

March - April 2024

£1 per printed copy

from our Vice-Chair

Alison Botha has kindly decided it is the turn of someone else to write this edition's introduction, and so the pen has fallen upon me this month!

Probably few of us really enjoy the winter months which, this year, have been especially depressing for many – cold, wet, windy, and more expensive by the week it seems. The beauty of nature's Autumn colours has passed, the bright lights of Christmas long gone, and we have been reluctant to venture far in this weather. But HEY! – Mother Nature is waking up again, the birds are singing and the daffodils are in bloom – Spring is here and it is time to look forward to whatever the year brings us!

We on the Isle of Wight are so blessed with our environment – beautiful scenery, clean air and a relatively kind climate, and so many opportunities to improve our existing interests, and maybe try some new, and our u3a is the ideal starting point. With approximately 30 interest groups, coffee morning and speaker meetings, there should be something for everyone, so why not take another look at the activities available and see what takes your fancy!

MAYBE YOU HAVE YOUR OWN FAVOURITE INTEREST not already provided, and would like to share it with others – so start a new group – it isn't difficult and your committee is here to support you, both during the startup process, promoting your group whilst it develops, and beyond. Our strategy is, however, for groups to run themselves so your Committee provides support, but does not run any group (although Committee members do run their own groups as individuals, of course).

Whilst we have been steadily growing in numbers (and we are now nearly 300) we always welcome new members, and having tried various methods of promoting u3a, we have found that the best way is through word of mouth. This encourages friends and folks we meet to join us and enjoy what we also have. So, get out there, spread the word and enjoy your Spring!

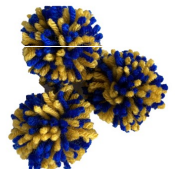
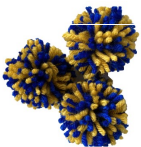
Dave Vodden

dave.vodden@tiscali.co.uk

Note: March 31st

Membership Renewals

See [Page 20](#)



**Coffee Mornings around the Island:
1st Wednesday of the month at 10:30
at the Bargeman's Rest in Newport.**

2nd Monday, Better Days Café, Ventnor, at 11:00

4th Tuesday, at Ryde Castle 11:00

A new coffee morning will be held at the New Holmwood Hotel, Queens Road, Egypt Point, Cowes on Thursday March 21st from 11 – 12.30.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Look out for the blue and gold pom-poms.

Regular Group Meetings

Monday	pm	Spanish Improvers', Zoom, weekly Signs of the Times, Northwood, 1st Monday French Film, Ventnor Arts Club, 1st Monday The Garden Group, 1st Monday and 3rd Tuesday Photography, Zoom, 3rd Monday Pub Signs, 1st Monday	brett_iow@hotmail.com rayscarfe@hotmail.co.uk anthealangelan@yahoo.co.uk robintyler60@gmail.com fred.wp.dawson@gmail.com rayscarfe@hotmail.co.uk
	eve	K-Dramas, Zoom, 2nd Monday	rogerskid@zen.co.uk
Tuesday	am	Cycle Out, 1st and 3rd Tuesday	dave.vodden@tiscali.co.uk
	pm	The Garden Group, 3rd Tuesday (and 1st Monday) Cowes Wine Appreciation, 2nd Tuesday	robintyler60@gmail.com jennylodc@yahoo.co.uk
Wednesday	eve	Non-Fiction Book Club, Zoom, 4th Tuesday Humanist Philosophy, 2nd Tuesday	hastingsnigel01@gmail.com rogerskid@zen.co.uk
	am	Green Issues UK wide group on Zoom, 4th Wednesday Walk & Lunch, 3rd Wednesday Beach Walk, Last Wednesday Playing with Water Colours, 2nd Wednesday	dinajung@gmail.com sally.u3awight@gmail.com carolbradshaw@u3awight.uk barb.mill@yahoo.co.uk
Thursday	pm	French 3 Conversation, Newport Vinyl Revival, 3rd Wednesday Walk & Talk Gardens, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays April - October	french@u3awight.uk rogerskid@zen.co.uk tillmanberyl@gmail.com
	am	Card Making, Shanklin, 1st Thursday Discussion Group, Newport, 2nd and 4th Thursdays Creative Writers, Newport, usually 1st Thursday	teresareed@btopenworld.com paulinehunter12@gmail.com sybug@aol.com
Friday	pm	St Lawrence Wine Group, St Lawrence, 3rd Thursday	frankj.kelly@icloud.com
	am	German Improvers or Advanced, alternate Fridays, Brading/Newport French 1 Conversation, Lake, weekly French 2 Conversation, Newport, weekly (new time 14:00) Wootton Book Group, 1st Friday	melongley1@gmail.com french@u3awight.uk french@u3awight.uk davidallison36@hotmail.com
Saturday	pm	Beginners' Spanish, Newport, weekly Beginners' Italian, Newport, weekly	brett_iow@hotmail.com

