

Winchester

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

September 2023

Issued quarterly: March – June – September – December

www.winchesteru3a.co.uk



**Smell the Roses – Smell the Coffee
Whatever it is that makes you happy!**

Rita Moreno

(Thanks to the Photography Group for this lovely photo)

Winchester u3a Committee 2022-23

Chairman Joan Sherrin
Vice Chairman Ann Edwards
Secretary Susan Shannon
Treasurer: Vernon Tottle
Membership: Marion Schiesser
Groups: John Craig
Speakers Secretary: Nick Vernon
Website: Barrie Brinkman
Freda Bates
Newsletter Editors: Sheila Ayling/Judy Smith



Come and join the Committee! Photo taken at a recent Committee Social.
Can you put names (as above) to faces?!
(Answers on Page 9)

Recently John and I have been looking at the current offerings and realise there are some areas of interest which are not being covered. We aim to work on this but as with all things we need your help please. To start the process adding more groups we need your thoughts and ideas plus any names of possible contacts. Remember that group leadership can be shared by a couple of members. Presently copy for our newsletter is being collated and edited by **two** of our members. They are doing a great job as I'm sure you all will agree.

We already have an 'Apple' computer group and would love to have one for Android /Windows. Perhaps there is someone out there who would be willing to help us to learn the basics in a short term weekly trial run. A couple of question and answer sessions could get us going. Talk to John or me with your thoughts.

Other main gaps which we are investigating at the moment relate to music – **Maybe an informal music for Pleasure group**. There must be members in the group who would love to meet socially and enjoy an hour or so making music with either their voice or instrument or maybe both.

An activity group – maybe line dancing and / or walking football. Probably not the best idea to conduct them at the same time!

A few members gathered together and we can achieve almost anything. It's all out there and just waiting for us to press the 'Go button'. We never know what we can achieve until we try and there is no such thing as 'egg on your face' only learning which has been set aside for a future attempt maybe in a different way.

Finally – a challenge to you all. We are 35 next year. How are we going to celebrate this milestone in the history of Winchester u3a? Ideas please.

Joan - Chairman

www.winchesteru3a.co.uk is an information source for members and the general public.

Access to Member only information is available by using the Member option on the menu with the password :-

Please let Barrie Brinkman know on webmaster@winchesteru3a.co.uk if you experience difficulties or have suggestions or need help using our web.

We welcome the following new members from:

Winchester:

Rosemary Beardow	Jean Crispin	Charlotte Farmer
Ros Hancock	Andy Hung	Susan King
Linda Lake	Jo Maclean	Philip Young
Suzanne Young (coincidence; not related)		Tony Hellard

Sutton Scotney:

Anne Harrison Mike Harrison

Colden Common:

Veronica Smith

Upham:

Dermot Flaherty

Notes for Contributors to the Newsletter.

The deadline for inclusion in the **September** newsletter is

Friday, 10th November 2023.

Please send contributions as a **Word document (not pdf)** by email attachment in **Arial font, type size 10, single line spacing** to the editors, (Sheila Ayling and Judy Smith)

You will receive an automatically generated reply acknowledging receipt. If you do not receive this reply, we have not received your contribution!

Reports of visits should not be longer than one page (about 400 words): the editor retains the right to edit items if necessary.

It is now no longer necessary to send a copy of Group reports to the Webmaster.

From the National u3a Newsletter Express:

Volunteering within u3a



We have **370**
Trust Volunteers
supporting the
Third Age Trust

There are **13 types of Trust volunteer roles** offering support at a regional or national level



We have **15 Volunteer Board of Directors** of the Trust

4 Volunteers work with staff to answer approx **330 calls on the u3a advice line per month**



On average 15 speakers

volunteer to share their knowledge, skills and experience every month as part of the **Online Events Programme**



Subject Advisers are one of our **largest groups of Trust volunteers**

1,035 u3as are supported by volunteers

across the movement, who make a difference in their local u3a, network, region, nation and at the Third Age Trust



u3a

The Annual Celebration of the u3a movement celebrates Volunteers' Week this year from 16-24th September.

Last year, u3as undertook walking challenges, hosted open days, performed musical shows and much more.

The u3a is one of the largest volunteer-led movements in the UK, with around 400,000 members contributing to their u3as.

