was a British Royal Navy officer and led two expeditions to the Antarctic regions. He, along with his companions, died on the return journey from the South Pole in 1912. The memorial was erected by his widow Kathleen Scott



At The Hard is the 'Mudlarks' bronze statue created by sculptor Michael Peacock. Generations of Portsea children entertained travellers by retrieving coins thrown into the mud below the bridge to the harbour station and Gosport Ferry. The statue was paid for by private subscription

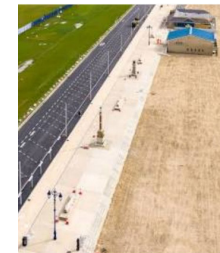
Moving on to Gunwharf and rising out of the water, the Vernon Monument is named after the spiritual home of mine warfare, HMS Vernon, which occupied the site for nearly 75 years was formally dedicated in 2022. The monument commemorates the hundreds of sailors who have devoted – or continue to devote – their lives to dealing with the threat of mines, unexploded ordnance and bombs today.

Walking through Old Portsmouth there is the Sculpture commemorating the links between Portsmouth and Australia "A Great Nation is Born" The sculpture recalls the sailing of the First Fleet of settlers from Spithead to Botany Bay, Australia, on 13 May 1787.



It was unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II on the 11th of July 1980. A twin monument was unveiled at Circular Quay, Sydney, Australia in 1980 as part of the Bicentenary Celebrations. A surprisingly interesting monument stands in the Pembroke Gardens area opposite the Holiday Inn the monument for Frederick FitzClarence who was the second (illegitimate) son of King William IV and Between 1847 and 1851 he was Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth Before he left Portsmouth for India the Town Council expressed their gratitude for his interest in the welfare of the inhabitants, and his help with the improvements carried out to the Southsea Common area under his auspices.

Clarence Esplanade is named after him. It was opened in 1848 by Queen Victoria. Before leaving the Governorship of Portsmouth he also presented Portsmouth with a gift of two statues one of Lord Nelson and the other of the Duke of Wellington because both had sailed from Portsmouth to their greatest victories sadly both of these have since been lost.



The recently created Memorial Walk along the seafront brings together five memorials to ships and sailors lost in 19<sup>th</sup> century wars. It is a testament to Britain's Empire and involvement around the world at this time - HMS Cheapeake in China (Opium Wars) HMS Shannon in India (helping with the relief of Peking), HMS Trident in West Africa (helping to end the slave trade), HMS Aboukir in Jamaica (where yellow fever claimed sailors lives) and there is a memorial to

those killed in the campaigns of the Crimean War.

When looking at these memorials it is important to look up and notice the features depicted HMS Shannon - A Flag sculpture made from the metal of a gun captured at Lucknow

HMS Cheapeake - A very tall pillar on a massive plinth surmounted by a bronze Naval Crown. A metal relief on the pillar depicts Sailors and Marines landing to assault the Taku Forts. Continuing on along the sea front there are many more memorials and statues including the soldier and memorial wall at the D Day Museum, The Cockleshell Heroes plaque where they trained at Lumps Fort now Southsea Rose garden and The Yomper looking out to sea at Eastney remembering those who fought and died in the Falklands War-



In May we continued the theme by looking at the Statues and Memorials in our Parks and Open Spaces, Victoria Park was the first public park to be opened in Portsmouth in 1878 and was designed by Alexander McKenzie he designed several of the great, open spaces in the London, including Alexandra Park.

Victoria Park has nine mostly Naval memorials and monuments from the late 1800s -

One of these is for HMS Orlando (1899) which depicts a picturesque miniature Chinese Temple and holds a replica of a bronze bell captured at the North-West Fort Taku. In June 2005, the bell was returned to a Chinese delegation and replaced with the replica

Another older monument of 1850s celebrates Admiral Napier's efforts to improve everyday working conditions for ordinary sailors.

Other Parks and Gardens around the city have memories of the past such as The Barn in Milton Park which was once a part of Milton Farm owned by Mr Goldsmith. Baffins Pond was once part of Baffins Farm, and along the Eastern Road Great Salterns is a reminder of when salt pans produced for the Navy, it is now a golf course.