Irregular Group Meetings

Bookies' Favourite
Cribbage
Scrabble
Mah-Jong, various locations

Eat Out and Review
Random Ramblers
Random Reads
Pub Quiz

New Music with Instruments and Voice
New Classical Music Group

stephedwards2@gmail.com
cm.priest1@yahoo.co.uk
alisonbotha@hotmail.com
sally.u3awight@gmail.com

sally.u3awight@gail.com
jackyiowu3a@gmail.com
sally.u3awight.@gmail.com
alisonbotha@hotmail.com

kevans@lejouvenal.com or
garryocxof@gmail.com

For calendar updates please contact Peter Huckle email peter@iow.me or 07746 949454

Focus on Groups

An animated and very social event was held at Arreton Community Hall in February for current and potential group leaders/facilitators.

Whilst enjoying the buffet spread catered by Alison and Frank, everyone was able to share their experiences of running a group. Those thinking of possibly facilitating a group in future were given a lot of encouragement, being told basically that it is nowhere near as scary or complicated as they might fear!

Some of the comments from current group leaders on this page should be very helpful to anyone else considering jumping in at the deep end at some stage.

Alison thanked everyone for the part they are playing in keeping our u3a vibrant and entertaining for the members. She also paid tribute to Sally Forster who has now stood down from the role of Groups Co-ordinator which she has so successfully filled for over 4 years.

In future all groups will be supported and advised by one of our committee members. The groups have been divided into Clusters and each Cluster will have a Group Supporter (currently Alison Botha, Dave Vodden, Sally Forster, Tony Williams, Roger Skidmore and Angela Forman). Group leaders will be informed who their Supporter is. Any new groups will be put into one of the existing Clusters.

Alison Botha
chair@u3awight.uk

If anyone is hesitant about setting up or taking over a Group – don't be! It's natural to be apprehensive embarking on something new, we were wary of "not doing it right". BUT, there is no right or wrong, just a group of friendly

folk with a shared interest. You soon realise that they are not "members" but appreciative and supportive friends who enhance your life tremendously. Do try it. You won't regret it.

See you all again in the Spring.

Robin and Patricia (Garden Group)
ntyler60@gmail.com

You don't need to be an expert on the subject - you only need an interest and enthusiasm for it. I have found running the group has driven my interest and increased my own enjoyment. You will soon find others to share the fun!

Frank Kelly
Wine Group
frankj.kelly@icloud.com



A few words about running a group - It has been fun running the Discussion Group page 14. We're just about to have our first birthday! What has been brilliant from the outset is that group members take the lead on topics that interest them and it's also brilliant that, if I can't attend, the group carries on happily without me. Sally helped me set it up and has been very supportive. I enjoy telling new members about the group. Booking the room at Utilita Hub is straightforward. The only other regular task is to write a short newsletter report every other month, which I also enjoy. Best wishes to anyone setting up a new group. The first step is, perhaps, to talk it all through with Alison or whoever on the committee is dealing with setting up new groups.

Pauline Hunter (Discussion Group)
paulinehunter12@gmail.com

Committee News

Thank you to all those of you who completed the survey

- we had 77 responses which, out of 300 members, was a reasonable rate of return for a survey.

Predictably but disappointingly 99% of respondents were members who are active in the u3a to some degree - those of you who participate in at least one activity (a group, coffee mornings, speaker meetings or walks).