Every day of Volunteers' Week, we have been sharing stories of u3a members sharing their time and energy to the u3a movement. Visit our social media to see some of these stories - [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

Most importantly, we want to say thank you to all our members and everyone who contributes to the u3a movement. The u3a movement wouldn't exist without you.

*Can Winchester u3a join in this year?
Check out [u3a - u3a Week](#) to find out more!*

New Debating Group.

Participating in a formal debate or even a conversation, when as participants we have spent some time researching the facts ourselves, has many benefits that include:

- Improving our critical thinking, reasoning and research skills
- Increasing our self-confidence, self-esteem and open-mindedness
- Enabling us to appreciate the validity of contrasting points of view
- Encouraging us to think 'outside the box'
- Helping us to maintain 'a personal growth mindset' that promotes lifelong learning
- Arriving at a deeper understanding of the complexity of the issues involved
- Motivating us to creatively craft our own original argument
- Helping us to clearly identify our personal values so that we live more consciously, authentically and purposefully

Furthermore, attending a debate can be more interesting, engaging, informative and thought provoking than attending a conventional lecture in which a topic is didactically taught by a single person. At the end of the debate, it is also of course the audience who decide whether the proponents or opposers of the motion have presented the most convincing argument!

Suitable topics for debate are those for which there are fairly strong arguments on both sides. The group might choose, for example, to debate the motions:

Euthanasia should be legalized the UK.

The United Kingdom should become a Republic.

Asylum seekers should be deported to Rwanda.

All member states of the United Nations should respect Universal Human Rights.

Life is getting better.

Climate change is the greatest threat to humanity today.

Wisdom comes with age and experience.

After an introductory session we would meet once a month for either a discussion on a pre-agreed controversial topic or a formal debate and at the end of each meeting every member of the group will have a few minutes to answer any or all of the following questions:

- What are the most important points you learned today?
- What questions do you still have?
- Do you feel satisfied that both sides of the argument were fairly represented?
- Did you think anyone's argument was particularly good? Can you say why?

This feedback will later be shared with everyone. The day, time and venue for our meetings will depend upon the number and availability of those who would like to join. If you are interested, please contact Ann Edwards.

The following poem was written by a u3a member while in hospital recently.
Ring any bells?!

BED 6. BLUE BAY WARD F3, SOUTHAMPTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Today I am wearing the slipper sox of security
and leaning on the Zimmer frame of mobility

I have had three dreams. In the first my fall was a bad dream
but I couldn't move my leg. I was sad.

In the second I was in my bedroom putting my clothes away.
I was happy.

In the third I was shouting at the Doctor because I was in pain.
I was very angry but when I had finished shouting I felt better.

I have said my full name and date of birth two hundred times.

Soon I will go home to my house and my cats and play music with my friends.

But today I am wearing the slipper sox of security
and leaning on the Zimmer frame of mobility.

(Lorraine Curtis)

Future Monthly Meetings

This is a brief resumé of our programme for monthly meetings for your diary. All our meetings start at 2.30 and usually have tea and biscuits, ending around 4.15pm We do hope there is something here which may interest you.

Nick Vernon

Tuesday 12 September: In the Littleton Hall
Two volunteers from the British Red Cross will tell us about some of the things they do for us all.

Tuesday 10 October: In the Littleton Hall
Gareth Rees - some of his experiences as a Ship's Pilot in the Solent / Southampton Water

Tuesday 14 November: in the United Church Hall, Jewry Street
(City Centre meeting)
Brian Freeland will talk to us about Bohemian Paris

Tuesday 12 December: In the Littleton Hall
Our Christmas party special which we hold every year

Tuesday 9 January 2024: In the Littleton Hall
Anne Anderson - the meanest millionaire (John-Paul Getty)

Tuesday 13 February: In the Littleton Hall
Katia Wright - Medieval English Queens as landowners (and what they did!)

Tuesday 13 March: In the Littleton Hall
Our A G M and then John Connell — Folk songs in time of war from the Elizabethan period

Tuesday 9 April
Colin Scott-Morton - Stories from the world of Tax "confessions of a VAT enforcer"

Tuesday 14 May
Avril Robinson - How our local charity Emmaus is working and helping with the homeless.

(Answers to Committee Photo: L to r:

John – Judy – Vernon -Freda – Barrie – Nick -Susan – Ann –Joan - Sheila -Marion)

Recent Monthly Talks

Reports by Vernon Tottle

A Life on the Ocean Wave

Flying British Airways Club Class to Mauritius was a splendid introduction to life on HMY Britannia for Chris Davis. Alas, that was the one and only luxury moment in his life as a member of the Royal Marines Band; the onboard crew accommodation was really cramped with three tier bunks for sleeping and very limited storage for all the uniforms and instruments.

