

**December 2023**

*Issued quarterly: As from 2024*  
*February – May – August - November*

[www.winchesteru3a.co.uk](http://www.winchesteru3a.co.uk)



**The Robin was voted our national bird in 1960.**

**(Thanks to the Photography Group for this lovely photo)**

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### **Winchester u3a Committee 2023/24**

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

### **Chairman's Letter**

Hello to you all

It's that time again. The clocks have changed into winter mode but the longer evenings will allow us time to follow our hobbies – or maybe try a new one. On the other hand it can be a chance to relax and get ready for the new year 2024 and everything that might bring.

Before it arrives we are about to have the December meeting at **Littleton Memorial Hall on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December doors open at 2pm ready for 2.30pm start.**

We are limited to approx. 80 members in the hall so if you would like to attend contact **FREDA BATES as soon as possible please**

Our Winchester u3a are always looking for members to add to the very valuable list of helpers who assist with all sorts of jobs – possibly in a 'one off' capacity – you will be particularly welcome during 2024 which is our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. You don't have to commit to being on the committee necessarily but could be available to help when extra events are being arranged.

Finally - perhaps instead of a New Year resolution which most of us break anyway we should remember the mantra of the u3a - Learn Laugh Live.

On that note the committee and I wish everyone of you the season's greetings and look forward to meeting many of you during 2024 and the future.

Joan

The Committee would like to remind all members to update any changes in their personal details with Marion, our Membership Secretary as soon as possible.

***We welcome the following new members from:***

Winchester

Pamela Dickens

Angela Harbott

Patricia McNeil

Celia Mungo

Sue Woodd

Inga Chapman

Kings Worthy

Lynne Richardson

Alresford

Barbara Walker

Chandler's Ford

Mark Bishop

Swanmore

Polly and Andrew Wilkinson

**[www.winchesteru3a.co.uk](http://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 if you experience difficulties or have suggestions or need help using our web.

**Notes for Contributors to the Newsletter.**

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

**Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**

***NB One month earlier than usual due to Newsletter date change – See front page***

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), at ***u3aletter@gmail.com***.

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.**

## **SCAMS**

Scams are a scourge of modern life and have become one of the biggest areas of crime in recent times. This autumn I was myself subject to one, and I involved Action Fraud who did indeed follow up, including a visit to my house by two officers from Hampshire Police to ensure that everything possible had been done. Impressive!

### **What can we do?**

**Phone calls:** don't give out any information if someone phones you, no matter how credible they are or how innocent the question might seem. Often if you try phoning back to the calling number you find it doesn't exist and has been "spoofed".

**Emails:** If you get an email seeming to come from a friend asking for help, their email system has probably been hacked so do not reply to that email. If you are sending an email to a number of people all at once, for example in a u3a group, always put the people in the "blind copy" (bcc) field and not the "copy" (cc) one. The "cc" is open to everyone on the list (and potentially to hackers) and if anyone on that list has had their email hacked, this may lead to further hacking and unwanted junk mail. I'm a victim of this, I get loads of junk emails on my gmail account every day, nothing I do can stop it, and it's an absolute pain.

Hope this helps.

Be safe.

Nick Vernon

## **\*New Computer Group up and running\***

Ten members attended the first meeting of the Winchester u3a Windows and Android Computer Group in November. It soon became apparent that even this small number of participants had more than enough questions for several future sessions. The topics raised ranged from arranging the icons on the home screen, through Bluetooth and backups to stopping the screen from going black after a few seconds of inactivity. Novices and veterans alike found much of use and interest.

The next meeting will take place Thursday 11 January. If you want to come along, please contact Roger Bailey

*Vernon Tottle*



## **Apple MAC Users Group**

We meet once a month on the 4th Tuesday from 10.30-12.00 in the Littleton Hall. To cover the costs of our speaker and the hire of the Hall, we have a small subscription for each calendar year.

We have a professional specialist in all things “Apple” who usually gives a presentation on a given subject, after which we have questions and then more general questions on any Apple related subject: we learn from each other’s issues and problems of course. Members also get access to help on the phone or on line to resolve obstinate things that happen to us all.

