u3a
learn, laugh, live



Newsletter Autumn 2026

“Sea of poppies” at Southsea Castle.
Some members of Needles and Pins contributed towards the 27,000 used in the display

Website: www.u3asites.org.uk/portsmouth

https://portsmouth.u3asite.uk/

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Chair's report for the Autumn term 2026

Now that the weather has changed it really does feel autumnal. The long hot summer feels like a world away but was full of many opportunities for us to take part in social events. At the cream tea we managed to gather a number of Portsmouth related items to use for our raffle. Amongst these was a signed Pompey shirt, unfortunately for me it wasn't a Tottenham Hotspur one, c'est la vie! Thanks to all who contributed prizes for the raffle. The other summer activities were well attended, and I am sure members are grateful for the organisers who gave up their time to run these events. The Portsmouth centenary year is almost over, and the Lions have disappeared from public view. They proved an exciting addition to the city, and a new game of 'Spot the Lion' was a constant topic of conversation. What will we find to talk about now?

Sadly, we were unable to continue with two of our classes 'Spoken Spanish for Beginners 'and 'Science and Technology' but we have two new classes to compensate. 'A Taste of Italy' is well attended and leaves us all fascinated by the areas of Italy which are less well known. The Archaeology group is looking forward to hearing about ancient civilisations and now we are all experts in Carbon dating (or pretend to be!) We have had two Ukelele tasters and there is great enthusiasm for the classes to start in January.

By the time you read this we will have had our AGM and members of the Committee will have been elected for the coming year. As you know the Committee is vital to the running of our u3a and we are always looking for people to give up their time to help Portsmouth to keep running. For some of us this will be the last year that we are able to put ourselves forward for election so we will be looking for replacements. If you feel this is something you could do, then have a conversation with any current Committee member and I can arrange to meet with you. One of the responsibilities of the Committee is to develop statutory policies. The Safeguarding policy is now completed and is on our website. Just click the link to view the policy in full. If you are a group leader, you will receive your own copy, and the Committee will organise an opportunity for you to discuss this and its implications. We are going to start work on the Data Protection policy next.

Hopefully I will see you at any of the several social events we have planned. It only remains for me to wish you a happy and peaceful festive season and a happy new year

Mandy Richards Chair 07496 009401

Thanks to Waterstones for donating a book on Portsmouth for the summer raffle and the "Good Human "agency for the Pompey Slang beach towel etc

Welcome to new members:

Victoria Adams, Graham Barber, Andres Juan Cuenca, Pam Evans, Stuart Exley, Lindsey Hay, Sylvia Hutchings, Carole McKerracher, Ellen Mollouy, Janice Richards, John Richard Saulet and Denise McFall

In Memoriam Audrey Thorpe

Sad news of Audrey Thorpe's death.

With Audrey's death it is likely that the last link to the founding of the Portsmouth branch of the U3A has gone. Her husband Peter was, I believe, a founder member. Audrey joined him as soon as she had retired from her post as Head teacher of Wimborne Junior School. Together they ran the long running World Books group. Peter introduced poems each week and Audrey masterminded a path through novels provided by the Hants Library service. (Audrey had had a life with the library service before becoming a Junior School teacher.)

It was at her first? teaching post that I met Audrey. She was very small in stature but possessed of inexhaustible energy and was a great source of ideas on all aspects of teaching. Her special gifts were much in demand at Milton Junior School. It had only just become a mixed school, and the staffs of the quiet girls' school and the rowdier boys' school did not fuse seamlessly. It was a school where closed doors were the order of the day. Embryo teachers like myself soon realised that the first unbreakable rule was that it was not acceptable to use an idea that had been spied through a crack an experienced teacher's door in one's own classroom. Clueless Main English graduates with no practical subject skills had to sink or swim by their own bungling efforts.

Audrey led the small group of newbies through the TV Maths Workshop programs. No brochure had been ordered and sharing ideas of what it was all about was great fun! She also set about getting children to work independently outside the classroom. At that time there was an initiative to get certain teachers out of the classroom to get degree qualifications. Audrey was selected and enjoyed one year part time and one-year full time at Bishop Otter college in Chichester. I was lucky enough to follow in her footsteps later.

Raising of the School Leaving Age changed everything and we had little contact until I retired and join the U3A. I joined the World of Books group and when Peter became unable to manage the Poetry side I took over. I managed this role until Audrey felt she could no longer cope. The work she put in to the preparation of the set novels was prodigious. I would have buckled under such a strain. Needless to say, Christine is carrying on the good work but there is not time to fit Poetry into sessions. Well done Christine. **Tony Stutters**

ARCHITECTURE and DESIGN

The evidence is gathering. Summer's heat has left us. Outside the sky is grey, uncertain and sulking, the rain is clattering into the roadside drains, trees are hurling their heavy burden of leaves into the aforesaid drains, the clocks have gone back - it's time to acknowledge that the Autumn Newsletter is unavoidable.

However, one of our recent subjects for study brings back the sunshine of Spain into the autumnal gloom. Santiago Calatrava is a name undeservedly little known outside his native country. In view of his explorations of the possibilities of new technologies in a prolific variety of extraordinary buildings, it's hard to understand why.

Born in Valencia in 1951, when Franco was still very firmly in power, he grew up in the country outside the city, obsessed with drawing the natural world around him, a talent that has been a constant inspiration in shaping his designs. Training first as a civil engineer, later qualifying as an architect, his building designs arose out of a combination of the laws of physics and the imagination of an artist.



Those who have visited Valencia may have been made aware of the enormous contribution he made to the rebuilding of the centre of the city after a disastrous flood destroyed the whole city centre, leaving an unused and unplanned area of waste land. Along this long, awkwardly shaped terrain, he designed a huge complex of space-age constructions to house museums and galleries dedicated to the arts, sciences and the natural world. Seemingly, they float on great pools of water, like the boney skeletons of enormous prehistoric creatures. One construction actually features what appears to be an eye that opens and shuts, reflected in the water. His inspiration came from the skeletons of sea creatures he found on the beach when he was a boy. As an image, these resting leviathans are immensely powerful. His work is immensely varied, encompassing ethereal, gravity-defying bridges, curving roofs that cover the structure like a feather, stations and airports whose jaw-dropping facades remove the anxiety of travel (well, a little!), Olympic stadiums (or should that be stadia?), university campuses (or is that campi?) and an amazing museum in America with actual wings that are raised as if in flight every morning. If you're ever in Milwaukee, don't miss it. Sometimes his designs have been over-ambitious and less successful, also hugely budget-busting but he's given many cities something in short supply today - not only beauty but poetry and drama, wonder and magic - and buildings that can fly.



Coming down to earth, we landed very solidly on terra firma in Kilburn, North Yorkshire, to find out about Robert Thompson, the Mouseman. He lived his whole life in this small village, one of 6 brothers, his father owning a joinery business. Apprenticed as an engineer, nevertheless, he persuaded his father to let him join the family business to learn the artisanal skills of joinery and, most importantly, of woodcarving. He had been inspired by the magnificent Gothic carvings in nearby Ripon Cathedral, having drawn them and read widely throughout his youth and his dream was to return to the old methods, to produce traditional oak furniture for churches and homes. His father died very soon afterwards so Robert and his brother took over the business to find commissions requiring work of this quality

and durability. So why is he known as the Mouseman? One of his workers complained one day that however hard he worked; he was always as poor as a church mouse. Robert was charmed with the image of a tiny creature gently scraping and biting its way through the hardest of woods in the silence of a church. From then until the present day, every piece that leaves their workshops is embellished with a little mouse. Every carver has his own "signature" mouse, each one subtly different. Word began to spread of the quality and simple beauty of the work and between the wars the business flourished. Since then, four generations of Thompson sons and grandsons have continued to learn the skills and manage a thriving business whose order book is full for years to come. They have made

pieces for, amongst others, Westminster Abbey, Eton College, the Nepalese Parliament, York Minster and appropriately, Ripon Cathedral, as well as domestic furniture for many private clients.