Rising early to make sure the band was ready on the dockside to play the Queen onshore at the start of her royal visit and staying up late to beat the retreat was all in a day's routine. When Her Majesty hosted a dinner on board for distinguished guests, this sometimes meant staying awake really late to provide entertainment. Chris told us about the time Frank Sinatra gave an impromptu concert just before disembarking; this required the very tired band to sight-read new music for half an hour to accompany Frank while he sang to the Queen. "Just follow the dots" he said helpfully.

In addition to fascinating insights into life on board the royal yacht, Chris gave us a potted life history from his upbringing in Eastleigh, playing with the Boys Brigade Band and enlisting in the Royal Marines aged 16. After ten years he came back onshore and through a string of promotions, ended up as Principal Director and Commandant of the Royal Marines School of Music, training the new generation of band members.

On retirement, Chris conducted the Brighthouse and Rastrick Brass Band for two years before eventually putting his baton firmly back in its box. He concluded his brilliant talk by playing his violin alongside a backing track of Ashokan Farewell.



Clean electricity; watts the problem?

After a quick recap of his talk last year about traditional electricity generation, u3a member Michael Etherington set out to discuss clean electricity at our July monthly meeting. The use of fossil fuels to create steam, the main driving force used to rotate electricity generators, has been a contributing factor to the rise in greenhouse gases. Engineers are therefore working hard to find new ways to supply us with our insatiable electricity needs.



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Locations close to the open sea can make use of tidal power to generate electricity and apart from either side of high tide, this works well without much human input. Similarly, solar panels are very popular with almost zero maintenance, but require further government intervention to require installation on all new builds and retrofitting to large roof areas.

Wind farms are becoming easy enough to build, but they tend to be in remote locations and this requires additional network infrastructure (electricity pylons) to move the power to where it is needed. Dogger Bank was quoted by Michael as the classic example of the perfect location to build a wind farm but too far from built up areas that could make use of the energy.

Nuclear fuel is completely greenhouse-gas free but it comes with its own safety and waste disposal problems from the splitting of heavy atoms. Nevertheless, fission reactors are still being constructed in the absence of any obvious alternative. Nuclear fusion, the combining of lighter elements with a corresponding release of energy, (remember your laws of special relativity?) is the cleaner way forward but this has been in the experimental stage for decades without a commercially viable result.

As always, gridwatch.com is the website to watch to see the mix of current electricity generation output.

News from Groups

Art Appreciation – Fourth Thursday of Each Month

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of our former group leader Mary Witherington. Sadly, Oxford history graduate Mary was recently reduced by dementia and her life ended peacefully in St Catherine's View Care Home on 30th May 2023. As well as volunteering for The Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind, managing one of their shops in Southgate Street, in the 1960s, she was a befriender with The Live at Home Scheme. She also spent many years teaching English as a Foreign Language in several far eastern countries. As leader of the Art Appreciation Group, her passion for art and gardening always illuminated the very enjoyable meetings which she held at her house.

“The Globe” was the theme for our May meeting. One interpretation of this theme was snow globes, which revealed that there is more to them than being a slightly Kitsch novelty. They originated when 19th century Viennese surgical instrument maker Erwin Perzy used a water-filled glass sphere to concentrate light for performing operations, which gave him the idea. In the 20th century they became popular as “toys”, and used by advertisers. Common themes were famous buildings (including The Globe Theatre), characters from children's stories and portraits.

A description was given of how an atmosphere can be created in Shakespeare's Globe by very minimal scenery.

A member who was a guide in the Morley Library at Winchester Cathedral described the recently cleaned Blaeu globes housed there. They are magnificent examples of large (nearly 3 ft in diameter) 17th century globes. One is terrestrial and the other celestial.

We looked at Vermeer's *The Geographer* who is working on a table with a luxurious richly patterned cloth and *The Geographer* is dressed in a kimono. This was painted in the 1660s when the Dutch “Golden Age” had reached its height, and held, as it was to maintain for the following two centuries, a virtual monopoly in trading with Japan.

Continuing the Shakespearian association with “The Globe”, we considered Hogarth’s portrait of David Garrick as Richard III.