In the John Wesley Gardens Hilsea there is a monument to John Wesley the Methodist preacher who preached under a massive elm tree, in the 18th century, a plaque commemorates his visit. The original tree died, and a new elm was planted in 1909 within the old tree's shell.

Canoe Lake has a drinking fountain depicting a bronze angel of peace mounted on a polished granite base it was donated to Portsmouth by the family of Emanuel Emanuel Alderman JP who was Mayor of Portsmouth 1866 - 67. Behind the Rose Garden which was created in the 1950s you can still find the remains of Lumps Fort .

This is just a flavour of the many historical features around Portsmouth and Southsea I hope this article will encourage people to look more closely as you walk around the city –



" History is everywhere".

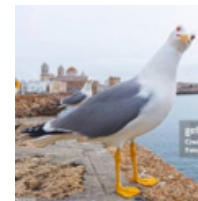
**For any information contact: Rosemary Sirett -Telephone 07540 597804**

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

"Seduced by greed, our leaders know no justice,  
From public property they steal, and do not spare a jot,  
While justice's great foundations rot.  
(The masses) hang on every word they spew,  
But barely notice what they do." (Solon 640 - 560 BCE)

Well said, Solon! He was an Ancient Greek lawmaker, famous for his poems on 'Dysnomia' (Bad Order) and 'Eunomia' (Good Order).

Anyway, onward! Our free choice selection seems to be getting bolder and more free ranging. A few new members are also widening our range. We had a lovely session on "Southsea", with Alison Havens' "Southsea, but plastic-free" inducing feelings of "If only!".



Anna Jones, an early teens poet, and winner of a local poetry prize, gave us a wonderful evocation of a child's day out at the seaside, including this charming quip:

"The gulls look at me funny  
So I look at them funny!")

Is that the cure? Would that stop them snatching your sandwich?!

Among our many themes, "Personification" produced interesting fare. There were, of course, the usual references to "Beauty" and "Death", but, for me, Sylvia Plath's wonderful poem, "Mirror", describing a wall-mirror's monitoring of its owner's aging process is a personal favourite. Who could better the final couplet:

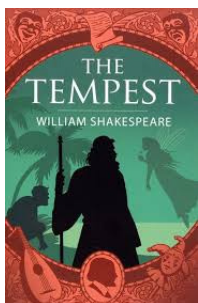
"In me she drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman  
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish."



Other stimulating themes were "Rivers", "Memories", "Friendship", "The Seven Ages of Man" (not very PC, I know! But it is a reference to Shakespeare!), "Trains" and poems with a strong personal resonance, including active dislike! Interestingly, no-one read one of those! But don't get Jane started on "Warning", by Jenny Joseph! (Look it up!). A session on "Parodies" was fun, and when actual poets become the theme, surprises can surface. For example, Thomas Hardy's rollicking "The Ruined Maid", which must be his only comic poem. Please look it up!

Our Thursday sessions, mostly drama now, have dealt with lethal eccentricity, exhibited in Joseph Kesselring's "Arsenic and Old Lace" – also a hilarious Capra film starring Cary Grant. He is said to have hated his over-acting, as he called it, but it absolutely makes the film an all-time classic farce! "The Real Inspector Hound" by Tom Stoppard was eccentricity personified, telling a surreal tale of murder, and Stoppard also provided us with "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead". It too, asks questions about reality, art and drama.

For our final pre-newsletter drama, we have reverted to our favourite playwright



Shakespeare, and his masterpiece, “The Tempest”. Probably the last play written solely by him, it too is interested in the theatrical depiction of reality. Who could forget,

*“These our actors, as I foretold you, were all spirits, and are melted into air, into thin air.”*

These lines are not, as often thought, at the end of the play, but after a masque performed by spirits to celebrate Miranda and Ferdinand’s engagement. After the performance, they do, indeed, melt into thin air!

