



Welcome to the u3a Newsletter for the Isle of Wight



December 2020

The **u3a** is a UK-wide collection of locally-run interest groups that provides a wide range of opportunities to come together to learn for fun. We enjoy exploring new ideas, skills and activities together.

Web: www.iowu3a.uk

Email: info@iowu3a.uk

Follow us on Twitter [@u3aWight](https://twitter.com/u3aWight)

Dear Members

I hope that you are well. I have exciting things to announce this month.

The first is that on Saturday the 12th December the Isle of Wight u3a will have a stall at the Farmers Christmas Market in Newport. Our aim is to spread the word and publicise our u3a to the wider public and also to be a rallying point for you, our members. Come along to say hello, bring your friends who may be interested in joining. There will be leaflets and information, membership gift packs – ideal as Christmas presents – and some friendly faces to chat to. Do come and support us.

Secondly I have had an idea for next year. How about the Isle of Wight u3a doing a round-the-island coastal walk all in one day! It sounds a bit crazy but it could be done. Walkers could choose (in advance) how far they want to walk, flat or hilly, who they want to walk with, and which part of the route. With planning we could cover the whole of the coastal path in one day. All walkers would start at the same time at

their agreed start point. If everyone helped, walking, driving, supporting or cheering we could involve every member of our u3a and make a splash – maybe even get in the national press. This will take some planning but if we start now we could do it in early summer. Let me know if you are interested in principle in taking part. I'm excited about it already. Contact me on chair@iowu3a.uk or by phone on 07748886246. I look forward to hearing from you.

Something else to look forward to is the next Speaker meeting 'Secrets of the Solent' on December 10th 14:00 on Zoom. It sounds fascinating. See full details later in this newsletter. It was great to see so many of you involved in the November speaker meeting. It will be good to see you all again in December.

Stay Safe and Well,

Carol Bradshaw
Chair

Please check for errors and omissions.

News, articles and updates always welcome.

Newsletter editor Roger Skidmore, rogerskid@zen.co.uk, 01983 822900

The January speaker will be Bernard Lockett giving a virtual talk on "The Heritage of Gilbert & Sullivan", on Thursday 14th January 2pm.



Bernard is an author and speaker and has spoken at many organisations - U3As, WI, Rotary, Festival and theatrical events over the past few years.

He is a Trustee of the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival which takes place annually (now in its 25th year) in Harrogate and also tours every autumn mainly within England.



Winter Watch u3a Photography Competition: Subject - Winter

National u3a is looking for interesting photos that fit in the theme; whether this is an image of your garden, a warming meal, a festive tradition or anything you personally associate with the colder months.

More information at:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes/winter-watch>

Whether you are submitting a high-quality image fit for National Geographic magazine, or a whimsical picture taken in the moment - we want to see it!

u3a Isle of Wight have decided to piggy-back onto the national project by inviting members to submit your photos to us as well - (editor@iowu3a.uk) We will publish your photos on our website (no pictures of people please) and we will choose our own winner ... and the prize will be a year's free membership of iowu3a to use or to gift!

Closing Date 31st January 2021.

Winners will be announced at the February Speaker Meeting on February 11th 2021,



Groups

All Groups are listed at
www.iowu3a.uk

Because of the Coronavirus only a few of these groups are being held in person at the moment, the rest are continuing remotely. The new Beach Group continues in person, currently in pairs and outside - at the beach! As does the Garden Appreciation Group - next visit Ventnor Botanic Gardens, December 16th, will conform to whatever the new guidelines are in place at the time.

Please check with the group leader through groups@iowu3a.uk for up to date information.

Walk and Talk about Gardens - Wednesday p.m.

Contact by email - groups@iowu3a.uk

As usual at this time of year we are not walking about gardens apart from our own but we still keep in contact, exchanging photos and plants. We are now well into Autumn but many plants are still in flower. Plants such as perennial salvias and Osteospermum were not seen in gardens when I began gardening, but have proved their worth by continuing to flower into late Autumn and last year the Osteospermums flowered through the winter. The special climate on the island means that gardens do not have that bare look during winter as so many plants retain their foliage and also some plants that are sold as annuals seem to become perennials, so do not be in too much of a hurry to rip out this years' annuals. Most of the garden is covered by a layer of leaves at the moment as we are

surrounded by trees. We clear them from the lawns but leave them on the flower beds to form a mulch and a hiding place for insects etc., that is my excuse anyway.

