

January - February 2024

Message from our Chair

You should all be receiving something from us in the post fairly soon (let us know of any recent change of address please).

It's all very exciting (well, quite exciting) and we look forward to hearing your responses later in the month.

There will be a letter from me which goes on a bit, so I'll keep this month's message brief.

As you know, our Isle of Wight u3a is run by members *for members* on a voluntary basis. I imagine we all joined either to have fun, meet new people, learn new things or a mixture of all three.

So this year my resolution as Chair is to ask everyone to engage at least once in a way you haven't done before. You might find it opens the door to a whole new world...

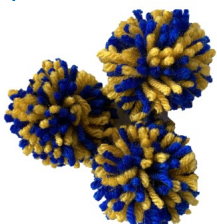
You could attend a speaker meeting (they're often really rather good), join a new group, start a new group, and attend one of the coffee mornings round the Island. Perhaps even offer to organise a one-off activity like a meal out, a walk, a visit to the mainland, or a come-and-try-it hobby. You could submit an article for the newsletter, a poem, or maybe something humorous!

I am very much looking forward to meeting both new and existing members at an event in the near future.

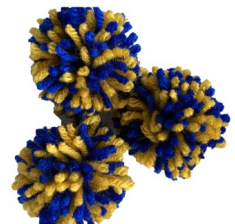
Hoping 2024 will be a good year for us all.

**New Year
Wishes!**

Alison Botha
chair@u3awight.uk



Coffee Mornings around the Island:
1st Wednesday of the month at 10:30
at the Bargeman's Rest in Newport.
2nd Monday, Winter Gardens Ventnor, at 11:00
4th Tuesday, at Ryde Castle 11:00



Look out for the **blue** and **gold** pompoms.

New Group – Random Ramblers!

The walk and lunch event is extremely popular and we are wondering if the addition of a new walking group is viable. This may still include lunch or tea and cake and all would be welcome at both!

I am happy to do the administration for a walking group and lead some walks during the year but cannot give a monthly fixed date to lead – hence the ‘random’.

It would be great if a few people would be happy to lead - even just one walk a year. This can be in your local area which you know well. There are also 70 Island walks published on the Isle of Wight Ramblers web page if further inspiration is needed.

I used to be a Rambler but am now more of an ‘ambler’. The walks can vary in length, difficulty and speed as long as they are well

described by leaders and participants know what to expect.

It would be great to include themed walks, for example local history, places of interest, photography etc.

Whether or not you want to lead walks, I am happy to run a couple of sessions on Zoom during January and February about simple map reading, the use of smart phones and navigation apps.

I am happy to go out with people, recce walks and ‘test’ the new skills in March and April. Dates will be arranged to suit all. I would also appreciate help with doing recces of walks.

Please let me know if you are interested in leading walks, the map reading sessions or just a chat to get further information.

Jacky Carter

jackyiowu3a@gmail.com.

Group Leaders’ Appreciation Afternoon

All our groups (there are about 36 at the last count) are run by members. We call them group leaders, or facilitators, or organisers, or group contacts.

The name doesn’t matter much – but without them the u3a wouldn’t exist and we think they are all fantastic!

To show them how much they are valued and also to encourage others to think about running a group, we are putting on a Groups Appreciation afternoon in **Arreton Community Hall on Thursday January 25th from 2 – 4pm.**

This will involve a glass of bubbly, some sandwiches and snacks and opportunities to learn about what it takes to facilitate a group.

ALL GROUP LEADERS are invited to this and we would also love to see **any**

other members who have an interest in starting a group.

There is no great mystery in getting a group up and running. You have an idea of something you’d be interested in, you tell us (us being anyone on the Committee), we help you advertise your idea in the newsletter and bingo – if more than a couple of other members are keen then you have a group.

Depending on the size of membership, groups can be held in members’ homes or in venues across the Island. We would help you find one.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IN ADVANCE IF YOU ARE COMING (to assist with planning). So far we have 11 names and we would be delighted to get to 20+.