Nick Vernon

The Committee are aware that some members are housebound or have problems attending groups in person. On the **national u3a website** there are many online groups that people can join. Details for these online groups can be found by going to the “Events” tab of the (National) u3a website and then choosing the “Online Learning Events” option in the Events menu. Some details of individual online talks taking place in December are detailed on Page 20 of Winter 2023 edition of Third Age Matters.(TAM)

**Also in the current TAM**, Page 55. There are details of the **National U3a Festival** that is due to take place from the **18th-20<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at the University of York**. The price is very reasonable. £54 per night for bed and breakfast, £25 for the first day, including supper, £10 for the second day and £5 for day 3. There are already over 70 suggestions for activities that people could choose to participate in. If you are interested in attending the Festival please contact [festival@u3a.org.uk](mailto:festival@u3a.org.uk)

## **Future Monthly Meetings**

**These are all in the Littleton Hall, at 2.30 pm**

### **Tuesday 9 January 2024**

Anne Anderson - the meanest millionaire (John-Paul Getty)

### **Tuesday 13 February**

Katia Wright - Medieval English Queens as landowners (and what they did!)

### **Tuesday 13 March**

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.

## **Travel problems getting to Littleton Hall?**

If you'd like someone to give you a lift to the Hall for any Monthly General Meeting, contact Nick Vernon and please say where you live.

## Recent Monthly Talks Reports by Vernon Tottle

### September Talk: The Red Cross is more than just First Aid

You don't expect to hear "young offenders" and "the over 60's" mentioned in the same sentence but those are some of the people to whom the Community Education division of the British Red Cross directs its efforts. For our September monthly talk, Natalie McMonagle and her team gave us a whistle-stop tour of the wide range of local initiatives and experiences from the local branch of this international organisation.

Natalie emphasised that these days the Red Cross doesn't do first aid at public events, leaving that to St John's Ambulance. Their efforts are more directed towards welfare and education. The Red Cross aims not only to instruct members of the public in basic first aid, but also to prepare them to respond to adversity. She emphasised that her volunteers are not counsellors but offer a safe space to discuss problems. They don't offer solutions but support their clients to find the ability to cope and eventually help themselves.

As well as assisting adults, the Red Cross offers very similar services for young people but directing the help in ways more suited to their expectations and limited experiences.



Natalie's colleague, Barrie, told us that something as simple as teaching as many people as possible the basic recovery position was something that could save lots of lives. But, more often than not, he is called in as a welfare supporter, offering comfort and assistance for those referred to him by the emergency services. For example, anyone who has just escaped from a house fire may need clothing, accommodation, replacement prescriptions and help with

insurance claims. All this can be arranged by him and his colleagues as well as just being a shoulder to cry on.



Natalie concluded by reminding us that the Red Cross website has lots of resources available to cover all sorts of situations where help is wanted. She also recommended the Red Cross First Aid app for a phone, available by scanning this QR code.



## **October Talk: Piloting – a rough guide**

*Though I'm a nurse, you might do worse, than make your boy a pilot.* Pirates of Penzance

Gareth Rees certainly had no piratical leanings when he visited Littleton Hall on an unseasonably warm October afternoon to tell us about his life as a pilot on Southampton Water. He explained how English waters had been unregulated until Henry VIII decided something had to be done about the damage being caused to shipping coming into dock when manned by crews unfamiliar with local conditions. He set up Trinity House, which took over all lighthouses, navigation aids and pilots until further legislation in 1988.

All ships over 600 tonnes or 61 metres must have a pilot onboard when coming into harbour unless they are frequent users of the local waters (such as ferries). In Gareth's case, this means getting on board one of the fast pilot boats based in Gosport and being taken to the ship approaching one of the boundaries of the Solent. This can happen at all hours of day or night and in all weathers. In a rough sea, this journey, and the subsequent scaling of the ship's side by means of a rope ladder, can be unpleasant if not dangerous.





Add to this the complications that can ensue with a foreign ship crewed by non-English speaking seamen, Gareth's job isn't a pushover. There are however standard procedures that will enable him to understand the handling characteristics of each individual ship and, from then on, he gives guidance to the captain on all manoeuvres until tied up at the dockside.