We now have one space in our group, so if anyone would like to join us, you would be welcome, even though we will not be meeting until the spring.



Enjoy your
gardening

Beryl Tillman

Writing Group

Hello writers ,

We couldn't meet this month and after some reflection , it seems unlikely that we'll be able to meet on the 3rd of December.

In the meantime, I am inviting you all to suggest a theme for our December writing. It doesn't have to be tinselly.

Send me your suggestions and we can pick one or two favourites from all the ideas which are going to flood in ! I will email in the event of new developments.

Best regards,

Christine

Groups

IoW U3A Film Studies Group

Film Studies continues to be a lively discussion group, delving into a different film once a fortnight to exchange opinions and estimations of what we have chosen collectively to watch.

Our continuing lockdown system is straightforward: a group member suggests a film or films for us all to view individually on the two week cycle (as long as it is available on Netflix, which we use for convenience).

Over the last months we have discussed O Brother, Where Art Thou?; 12 Years a Slave; The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind; One Day; The

American President; K-9 The Widowmaker; Julie & Julia; Juliet, Naked; The Laundromat; and Enola Holmes. In December and January 2021 we intend to view and discuss The Social Dilemma (2020); A Beautiful Mind (2001); and The Trial of the Chicago 7 (2020). We are also planning a Christmas/New Year special, title yet to be decided by members.

Film Studies Group welcomes new members: if you are in IoW U3A then you can join.

Jim Moody



Garden Appreciation

The Garden Appreciation Group organised visit to Osborne House, open to all members of the Isle of Wight u3a, met on Wednesday the 11th November. The weather was fine, mild even, a good day for a walk. The booking procedure online was easy and the Covid safety elements were all well managed. Six of us met in the car park in very orderly, socially distanced pairs. We enjoyed the visit, taking our own routes to the walled garden and through the grounds, meeting again by the sea, admiring the lovely colours of the trees and the autumnal air on the way down. The café was open and we chatted while we enjoyed our drinks and then meandered back. It was lovely to meet up in such beautiful surroundings and enjoy some fresh air and exercise at the same time.

The next garden visit will be to Ventnor Botanical Gardens on Wednesday 16th

December. Booking is as usual these days online. The visit could be followed (for those who would like) by a walk to Steephill Cove if the weather is fine. Bring a picnic if it seems the right sort of day. All welcome. Contact me on groups@iowu3a.uk or Facebook if you would like to come.

Carol Bradshaw



Groups

BEACHES Cowes - Gurnard – Cowes Wednesday 25th November

The forecast was not great. It could rain. It could even rain really hard. This deterred a couple of the faint-hearted but six of us met and walked from Cowes to Gurnard and back with only the slightest suspicion of rain for a moment or two. We felt pleased with ourselves.

Having had such a good instructive walk led by Chris Priest on last month's Ryde to Seaview walk, I felt obliged to do some homework on what is effectively my home patch. I enjoyed the research and I think that other walkers, who also knew lots about the area and chipped in, enjoyed the snippets too. Did you know for example that Egypt point is the most Northerly point on the Isle of Wight? Neither did I until a few days ago.

It was also a pleasure to meet a new member under these circumstances. Identifying oneself on these occasions with "I'll be the one in the red hat and coat" or "I'll be the one wearing blue and gold pompoms" – yes really! it proves that, current constraints notwithstanding, it is possible to get out and meet people, have fun and learn something too. It was certainly good to be outside socializing with real people rather than looking at a zoom screen full of heads.

December's beach walk will be on New Year's Eve, probably starting at 14:00 and possibly walking along Compton beach. Obviously this will be tide and weather dependent. More information to follow. Contact me through the groups page or on our Facebook page if you are interested in coming.

Carol

New Groups

**Tea, Chat & Tech, 13:30 Forest Road Nursery Cafe -
whenever cafés are allowed to open - December 9th,
January 6th, See page 10 and 11.**

Family History and Genealogy:

Those new to tracing their roots and others who are more experienced will be very welcome. The aim will be to help each other make progress and share successes and pitfalls. This is a far reaching topic with a great many fascinating themes for future discussion and research. **(starting Thursday 21st January)**

Games Group: Thursday afternoon
Newport - Scrabble, Rummikub, Monopoly or Tiddly Winks anyone? Also Cribbage or Dominos, Friday afternoon - Seaview.