In June Folk Lore, Tales and Customs were our chosen topics. The traditional Russian tale of Ivan and the Firebird was looked at through the painting of Ivan and The Firebird” by Victor Vasnetsov, in which the “magic Carpet” on which Ivan rides provides wonderful and intricate patterns and images superbly rendered by Vasnetsov.

One of the most enduring forms of children’s entertainment in the form of the Punch and Judy show was discussed. It shows the darker side of domestic relationships through the absurdly comedic traditional images of Punch and Judy – these images being as familiar today as they were when described by Samuel Pepys.

Another traditional character depicted by dress conventions is that of the clown. The white-faced clown with conical hat, ruff and spangled costume predates the coarsely made up and baggily dressed Auguste clown, which one member found frightening as a small child. Coulrophobia is the fear of clowns.

Hares feature extensively in folklore and are represented in the whimsical anthropomorphism of Barry Flanagan’s sculptures, some of which can be seen at Roche Court near Salisbury and in Southampton City Art Gallery. We examined 3-D printouts of a couple of these works.

Keith Hatter

Local History Group 5

Our annual outing this year was to Gilbert White’s House in Selborne. We were blessed with wonderful weather so that we were able to enjoy the garden and wonderful surrounding countryside as well as the interesting house and exhibitions. After looking round the house and garden we visited St Mary’s church where Gilbert White was curate for many years.

(See back page for photos)

Our visit complemented our current programme of looking at the lives of Hampshire authors and villages. Amongst those we have looked at are Gilbert White (obviously), Neville Chute, Charlotte Mary Yonge and Mary Mitford. We also looked at the interesting life of the Petersfield artist Flora Twort – perhaps the Lowry of Petersfield.

Amongst the towns and villages whose history we have looked at are Worthy Down, Fordingbridge and Hambledon.

Hampshire has such an interesting history varying from medieval Winchester through to social issues such as the Swing Riots. Our members are always finding interesting subjects to research and give an informal talk on. We meet in each other's homes so, at the present time, we are unable to take on any more members.

John Craig

New university Building at West Downs

Quester 6 was recently given a guided tour of the building (opposite the County Arms pub on the Romsey Road) by Mat Jane, Head of Environment and Building Services whose team is responsible for the support and maintenance of all the buildings of the University. The building represented a 10% increase in the size of the estate (the building is 7,500 m²). Although we think of it as new, it was actually ready for the 2020/21 intake albeit handed over after the start of the lockdown.

There were many “wow” moments during the tour, and it would take a much longer article than this to convey the full scale of the design, with its high tech combined with an emphasis on the mental health and well-being of the students which it is hoped will get a WELL accreditation along with BREEAM Excellent in the near future.

The first surprise was the “secret” water garden, so close to the Romsey Road yet not visible from it. So tranquil, a perfect place to think, or just relax.

Another surprise to me was that the library is open 24/7 all year round; and its soundproofing means that the noise from the traffic is barely discernible. From that floor there is a superb view across to St Catherine's Hill. An impressive raked lecture hall seating 250 is very well appointed.

The design provides spaces for group or social learning as well as traditional lecture rooms and study spaces, so that students can, if they wish, discuss/work together.

Anticipating the growth of the health sector post Covid, two rooms are set out as replicas of a hospital ward and an operating theatre (there are degree courses for nursing and midwifery).

High-end computer equipment was in evidence. We were told that there are courses to train people to defeat the hackers, as well as 3-D computer-aided design.

A multi-purpose space provides for Pilates sessions (for example) or relaxation in chairs or (for the agile) to curl up in a contemplation pod in a wall.

As you would expect, considerable effort has gone into sustainability. Rain falling on the roof is collected, cleaned and stored for flushing the toilets (which are gender-neutral). Heat is captured to warm incoming fresh air. The windows have high-quality double glazing and some have automated blinds. Nesting boxes are provided for bats and swifts

My overall impression? Impressive. Intriguing. Inspiring. Yes, all of those. Which probably explains why the bill ran to a jaw-dropping £48M (total project costs).

You may be interested to know that the public is allowed to use the cafe and/or visit the art gallery, whose displays are changed regularly. I certainly intend to.

Philip Davies



Local History Group 5 -

Visit to Gilbert White House and Gardens



Enjoying the sunshine
with Gilbert White



The Group outside St Mary's Church



Painting of Petersfield Square
by Hampshire artist, Flora Twort