He never knows what his next ship will be. He pilots the latest grand passenger ships, oil

tankers, car transporters and huge container ships. Sometimes he is called on to pilot Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels out of their Marchwood base. At the other end of the scale, small coastal feeder ships ply their trade in and out of port even though they aren't so noticeable to the casual observer. Gareth will always advise the captain on how many tugs to employ to get his ship berthed safely. This is usually at least two with more being used in strong winds.

Whilst "left hand down a bit" was a familiar phrase for listeners to *The Navy Lark*, Gareth assured me that he NEVER says that!

## **November Talk: Top floor, top drawer**

The first scene of *La Boheme*, the tragic opera by Rossini, is set in a garret, a room in the attic of a creaking old town house in Paris. This is often thought of as the typical residence of the struggling Parisian artist of the nineteenth century and Brian Freeland brought this image to life in his November talk on Bohemian Paris.

His tale began with George Moore, a would-be Irish painter who studied in Paris during the 1870s. George met many of the now well-known artists and novelists of that era, Manet, Degas, Van Gogh and Zola and he wrote about them in his book, *Confessions of a Young Man*, published in 1886 on his return to London. He depicted the Parisian bohemian life in such graphic detail that the image of the struggling artist, too poor to eat or keep warm, with every centime spent on paint and canvas, became fixed in popular culture.



George Moore by Manet

Nevertheless, it wasn't George's book that became the basis of Puccini's opera but *Scenes of Bohemian Life* by Henri Murger, written forty years earlier, before impressionism had even become known as a school of painting, indeed before many of its artists had even been born. Henri had mixed with painters and poets of the 1840s, many of whom never lived to achieve the fame of the subsequent 1870s artists. Murger's book, about his life living in garrets and perennially poor, was adapted into a hugely successful stage play; as a result, he was awarded the Legion D'Honneur medal.



Luncheon of the Boating Party by Renoir

Two novelists and two books written forty years apart but both depicting the poverty-stricken life of top quality artists living on the top floor.

*All Monthly Talk Reports by Vernon Tottle*

## **News from Groups**

### **Exploring French Literature**

Exploring French Literature is a small group of Francophiles who enjoy reading and discussing French Literature, both Classics and Modern according to your taste. We meet monthly on Skype during a Wednesday afternoon, usually the last week of the month, but not always.

Our meetings are light, the environment is friendly, and provides a good opportunity for using and speaking French.

Recent books include- *La Neige en Deuil* by Henri Troyat and *L'Immoraliste* by André Gide.

For more information contact Diane Sparkes

## **Gardens Group**      2023 – A year amongst the flowers and trees.

Our group of 30 members have had a full year visiting gardens in the National Gardens Scheme and indirectly supporting and contributing to their charities

After a snowy start – resulting in cancellation of our visit to Chawton (not a good time to view snowdrops) we enjoyed days out to Durmast House in the New Forest, Little Court at Crawley, Church House Medstead – and at all of these we were treated to coffee and cake before a tour of the gardens. Other visits have included meeting with Lady Clark at Redenham Park House, Diana Hart Dyke at Hambledon House, and the gardens at Longstock. Mid-year we were invited to tour the House and kitchen gardens at the 5 star Lainston House Hotel (a 17<sup>th</sup> century listed building) and equally at all these venues we enjoyed great hospitality by the hosts. Unfortunately our planned autumn visit to Furzy Gardens in the New Forest for a tour and talk by the Founder coincided with Storm Babet and had to be cancelled. Our visits often include a pub/cafe lunch and we usually have an indoor talk on a ‘garden’ subject and a Christmas lunch during the winter months.

Jackie & Clive Boot      Group Co-ordinators

## **Handicrafts Group – formerly Knitting 1 Group**

This group now includes any handicrafts eg knitting, crochet, sewing, embroidery etc. that could be transported easily to each other’s houses.

We would welcome new members – if you are interested please contact Liza Hughes.