Reading - Not a book group where we all read the same book but just a 'Reading' group - share what you love to read, what you are reading - articles, papers, research, short stories, History - whatever inspires you or brings you pleasure. First reading is on Zoom on 5th January. Come prepared to talk about your best read over Christmas.

Spanish: Exploratory Zoom Meeting:
Monday December 7th at 15:00.
Join the chat, find out what might be possible.

New Groups



Louis Lawrence says:

" You know how TV news bulletins begin... 'twenty people were injured... a man was killed.... increased taxes for motorists' etc. etc? "

Well let's look for some good news for change and start making video reports about good news stories and lots of happier events that go on all the time but never get reported. For a flavour of the project, have a look at VentnorTV on its Facebook page and then contact me for an opportunity to join our new good news video making groups who will follow up good news stories around the Island. We just need you behind or in front of the camera.



And...

"How do I become a councillor? Help someone to get elected? How does it all work? Counting the votes? Meet our MP?"

Join our new Politics Study Group and find out about the nuts and bolts of the democratic system from the ground up. This is not about actual political policy, though we can meet councillors and political activists to hear their views.

We will meet with the people who organise elections and hear how that is all put together - and journey up to Westminster for a visit to the Houses of Parliament .

Never mind the Virus - look at the Zoom !

Third-Agers have taken like the proverbial ducks to the use of Zooming and the internet as a means of activity - as in their Film Studies group which is delving into a different film once a fortnight; exchanging divergent opinions and estimations of what they have chosen collectively to watch. Group members suggest a film for all to view on Netflix. Once you join u3a you can simply sign up to the group. Recently a Zoom performance by a musical duo was followed by a Zoom style general meeting.

December 10th sees a Zoom talk entitled "Secrets of the Solent" by Emily Stroud of the Hampshire Wildlife Trust. But it's not all extra-terrestrial as, subject to safeguards, others also engage in beach walks, English Country House Literature, Books, Topics & Chat, Garden Appreciation, Writing, Family History and Genealogy, French for beginners, plus several other topics.

Anyone with a computer, PC, laptop or mobile phone can join and technical support can be arranged.

New Groups

NEW GROUP - GREEN ISSUES

This group will not just discuss Green issues we will also help and support each other to calculate our own personal carbon footprint and find ways in which we can reduce it. There is much online information available that we can use and take advantage of, the Government's latest Green Home Energy Improvements Grant is an example of this.

By looking at application forms as a group the task becomes less arduous and hopefully we will all benefit. Simple things such as changing living habits can also be considered as well as looking critically at how "Green" some things really are. Groups will be run on Zoom till physical meeting up becomes possible and we can then take it in turns to host each Green Meeting to add more variety.



Dina.

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO FIGHT

I am a Greenpeace Warrior, in my dreams I sail the seas.
Confronting great conglomerates who think they'll do as they please.
I climb the rigging bravely with my mission between my teeth
And whizz in front of bows of ships with guts beyond belief.

In real life I'm a teacher and when I wake each morn
I think, "What shall I teach the dears today" but here I'm somewhat torn.
Do I continue with status quo, is this the role of a teacher?
They come for woodwork after all, want teaching, not a preacher.
Do I say that the way we live is crucifying nature?
That till we take much less - and give, the world has dire future.

I try with age, to be discrete my fighting more subliminal.
An undercover campaigner, like Swampy in his tunnel.
But this old Greenpeace Warrior (whose teaching is unquestionable) insists
"I will not have any wood in here unless it is sustainable".

I'm still a Greenpeace Warrior, every year I pay my dues.
Too old to sail the Seven Seas, the rigs I'm scared to use,
But I can still participate in the great Environment War
I'll go to Ryde and plant some trees they're bound to want some more!

Dina Jung

A CONVERSATION WITH MYSELF

"How did I get to be in this awful mess? I asked myself out loud.

"I didn't realise how dreadful the situation would be"

"You're never one to avoid helping and thought you ought to do your bit" my inner voice said. I had a little wooden hare in my hand - the talisman my mother had given me. It felt comforting as I held him before putting away in my pocket.

"What on earth will Mum and Dad think when they find out what a horrible situation we are in" I shuddered. "I told them not to worry".

"Anyway, it will all be over soon and then we can go home".