We posted the survey because we were hoping to reach the members who are harder to connect with, those who have not yet found their feet in the u3a. So if that is you, although you may have missed the chance of a chocolate reward (!) please make contact with us - maybe fill in the survey, send an email to our Chair (alisonbotha@hotmail.com) or call Alison on 01983 855217.

You could also maybe come to a coffee morning and introduce yourself, we are a friendly crowd and it would be nice to meet you.

The overwhelming message from the survey responses was 'thank you!' which was lovely to hear. The second strongest suggestion was more regional activity in different areas on the Island. We continue to work on this. It is a bit of a chicken and egg problem - groups don't form without enough members in an area and without groups in an area the less attractive we are to new members who live in that area!

We will hold all of your messages in mind as we continue to plan our way forward.

The issue of frequency and form of newsletter will be a long running discussion without an answer that will suit everyone - but watch this space.

And finally, a small but noticeable number of you tentatively offered to become more engaged as a volunteer. Thank you - we will be in touch.

From the Committee.

Notes from our January AGM

A successful year with steady growth to nearly 300 members and 30 groups. Finances in good shape. Survey results awaited with interest. Several new committee members but most still in place. Some slight changes to our constitution. Full details available on request.

Our recent AGM was very well attended – around 50 members came to hear the Speaker and then didn't sneak off afterwards!

Our committee has expanded, and responsibilities are being shared whenever possible. Carol Bradshaw stepped down having stayed on for an extra year and Sally Forster has stepped down from her role as Groups Co-ordinator. Alison thanked both of them for the terrific amount of commitment they have shown the u3a over the past years.

Alison urged everyone to try and play their part in keeping the u3a vibrant, friendly and forward-looking.

Alison Botha, chair@u3awight.uk

Dates for your Diary

Exploring Historical Churches – new group starts in May

The Island is full of amazing churches – ten of them listed in the Domesday Book and others dating back to the 11th century. During the summer we will be visiting a different church every other Sunday at 2.30pm, starting on May 5th .

One of the group will have done some research about the church in advance (and will have established that it is open!).

We will explore the church, learn about its history, walk around the graveyard and then stroll somewhere nearby for some refreshments. Some churches offer afternoon tea for visitors in the summer.

We will start on May 5th by visiting **St Mary the Virgin** in Brading.

There is a car park (which charges) and the No 2 bus goes from Newport to Brading church. Other churches being considered are St Mildred's, Whippingham; St Olave, Gatcombe; the Holy Cross, Binstead; St Michael the Archangel, Shalfleet.

If you are interested please contact Hilary Ranger (07876 560439). If we have missed your favourite church come along, tell us and lead an afternoon's visit!



St Mary the Virgin

Hilary, Carole Batchelor, Julia Seabrook

Eat Out and Review

There will be an **Eat Out and Review** for lunch at 'Thai Journey' in Godshill on Thursday March 7th - please contact Sheila Herrando if you are interested - sheilaherrando@gmail.com.

There will also be an Eat Out and Review for Sunday Lunch at The Portland in Gurnard on **Easter Sunday Lunch, March 31st**. I have heard good things about the food at the Portland and they are obviously putting a lot of energy into making the pub a vital community asset. Please let me know soonish if you would be interested so that I can give them approximate numbers.

At the moment I have asked them to reserve their 'event room' that holds 20 but

I do not want to hold on to it if we will be a much smaller group.

Also let me know of other **Eat Out and Review** possibilities. Two that look interesting to me are brunch at the Military Museum and brunch at Fort Victoria when the weather gets warmer.

Contact **Sally**
sally.u3awight@gmail.com

**Easter Sunday Lunch
(31st March)
Anyone?**



News from the Groups

Walk and Lunch

The March walk & lunch, will be on the spring Equinox, Wednesday March 20th. The lunch will be at The Yarbridge Inn, Brading. I hope that the walk will be in the bird sanctuary at Brading. This will only be two days after my return from holiday so if we have a lot of rain between now and as if! then there maybe a last minute diversion. Please let me know if you think that you would like to join the lunch. There are a few places left and the list will move as we get nearer the date and peoples plans change. Lunch is booked for 12:45.