Our next dramatic foray will be “The Admirable Crichton” by J. M. Barrie. So, watch this space! (Try to catch the classic film version with John Mills)

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

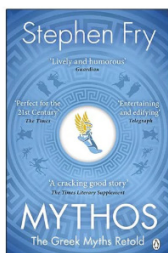


## Writing Group

“We chose our theme of “Mothers” for our March meeting with a broad sweep of responses. Some members took the opportunity to write about their own mothers, one member travelled right back in time through the ages, with Grendel the monster and his mother in “Beowulf”. Another member returned

to Zambia for her memories whilst others used the objects of a wedding photograph and a Mother’s Day card selection to write their pieces. A group of mothers were celebrated for their campaigning work in the restriction of social media to the phones of young people. This last idea led to the formation of our next theme “Make a case for .... Choose a subject and make an argument for it.” Prize for the most original piece of writing on this went to the member, obviously adventurous, who chose to make the case for beliefs in a Flat Earth! He reported that his research for this was accompanied by bemused incredulity, but the presentation was written in the most persuasive language. We loved it! Truly extraordinary. The theme for May was “The most significant place you have ever visited”. A few writers chose Berlin in different circumstances, even during the Cold War. We discussed the coincidence of the previous Film Club viewing of “ Bridge of Spies”. Next month’s choice will be a tricky one. We are being encouraged to start writing a murder mystery opening. The setting has to be somewhere confined - a train, a ship? I can hardly wait ...

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



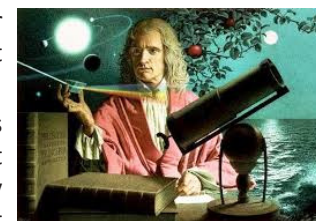
## Philosophy

After a brief sortie into full-bodied philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponti we have commenced a more wordy engagement with Stephen Fry. His espousal with the Greek Myths has all but lasted a lifetime and his reworking of them has emphasised their religious and philosophical aspects. The medium of language has served all three traditions of religion, storytelling and philosophy, well.

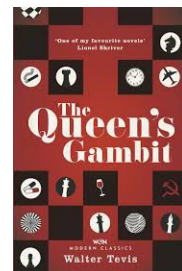
The question will have to be raised, though, whether language alone can serve all three traditions equally well. Whereas language delivers, in Stephen’s hands, or tones, a fully satisfying account of the stories and world-view of the Ancient Greeks we must ask whether stories, myths or Holy books alone can convey a full and satisfying

account of our modern world. My opinion is that whatever account is tendered it would likely fail on both counts. It would be both incomplete and fail to satisfy.

A similar judgement could be levelled at the Enlightenment’s great creation, the mathematically inspired summation that is Newtonian Science. Aristotelian Science was eventually overthrown by Newton’s work, but the same flaw is present in both systems - reductionism or foundationalism assumes that whether we dig down for definitions or search for the elemental scraps of matter we are doomed to fail. The last century taught us that neither approach brings clarity. Another Stephen assured us that Philosophy is dead, and Quantum Mechanics revealed that there was no solid crock at the end of the rainbow. We need to raise our thoughts above the mundane and the particular to the only scientific law unlikely ever to be revised. At the same time, we must appraise the source within all life that feeds on free energy if we are to arrive at a philosophical system worthy of the name.



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



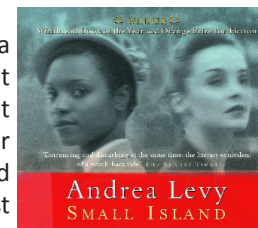
## World of Books

The Queens Gambit which had been a Netflix series was our last book of the term which we finished reading over the Easter Break. This is a story about a child genius Beth Harmon with an unparalleled talent for Chess. Unfortunately, her personal life is marred by circumstances over which she has no control and finding herself completely alone in the world she ends up in an orphanage which is where she learns to play chess.

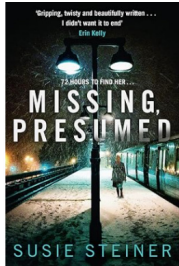
She is then adopted by a Mr and Mrs Wheatley who are as dysfunctional as her birth family but she does get along with Mrs Wheatley, Mr Wheatley falls out of the picture completely. As she becomes more and more successful at chess and begins to earn a lot of money Beth and Mrs Wheatley travel all over staying in some very nice hotels and enjoying the good life, that is until Mrs Wheatley suddenly dies and once again Beth is completely on her own. At this point she goes into a very destructive decline fuelled by drink and drugs, which fortunately she does come out off thanks to support from an old friend from the orphanage Jolene and yes she does go on to become a chess world champion. Not an easy book to read as there are a lot of references to the game of chess, but enjoyable all the same.