Alison Botha

chair@u3awight.uk

Regular Group Meetings

Monday	pm	Improvers' Spanish, Zoom, weekly Signs of the Times, Cowes, 1st Monday French Film, Ventnor Arts Club The Garden Group, 1st Monday and 3rd Tuesday Photography, Zoom, 3rd Monday	groups@u3awight.uk rayscarfe@hotmail.co.uk anthealangelaan@yahoo.co.uk robintyler60@gmail.com fred.wp.dawson@gmail.com
	eve	K-Dramas 1st episodes on big screen, 2nd Monday	rogerskid@zen.co.uk
Tuesday	pm	The Garden Group, 3rd Tuesday (and 1st Monday) Reading (1st Tuesday) Cowes Wine Appreciation	robintyler60@gmail.com groups@u3awight.uk jennylocd@yahoo.co.uk
	eve	Non-Fiction Book club, Zoom, 2nd Tuesday	hastingsnigel01@gmail.com
Wed	am	Green Issues UK wide group on Zoom, 4th Wednesday Pub Lunch, 3rd Wednesday Beach Walk, last Wednesday Playing with Watercolour, 2nd Wednesday	groups@u3awight.uk groups@u3awight.uk carolbradshaw@u3awight.uk barb.mill@yahoo.co.uk
	pm	French Conversation, Newport Vinyl Revival, 3rd Wednesday Walk & Talk Gardens, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays April - October	groups@u3awight.uk rogerskid@zen.co.uk tillmanberyl@gmail.com
Thurs	am	Card Making, Shanklin Discussion Group, Newport, 2nd and 4th Thursdays	teresareed@btopenworld.com paulinehunter12@gmail.com
	pm	Creative Writers, Newport, usually 1st Thursday Wine Appreciation, St Lawrence, 3rd Thursday Family History: Beginners, 1st Thursday Returners, 3rd Thursday	sybug@aol.com frankj.kelly@icloud.com rhawebb@gmail.com
Friday	am	German Improvers or Advanced, alternate Fridays, Brading French Conversation, Lake, weekly	melongley1@gmail.com groups@u3awight.uk
	pm	French Conversation, Newport, weekly Wootton Book Group, 1st Friday Mah-Jong, Cowes	groups@u3awight.uk davidallison@hotmail.com jackie.derrick@gmail.com
Sat	pm	Beginners' Spanish, Newport, weekly Beginners' Italian, Newport, weekly	isabelle.schloesing@btinternet.com

Irregular Group Meetings

		Allotment Gardening	sarah.innes31@gmail.com or anniemathura@talktalk.net
		Bookies' Favourite Cribbage Cycle Out Scrabble	stephedwards2@gmail.com cm.priest1@yahoo.co.uk dave.vodden@tiscali.co.uk alisonbotha@hotmail.com
		Random Ramblers Mah-Jong, various locations Eat Out and Review	jackyiowu3a@gmail.com groups@u3awight.uk groups@u3awight.uk
		New - music with instruments and voice	kevans@lejouvenal.com or garryocxof@gmail.com

Annual General Meeting

There have been no members' resolutions put forward for the AGM (11th January) to debate so the business of the day will be electing the committee, accepting the accounts and adopting the new constitution. Both the accounts and the new constitution can be downloaded from the website. Printed copies can be requested through info@u3awight.uk.

Your committee -

Alison, Dave, Tony, Roger, Carol, Sally, Sara and Angela
committee@u3awight.uk

Playtime with Watercolour

After initial session with 3 ladies and then a 2nd session with 6 we now have a group of 8 who would like to come to play on a regular basis. It is a little snug all round my dining room table but we are a very friendly group with a great sense of fun so it works well.

After going through some basic information on paint, paper and brushes we are now splashing paint on paper and getting the feel of how watercolour paint does most of the work for you!

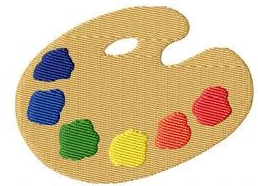
So far we have been playing with messy washes and trying to get our heads round negative painting. There are so many different

ways to play with watercolour, we have enough things to try to keep us going Ad infinitum.

We will be trying out the 2nd Wednesday of every month as that seems to be a good date with everyone.

We currently feel 'full' but let us know if the idea appeals and we could explore alternative premises if there is enough interest.

Looking forward to hearing from you . . .
barb.mill@yahoo.co.uk



Best wishes
Barbara

Calling all musicians (and vocalists)

The musicians and vocalists had a preliminary meeting and decided that the probable future is two separate groups based on either classical or more modern music with the potential for occasional get-togethers.

Contact Kay on kevans@lejouvenal.com if you are a singer and would be interested in joining a group focussing on contemporary music or if you are an instrumentalist who would be interested in supporting such singers.

Contact Garry on garryocxof@gmail.com if you are interested in classical music, singers, pianists, other instruments and would be interested in a group that meets to play 'amongst ourselves' – solos, duets, songs, chamber music, etc. Could be sight-reading or practised pieces, just for the enjoyment of playing with and chatting to people with a shared interest, and no standard required to qualify!

Garry Thorp
Kay Evans



Christmas Social at Arreton

Great fun was had by 50 members at our annual Christmas Social last month, held in Arreton Community Hall.