Arthur Negus on the Antiques Road show once praised his work and, since then, vintage items of his work have sold for huge sums. Newly made items are expensive too but the long process of 5 years seasoning the wood, the traditional, painstaking methods and immense craftsmanship used to produce these individual items ensure that you will have bought a future heirloom that can be passed down the generations.

We were very fortunate to have a presentation by one of our group members, James Edmonds next. He gave us an impeccably researched, in-depth talk about an aspect of design that developed, in the late 19th century, for the grand hotels that sprang up in England and Europe with the advent of the railways and the craze for travel, a design that transferred to the interiors of the luxury ocean liners The wealthy and the aristocratic wanted to travel in the style to which they were accustomed.



One man, in particular, the French architect Charles Mewes grasped the commercial importance of providing the opulence they felt entitled to. In order to achieve this luxurious style, he rejected the current Art Nouveau and sought inspiration further back in history, to France under the Sun King, Louis XVI and the grandeur of Versailles. Mewes' name was inextricably connected with the Swiss hotelier, Cesar Ritz for whom he designed the richly decorated Ritz hotels in Paris and London. Mewes saw that this historical ornamentation would transfer very successfully to the vast interiors of the liner, giving the fashionable and wealthy traveller the ambience of past glories in French history.

This extravagant period of the Belle Epoque, however, was savagely cut short by the first World War. When peace came, after 1918, the world had changed forever. This change, where design and the look of the world took a radical turn towards modernism, led logically to our next subject to investigate not just the design for ocean liners but in every aspect of design and life itself in the coming decades.

People felt the need to turn away from the over-decorated look of pre-war life to find something new, sleek and streamlined instead. Gradually the old decorative patterns, curves and outlines evolved into the look we now call Art Deco but, at the time, was called Moderne. The Bauhaus movement led the way in stimulating new ideas of shape and colour in every kind of object, from houses to sports cars, from jewellery to fashion, cinemas to skyscrapers, from telephones to tea-sets.



The Machine Age, the obsession with speed and travel, new music and jazz, even archaeology, via Tutankhamun, they all fed into these 20 brief years. Even the Depression had an effect - manufactured goods needed to become more cheaply made with simpler, geometric shapes. In an unexpected way, Art Deco brought, in its wake, a sort of equality - even those on a low income could still afford to buy into the style, a hat, a teapot, a handbag, perhaps. Returning to the design track of the ocean- going liners, we had a closer look at the Queen Mary and

the story of this doughty British liner. Following WW1 and the economic problems of its aftermath, it was still decided to risk investment in travel. The Queen Mary eventually emerged from the Scottish unemployment problems of the Depression, in full Art Deco glory, to become the fastest and most financially successful of all the liners. Tragically, after this brief, 3-year period of success, WW2 intervened but the Queen Mary, pluckily, still played her part in the war. She was fast and so a perfect choice to use as a troop carrier for the next 6 years. Stripped of her finery, she travelled the world, taking as many as 15,000 personnel to vital destinations. Refitted after the war, she resumed her role as the essential and still glamorous way to cross the Atlantic- royalty, both real and Hollywood, chose it until 1967, when Cunard recognised that jet travel had overtaken sea voyages as the means to reach America. Today she's in stately retirement in California, part museum, part hotel but restored to her full Art Deco gorgeousness.

She's an example from the past, perhaps, of what Britain can do best - stylish yet restrained, beautiful but hard-working and always to be relied on in an emergency. Not a bad epitaph for an old lady of 100 or more.

For more information contact: Gilly Zeffertt 07845 849752



A Taste of Italy



I started this term with my first presentation on PIEDMONTE.

A well-attended membership gave me courage to hopefully offer an interesting presentation even though not having ever done anything like that before I was anxious that the members were entertained. Positive feedback encourages me to improve on the subject discussed. I spoke about the city Of Turin with its architecture, museums and palace. The region is a truly beautiful area of northern Italy



October saw us going to PUGLIA in SE Italy. the history and architecture of Lecce the White towns of Puglia, Alberobello with its iconic Trulli. The local economy of wine and olive oil and sharing recipes for pasta dishes of the area such as Trofei with pesto and Orecchetti with broccoli.

Finally, November was the turn of the island of Sicily It was my presentation with a discussion about the rise of Mafia which devastated the region and beyond but still the Sicilian people have fought against the pressure they felt from the economic crisis. Palermo, Catania and Mt Etna. Greek temples and baroque architecture were all discussed.



I hope this new group is enjoyed by our members and that future presentations will be informative and enjoyable, however, I'm open to suggestions of any area you would like to learn more about and to talk about the other many regions of BELLA ITALY.

For more information contact: Elaine Meredith 07300 797 715

The Archaeology Group



"This term saw the introduction of our new Archaeology Group and the first few meetings have been very encouraging, with good attendances and a variety of subjects being presented. Andy Barrow gave us all a much-needed explanation of Radiocarbon Dating; Andrew Wiltshire spoke of the ancient and mysterious Anasazi culture of the South-Eastern USA and Quentin Lang reviewed the latest News articles concerning those with an archaeological interest! At the time of printing this article we are very pleased to welcome our first outside speaker, Therese Kearns, Director of Archaeology and Operations at Butser Ancient Farm to give a talk on "Bringing the Past to Life". The group has certainly hit the ground running!

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



New class starting in January <u>Ukulele lessons for beginners</u>

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.

Art Appreciation



This term started with a look at the two greats in the Art world who sadly died this year. David Hockney and Yayoi Kusama (the Japanese artist with the obsession with spots. David Hockney has had such a long and varied career. He embraced iPad paintings in his later years. The French absolutely loved him as he spent a lot of time in Normandy and creating lots of painting of the seasons in Normandy and claiming his inspiration was from the Bayeux Tapestry. The latest Brittany Ferry proudly displays some of his artwork and the French rank him among the greatest of modern artists.



Other members are taking it in turns to give us talks on artists they have discovered which broadens the scope of what we look at with a different perspective. Elaine Lawson stepped in to give a talk on War Artists. The presentation showed the work of some of the 42 official War Artists recording the damage caused to London and the surrounding area between 1940 and 1945. Styles and techniques varied but the impact of the damage caused to the city was profound. Many of the painting focussed on the population, their resilience and their protection during raids, other scenes on the damage done and the clearing showing a 'back to business' attitude. There were a few demonstrating a sense of humour, the attack on London Zoo and the recapture of the animals being an example.



Lin Schofield told us all about the amazing artist Stephen Wiltshire who can remember and draw scenes in incredible detail after just seeing it once.



The new statue on the fourth plinth has caused some controversy so we traced the variety of artwork that has been shown over the years from Ecce Homo to Lady in Blue.

The architecture class were all very interested in the Art Deco movement and asked if we could look at this in the wider context of art, clothes, furniture etc. Poirot is the quintessential Art Deco man. Everything from his clothes to the furniture in his flat and the flat itself. Art Deco was a reaction to Art Nouveau with all the curves and in came geometric designs and a sense of modernity. There are the famous Lalique perfume bottles and the diamond and platinum jewellery which epitomised the glamour of the 20s and 30s between the war.