Our next read was something totally different. A book by Andrea Levy call ‘Small Island’ a story about World War 2 but this wasn’t just about the war it contained a lot of characters from different countries and different walks of life who because of the war found themselves thrown into this melting pot of humanity and how their different interactions with each other shaped the rest of their lives and not always in a good way.

She outlines very clearly how people can be swept up in the events of the day more concerned with the here and now without looking at the full picture, and how the lack of information can impact on behaviours, how upbringings can shape the future whether



you like it or not, she also outlines very clearly the austere grey and cheerless London on offer to those who came to live there looking for a better life, and how cultures can collide rather than gel together. There is humour in this book which is very cleverly written there is no glamour in the descriptions of war-torn London but she outlines the hardship and struggle of those who had to live through it. A very good read and highly recommended.



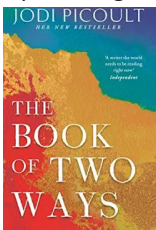
Once again, we have something totally different. Missing Presumed by Susie Steiner, this was a who-dun-it with a difference. It contains everything, same sex relationships, black mail, and also outlines how a friendship you may think is rock solid can come crumbling down when things go pear shaped. She looks at how relationships shape lives and behaviours and all of her characters have flaws and relationship problems as one of the main characters spends a lot of time internet dating with some very disastrous results. The story revolves around the daughter of a prominent surgeon who goes missing and the efforts made to try and find her while doing this the police uncover many skeletons in many cupboards and how the media pressure caused one young woman to actually kill herself. What started off as a missing person gradually turns into a murder enquiry but without any solid leads or clues the investigation is watered down, it is only then that the mother of the missing woman decides to head for France where her daughter has actually run away too, so a happy ending there. Don't take this book too seriously just enjoy as certain aspects of the story just do not hold up but it is an easy and enjoyable read great for a summer afternoon in the garden.

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

## Pelham Book Group

We have three novels to share with you in this Newsletter, two you may find familiar.

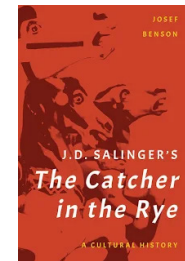
April brought us "The Book of Two Ways", 2020, Jodi Picoult. I am sure many of you have sampled this popular, readable American writer of 28 novels as I have. I encouraged our members to enjoy this book and referenced her themes of family drama exploring topical, intense legal and societal issues. What a departure from her usual subjects and accessible structure with this one!



This novel explores those "what if" moments, where our life choices lead us for better or worse. It has two simultaneous timelines: one in Boston where Dawn, the central character, a death doula, lives with her devoted husband and daughter; one in Egypt where she can re-ignite a promising, abandoned Egyptology career and an intense relationship with Wayne, a member of the team. The reader shares her decisions from the opening chapter as Dawn, at a crossroads in her life, survives a plane crash prompting a re-evaluation.

The most challenging part of the novel was following the detailed and to most of us too lengthy passages on Egyptian history and hieroglyphics. It was interesting but heavy-going. The novel ends with an unexpected twist and then the reader having to make Dawn's final choice. Is this irritating or a chance for us to participate in her life?

In May we all sympathised with Holden Caulfield, the teenage main character in "The Catcher in the Rye", 1951, J D Salinger. A novel we might have read in our own late teens now re-read



as an adult. Holden's experiences told in flashbacks, having been expelled from yet another prep school, take place over a weekend drifting between bars and dubious adults. They show us his profound grief and anxiety. This is a teenager suffering with depression, isolation and alienation in an adult world he considers 'phony'. The only character he really trusts is his younger sister, Phoebe. We could appreciate the powerful picture of teenage angst and note the controversial themes, rebellion, sex, violence, that caused the book to be banned in schools and libraries. We were gratified at the end with Holden in treatment after his emotional and mental breakdown, we felt he had a future waiting for him.

This month we have the novella, "The Third Man", 1950, Graham Greene, to discuss. It was originally written in 1948 to be developed as the 1949 film with Joseph Cotten and Orson Wells, we could all have seen it? The setting of a bomb-damaged Vienna divided into zones controlled by conquering powers is a threatening backdrop. Rollo Martins has arrived summoned by his old friend Harry Lime to help him, but Harry is dead, his funeral that very morning. Rollo becomes suspicious and is determined to discover the truth about this mystery death. It is a short thriller steeped in post-war atmosphere with a brutal ending.