"That's wishful thinking" came the reply from within myself. "I know, I thought it was such a good thing to do and I do like all

the other chaps. I've made some good friends - George, Percy, Arthur and my best mate Fred".

"A fag while I'm waiting would help". I found a crumbled packet of Wood-

bines and pulled one out carefully so as not to drop it and attempted to light it. My hand was shaking a bit too much. "Steady on" I thought. "Don't want to waste the fag, haven't got many left". I patted my pocket to make sure the hare was still there. I was reassured. I curled up with my cigarette, cupping my hand round it to savour the warmth. It didn't do much to blot out the cold, wet and mud.

"Aren't you scared" a whisper from inside. "Too bloody right I am but I'm not going to tell anyone".

Without warning I heard the Sargent breaking the silence, shouting the order. "Right lads, it's our turn, bayonets fixed, we're going over the top, let 'em have it".

Maggie Brown
(Writing Group)



Postscript:- This fictional story was inspired by one of my ancestors.

Pte Harold Barnett Barfield was born in the village of Ketton, Rutland on August 24th 1899. He was a motor mechanic prior to joining up with the South Staffordshire Regiment.

He was just 18 years old and of a bright, sunny disposition and endeared himself to everyone with whom he came in contact. He was sent to France on April 2nd 1918 and went into the front line at the second Battle of the Aisne on the night of May 26th between Reims and Soissons where he made the supreme sacrifice together with many others.

Chickens in Lockdown – Post Script – Eggs!

Astonishingly, in amongst the angst about unhatched eggs, chicks falling asleep on their feet and looking dead, chicks getting lost and hiding under the wardrobe, how much heat they need, how much feed, how much space? Is it really safe to let them outside, how many are cockerels and how many are hens – and the resulting quirky, characterful, stropy, hungry and entertaining birds – it is very easy to lose sight of the initial end goal – which was eggs.

Well, my girls were hatched in May, and they are large hens. As we headed into November, they were 6 months old and no eggs were in sight, I had begun to assume that there would be no eggs until January. Although of course, I could not resist setting up the nesting box, just in case. And then I realised that the nesting box was being prepared. The straw was being patted down and reorganised.

But I had a dilemma. My chicken coop, with its nesting boxes, is within a safe enclosure which I had been keeping locked. We are inundated with moorhens who obviously like chicken food and are bold and brassy when it comes to getting it. They terrorised the chickens until well after the chickens were four times their size. So, to keep the moorhens at bay, I would let the chickens out of the coop at dawn (or near as) and give them their breakfast, then they would be locked out of the enclosure and left to free range during the day. I would lock them back in, in the late afternoon, for another feed and leave them to put themselves to bed, coming out after dark to ensure that they were safely tucked in and then close the coop door.

Which is all very well if you a) remember to come out before dusk to let them back into the enclosure and b) if your chickens are not laying eggs!

Well of course, one day I was side-tracked by work and was late coming out. The chickens were all sitting on top of the enclosure! Having made their own decision about where safety lay. Chickens do not have good night vision and the coop roof was very high. Even after I had opened the door to the enclosure there was no way they were going to jump down off the roof in the dark! I had to get sweetcorn and spotlights, ladders and brooms, to entice them down off the roof and into the enclosure – It took about 2 hours – I have not done that again

Side-tracked again! I had given up expecting eggs. And then one day I looked out of the window and could see one of the hens running up and down outside the coop looking for all the world like someone who needed to go to the loo but had found the toilet occupied. So, I went rushing out and let her into the enclosure. She marched straight up the stairs into the coop and delivered me the sweetest, small and perfectly formed brown egg! Talk about love at first sight. And since then, she has delivered me a daily gift. And in the last day or two her hatch sister has joined in. A small miracle.



They are of course the most expensive and delicious eggs on the planet – but worth every penny! The difficulty with the enclosure remains, however. And with threatening bird flu it is even more important to keep wild birds out of the enclosure. Which means that I am on egg watch all day. An egg takes 24-26 hours

to create. So, with two laying hens, I am on constant standby in case one of my ladies needs to lay an egg and I have to run up the garden and open the gate. I need a new system. Ideas on a postcard, please.

Sally



A Message from a Reluctant Zoomer

I probably belong to that group of people who are not too enthusiastic about any sort of social media. I'm just fine with my laptop which I have always used for work related purposes, research, emails and my interests.