Following on with the theme of larger-than-life sculptures on the fourth plinth, we looked at the statues of some of Beryl Cook's characters that have been on display in Plymouth.



They are celebrating the 100th anniversary of her birth and capturing the joie de vivre that her characters show. Perfect opportunities for selfies. Beryl seemed to capture the essence of people having a good time and showing that this was not simply the preserve of the young and beautiful. There was always a bit of humour in the portrayal of the characters, which made her such a popular artist. Who doesn't love a leopard skin patterned shopping trolley. It is only after time that people are giving her credit for her talent and that there was more to her than cartoon characters. Another sculptor who created larger than life paintings and sculptures was Botero, a Columbian artist who seemed to believe big was beautiful. A small dapper man himself, he created these statues and paintings of huge people. These statues are found all over the world and we even have a couple in London although he is not so well known in this country. This is the Broadgate Venus



For more information contact: Susan Johnson 07711 300 407

Music Discovery

The faithful band of music lovers that is the Music Discovery Group has now been meeting for six years and we have now settled down as a friendly and welcoming group. Our format is now fixed as a leader-led session before a generous coffee break, after which the session becomes a 'free for all' with members bringing music of any genre that they would like to share with us. If such offerings are thin on the ground I always have my my trusty SSD (Solid State Disk) with me with 8,000 musical tracks on it to fall back upon, in the metaphorical rather than the literal sense of that phrase. Sadly from 2027 the group has agreed that meetings will be monthly rather than fortnightly as a fortnightly meeting is becoming a bit demanding for the Group's Leader and Deputy Leader, but this change doesn't preclude a return to fortnightly meeting at some future date.Music Dicovery Group **For more information contact: Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357**





Curry & Craft Ale Club



The Curry & Craft Ale Club has now held three very enjoyable meals: two were lunches and one was an evening meal, an evening meal which due to bad planning on my part coincided with some football match or another! Memo to self: check the football fixtures before planning a curry supper! Our next meal is planned for November 6th, to be held at lunchtime at the Tap and Tandoor Indian bar and restaurant in Gunwharf Quays. This venue is fast becoming a favourite: good food, good service and easy to get to by public transport. What more could one ask?

For more information contact: Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357

Brush up your French Conversation

'What's your level in French' (Alexa on YouTube)

Maybe you've studied French at school or learned with Duolingo and would like to practise speaking. In our group we listen and watch 'Easy Conversation' on YouTube. We tell simple stories and ask questions. If your French level is A1, A2, or B1, you would be welcome in our group.

Please find out your level on Alexa. **To register interest please email: - hilary@poley.co.uk**

The French Experience Group





We are continuing to share our experiences in French or Franglais and embracing the collaborative way of running the class. This term we have been entertained by people's holidays in France or the UK. Lots of people seem to have been to Cornwall (Cornouaille) this summer. Tales from France have included the poor dog who fell in a slurry pit but was rescued and beautiful views of Cap Ferrat and wonderful platters of seafood. As well as the food there are some amazing churches. We saw photos of the white horses in the Camargue One of our class members told us about the house he bought in France many years ago and somehow persuaded the local school to enrol a couple of his children. This helped the entire family integrate in the local community and the children had excellent results in their French qualifications. We also looked at Guernsey which itself seems "Franglais" The streets all have French names, but everyone speaks English. You can see France from Guernsey and several well-known French artists took refuge there when Napoleon lll was ruling France. Victor Hugo lived on Guernsey for 15 years and wrote Les Miserables there. His house, in the aptly named Hauteville, is actually owned by Paris as he bequeathed it to the city. The tours are in alternate French or English. Every room in the house is completely different, and the dining room has a huge H made out of Dutch tiles above the fireplace.





We looked at the amazing story of Charles Aznavour who was of Armenian descent but born in Paris and worked in a variety of performance jobs before making it as a singer. His parents had sheltered Jews and deserters from the Gestapo when Paris was occupied, and he and his sister helped with this from a very young age.

A more unusual topic was the 1950's show flat in Le Havre which is now a UNESCO heritage site. After the allies flattened Le Havre during the war, an enterprising architect designed beautiful flats to replace the old, bombed homes. These were way ahead of their time and are still desirable properties today with their full-length windows and lots of double doors so the rooms can be made bigger or smaller as required. To show variety we even discussed National Gin and Tonic Day which happened to fall on a French class day. No free samples were available unfortunately.

For more information contact: Susan Johnson 07711 300 407

FRENCH READING GROUP, Mondays



Well, it's newsletter time again – it always seems to arrive so suddenly!

As usual, a couple of topical French quotes:

« Il faut cultiver notre jardin » *1) (Voltaire – from 'Candide')

Today, this could be seen as a warning, not necessarily an invitation to find happiness and meaning in honest toil! And surely, Corneille's « Il faut bonne mémoire après au'on a menti » *2) is out of date, and needs rephrasing, something like: « Celui qui ment a besoin d'une audace effrontée » *3)

(*1) "It is necessary to cultivate our garden", *2) "one who lies should have a good memory", *3) "one who lies needs shameless audacity")

This term, two people have joined us, which is very welcome. They have brought new vigour to the group and new ideas – John says:

"I have recently joined the U3A French reading group to brush up my French. I find it very useful, most entertaining and excellent value for money. I wish that I had started earlier."



We read a mixture of novels, short stories and articles from "Le Monde". This term, we have read "Le Café de l'Excelsior" by Philippe Claudel, a poignant story about a young boy brought up by his grandfather, who runs a small bistro where lonely people meet and talk. However, the authorities don't think that this is a suitable environment for a young boy, even though they are devoted to each other. How will they cope with being separated? It is a moving story full of empathy and humanity.



« Le Silence de la Mer » by Jean Bruller (Pseudonym 'Vecours') was published in 1941. It tells how an old man and his niece show resistance to the German officer billeted in their house by not talking to him. He is, in fact, a decent man, and there is emotion, pathos and revelation in this beautiful tale. It was filmed in 2004 and is well worth seeing.



We enjoy short stories because we can complete one in a session. Every year, a book of short stories is published called "13 à Table" – thirteen very different and engaging stories by thirteen different writers. Articles from "Le Monde" keep us up-to-date with the French take on world affairs, as well as what may be happening in France – quite a lot recently! We are also dipping into an extract from "Germinal" by Zola. It is beautifully written, but very dark – quite a challenge. One thing we have neglected this term is poetry. That can be tricky and somewhat daunting, but it is certainly worth the effort. We should address this next term.

So, we enjoy our two hours a fortnight. We all have different things to bring to the table. We are very democratic, and all reading suggestions are considered. Sometimes we play games, such as French scrabble or Trivial Pursuits, which can be quite competitive!

For more information contact: Jane Helliwell 07778 484 974



German Studies



A couple of quite different but both unusual items have kept us engrossed this term.

A member found a wonderful article about the alcohol-drinking habits of many famous composers! The rhyming slang "Brahms and Liszt" is an apparently well-known, and entirely appropriate euphemism about their life-style (though of course, being the product of convent education, I had never heard it, and wouldn't have had any idea of what slang might rhyme with "Liszt" to indicate inebriation……)

Liszt's reputation for hair-raising episodes of drunkenness frequently involved drinking a bottle of cognac a day and sometimes also a couple of bottles of wine.