These three novels might have given you ideas of authors or genres to follow up in your own reading. Once again, a huge thank you to Maggie Macbeth for collecting and returning our sets of books to Havant. To Havant library, our thanks for providing our requested books as best they can.

Members of the group were very sad to say goodbye to Susie Harnden who found her many commitments conflicted with the reading demands of the group and the Thursday Zoom discussion. She will be greatly missed as her astute, perceptive comments often made us qualify our own reactions to the novel.

There is space for one u3a member confident using Zoom, prepared to read a book a month and share their comments on a Thursday afternoon with their own recommendations for reading and viewing.

**Contact: Judith Wise, mobile-07530854969 of judewise1@googlemail.com**

## Needles and Pins

The dedication of this group knows no bounds. Here is Lynn Timms travelling across Europe and still busy with her needles. See the finished item to the right. However, you don't need to be this dedicated to join the group. We continue to meet for 1.5 hours every two weeks. You can bring any handicraft 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**



Cute dinosaur and bear by Gill Pridmore



Elaine Meredith Tapestry



Rainbow colours  
Jane Evans



Jeannette Beveridge  
Jumper - featuring a horse  
with a real mane



Pauline Judd and  
Baffin's Yarn Bombers  
100<sup>th</sup> anniversary topper

## Art for All - Tuesday mornings



In the style of Van Gogh  
Brenda Colman



Elephant Lin Schofield



Greenfinch Maggie MacBeth

For more information, please contact either of the co-leaders Lin Schofield 07909 537215 or Lynn Timms 07851 069146

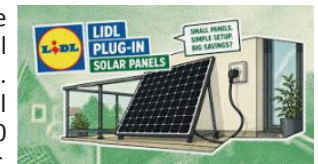


## Science and technology

The Science and Technology Group was active as usual. We lost a long-time friend after monitoring it since 1986 when it calved in the Weddell Sea. It then spent 30 years grounded on the sea floor of shallow muds before in 2020 starting to move again in a vortex called the Taylor Column. It rotated on the spot for eight months. It was iceberg A20b. After a long life it finally melted, and the last large piece disintegrated into many small pieces so no longer exists.

We then turned our attention on Red Blood Cells and why they were the only cells in the human body that did not carry DNA. Handy really because we have no problems mixing blood for transfusions as long as it is of the correct type. During the discussion on RBC we discovered everyone pronounced CHIMERA a different way. We looked up at least three different ways and usually this was determined by the context The Medical Science way is usual.

We then looked at the legislation the government was due to pass shortly which will allow keen DIY enthusiasts to install their own solar panels if they kept below a kilowatt system. Already a hit on the Continent where you can buy from Lidl and Amazon a £290 system that can earn you £ 70 to £ 110 per year. The kit of parts comprises two panels an inverter, and a three-pin plug to plug into your house mains socket. Interestingly the solar panels are capable in any direction as long as it is not covered. I'm going to be joining the queue at Amazon.



For more information contact : Brian Greener 02392 863381



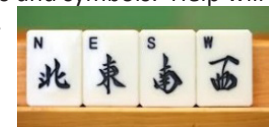
## Religion, Spirituality and Life

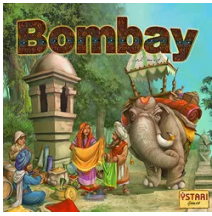
How do you get on with your soul? Soul talk has been our agenda this term. We discussed the practice in hospices and other homes for people have just breathed their last, of opening a window to let the treasured person's soul fly away to.... heaven ? ....or somewhere else? It can be a beautiful image for some: of gently releasing a person to their eternal future, rather than clinging on. For others it can be a cumbersome image that can get in the way of coming to terms with the death of loved ones.