First of all, I worry about the security of an online presence. This makes me hesitant to use Facebook, Twitter or online banking. I convince myself that it's just an 'age thing' but I can successfully book ferries and holidays, even make the occasional online purchase. Secondly, ongoing eye problems make TV and websites with moving images particularly tiresome to watch. Text and still pictures are more preferable. My young things have no sympathy and say that's just another one of 'Gran's excuses.'

However, I have decided that the time has come to give U3A Zoom meetings a go during this wintertime lockdown as I realise that I must make a plausible effort with this. I'm too frequently told 'Get real Gran!'

P.S.

Since writing the above nature has wended its mysterious way and the hens have synchronised their laying. Now I just need to keep an eye, approximately 25 hours after the last egg, pop them into the enclosure and let them out again when the business is done. The cockerel struts about grandly guarding the coop entrance as each hen takes a turn to lay an egg. When the business is done he crows loudly and self-importantly. He is definitely taking his new responsibilities very seriously indeed.

And remember **Internet Scrabble** anytime, anywhere, at www.isc.ro

With Sally's guidance I managed to join my first Zoom meeting in time to see Fools Gold perform their acoustic music show live from Durham for IOW U3A November speaker meeting which was different and enjoyable. I was quietly pleased with myself.

Sally will soon be starting a new group. 'Tea and Tech' is to be held at Forest View Nursery Café from December 9th (Covid permitting). I think this group could benefit many of us and I will be one of the first to join!

Alison Webb

... at Forest Road Nursery,

December 9th, if cafés are permitted to open. 1.30pm drop-in.

Come along, say hello and bring your Ipad or phone. If you have questions I will try and answer them.

Sally (740511)

Dates for your Diary – all queries to groups@iowu3a.uk

December 2020

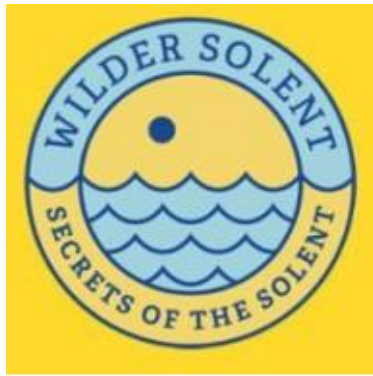
Date	Day	Time	Event	Venue
3 rd	Thursday	2:00	Writers	tbc
7 th	Monday	3:00	Spanish Exploratory Meeting	Zoom
9 th	Wednesday	1:30	Tea, Chat & Tech	Forest View Nursery
		5:00	Film Club	Zoom
10	Thursday	1:00	Open Chat	Zoom
		2:00	Secrets of the Solent	Zoom
		3:00	Break Out Room Chat	Zoom
12 th	Saturday	10:00-2:00	Christmas Market	Newport
16 th	Wednesday	12:00	Garden Visit – Ventnor Botanic Gardens	
23 rd	Wednesday	5:00	Film Club	Zoom
31 st	Thursday	tbc	Beach Walk (possibly Compton)	tbc

January 2021

5 ^h	Tuesday	3:00	Reading	tbc
6 th	Wednesday	1:30	Tea, Chat & Tech	Forest View Nursery
		5:00	Film Club	Zoom
7 th	Thursday	2:00	Writers	tbc
14 th	Thursday	2:00	The Heritage of Gilbert & Sullivan	Zoom
16 th	Saturday	12:00	Garden Visit – Princess Beatrice Garden (Carisbrooke Castle)	
20 th	Wednesday	5:00	Film Club	tbc
21 st	Thursday	2:00	Family History	tbc
27 th	Wednesday	tbc	Beach Walk (possibly Yaverland)	tbc

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/iowu3a> closed group for members
<https://www.facebook.com/u3aWight> open page for the public





u3a
Isle of Wight

www.iowu3a.uk

Secrets of the Solent

Thursday

December 10th
14:00-15:00

Zoom room open
from 13:00
Join for a chat

Zoom room open
until 16:00
Stay for a chat

Join us for a talk on the Solent's amazing marine species and habitats, the pressures they face and how to get involved in protecting their future.

At this talk Emily Stroud (Community Engagement Officer) will be uncovering the Solent's underwater world, from elusive cuttlefish to majestic seagrass meadows.



Hampshire &
Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust

FOR A

WILDER

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT



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