A not-too-difficult quiz with lots of chocolate prizes was preceded by glasses of bubbly and mince pies. After the quiz we enjoyed some wonderful plates of food provided by members. Thanks must go to the refreshment team led by Sue Vodden who did some sterling work in the kitchen as well as cleaning up at the end.

We had time to socialise and meet some new members as well as catch up with old friends.

Alison



Beach Walks

The November beach walk from Ryde to Seaview was perfect. The weather was calm and bright, sandwiched in between two days of rain, so we were very lucky. The company was good and the hot chocolate at the Old Fort in Seaview was perfect. Most enjoyable.

The December beach walk venue had to be changed. It was planned to be from Totland to Colwell but the path between the two was reported to be closed due to a landslip. Terri and I went to check it out the other day and yes, it is indeed closed. Instead we walked from Cowes to Gurnard and back, a familiar walk but in these current land/weather conditions it seemed the safest option.

The January beach walk will be on Wednesday 31st in Yaverland. Since this will be along the beach the start time will be tide dependent. I will email you with the start time about one week before. We usually meet by the café (which is unlikely to be open) in the car park.

In February the walk will be on Wednesday the 28th and will start in Yarmouth at 10:30 but I need to research the route. More details will be available by email nearer the time.

Beach walks are open to all members and are held on the last Wednesday of each month. The location varies and is sometimes actually on the beach and other times on the paths or promenades by the sea. Everyone is welcome, including well-behaved dogs.

Come and have a walk by the sea, a bit of a chat and perhaps a hot drink (or cold) at the end of it. Let me know if you would like to come.

Carol Bradshaw

carolbradshaw@u3awight.uk
07748 886246

Bookies' Favourites

'Notes from an Exhibition' by Patrick Gale was our book choice for our November meet-up.

This was a book which scored highly with all the group. A jigsaw of a story, it was extremely well written with skilful use of descriptive language. Whilst the subject matter was quite challenging, focusing on the central character Rachel, who was bipolar, it was a poignant and perceptive description of how her condition impacted on her family, who each had their own story to tell.

The touching scenes and emotions described drew the reader in. Some of the group had read other novels by Patrick Gale, who spent his early childhood on the Isle of Wight. He would be a good author to explore individually in the future.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 4th January at The Star Ale and Coffee House in Ryde High St at 14.00. We will be discussing 'Demon Copperhead' by Barbara Kingsolver. We will be having a new member joining us, and that will take our numbers up to eight.

Steph stephedwards2@gmail.com



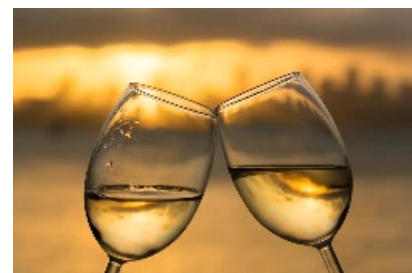
St Lawrence Wine Group Nov/Dec 2023

November was our foray into New Zealand wines, and unsurprisingly the top choice was a fine example of Sauvignon Blanc, the most planted grape in that part of the world and their best export. 'The Ned' was also the lowest priced wine of the bunch. Whether that makes us discerning wine connoisseurs or just cheap dates is for others to decide....

Our Xmas themed gathering in December brought together all the top choices from 10 months of wine supping, and was held at Peter Cross's lovely home in Chale by a roaring fire! Again the overall winner was a NZ Sauvignon Blanc. This time it was 'Devils Creek Gold Reserve' which was chosen at our very first meeting back in February.

The group has been a friendly and cohesive bunch from the outset, and we look forward to many more journeys down the rabbit hole of the world of wine next year.

*Cheers and
Happy New
Year!*



Frank

frankj.kelly@icloud.com

*Save the Date!
Thursday 11th January 2024 14:00
AGM and Speaker Meeting at St
John's Hall Newport*

News from the Groups

Scrabble Group

The Scrabble group enjoyed playing several games at St Lawrence in December. One of the games generated several words which would have been very familiar to anyone who has ever worked with teenagers. They certainly caused quite a few giggles!

The group is open to all members and spaces are allocated on a first-come-first served basis. Our next meeting will be in Sandown on Tuesday January 16th at 2pm. Please book a space with Jen (jen.ray54@btinternet.com) as soon as possible.

Alison Botha and Di Andrews

alisonbotha@hotmail.com

07805 773097



Family History

Now up and running for the 2023/24 session. Six workshops for new members and beginners are being held monthly in Brighstone on the first Thursday afternoon from October to March.

Existing members meet monthly in Newport on the third Thursday afternoon from October to April. We focus on research skills to help us make the most of online websites such as Ancestry and FindMyPast.

All members ideally need to bring their own laptop or iPad device and have a paid subscription to either Ancestry or FindMyPast - but this is not essential.