The April lunch will be at the White Mouse at Chale - let's hope for some sunshine so that we can eat outside. The walk might be a little more adventurous than usual up over the downs but more details on that to follow.

The February Lunch at the Red Lion was much enjoyed by all, the walk was lovely and the weather was atrocious!

I really enjoy walking in the rain, in the right clothes and the right footwear, once you actually commit to the mad idea of going out in wild weather it is fun to be out in it, rather than sitting watching through a window. Nine hardy souls battled through the wind and rain and several more dry (sane?) people joined us for lunch.

Sally sally.u3awight@gmail.com



On the test walk when the sun shone.

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*



Let's get Quizzical

There are many pubs across the Island which host quizzes, particularly during the off-season.

They can be great fun, so if you fancy joining in please contact me – alisonbotha@hotmail.com – and I will add you to our group and keep you informed of future dates.

The first two we are attending (both now fully booked) are in Godshell, at the Griffin and the Taverners.

Alison Botha

News from the Groups

Playtime with Watercolour

Playtime with watercolour has been attempting to add a little colourful cheer to this rather grey time of year.

January and February can be a tough and colourless time of year so we have been doing extra sessions of playtime to lift the spirits with messing about with bright colours and cheerful company.

Experimentation is the name of the game and we have been playing with shades of red and painting various shapes and sizes of poppies with squiggly green leaves and backdrops of blue with salt effects in a rectangular box. Hard to imagine but great fun to do and looks great with a mount around it. At times we had complete silence while attempting to render an artistic poppy - this is highly unusual for a group of women together, but it doesn't last that long! It seems to be a surprise as to how relaxing painting can be.

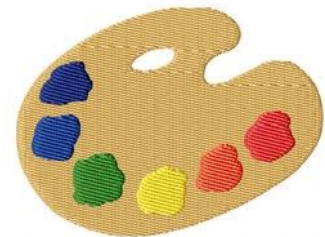
One of the ladies now leaves her paints out and easily accessible at home and is discovering that it is so easy to pick up a brush and lose hours playing with paints. It is a highly addictive pastime once the bug gets you.

Our numbers have now increased to the point where if everyone turns up at once we will be hanging out of the windows but it is a joy to see everyone enjoying themselves. We are planning local places to go to in the fine weather so hopefully we can invite more people to join us in outdoor excursions. The more the merrier and a picnic sounds so good on a grey day in February.

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

Best Wishes,

Barbara



Discussion Group

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

- What do we gain from moon probes? Are they worth their cost?
- And if so, should they be robotic or manned?
- Is the government right to plan to overturn all convictions of Postmasters and Postmistresses convicted due to the malfunctioning of their Horizon IT?
- What are the pros and cons of tactical voting?
- Do additives to foods- sugars/ polyols - do any harm?

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 March and April 2024 are:

March 14th & 28th and April 11th & 25th

Please contact Pauline

paulinehunter12@gmail.com

if you'd like to come along.

Pauline



News from the Groups

Bookies' Favourites

Bookies' Favourites choice for over the Christmas period was 'Demon Copperhead' by Barbara Kingsolver.

This is a long and complex book which provoked a variety of opinions! We all agreed that it was very well researched but it was quite an uncomfortable read. Written in the vernacular of a small community in the Appalachian mountains, it dealt with the problems of extreme poverty and the effects of opioid taking on those who are having to live in awful circumstances.

The book was written as a parallel tale to David Copperfield by Charles Dickens. We all agreed that the dialogue style was hard reading and some felt the book was overlong, with too many unnecessary characters. By contrast, there were members of the group who thoroughly enjoyed it and were able to totally immerse themselves in the story.

However differently we felt about it, there was agreement that it was insightful, accomplished and totally believable.

Bookies' Favourites met to discuss their latest choice which was "The Thursday Murder Club" by Richard Osman. As we were reading it over the Christmas period, it was a lighter choice than some we had discussed previously.

It provoked a lively and sometimes vehement discussion. Views ranged from enjoying the different characters and gentle humour, as well as the twists and turns of the sometimes complicated plot, to contrasting views feeling that the book was shallow, type cast, condescending and unnecessarily convoluted.