All of this opens up the question of the nature of the soul. That takes us back to Greek, Hebrew and perhaps other concepts of the soul. Is the soul a spiritual 'thing' that can exist separately from the body, as the devout Catholic philosopher, Rene Descartes insisted? Or is it a word that describes those uniquely human mental capabilities of our bodies as Aristotle preferred? For the ancient Jewish contributors to the Bible, the soul was more an expression of the inner character of a person, their personal qualities rather than their capabilities. How do people use the concept of a soul today? Does it matter? Come and join us. 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

The group's final meeting of the Spring term saw a remarkable game of Rummikub being played in which Susan Johnson opened the game by laying six tiles, which is quite extraordinary. Elsewhere there was a change of direction away from the term's theme as players became Indian merchants in the days of the Raj when elephants were still employed to transport goods around the country in a game entitled Bombay. The game is from a genre known as pickup and delivery which, in this case, involved travelling to towns in order to purchase goods and taking them to far off destinations to resale, hopefully for a profit. Consideration needed to be given to the viability of all aspects of the enterprise including the fluctuation of prices at destination towns as the game progressed. The game was very keenly contested and winning was only decided upon in the very last move of the game.

The Summer term's theme has been Spring into Summer, the first game being Eine Frage Der Ahre, which on this occasion saw the players become farmers cultivating crops and keeping animals in order to gain points to establish who was the best farmer. There were many possible routes to victory given that difficult decisions had to be made, therefore it may not be surprising to hear that the winner of the game was not a countryside inhabitant but that well known Londoner and Chair of this U3A, Mandy Richards. Clearly Mandy will be growing more than just a tomato plant or two in her garden this summer. At the same time our Rummikubers all tasted victory at some point during the afternoon.



During the second meeting of the term a card game game called Gift of Tulips kept the majority of the attendees involved in a visit to the Amsterdam Tulip Festival, with a view to creating the best bouquet of tulips by changing the rankings of the various varieties of the flowers or by giving blooms to their competitors to increase their own score, and perhaps lower their opponents score (as if we would indulge in such behaviour!). Ultimately the more one gave the greater the possibility of winning. Unfortunately, only two Rummikubers were able to attend the session but this did not impact upon the keenly contested games.



During our latest meeting five games of Rummikub were completed and congratulations to Vicky Frampton who won all five, what a fantastic feat!

The rest of the group played Bloomchasers, an unusual game consisting of a 3D tree onto which the players placed branches, bids and flowers scoring points if certain conditions were met. The group were very positive about the game which will be repeated at some point in the near future, the game had all the players ending with similar scorelines and the winner, Gill Pridmore, won by a whisker.

Are there any Scrabble players out there who are not already members of the group? This term our sets have remained unplayed, if you enjoy the game why not come along to our meetings and play for two hours?

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



## Film Club Starts at 1:45



**Wed. 16th Sept - Chicago (2002)**

Nightclub sensation Velma kills her philandering husband. Chicago's adroit lawyer, Billy Flynn, is set to become her defence lawyer, who also defends Roxie, under trial for murder. Starring Renée Zellweger Catherine Zeta-Jones and Richard Gere

**Wed 14th Oct - The Departed (2006)**

The Departed is a 2006 crime thriller film, directed by Martin Scorsese. It is also loosely based on real-life people, including the Winter Hill Gang, corrupt FBI agent John Connolly and Irish-American crime boss Whitey Bulger. Irish Mob boss Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson) plants Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon) as a spy within the Massachusetts State Police; simultaneously, the police assign undercover state trooper Billy Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio) to infiltrate Costello's mob crew.



**Wed.11th Nov -Bridget Jones's Baby (2016)**

Breaking up with Mark Darcy (Colin Firth) leaves Bridget Jones (Renée Zellweger) over 40 and single again. Feeling that she has everything under control, Jones decides to focus on her career as a top news producer. Suddenly, her love life comes back from the dead when she meets a dashing and handsome American named Jack (Patrick Dempsey). Things couldn't be better, until Bridget discovers that she is pregnant. Now, the befuddled mom-to-be must figure out if the proud papa is Mark or Jack.

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

## The Walking Groups

### The Ambling group

We are the U3A Amblers Walking Group. We do just as it says in the tin, we amble. Which means it is for everyone including those with perhaps less robust mobility. As you will see, this doesn't mean people who would like a little more walking shouldn't join us!