Just be enthusiastic!

Alison

rhawebb@gmail.com



Mah-Jong +

The Mah-Jong group is growing steadily. A small group meets in Cowes weekly. We also meet in peoples' homes; next one Wednesday 24th January.

Contact: **Sally**

groups@u3awight.uk



Cribbage Group

If you would like to be in an email group that gets notified when Cribbage games are being played contact:

groups@u3awight.uk
or contact Christine on
01983 811562
and leave a message.

News from the Groups

Hearing Action

Many people quietly retreat socially because of limitations caused by deteriorating quality of hearing. This limits social and cultural engagement. This group will meet regularly to talk about this and consider ways of making things better ... in whatever way.

See the [u3a website](#) or [quiet-access](#) website for more details.

Roger Skidmore
07732 480201
rogerskid@zen.co.uk



The Cowes Wine Appreciation Group...

...met and discussed and sampled five different sparkling wines, ranging from very sweet to very dry. We tasted blind and again price did not necessarily correlate with most appreciated.

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month in Cowes and still have a space if another member would like to join us. We are learning about wine in all its many varieties and having fun too.

Jenny Hale
jennylodc@yahoo.co.uk



Film Studies (Zoom)

Well, it looks like the Film Club is still in winter hibernation.

If you would like to propose *and* present a film then email groups@u3awight.uk and we will book Monday 22nd January or Monday 26th February.

You can view a full list of films we have watched [here](#).



K-dramas are now in-home on large screen TV, showing a first episode only as a "taster". Continue at home on Netflix. In November we started "Extraordinary Attorney Woo Young-Woo"; December was "Chocolate", episode one, and January will be "Start-Up". February will be episode one of "Navillera".

Full details - see [u3a web page](#) with active link to our whole series.

"Intelligent romance ... with sub-titles for everyone!"
"Every one I watch seems even the best so far!"
(Just started the extraordinary fairy tale "Castaway Diva" - the Korean imagination sometimes knows no bounds!)



Contact the editor (who is very keen on these).

Cycling Group

We have had some very enjoyable cycle rides this year with only one being cancelled due to bad weather. With winter upon us we have suspended activities until the spring when, hopefully, the weather will be more favourable and the cycle routes not flooded or blocked by fallen trees etc.!

This year we have concentrated on encouraging those who have not been on their bikes for a while to give it a try again, so the rides have been fairly short and on traffic free cycle tracks. My thanks to those who have tried it again, and also those more experienced riders who have come along to provide support and encouragement.



Next year I intend to run two cycle rides per month, one for those 'newbies' getting on their bikes again, and a second more 'adventurous' ride which will be longer and more challenging. All are welcome on all rides of course, either for the whole ride or part of it, but I am looking for suggestions as to possible routes, especially for the more adventurous rides.

Some of you may have read that the IW Council has received grants to expand the current off-road routes.

'The 1st of the new projects to be funded will result in the development of a 'green link' corridor between Ryde and Yarmouth to encourage people to leave their cars at home and travel more by bike, bus or on foot.

The 2nd project will see the development of a multi-use 13-mile cycle route between Newport and Freshwater – known as the 'West Wight Greenway' – providing an important link to the Gunville Greenway and improving access to the rest of the Island's cycle network.'

The 3rd project will see an extension of existing cycle routes in and around Newport connecting [Green Link](#) projects with existing sustainable transport networks.



The only timescale for these projects I have seen is that they must all be completed by March 2026 so they may be some way off but it will be interesting to see how they will be implemented, and, of course, we hope to incorporate them in future ride plans.

A Very Happy New Year to everyone, and Safe Cycling!

Dave Vodden

dave.vodden@tiscali.co.uk



Walk and Talk about Gardens

At the moment it is more talking about or planning, rather than walking about gardens. Looking out into the garden it looks most uninviting, grey, cold and very wet. Now the summer's bright colours have disappeared, the evergreens come into their own and the vibrant lime green of *Choisya Sundance* lifts the spirit. I have it planted in front of a dark green conifer with a smaller *Euonymus*, *Emerald Gaiety* to one side and a variegated *Eleagnus* in the background.

This small group of shrubs is quite pleasing at this time of the year. Quite near this group is a *Leptospermum*. (Top left in photo). This is a plant from New Zealand and it thinks it is still there, as it is flowering now.

Happy Gardening,
Beryl Tillman
tillmanberyl@gmail.com



Signs of the Times: A Dance through History, 4

Just to let you know that our next meeting of the u3a "History through Pub Signs" will be on Monday 8th January 2024 at the Travellers Joy, Northwood, between 2pm and 4pm. The theme for this month is "Transports of Delight" illustrating early forms of travel around the country. All u3a members are welcome to have a drink and listen to my stories of the roll our historic public houses played in our history.