Brahms was famous for playing the piano in brothels and pubs – just to earn money – as a young man. It is alleged that prostitutes found him charming; he reserved his worst behaviour for respectable gatherings!

Schubert was no better. Even as a teenager, he could be "a nasty drunk", Beethoven was not much better. They both developed syphilis; Beethoven died before the tertiary stage set in, but Schumann lived long enough to go horribly mad – another little gem of information which seemed to escape my convent education……

The other interesting item was the result of a contact via our website from a woman – Petra - who studied at Portsmouth Poly about 40 years ago. A great Anglophile and also a lover of our language, she has spent years teaching it. She asked if there was a chance she could meet some of us. It was so gratifying that many of our group met her in the Hub Café one morning. Originally from Bremen, she now lives in Kiel and is involved in an organisation very similar to the u3a, but local, not national.



By quite a coincidence, one day while she was here a large, green 3-masted yacht sailed past my window. Some people had noticed part of the name: Alexander. (The full name is

Alexander von Humboldt. Anyone who read my entry last term might remember that.) It is a training ship for German young people from about 14; they spend 6 months aboard sailing various legs of the round-the-world yacht journeys. It moored in Gunwharf for a while and intrepid Petra persuaded the guy guarding entry to the jetty to let her board the ship. That yacht is based in Bremen, Petra's original home. The serendipity of that delighted Petra and was a very satisfying end to her stay! In fact, I did a Harbour Tour that week which started at the Dock Yard but because it was the last of the day, dropped us off at Gunwharf and we passed very close to the Alexander von Humboldt!

What goes around comes around!!

For more information contact: Hilary Nicklin 02392 297 867

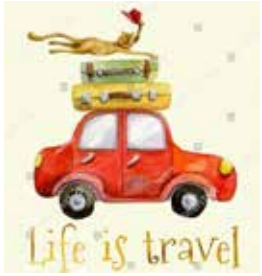


Spanish



Our numbers continue to grow, and we seem to be made up of a group of people who enjoy travelling and can be relied on to bring back stories from their visits to Spain or Spanish speaking countries. We continue to follow the adventures of Juan and Pamela in Mexico. They do speak nicely and clearly so that we can follow what they say (even without the subtitles) We have been grappling with the subjunctive this term which the Spanish are very fond off. Any wishes or hopes will be followed by this tense. We had an interesting session on what annoys us about our neighbours. This seems to be something we do share with the Spanish. The picture of the baby illustrates the problems we have with this tense as it no longer really exists in English. The baby is surprised that people don't understand how to use the subjunctive correctly. Oddly enough Tuesday 13th is considered unlucky in the same way that we think Friday 13th is unlucky. We did actually have a class on that day, but thankfully we all survived. The level of the class is quite high but if you think you would like to give us a go, just give me a call or email

For more information contact: Susan Johnson 07711 300 407 jobinemarmion@hotmail.com



Armchair travel

In **September**? We made a return visit to Madeira, joined a discovery visit to Tromso in Norway (with hopes of seeing the Northern lights) and, closer to home, travelled to Hayling Island and thought about its role through history. Many in the group were able to share memories!

October's travels? It was a busy morning! Andy Barrow revisited his home county of East Yorkshire ; we took a speedy journey across England's largest county of North Yorkshire from Grassington to Pickering, stopping off in Skipton, Richmond, Northallerton and Kilburn to see the famous carved mice, with a detour into County Durham to Barnard Castle to get our sight checked (we were amazed that you can get souvenir postcards depicting "optician's eye tests" 6 years after it became famous) ; and, with Andrew Wiltshire, we found out all about Whitby - goths, jet, ghosts in the Abbey and fish and chips!



And, as I write this, we look forward to **November** when our travel plans will be taking us to the Amazon, discovering the mysteries and psychology behind airport departure lounges, and we hope to see Portsmouth, from the air - through airplane windows and with the help of drones.

Meeting monthly, in just 3 months leading up to Christmas, we shall certainly have travelled widely. There is always the opportunity for you to join us and share travel experiences! Equally it is an opportunity to sit back, relax and listen! Do come...whenever your travel diary permits!

And, with November's meeting in mind ....Where is this? It is local! All will be revealed in 2027! **For more information contact: Jean Barrow 07746 233 496**

History



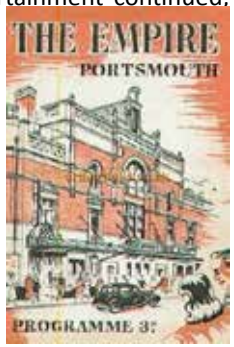
Entertainment and Leisure has been the theme for this term's meetings. In September we looked at Portsmouth's Theatres and Cinemas. In the 1800s, following several changes to the laws, people had more leisure time and The Music Hall was very popular. There were numerous Music Halls in Portsmouth and it boasted 5 Theatres and one of the largest Music Halls in the country " The South of England Music Hall" was built in St Mary-Street, in 1855, It could accommodate up to two thousand people and was heated by 16 fires and lit by gaslight

The Early Theatre Royal in Old Portsmouth, built in 1802, was also a popular venue. The first Theatre Royal in Old Portsmouth was later demolished. A new Theatre Royal was opened in Guildhall Walk. This was later rebuilt by the famous theatre architect Frank Matcham, and it is still thriving today

The new Prince's Theatre was situated in Lake Road, Landport. It opened in 1869 it was a popular venue in the years between the wars. Unfortunately, In 1940 the Theatre was severely damaged by a bomb and eight children were killed. The damage was too severe to repair, and the Theatre was finally demolition in 1942.



The Kings Theatre in Albert Road in Southsea, was another Frank Matcham Theatre opened in 1907. The Kings Theatre closed briefly at the start of World War II then reopened and ultimately survived the heavy wartime bombing of Portsmouth. Entertainment continued throughout the war and afterwards. In 1990 the Kings was bought by Hampshire County Council, but its future looked uncertain. Eventually in 2001 Portsmouth City Council acquired it and then leased it back to the Kings Theatre Trust Ltd, who have been running the Theatre successfully since 2003.



The Empire Theatre was in Edinburgh Road. It opened in October 1891. The Theatre was designed by C J Phipps another prolific theatre architect. In 1900 plans were made for a larger theatre

Unfortunately, the licence was not granted, However, in 1913 the Empire Theatre was completely renovated and renamed the Coliseum. After the war it was again redecorated and reverted back to its original name of 'The Empire. It continued to flourish again until the 1950's when audiences began to decline. It was closed and demolished to make way for a supermarket in 1968.

The Groundlings Theatre is a rare survivor of a Georgian building built in 1784 as a 'Beneficial School', and still retains many of its original features, such as the original floorboards and fireplaces. It is run as a charity today.

In the 19th and early 20th century many of the stars of the day appeared in Portsmouth. - Marie Lloyd, George Robey, Vesta Tilley, Harry Randall, Little Tich, and Nellie Wallace were among those who came to Portsmouth.



Cinema - Going to the Cinema was an important leisure pastime in the early and mid-20th century. Millions flocked to the cinema on a weekly basis, often referred to as the '*social habit of the age'*



Between 1910 and 2008, Portsmouth had over 25 cinemas. Many have since been demolished, bombed or converted. The Gaiety, The Southsea Electric, The Scala, The Rex, The Rialto, and The Essoldo are just a few of the magical names that conjure up Portsmouth's cinema heritage.