#### 21 March

On a very warm, sunny day in March we met near the Butter Cross in Chichester for a cup of coffee. Our intention was to walk some of the old defensive walls which surround Chichester city centre. It was interesting to learn about the history of the walls as we went along. We ended the walk by the walls in the lovely gardens of Chichester Cathedral. We finished here for lunch in the café. Some more ambitious walkers stayed on for some retail therapy!- Cheryl Sewell

#### 18 April

We saw hundreds of beautiful Bluebells in Stoke Wood. We met up in the Vale Café and Wellness Centre. And then parked in the Kingley Vale carpark, squashing in with all the other cars. We enjoyed the cafe again with free parking and lovely lunch. **Hilary Poley**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> May was bright and clear as we met for the short boat crossing to Hayling Island. A few minutes on the water and we were ready for a walk along the beach. As the temperature rose layers were removed and stored in back packs or tied around waists while we continued taking in the sea views and green hedgerows. Returning to the harbour a lovely lunch was enjoyed at The Ferryboat Inn before the short trip back to Eastney, with everyone safely home before the promised rain arrived.

### The 30th May

Our latest walk saw us again taking to the sea, this time on The Gosport Ferry followed by the bus to Lee on Solent. The very high temperatures of the previous week had cooled to a perfect summer's day with a light breeze, perfect for a stroll along the promenade. We all had a hearty appetite for the carvery at the Inn by the Sea before our journey home.

**Elaine Hasker**

**For further information contact Hilary on 02394 008935**

## The Walking Group

Our last walk before Easter was to Dell Quay via Fishbourne Always a lovely walk and we were blessed with sunshine We sat outside the Crown and Anchor and enjoyed the sunshine with a coffee. After walking back to Fishbourne we sat in the garden of The Bull and I enjoyed a delicious Prawn Cocktail. The next walk was a new one for me and the group. On April 11th we headed off up county lanes to Up Madden. This was a walk from the Octagonal walk book that a few of us have. I must thank the drivers, Fiona and Joy that day as it was a rather difficult drive through windy country lanes. There is a restored ancient Cart Shed near the old church which was rather impressive. The church itself is in an idyllic location overlooking fields and quite hidden among trees. There are some old frescoes on the walls and we loved it. The woods we walked through were thronged with bluebells. There were a couple of steep hills to negotiate but we just about managed it. Some beautiful scenery to make it worthwhile. We drove to Compton nearby for lunch. On May16th we visited West Dean again for Mental Health Week. They have a new shop and an extended cafe. After coffee and cake, we set off into the garden. There were eleven of us today and half decided to do the circuit walk which involves a n uphill climb and a long walk through the Rhododendron woods. They were delighted with the magnificent blooms. Unfortunately, one of our members had a fall before the walk uphill had started and a lovely member of staff came out of the house and helped her inside. They very kindly bandaged and cleaned her and Susan and Oly came to the rescue and drove her to the Emergency Centre in Portsmouth. I am pleased to say that nothing was broken, and she made a good recovery. The other half of the group had a lovely time wandering around the gardens which were brimming with late Spring blooms. Today June 13th, a lovely sunny, warm day after a week of rain and gales, we drove over to Pagham Nature Reserve. We parked in Sidlesham Quay to find the sea had receded out over the saltmarshes and mudflats. We walked along the shore to the RSPB Centre where we sat outside with coffee. We attempted to walk as far as Church Norton but found it just a little too far and headed back to the Centre to eat our picnics. It was a most rewarding walk taking in the Hide where a ranger had her telescope fixed on a Spoonbill and let us all take a look. Most of us had never seen this magnificent wader before so a real treat.



The paths were adorned with wildflowers, and the sound of birdsong was everywhere. Wonderful June Day in perfect surroundings. We are hoping for more lovely days out this summer. Since I started this group about eight years ago, I have been privileged to meet some amazing people who have enriched my life, Many thanks.

**For more information contact: Jackie Forsyth 02392 666 680**

**March 21<sup>st</sup> Fishbourne to Dell Quay**



**West Dean with glorious spring flowers and Philip Jackson sculptures**



## Social Programme Easter Social with raffle



Visit to the Lord Mayor's Parlour March 26<sup>th</sup> Thanks to Lynn Timms for the photos



## Members' Meetings Speakers in 2026



### 17th March 2026

The Speaker during our Monthly Meeting in March was Kelly Nash from the Strategy Unit at Portsmouth City Council who gave us an informed and engaging talk about the current renovation work being undertaken at the Hilsea Lido. Opened in 1935 the Lido has offered the local community sport and leisure facilities for the majority of its 90 years, but has been closed for the last four years to allow for this major refurbishment.