Ray Scarfe
rayscarfe@hotmail.co.uk



News from the Groups

Photography Group



The photography group meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 14:00 on Zoom.

The November meeting was well attended. Members discussed their photographs and what went well and how they might do better in future. Ian gave a demonstration on how AI is changing the way images can be manipulated and created, opening up new opportunities.

The December meeting featured discussions on choice of ISO and the implications for generating noise in digital images. The use of software in post-production for reducing noise was discussed and demonstrated. An assignment for the January meeting will be agreed.

In the Spring physical meet-ups will be resumed giving members the opportunity to meet face-to-face and chat whilst taking photographs. This is an excellent way to learn by doing.

Fred

fred.wp.dawson@googlemail.com



Members' photographs are available to view on the group Flickr page at

<https://flickr.com/groups/14827860@N22>

Walk & Lunch

After a brief hiatus where we just 'lunched' - we might try to add a walk in January - depending on the rain & mud!

In November we all ate well at the Pointer Inn in Newchurch and in December the Woodman's Arms did us proud.

In January we are booked at the Dairyman's Daughter at Arreton for Wednesday 17th and, mud permitting, there will be the opportunity for a circular walk (with stiles) beforehand.

On Wednesday 21st February I hope we will be at the Red Lion in Freshwater with a walk up and down the estuary (with the option of a bus back).

Please let me know if you would like to join us so that I can give the pubs accurate numbers in advance.

Sally

sally.u3awight@gmail.com

News from the Groups

Spanish Improvers



The group is friendly and welcoming. There is no pressure - we are here to enjoy ourselves and get the satisfaction of learning a new language.

Lola, from Spain will continue to coach the group and there is probably space for one or two new people with a foundation in Spanish.

Brett Clark: brett_iow@hotmail.com

Italian Beginners Saturday 14:00

and

Italian Conversation Saturday 15:00



Spanish and Italian with Isabelle, at Utilita in Newport...

Spanish Beginners and Improvers



Isabelle is taking some time to take care of her health.

These language classes will resume towards the end of January.

All enquiries to groups@u3awight.uk.

(Isabelle also teaches French, Italian, Spanish and Turkish privately.)



The Garden Group (hibernating until Spring)

The Garden Group have come to the end of their programme of garden visits for this year. What was striking in our visits was the amazing diversity of each other's gardens. Members gardens are not just flowers. Some have ponds, some fruit trees some productive vegetable plots or very productive bee hives.

We're collecting photos of our gardens in all their glory to share during the colder months ahead. Some members rounded off the season by attending the recent recording of 2 episodes of BBC Gardener's Question Time in Freshwater, a very enjoyable evening.

See you all again in the Spring.

Robin and Patricia

ntyler60@gmail.com

Humanist Group

The u3a Humanist Group (second Tuesday) which is affiliated with the IW Humanist Group - www.iw-humanists.org.uk - is not meeting at the moment. Please check web link or contact Editor for more info.

News from the Groups

French Conversation

Friday am: Lake
Friday pm: Newport
Wednesday pm: Newport



These three conversation groups are all aimed at having fun while endeavouring to speak French. There is no teacher and we share the responsibility for supporting each other to improve, or at least not lose, what French we have.

Contact groups@u3awight.uk

French Film Matinée

The January French Film is on Monday 8th January (2nd Monday of the month to avoid New Year's Day).

A Journey through French Cinema... French director, screenwriter, actor and producer Bertrand Tavernier looks at the rich history of French cinema. As the film is 3 hours 21 minutes long we propose an earlier start at 2.00 pm with a short half-time intermission with mini social and light refreshments.

Please book with:
wendy@ventnorartsclub.

The February film on Monday 5th is 'Maigret', a modern film starring Gérard Depardieu, 2022 (1 hour 29 minutes).

Contact anthealangelan@yahoo.co.uk



German



There are two German groups that meet on alternate Friday mornings 10.30 – 12.30am, either at the Brading Roman Villa or at Utilita in Newport. Anyone interested in joining is welcome to try in both, so that they can gauge the level they feel most comfortable at. Some members choose to participate in both.

"Improvers' Group"

There are a few spaces available if anyone is looking to improve the German they learnt at school or while living or working in Germany. We can't take beginners at this stage, but anyone who already has some knowledge should feel comfortable in this group. We practise three basic skills, speaking, listening and understanding written texts, using a variety of methods, videos, broadcasts etc. and anyone who needs to participate via Zoom can do so.