Several of these cinemas built in the 1930s were big architectural landmarks to the city, including the Savoy on Commercial Road (later the ABC, which opened in July 1937 with 1,911 seats) and the iconic art-deco Odeon in London Road, North End, which opened on December 14, 1936.

However, television and changing habits led to declining audiences through the 1950s and 1970s, grand buildings found other uses sometimes as Bingo Halls, Supermarkets and even a Mosque, others were demolished to make way for residential buildings.



In October Lesley Willis, one of our u3a members, told us about her life and work in Warners Holiday Camp in the 50s and 60s on Hayling Island. It sounded as if they had a lot of fun!

The improvement in Labour laws gave people paid holidays and more leisure time. Factories in the north of England closed for two weeks and the whole community went on holiday. They arrived in Hayling Island by coach and train, sometimes 5000 people could arrive in one weekend. Harold Warner, who at the time was working with Billy Bulin, saw the need for a more inclusive, luxury holiday with accommodation, meals and entertainment, provided. The children were entertained and mums and dads could relax. Lesley was a Nursery worker helping to look after the children. They played games, dressed up and held competitions. There were activities for all the family like the famous Knobbly Knees



and Glamorous Grandmother competitions, There was entertainment all day - sports, swimming and dances in the evening. Families returned year after year, and there was a real community spirit.

However, by the end of the 60s holidays abroad became more popular. Package holidays made it cheaper and the weather was better. The role of the Holiday Camp changed, some closed and some became hotels, only a few now remain providing short breaks or day trips

In November continuing our entertainment and Leisure theme we looked at the Nightlife in Portsmouth and Southsea after WW2, the Dancehalls and Nightclubs. In the post war years Southsea was the place to be.





The Savoy opposite South Parade Pier started life as a café and dancehall in 1920. After the war it flourished with visiting artist and bands performing regularly - Acker Bilk, Kenny Ball and Ted Heath were. just a few of the famous names.



Kimbells in Osbourne Road opened in the 1930s providing a venue for local bands to perform at the dances. Kimbells was where The Birdcage Club started later moving to Eastney and for a while it was a Playboy Club. In the 2000s it housed a Casino.



As the culture changed the Savoy, and Kimbells closed and in the 70s and 80s there were several popular night clubs around the city including - Joannas in Southsea, The Mecca in Arundel Street, Granny's in The Tricorn and Martha's at North End. However, in the 90s the Nightlife of Portsmouth began to move to Guildhall Walk where popular bars and clubs included names like The Fuzzy Duck, and Pure. Most have closed or changed now and only Weatherspoon's and Astoria remain.



Portsmouth's dancehalls and entertainment venues have evolved from 19th-century music halls and seaside ballrooms into legendary 20th-century discotheques. All are deeply tied to the city's rich naval heritage, student population, and vibrant seaside culture.

For any information contact: Rosemary Sirett -Telephone 07540 597804

POETRY and POETRY & DRAMA Groups, Wednesday & Thursday

Don't you just love Shakespeare?!

"Promising is the very air of the time" (Timon of Athens)

"When clouds are seen, wise men put on their cloaks" (Richard the III)

"'Tis the mind that makes the body rich" (Taming of the Shrew)



Bearing in mind that last quote, long live Mickey Mouse degrees! I can also safely say that our dramatic and poetic minds have been enriched, exercised, challenged and expanded once more as our literary odyssey continues. Since our last newsletter, we have covered much ground, and I can merely mention a few highlights as I see them.



We often choose a particular poet as a theme, and Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 – 1889) impressed us with his sincerity, concern for the environment and sense of wonder. His "sprung rhythm" can be perplexing, but when read aloud it reveals itself as a joyful, excited tumbling out of ideas and observations. He had wanted to be an artist, and his artistic endeavours are worth searching out, as was explained to us by Chris Martin in an excerpt from a recent talk he had given on Hopkins and his love of colour in art and nature. Eventually, Hopkins became a Jesuit priest, but he had a turbulent relationship with his faith:

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend

With thee, but, sir, so what I plead is just.

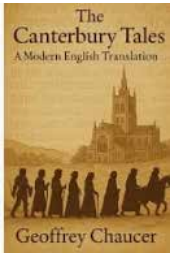
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must

Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Twentieth century poetry was another theme, and, let's face it, there is no concise way to sum that up – it is a very large palette, ranging from the late Victorians to Brian Bilston. Kipling's "If" is still considered inspiring, and we all know "The Jungle Book", and have at least heard of "Gunga Din". However, as a child of his time, he inevitably inspires some disagreement, he is, after all, responsible for popularising the phrase "the white man's burden". But what about this: after the death of his son John at the battle of Loos in 1915, he wrote in "Epitaphs of the War":

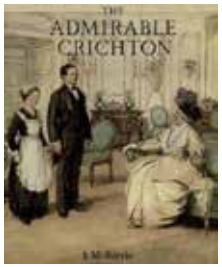
"If any question why we died,

Tell them, because our fathers lied."



Many of our group's favourite poems and poets popped up in this session, which prompts the thought that we need, perhaps, to focus more on previous centuries to broaden our base! Robert Graves' "Welsh Incident" (a truly hilarious event!), Thomas Hardy's "The Ruined Maid" and Betjeman's "Slough" being just a few of the humorous poems we revelled in. (Although, to be honest, in the current climate, this last one is gaining a new edge: "come friendly bombs and fall on Slough"!) Carol Ann Duffy's "Empty Nest" speaks for itself, and Shakespeare's lament for a (soon to be) dead child in "King John" is heart-rending, suggesting that grief may, in fact, be a friend, keeping the memory of a loved one alive. Finally, we have tentatively begun exploring Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales", (in modern English!). They can be rude, exciting, incomprehensible or boring, and are not to everyone in the group's taste, so will only be explored occasionally!

Our Thursday drama group is also going from strength to strength. We all enjoyed Barrie's



"The Admirable Crichton", comically upending class relations when a butler becomes the leader of a group of shipwrecked aristocrats. Normal relations are, however, resumed upon rescue – Barrie couldn't really upset early twentieth century class relations! The happy ending in the 1957 film is not in the play! Next, we enjoyed being confused by Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors" about twins and identity mix-ups. Currently we have two plays on the go: "Cyrano do Berjerac" by Edmond Rostand (1868 – 1918), which I am sure most of our readers will have heard of, if only from the famous 1990 film starring (unfortunately?) Gerard Depardieu. Concurrently, we are also very much enjoying Shakespeare's comedy "Much Ado about Nothing" – a near tragedy. I highly recommend Kenneth Branagh's film version which helped all (well, nearly all) my FE students pass their GCSE English!

Onward and upward!

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



Writing Group

We had a suggestion last summer that we start writing a Murder Mystery - just the first chapter! This initiative continues to flourish unlike the poor victims most of whom met extremely grisly ends. The pieces of writing were to be set somewhere confined. These places included a remote lighthouse on the Hound's Tooth Rock, an old people's home, an Escape Room and an island in the Inner Hebrides. One squeamish writer bypassed the general gore and unpleasantness by basing her account within the Wild Wood, making the murder of one Mr Toad and a potential suspect of a certain Ratty sculling quickly through the Willows as fast as the Wind.