The meeting learnt about the plans set up for the revitalised Lido, how the work has been executed, as well as the various facilities that will be available to the public once the Lido is reopened during May 2026. Kelly 'enthralled' the meeting with her talk and was happy to answer the many questions that the members asked about the project.

### 21st April



At our April meeting we welcomed Hugh Cull from the City of Portsmouth College, who presented a very valuable session about how to stay safe on the internet. Hugh's talk was very wide-ranging and included advice about the importance of having a strong password, how to use a secure and private search engine and creating a privacy focused email account.

Hugh also offered to hold a more comprehensive course on navigating the dangers on the internet for the u3a members. This opportunity was welcomed by many of those present. He promised to send a User Guide via email and a poster advertising his next course which would distribute to members.

## Oliver Twist

Charles Dickens



## The Hound of the Baskervilles

A MYSTERY CLASSIC

Arthur Conan Doyle



19<sup>th</sup> May

### Mike Williams on Dickens and Doyle

At our May Monthly Meeting, we welcomed the return of Mike Williams to give us a talk about two eminent Victorian writers, each of which have strong links to Portsmouth, Charles Dickens and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

In his talk Mike contrasted the lives and beliefs of each author. Both had been poor as children and forced to

earn a living at an early stage Dickens, a committed social commentator and activist, who wrote sentimental and character-driven stories which exemplified his own criticism of the privations of the era, and Conan Doyle whose work included adventure stories and science fiction, but who is primarily known for his creation of Sherlock Holmes, a character far from sentimentality, but rather is a template for rational and logical analysis. The strange side to his character was his belief in fairies and going to see mediums to get in touch with his dead son. Both were successful in their lifetime and left a large amount of money on their death. The equivalent of over £8 million in today's money

16<sup>th</sup> June

At our June meeting the membership was given a talk by our u3a Treasurer, Lynn Timms, about a campaign she and her husband have been running.

Their project, which began in 2024, is named on behalf of Lynn's mother, who died tragically young after suffering from cardiac arrest.

The aim of *Forty4Frankie* is to set up and instal 40 AED's (Automated External Defibrillators) across Portsmouth.

During the talk, Lynn spoke about the importance of having better public access to these medical devices as well as fostering confidence within the public to be able to use them. She spoke of a local organisation who offer life-saving training sessions to a variety of groups, as well as members of the public.

To date, the project has successfully installed and registered 24 defibrillators and have a further 5 waiting to be fitted. Of these 24 devices, Lynn told the meeting that on two occasions they were accessed, resulting in the saving two lives.

A very informative talk which was well-received by the membership present.

Speaker Secretary Carol-Anne Turner



## Summer Programme



Tuesday 14th July  
1:00 start

Picnic on the Common near the Jolly Sailor

Bring own food and drink and a chair or blanket to sit on (and maybe some food to share)

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 1:30

### Celebration Cream Tea Portsmouth 100 years

Cost £6.00 purchase ticket from the café beforehand

This will cover sandwiches, cake and scones and tea or coffee

Also, a raffle and a chance to show your lion pictures

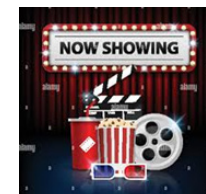


Tuesday 28th July

### Summer Lunch in the Holiday Inn Southsea

1:00 for 1:30

Tuesday 4th August Film Room 3 1:45 start



Tuesday 11th August

### Board Games Room 4 2:00 start

Contact Tony Valvona on 02392 822641 so he has an idea of numbers coming

Tuesday 18th August Lion Trail

Meeting place tbc for a walk around the lion statues for the celebration of the Pride of Portsmouth



Tuesday 25th August

### Summer Quiz Room 4 2:00 start

Join us for a fun afternoon testing your knowledge of Portsmouth

Social secretary Elaine Jessica Meredith 07300 797 715



## **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.