"Advanced Group"

There are spaces in this group for people with a more advanced knowledge of the language, for example, people who may have studied to "A" level in their youth, or anyone who has lived and worked in Germany for some years. The main skills we practise are speaking, listening and written comprehension, and group members often bring their own contributions for us all to pore over. Zoom is available for anyone unable to be present in person.

Please phone or email for further details.

Mary Longley

melongley1@gmail.com

07815 901252

News from the Groups

Discussion Group

Do join us in the new year for lively discussion of a wide range of topics. Some questions we've discussed recently are:

- *How can we reduce the epidemic of shoplifting?*
- *What are the causes of obesity?*
- *Should elderly drivers have to retake their driving test?*
- *Do we always act in our own self-interest, even when being apparently altruistic?*
- *How might Artificial Intelligence change the way our brain/s work and would we like it?*

We meet twice a month, every second and fourth Thursday, at Utilita Hub, 121 High Street, Newport, between 10.30 and 12.00.

Our meeting dates for the end of December and January and February 2024 are:

December 28th
January 11th & 25th
February 8th & 22nd

Please contact Pauline
paulinehunter12@gmail.com
if you'd like to come along.

Pauline



“Once Upon a Time” Helen Edom, Creative Writing

Once upon a time there lived a wise peasant woman. She was feeding her chickens when a tiny man popped out of the air. The wise woman knew magic when she saw it.

“I have come to give you three wishes.”
“Why?”

“Because that’s what I do.”

There was no arguing, she had to have three wishes whether she liked it or not. On the whole she didn’t like it because wishes were tricky. There was that man who accidentally wished for a sausage, then lost his temper and wished it onto his wife’s nose. He had to use his third wish to remove it. The woman pondered. “I’d like my cottage to be less draughty.”

“That’s easily done,” said the man.

“My second wish is for a bag of corn for my chickens.”

“You can have an everlasting bag if you want.”

“No, one bag will do,” answered the wise woman, having no wish to be buried under an unstoppable torrent of corn. The woman thought carefully about her final wish. She could ask for world peace but perhaps everyone would end up dead, it would be peaceful then.

The wise woman asked:

“I’d like the wish in this box to keep on my shelf and use when age becomes a burden.”

The tiny man granted the wish but warned it couldn’t be changed. Then he blinked out of existence.

That evening the woman sat inside her cosy cottage. The wind whistled outside but her mended shutters kept draughts out. On the whole the wise woman was pleased but every wish had its price.

There was always the warning of Midas’s fatal golden touch. Her price was wondering what would have happened if she had been greedy enough or bold enough to dare to ask for more.

News from the Groups

Non-Fiction Book Group

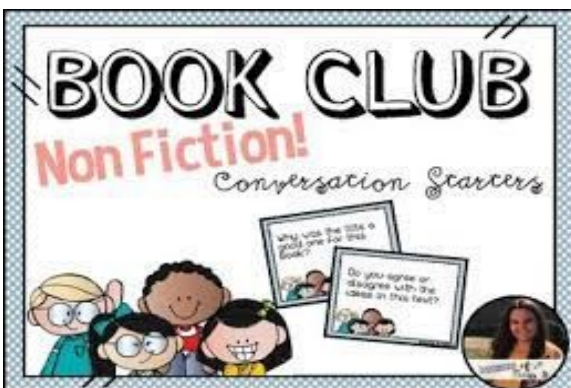
Zoom, 2nd Tuesday, at 17:00

Maybe it's the wet weather or the relentlessly grim daily news, but we have recently been reading and discussing books exploring how politics and government work.

First up was 'On Tyranny: twenty lessons from the twentieth century' by Timothy Snyder, Professor of History at Yale. It is written as a 'handbook' for identifying the signs of, and resisting the move towards, tyrannical government, which Snyder saw clearly happening under President Trump and we have more recently observed in several European countries.

Following on from this, by chance rather than design, was Rory Stewart's 'Politics on the Edge' in which he describes his entry into UK politics and his experience and observations through nine years moving from backbencher to cabinet minister. We sort of 'knew' it worked like that but this account from the inside of government was aptly summarised by Rowan Williams as 'an excoriating picture of a shamefully dysfunctional political culture'. It surely is.

Nigel Hastings 07967 371635
hastingsnigel01@gmail.com



Wootton Book Group

December's book choice, 'Haven' by Emma Donahue, really divided the group. The story is set in seventh century Ireland and is about a scholar and priest called Artt, who takes two monks called Trian and Cormac in search of an isolated spot on which to build a monastery. They settle on Skellig Michael which is a bare, desolate island inhabited by tens of thousands of birds. The story is about isolation, passion and conflict between obedience and self-preservation. Scores out of ten ranged from 2 to 10!