We could hardly stop at the first chapter! Most listeners had far too many unanswered questions. Writers were beseeched to continue. Most of the subsequent authors have since confessed that they had no idea who were the perpetrators but would work on the problem. In September we were joined by three new members who fortunately were not put off by the general horror and reappeared in October. One of them suggested our next theme "I was mugged!" This was a great stimulus. Two quite independent accounts were written about events in Naples. Hurriedly before the session ended, we had a show of hands to indicate who had in fact visited Naples and had not been mugged. The number was reassuringly large. Just as well, since the leader of one of our newest groups, the Taste of Italy, was present! This month, our subject of choice is "The Umbrella." Watch this space ...



For more information contact: Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764 N.B. The Writing group has reached its maximum number and is now sadly closed to future members.

Philosophy



We have touched upon Bryan Magee's BBC series Modern Philosophy. John Rawls' Theory of Justice and Logical Positivism with an emphasis on A J Ayer's Language Truth and Logic have produced very varied effects. We will continue through the series for some time, but it is my intention to return to the theme of the difference between subjectivist and objectivist approaches, and I will stir things up with a stick by introducing a continental philosopher whose concern is with matters of Taste! The story he builds should make for and informative and interesting session or two.

One reason for injecting a dose of a contrasting tradition is that Magee's series necessarily leads through the rather dry and academic territory of the 'linguistic turn' that led to fixation upon language that seemed, to the public, to discover an unappealing morass. A discussion can only take a limited diet of the Brain Trust's Professor Joad's gambit of,"It depends upon what you mean by . . . . . whatever!

For more information contact: Tony Stutters 07739 832 774

World of Books

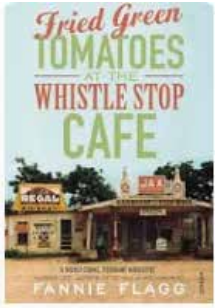


The last book we read before the summer break was 'Before the Coffee Gets Cold' this book split the class some liked it some did not and unfortunately, I came in the did not group. It was a strange book about a cafe in Japan which contained a 'chair' which if you sat on it you had the chance of going back into the past or if you preferred into the future but you had to be back 'Before the Coffee' got cold. One problem with this chair is that it was occupied by a 'ghost' and therefore could only be accessed when the ghost got up and went to the toilet, if you tried to move the ghost at any other time she would put a curse on you.

The characters in this book were the people who ran the cafe and some of their relatives and their daily interactions with each other which appeared to consist of constant tragedies a strange book a mixture of fantasy and sci fi not one that I could recommend.



Our next book was completely different 'The Miniaturist' by Jessie Burton it would be very hard to compare the Amsterdam of 1686 which is the setting for this book and the Amsterdam of today. The heroine of the book a young girl called Nella is married not by choice to a wealthy merchant Johannes Brandt. She finds herself in a very strange household with many secrets when her husband buys her a wedding gift of a Dolls House which she attempts to purchase furnishings for. The Miniaturist she commissions to make these items goes far beyond what is being asked for and some of the items received seem to predict the future which does not look good for Nella. After her husband is executed as a homosexual, we do not know what happens to Nella the book leaves you to write your own ending and the fate of Nella. A good book and a very interesting read lots of characters and many twists and turns.

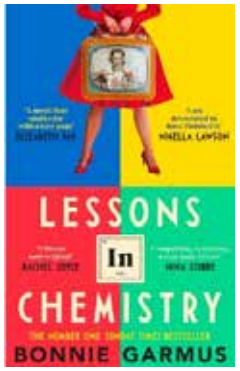


Fried Green tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe was our last book of this session once again the group were divided some loved it while others were not so sure. The story basically in about a community in the deep south of America over two periods the 20ths to the 30ths and into the 1940's and the first world war. It covers many aspects of their existence from great poverty to immense generosity shown by some members of the community and certain unlawful activities carried out by certain members of society in order to allow others to actually live. In places it is very funny and others quite sad but in the end, it is an in-depth study of human life and interactions with each other and their environment. Definitely worth a read

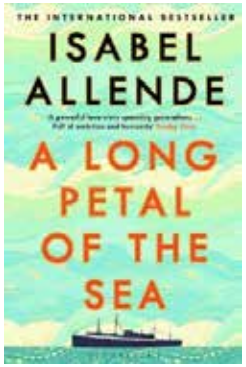
For more information contact: Christine Courtney-Wells 02392 297723

Pelham Book Group

We have a variety of books to review with you from our Zoom sessions over the past few months. All fairly modern, some with well-known authors.

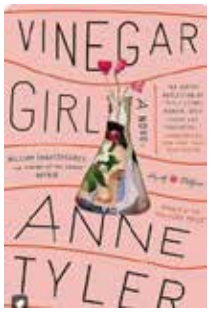


Our July novel was read with enthusiasm by us all. A debut novel, highly popular, with all a reader could wish for: an entertaining thought-provoking plot, challenging themes, comedy, lively characters and even a dog called Six-Thirty. This is 'Lessons in Chemistry', 2022, Bonnie Garmus, if you missed this when it was published you missed a gem. Set in 1960's Southern California, a brilliant chemist Elizabeth Zott struggles in a world that believes science is a man's job, women, generally, should be kept in the kitchen as little more than a domestic servant. A chain of events leads Elizabeth to become the reluctant star of what develops into America's most popular cooking show 'Supper at Six' where she refuses to simply pass on recipes and cooking tips but teaches her female audience to question the rules, trust themselves and change their lives. She is challenging the status quo that has made her life so difficult. The plot is more complex than this with memorable events and colourful characters. Please read and enjoy!



In August 'A Long Petal of the Sea', 2019, Isobel Allende, took us from the Spanish Civil War in Barcelona to France to Chile. Allende uses personal experience and fictional characters in the context of real historical events in this epic story of love, conflict, displacement and eventual reconciliation. The historical events were a revelation to most of us. We could engage with the characters, their suffering and trust in their survival. This is a disturbing but worthwhile read, especially if you are interested in Spanish and South American history.

September returned us to America with 'Vinegar Girl', 2016, Anne Tyler. We discovered this was one in a series commissioned by Random House's Hogarth Shakespeare project where contemporary novelists retell stories from Shakespeare's plays. The plot is based on 'The



Taming of the Shrew' now set in modern Baltimore where Kate, an unmarried daughter of an eccentric scientist, Dr Battista, has limited future opportunities until her father introduces her to his brilliant lab assistant, Pyotr. Their relationship evolves as Dr Battista engineers a plot for Kate and Pyotr to marry so Pyotr can gain a Green card allowing him to stay in the country. Plans inevitably do not run smoothly as a range of interesting characters involve themselves in the action. There is the anticipated happy ending after various outrageous episodes. We all enjoyed this amusing book as long as it was treated as a lightweight, easy read, not as textured as other Anne Tyler novels.



Our October read was 'The Queen's Governess', 2021, Tessa Arlen, if you enjoyed 'The Crown', you will enjoy this. The book begins in 1931 as 22-year-old Marion Crawford, 'Crawfie', becomes governess to Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. She becomes their trusted confident, spending 16 years of her life in loyal service to the royal family sacrificing her own life and love to do so, putting their well-being before her own. The action ranges from the abdication, WW II, Elizabeth and Philip's marriage to the 1970's. There is no happy ending here as the dedicated servant is ultimately cruelly ostracised by the royal family for daring to publish a harmless memoir of her life with the princesses. Crawfie's life in rural, weather ravaged Scotland is an effective contrast to the opulence and extravagance of her life in the royal residences. If you enjoy speculating about members of the royal family this is an interesting, straightforward read.