## **The Retreads**      **Isle of Wight walking week October 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> 2023**

The Retreads five day break was based at Norton Grange. Warner’s Holiday accommodation chalets were allocated to the 23 walkers upon arrival after a rather overcast drive through the New Forest and a crossing to the island on the Lymington to Yarmouth Ferry. We met in the bar on the Monday evening and the route and plan for Tuesday were explained, this pattern followed for Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

After a hearty breakfast the Retreads met at 9.30a.m. to begin the walk. Despite being overcast and windy, brilliant views awaited us on our walk from Norton Grange to Alum Bay. We walked through woodland and then along the coastal path to Totland Bay and climbed up to the headland at Headon Warren where we had our first view of The Needles and Alum Bay Chair Lift. A tricky downward climb followed to Alum Bay where we stopped for a break. We continued the walk along the base of Tennyson Down to Freshwater Bay where we turned off onto a woodland path to the amazing thatched covered church of St Agnes with its beautifully embroidered pew cushions. From here we caught a bus back to Norton Grange.

On Wednesday we caught the Breezer bus, with its interesting commentary from Yarmouth to the Needles New Battery. Descending from the bus we climbed to the start of the Tennyson Way and walked to the Tennyson Memorial with spectacular views across The Solent. Continuing along the top of the Down we walked to Freshwater Bay where we had a break. We joined the River Yar walking along the east side to the Causeway crossing, always popular with masses of birds. From here the track bed of the old disused Freshwater to Newport railway, which opened in 1889, provided a peaceful path that followed The Yar back to Yarmouth.

Thursday morning saw us catching a No 7 bus to Hooke Hill (Church place). We climbed up Afton Down and crossed the top avoiding the golf players and looking backwards had magnificent views of the white cliffs of Tennyson Down and Freshwater Bay. Continuing the walk we then joined Compton Down still part of the Tennyson trail. We pick-nicked amongst evidence of the Barrows, ancient burial grounds. We descended through a very overgrown path, brambles and a neglected orchard stopping to look round All Saints Church where we saw a bust of Tennyson. We returned to Norton Grange along the western side of the river Yar. That evening in the bar thanks were given and tokens to Carole Remington for booking the ferry crossings and accommodation and to Tony Westlake who arranged and led the walks.

Very sadly on Friday morning because of amber weather warnings the walk had to be cancelled, very heavy rainfall and windy conditions followed. We realised how lucky we had been on our previous days to have had dry conditions. Retreads departed the island at various times but Norton Grange were happy for us to use their facilities after we had cleared our chalets.

*See photos on back page.*

Monica Westlake

**Questers**

**Portsmouth ERF and MRF visit.**

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October a group of 14 members from Quester groups 3, 5 & 10 attended the Portsmouth ERF & MRF Wonder Day, held by Veolia Environmental Services, organised by Eileen Lukes.

The ERF (Energy Recovery Facility), of which there are 3 in Hampshire, deals with approximately 500 tons of non-recyclable household and other waste every day of the year which is loaded into furnaces and burned at very high temperatures. No fuel is used to burn the rubbish as, once the furnace is hot enough, the rubbish self-ignites. The facility then recovers heat energy from the waste to produce steam which is used to generate electricity that is supplied to the National Grid. The resulting burnt-out ash passes through a system which extracts ferrous metals for recycling and ash for roadway substructures.

For the past 18 years no non-recyclable waste has gone to a land fill site in Hampshire.

The MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) deals with the recyclable waste which is sorted by a mixture of machines, as it passes along on conveyor belts, comprised of air jets and magnets along with human beings sorting the rubbish as it passes along and at the end.

Only 4 types of recyclable rubbish are passed through to the end of this facility. Paper including magazines, cardboard, tin & aluminium cans and plastic bottles are the only acceptable items for recycling at this facility and all other items are rejected. Unfortunately a lot of the items put into recycling bins isn't yet recyclable at this facility so gets transported to other processors elsewhere.

This was a very enlightening visit,                      Thank you for organising it Eileen.

Ruth & Dave Cooley Quester 3.

Photos from the ERF Visit – thanks to Vernon Tottle



Photos from the Retreads Walking Week on the Isle of Wight