Although the views of the group can be very varied we all like the opportunity to read books and authors which we would normally never pick up. We may sometimes not enjoy one of the titles but it always makes for wonderful discussions!

Our book for January is 'The Laughing Policeman' by Maj Sjoewall.

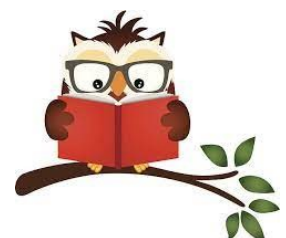
Allison Rogers
01983 616634
davidallison36@hotmail.com

Reading Group

We meet monthly in Newport on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 15:15 and discuss what ever we are reading - sometimes with a question about why, sometimes just with delight.

Next meeting Tuesday February 6th.

Sally
groups@u3awight.uk



News from the Groups

GREEN ISSUES

GREEN ISSUES - GRANT ALERT:

The Government has increased the BUS grant (Boiler Upgrade Grant) from £5000 to £7500. This is so that homeowners can get rid of their fossil fueled gas boilers and replace them with an electric heating system which is more sustainable.

Just Google "Boiler Upgrade Scheme Gov.UK" and you will find all the details of the grant including a list of local MSC qualified installers who will give you a quote and apply for the grant for you. Your house must be reasonably well insulated as it would be a waste of money if all that happens is that you are heating the outside air but it is not means tested.

I have just had a quote of £8,000 for an air source heat pump, a highly insulated tank, upgrade of my central heating should it need it, all the bits and bobs for fitting, the cost of fitting and a five year guarantee. Minus the £7,500 grant and it will cost me £500 for the whole

lot, which is a joke. Gas is very uneconomic as well as polluting, for every 1 kwh you put in you only receive a maximum of 0.9 kwh of heat out and that is with the latest high spec boiler. Electricity is better, for every 1 kwh you put into an electric fire you get 1 kwh of heat out. Air Source heat pumps are more efficient still - for every 1 kwh of electricity you put in you get 3-4 KWhrs of heat out. It is even more economic if you have solar panels and generate your own electricity (there are grants still available for solar panels as well).

Have a look on your energy supplier's website as some companies are doing it for their customers. I got my quote from Octopus and am just waiting for the assessor to come round.

Hope this helps

Dina

Green Issues
Group

dinajung@gmail.com



Creative Writers

The Creative Writing Group has now eight members. Officially full, but life can be flexible. 2024 will have changes. It is a constant surprise as to the variety of content and style that is produced by the group and one more writer means more surprises.

Meeting monthly is helpful when composing our "homework" challenges. There is always a pleasant exchange of comments in the meeting when tackling a small exercise. Something Festive was the

December task. See our work on the u3awight [website](#).

Read a short story by our own Helen Edom on page 14 or 17.

Regards from

**Helena
Hewston**

sybug@aol.com



Dialogue Story, from Creative Writing group, by Helen Edom

“Your mum actually said that she would bring her dog to a wedding?!”

“Honestly she thought it was okay somehow.”

“But Mabel? She’d jump up at every one and wouldn’t be above a widdle in the marquee!”

“You should have heard my elder sister in full Mother-of-the-Groom mode! But the dog still went with us in the car. There wasn’t much room because my other sister, Jessica, and her two young kids had to go up. Mabel was in the foot-well.”

“You had a fart-prone dog in the car. All the way up to Rutland?”

“And she was car-sick and needed frequent walks.”

“But you stayed in a cottage for three days. Was the dog even allowed?”

“A well-behaved pet was allowed, but that wasn’t Mabel. There were instructions in the welcome book to keep the dog in the kitchen”.

“But Mabel is used to roaming the house and sleeping on the sofa! And she sheds hair everywhere.”

“Yes it was a nightmare. The kids were constantly leaving the kitchen door open or else Mabel would whine.”

“Who did you get to look after Mabel on the wedding day?”

“Well mum thought Mabel would be okay if she was shut up properly. Mum left the window slightly ajar so Mabel could get some air.”

“What was the wedding like though?”

“Simply lovely! Katy and Chris were blissfully happy. We were slightly covered in dog hair but made a good showing.”

“So all was well?”

“No dog at the wedding but there was another bit of drama. When we got back there was no dog and the window was wide open. Mum went pale. Luckily there was a knock on the door and I opened it to find a man holding Mabel on a leash.”

“Hi,” he said, “I live next door and noticed you had a dog. It came running up to mine when I was walking in the nearby graveyard.”

““Oh thank you!” cried mum, joyously reuniting with Mabel

“He went on “Ah, I’m sorry it’s not all good news .I’m afraid my dog mated with yours before I could stop him. I haven’t kept bitches but I think you can get some anti-mate medicine from the vet.”