We have yet to discuss November's 'Snow' 2020, by the Irish writer John Banville who won the Booker prize with his 'The Sea'. 'Snow' is the first book in the St John Strafford crime novels. Set in the winter of 1957 in County Wexford, a particularly gruesome murder of a Catholic priest takes place in the library of a Protestant aristocratic family as the weather - snow - plays its part in the crime. The scene is set for alarming divisions within post-war Irish society, institutional secrets and sectarian tensions. It is an uncomfortable, if amusing in parts, read. Strafford solves the case and loose ends are tidied at the very end.

Three of our authors: Allende, Banville and Tyler have large oeuvres to explore if the ones here don't appeal to you. There is so much to say about our reading. Please enjoy whatever books you select. As Queen Camilla advocates "books can change lives" in the BBC Two/ iPlayer programme 'The Book That Changed My Life'. This is the National Year of Reading 2026.

As ever our thanks go to Maggie Macbeth with her faultless dedication to collect and distribute our books, also to Havant library for usually providing our requests. Thank you.

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

Needles and Pins



Gill Pridmore
Cute Fox



Oly Quinn and Lynn Timms
Poppies for the display at Southsea castle



Gill Pridmore
Snowmen



Lynn Timms
Baby set and Peppa Pig jumper





Heather Lewis
Christmas decoration

This term some members of our group have been contributing to the "Sea of Poppies" display which will be hung on the Southsea Castle walls to honour armed forces members lost in the line of duty, which is due to be unveiled on 30th October. Liz Valette has been working on saving an old but very comfortable pair of jeans, using Japanese Sashiko (little stabs) mending technique. Sashiko is a traditional Japanese style of functional embroidery used to reinforce, repair and extend the life of worn textiles. Our members continue to bring to the group the things they are working on, especially knitting, whilst having a good and friendly natter, so we welcome anybody who would like to join us fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon.



For more information, please contact: Oly Quinn 07506 145293

Art for All - Tuesday mornings

This is a practical, self-led, group where members bring their own work to focus on during our fortnightly meeting.

We are a very friendly, sociable group and despite our chatter we manage to produce a diverse selection of artwork using various mediums including black inks, watercolour paints and pencils, charcoal and pencils.

This term one of our members, Craig, shared his knowledge on the use and purpose of different paint brushes. Then we all produced our own interpretation of a tree!



As a sociable bunch we meet for a coffee and / or breakfast in the school holidays as this picture shows. We welcome, and can accommodate, new members so please do contact me if you would like to join us. **For more information, please contact either of the co-leaders Lin Schofield 07909 537215 or Lynn Timms 07851 069146**



Brenda Colman
Penguins



Lynne Foord
Hedgehog



Lin Schofield
Dog



Maggie Macbeth
Gold Crest



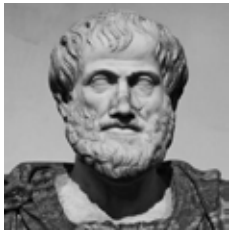
Gallina Miller
Portrait

Religion, Spirituality and Life



'What if the Hokey Cokey really is what it's all about?'

We recently discussed what it might meant to live a worthwhile and happy life without recourse to any religion at all. After all a quarter of the world's population live well enough without it (24.2% whilst 75.8% follow some religion or other.) That's about 2 billion people.



We explored living without religion through the eyes of the fourth century BC Greek philosopher Aristotle. He was untainted by any of what we call the world's major religions. He lived before Christianity, Islam and Buddhism and outside the scope of Judaism and Hinduism; and was entirely without religious feelings. He wrote extensively about living purposefully and well, living what we might call the 'good life' and contributing to civic well-being. His central idea was that a fulfilled life is developing all our distinctively human capabilities to the full, not just intellectually, but our sensations, feelings, emotions too, gearing our choices and our relationships towards what matters to us. Aristotle is deeply interested in the relationship between seeing our lives as worthwhile and fulfilled; and living purposefully to achieve it. One of his central concepts was that of virtue. It's not a word that has much currency today. It conveys something slightly priggish. "Because thou art virtuous dost thou think there shall be no more cakes and ale," protests Sir Toby Belch in Shakespeare's play Twelfth Night.

For Aristotle virtues described the qualities that every object and every person needed to achieve the purpose to which we might want to put the object. So, a good cooking knife needs to be sharp, and it needs to be the right size and shape for the things it must cut. Similarly, a warrior must be courageous and strong in battle. But Aristotle was a keen analyst of the context in which people act. We need physical virtues, moral virtues and intellectual virtues, each one of them correctly honed and shaped to the purposes we want to achieve. That means we don't want an excess of virtue. We need the right degree of courage between the constraining vices of recklessness and timidity. We need the right degree of generosity between the vices of extravagance and meanness. So, context is everything in honing our capabilities to our purposes, personal and social.

I think it would work for the Hokey Cokey. But is that all we want? Aristotle lived in a society in which the interests of slaves, nor women counted in the good life.

Next half term we shall explore how Aristotle's account of the good life figured in European history. Come and join us? **For more information contact: John Strain 07834 637 744**



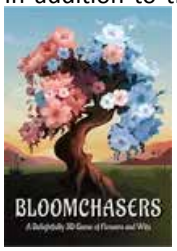
Mahjong is a tile-based game that was developed in the 19th century in China and has spread throughout the world since the early 20th century. It is played by four players The game is played with a set of 144 tiles based on Chinese characters and symbols. Help will be given to beginners. **Mah Jong** 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 usually meets once a month and has copies of Rummikub, Scrabble (we have a copy for those whose sight is not as good as it once was), Backgammon and packs of standard playing cards on hand for those who wish to play those games, other games may possibly be available on request. The group's current favourite of the above games is Rummikub. The intent is to have a fun afternoon whilst also exercising the mind at the same time.

In addition to the above the group leader brings in a game in keeping with the term's game theme to keep the group occupied for the whole afternoon, most of the games will not have come to most folk's attention as they are not generally available on the High Street, those played since the publication of the last Newsletter are as follows: -



BLOOMCHASERS, this game centres around a three-dimensional tree on to which the players need to add further branches and blooms in order to win points.



BAZAAR , a game of simple rules but complex ways of leading to victory, each player having a different set target to achieve, the game has been described as a real brain burner.



MANAGER, the players are cast in the role of CEOs of different tech companies, all of which produce the same merchandise in competition with each other. The emphasis being to cut production costs, the keen pricing of goods in the marketplace and keeping an eye out for the value of company shares given that buying and selling of shares is an integral part of the game.



BYZANZ in which the players are market traders in Byzantium bidding against one another for goods and selling them in the local market, hopefully gaining a good profit, a risky business for these ancient forefathers of Del Boy.

If you have an interest in games why not come along for a session.

For more information contact Tony Valvona 02392 822641

Film Club



Wed 6th Jan 1.45 start.

"Before Sunrise" director Richard Linklater. 1995 97mins. Starring Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy.

Before Sunrise is a 1995 romantic drama film and is the first instalment in the Before trilogy. In the film, Jesse (Ethan Hawke) and Céline (Julie Delpy) meet on a train and disembark in Vienna to spend the night together**.** The film explores themes and perspectives on life, love, time, death, self-discovery, and postmodern romance.



Wed 3rd Feb 1.45 start.

" Before Sunset" director Richard Linklater. 2004 77 mins. Starring Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy.