Questions were raised as to whether it had been written as a money spinner for the author! Whilst some of the group enjoyed it as a light read, it certainly didn't get a whole hearted endorsement. It was the first book we have reviewed that evoked such a difference of opinions!

Our next meeting will be at Monkton Arts, Ryde, on Monday 18th March at 14.00 when we will be discussing "The Half Life of Valery K" by Natasha Pulley

Steph stephedwards2@gmail.com



Random Reads

We will now meet approximately every 4-6 weeks as and when most of us can get together in a variety of venues. The next meeting will be 15:00 Tuesday March 26th at the Bargeman's Rest in Newport.

New members welcome.

Sally
sally.u3awight@gmail.com



News from the Groups

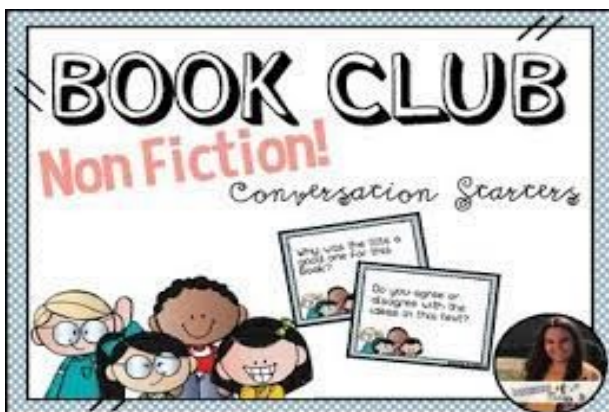
Non-Fiction Books

To kick off the New Year we had chosen a recently published book by the Guardian's political sketch writer John Crace, whose daily commentary on comings and goings in Westminster several of us regularly enjoy, but it got a uniform 'thumbs down' when we met. Entitled '*Depraved New World*', the book is essentially a collection of Crace's sketches from October 2021 to June 2023, covering Covid, the war in Ukraine, two monarchs and the comings and goings of three prime ministers and their countless appointees. As individual sketches, they are entertaining, in a thoroughly partisan manner, but bound together they become monotonous.

So, for a complete change of diet, February's book is Mensun Bound's *The Ship Beneath the Ice: the discovery of Shackleton's Endurance*, the fascinating story of the expedition to locate the wreck deep beneath the Antarctic ice, written by its leader.

We have room for a few more to join us. If a varied diet of non-fiction interests you please get in touch. We meet monthly, by Zoom.

Nigel Hastings 07967 371635
hastingsnigel01@gmail.com



Wootton Book Group

We had an hilarious experience in January when discussing 'The Laughing Policeman' by Maj Sjoewall. It transpired that two members of the group had read a book with the same title but by a different author! Both books proved to be fairly awful. The correct book was rather tedious and complicated with Swedish names and titles. The other book was long and gruesome. No one recommended reading the alternative version but we had a good laugh about the whole episode.

In February we read and discussed 'The Reluctant Bride' by Lucy Mangan. As the group took it in turns to give their views on the book describing how much they had enjoyed it and how funny they thought it was, one of the group gasped and looked down at the heavy tome on her lap. 'I don't believe it, I've got the wrong book! I thought it was awful and Jane must have gone mad to choose it!'

Who would have believed that it could happen twice in two months! It seems there are two books entitled 'The Reluctant Bride'.

We are of a certain age but we are generally 'on the ball' and in our defence the error was made by a different person on the second occasion.

In March we are reading 'Notes from a Small Island' by Bill Bryson. I think we will all be checking we have the correct book title and author this time!

Allison Rogers
01983 616634
davidallison36@hotmail.com

News from the Groups

Garden Group...

Looking out at our water-logged and wind-swept garden, our lovely afternoons spent enjoying each others' gardens seem so far away. But we gardeners are an optimistic lot, always looking ahead and planning for even better results in the coming year. We know it will happen, just seems such a distant prospect.

Here's some great photos of our group and some of their gardening successes last year to keep us going.