“I bet your mum refused!”

“Of course! Anyway it could have been worse. The bride and groom are already promised the pick of the litter. I don’t know if it will make them broody but mum certainly hopes so!”



Info, copy, errors and omissions etc. to the editor:

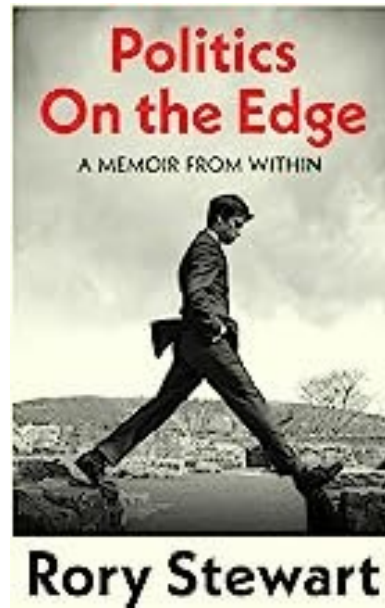
rogerskid@zen.co.uk 07732 480201

Editor's book of the month:

'Politics on the Edge' by Rory Stewart

The Times* pick for *The Biggest Books of the Autumn

Over the course of a decade from 2010, Rory Stewart went from being a political outsider to standing for prime minister - before being sacked from a Conservative Party that he had come to barely recognise.



Web Site The u3aWight web site currently uses a web platform designed and run by two long-standing u3a volunteer members (at national level) who are nearing retirement. The plan is to encourage regional u3a's (like us) to move across to WordPress, using a u3a created template. If you have WordPress web design skills or would like to develop them then you would be very welcome to become a u3aWight web-apprentice.

Please contact the web/newsletter editor if interested:

rogerskid@zen.co.uk

www.u3awight.uk

I.C.E. In Case of Emergency

It might be sensible to consider carrying a card in your wallet or purse which gives details of who to contact in an emergency.

This can save emergency services a lot of time and bother if you are unlucky enough to be in a situation where you are unable to communicate.

Please add your phone to **I.C.E.**



Facebook

The Facebook Members' Group:
www.facebook.com/groups/iowu3a



The Facebook Open Page:
www.facebook.com/u3aWight



Our normal website is:
www.u3awight.uk



Spotlight on...

your editor



Roger was born in Wolverhampton in 1946, attended Wolverhampton then Slough Grammar Schools, then Aston University and first came to the Island as a student optometrist in 1968; left, underwent an itinerant phase including a time in South Africa, came back to UK, worked in various places, returned for a further degree and then back to the Island to become the Freshwater village optometrist until retirement in 2008.

Got married, got divorced, got involved with various charities including the West Wight Swimming Pool and Julia Margaret Cameron Trusts. He moved to Newport in 1985 and co-founded the "Island Professionals" singles group. And all along had a supportive rôle at the Quay Arts Centre from its inception.

He likes some classical music, is really bad at playing the piano, likes light duty IT skills

including the u3a website and newsletter. In 2022 he found working on the "[Laptops for Ukrainians](#)" project rewarding.

He has found setting up u3a groups creative, even if they have never caught on: [AeroPress Coffee](#); [Humanism](#); [Vinyl Revival](#); [K-dramas](#) and now "[Hearing Action](#)". Click to see appropriate web entries.

Contact via various "Editor" links.



Update: Speaker Meeting Programme 2023/2024

All Speaker Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at St. John's Hall, Newport, and start at 14:00.

The location/timings of the socials vary and will be advised well in advance.

Jan – Jeremy Thomas - National Coast Watch, Needles, about their work on the Island (plus AGM)

Feb – The Donkey Sanctuary

Mar – Mark Earp - Every Pond Matters

Apr – Kevin Shaw 'Lord Palmerston: Britain's Most Outrageous Prime Minister'

May – Forest Park Waste and Recycling

June – Summer Social (no **July/Aug**)

Sept 12th – David Fairlamb – nature talk of our choice tbd.

October 10th Sarah Lang – subject tbd

November – still available

December Winter Social

Speaker Meetings

A.G.M. and Speaker Meeting
2.00 pm, Thursday, January 11th
St. John's Hall, Newport, PO30 1LN

Jeremy Thomas - National Coast Watch, Needles,
about their work on the Island (plus AGM)



The objective of the National Coastwatch Institution ([NCI](#)) is to assist in the protection and preservation of life at sea and along the United Kingdom coastline.

A voluntary organisation keeping a visual watch along UK shores.



Thursday February 8th -
Talk on the
IW Donkey Sanctuary
2.00 pm St John's Hall
Newport, IW