The story picks up nine years after Jesse (Hawke) and Céline (Delpy) spent a single spontaneous night together in Vienna. Now in their early 30s, they cross paths again in Paris during the final stop of Jesse's European book tour, where he is promoting a novel based on their original encounter. With only a few hours left before Jesse must catch a flight back to New York, the two walk through the streets, cafes, and canals of Paris. As the film unfolds in approximate real-time, their casual catching-up quickly deepens into candid conversations about career setbacks, marital disappointments, personal growth, and the enduring romantic feelings they still have.



Wed 3rd Mar 1.45 start.

"Before Midnight" director Richard Linklater.2014 104 mins. Starring Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy.

Jesse and Céline are now in their early 40s, living in Paris as a couple with twin daughters. The film takes place over the final day of their summer vacation on the Peloponnese coast in Greece. Unlike the romantic idealism of the first two films, Before Midnight explores the raw complexities of long-term commitment, aging, and domestic reality. Tensions surface regarding Jesse's relationship with his teenage son from a previous marriage, Céline's career transitions, and the everyday compromises of their partnership. This culminates in an intense, deeply honest argument in a hotel room that puts the future of their relationship to the test.

For more information contact: Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764

The Walking Groups- The Ambling group



It was a gloriously hot day on the **14th of July** when we went to Cowes. Perfect blue skies and the Solent was like a mill pond. First step was a Hovercraft from Clarence Pier, then a bus to East Cowes where we caught the floating bridge, a chain ferry, to cross to West Cowes where we met up with Cheryl and Hilary. After a refreshing coffee we walked around the shops and sites of Cowes taking in the vibrant atmosphere and history of this famous sailing town and taking time to select a perfect spot for lunch surrounded by boats, before reversing our journey and heading for home.

On **24 July**, the Pride of Lions took over the streets of Portsmouth. The Ambling Group, keen to see these fabulous creatures, went out in pursuit around the Dockyard, The Camber and Gunwharf Quays. We were impressed by the quality and variety of the artwork the different artists used to express so many aspects of Portsmouth life. A great addition to our city.

In a summer of seemingly endless hot sunny days the **21st August** forecast rain. Doggedly 3 of us went ahead with a walk along the Solent Way around the edge of Langstone Harbour. The tide was nearly out but there were small boats sailing in isolated pools and geese and birds feeding in the shallows. A beautiful morning and home just before the forecast rain finally arrived. **Elaine Hasker**

September 11 - Janice had planned to lead a walk to Apley Tower on the Island, but the weather was doubtful and 1or 2 people said 'I've been there before.' I ask you! So, we substituted Lee-on-Solent by ferry, bus and a carvery! Very nice. Janice will take us to Apley Tower another time.

October 10 - Pagham Harbour and RSPB Nature reserve.

The sun shone on the birds as we watched from the Hide. A friendly, knowledgeable man helped us identify some of the birds with our binoculars. We walked 2 miles alongside the harbour and those of us with walking limitations walked to a bench to admire the view and enjoyed coffee in the RSPB Information Centre.

Future Ambles

November 7 – Bosham

December 4 (Friday) Train to Winchester and visit the Christmas Market

January 9th or 16th Paths near Stansted House and the Garden Centre

For further information contact Hilary hilary@poley.co.uk or Elaine Hasker elainehasker@aol.com

The Walking Group

Wow, what a summer we had but unfortunately too hot to go out walking. We did get back out in September though. Our first walk was to Queen Elizabeth Country Park. Weather had cooled down at last and made it pleasant for walking. We all met up in the park's cafe for our usual coffee and returned later for a very go lunch. We managed to find a reasonably flat walk with some lovely views over to Butser hill. It was long enough for our first walk back.

On a beautiful sunny day in October, we headed off to South Harting. The lovely Italian cafe La Folia was calling us with its tempting pastries and coffee. I had mapped out a walk, but we were having trouble finding a public footpath when we met a lovely lady walking her lurcher. She told us that my proposed route involved a steep climb and that she could show us a flatter shorter walk to East Harting. I am now so pleased we asked her as she came with us on the walk and told us many interesting facts about the villages and the houses en route. She showed us hidden courtyards and a house that was used as a mother and baby house for unmarried women in the past away from prying eyes. It was a delightful walk across fields and passed orchards and then circling back to South Harting. She then pointed out a grave in the churchyard with a skull and crossbones. I have forgotten the name for this, perhaps someone could enlighten me on this. We had a peek inside the church with its copper spire. It has an interesting history, thought to have originated at the time of the Norman Conquest and after a fire in the 16c was rebuilt and further renovations were undertaken by George Gilbert Scott. Well worth a visit. Our latest walk was to the delightful Durlieghmarsh Farm, recommended to us by the lady in South Harting. What a super place it was with its very good cafe and farm shop and Emporium where I think most of us made a purchase. I can thoroughly recommend the award-winning cafe with its homemade food and great coffee and chocolate. The only problem we had was with the walk. There wasn't any internet connection and as I was relying on my phone for this walk, we were in trouble, a lesson to learn to write it all down. I tried to do it from memory, but we ended up on a wrong path. We still enjoyed a lovely walk in the warm sunshine and went back to the barn for a lovely lunch. For our next walk we are hoping to do the Harting walk again while we still have a chance of remembering the route and for the ones who couldn't make the previous one. As long as the weather is kind, we will keep going.

For more information contact: Jackie Forsyth 02392 666 680





October 10th
South Harting



September 13th
Queen Elizabeth Country Park



October 31st Durleigh

Summer Social Programme

Summer Picnic







Summer Lunch









Lion Trail





Members' Meetings Speakers in 2026



7th July 2026 Monthly Meeting Speaker

With a gentle nod to the Portsmouth 100 Celebration, for the final Monthly Meeting of the Summer Term the Speakers were members of the u3a who shared their "Memories of Living in Portsmouth".

Many of our members are city born and bred, but we also have a fair number of those who have chosen to make the city their home.

The memories shared were both varied and interesting. Alongside an anecdotal account of "my first experience of Portsmouth", which was much enjoyed by the membership, the talks included childhood memories of living in the battle torn city following the destruction of WW2 and of coming to the area through work and witnessing the development of the City of Portsmouth University. Also discussed was how the Cityscape has changed, its urban environment and modern architecture.

22nd September 2026 Monthly Meeting Speaker

We opened the first membership meeting of the Autumn Term with a visit from Dr Emily Jessica Turner, who gave an interesting and entertaining talk about the research project she has recently completed. Its subject was a much-loved local business known as Tremletts Chemist, which after trading for over a100 years, closed in 2012.

This pharmacy was a staunch and trusted member of the Portsmouth community and the adage *"Go to Tremletts",* at the offset of feeling unwell, was recognised by many members at the meeting. Emily's talk included an audio account from Bill Tremlett, one of the three brothers involved in the business, who spoke of its community ethos. Emily's account of Ruby a long serving member of staff who fitted surgical stockings during the 1960's, raised a chuckle in the room.

20th September 2026 Monthly Meeting Speaker



Today, Rebecca Worthington came to speak to us about the fascinating subject of our relationship with herbs. A practicing Medicinal Herbalist, Rebecca's talk focussed on those herbs we generally have in the spice racks of our kitchens. Drawing on the history of many of these herbs, she explained the different benefits they have to offer us in terms of, not only flavour but in support of our wellbeing.

A staunch advocate for us to reconnect with what nature has to offer, Rebecca outlined examples of herbs we could grow, cultivate, use and enjoy, raising the plants in a garden, on a windowsill or anything in between. Those attending the meeting were very interested in the samples of herbs that Rebecca bought from her practice in Emsworth.

Speaker Secretary Carol-Anne Turner

Principle



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.