Thank you all, and see you soon

Patricia & Robin
robintyler60@gmail.com



Beach Walks

The January beach walk on Yaverland beach was perfect..... well almost. We arrived early to discover that the seafront road was closed from the town end. Access from the Brading end was possible, we discovered, even though the road said closed from that end too. Island Roads do love to keep us guessing! Most of the group managed to figure it out and we had a brisk walk right along the beach to the corner and back followed by a warming drink at the Animal Sanctuary. It was most enjoyable.

Thank you for the good tip from several of the group. If you use Yaverland beach or surrounding area more than six times a year it is worth joining the Wildheart Animal Sanctuary (£40 p.a.). This gives you unlimited free parking, use of the toilets, 10% off refreshments and your membership contributes to a good cause too. This seems to me to be a much better idea than paying over the top in the council car park.

Future Walks:

The **March** beach walk will be on Wednesday the 27th along Compton Beach. Start time will be tide dependent but will be in the afternoon around 15:30.

The **April** beach walk will start from the Green in St Helens at 11:00 on the 24th.

I will email everyone with more details one week before each event.

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 along 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

News from the Groups

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.

Classical music group needs you!

So far, we have two pianists looking for someone else to play with. Instrumentalists wanting to play duets or chamber music, singers with lieder or part songs, anyone who would like to try out solos - whatever you feel like. All ability levels welcome - just for the enjoyment of sharing a common interest. Email Garry Thorp on garryocxof@gmail.com.



Family History

Our group meets from October until April each year.

The final beginners' workshop for this session will be held in Brighstone on Thursday 7th March. The main group will meet in Newport on Thursday 21st March with the final workshop on Thursday 18th April. Family History group members can attend either venue - whichever suits them best.

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, iPad/device and have a paid subscription to either Ancestry or FindMyPast but this is not essential.

Just be enthusiastic!

Alison
rhawebb@gmail.com



New 'Learn Bridge' Opportunity

If you are interested in learning Bridge, a new class will be starting in Ryde after Easter.

It will be on Thursdays at 10am at St Georges Chapel, George Street. The teacher will be Christine Naughton. There will be a fee for these classes. Contact Chris Poles on christine.poles@icloud.com who will pass your details on. (Note - not actually a u3a group)

News from the Groups

Scrabble Group

The Scrabble group continues to throw up some interesting and challenging games. We would welcome any new members – we meet on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons, in Sandown, St Lawrence or Godshill.

Here you see Corinne and Jen relaxing after a game that produced a couple of ‘are you sure we can allow this word?’ moments!!

Our latest session in February saw two players successfully laying down all their letters in the same game – never happened before!

The next meeting will be in Godshill on Wednesday March 13th at 2pm. If you’re interested please contact Di at di.hylvilla@gmail.com

Alison Botha and Di Andrews



Corinne and Jen

Mah-Jong +

A small group meets in Cowes weekly. We also meet in peoples’ homes.

Contact: **Sally**
sally.u3awight@gmail.com



Cribbage Group

We meet every so often on a Wednesday evening in Wetherspoons (Man in the Moon) in Newport. Anyone is welcome to join!

If you would like to be notified of the next date please contact Christine on 01983 811562 and leave a message.

Christine
cm.priest1@yahoo.co.uk

Card Making

New Group Coming soon!

Teresa Reed



And let us know if you have difficulty getting to meetings or have mobility issues so that group organisers are aware of it.

News from the Groups

St Lawrence Wine Group Nov/Dec 2023

Our New Year's resolution for 2024 was to taste more wine! I don't know how we'll manage to keep to this strict regime, but it won't be for lack of wine.

For January it was decided for each of the group to bring their own favourite wine and tell us the reason for their choice. We then tasted and marked each bottle as normal, and the winner in a close contest was a Sauvignon Blanc 'Tiki Ridge' from New Zealand.

In February, we embarked on a virtual visit to Portugal, to taste wines made from mostly indigenous grapes little known in the UK. The country's chequered political past kept most of its table wine off our radar, (Port and Madeira have been imported since the 17th century, the extra alcohol allowing it to travel well.) This time a blended red wine 'Quinta do Portal' from the renowned Douro region topped our poll.

Next stop California!

Frank

frankj.kelly@icloud.com



St Lawrence wine tasting group.

Cowes Wine Appreciation

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month in West Cowes at 17:00.

We would really like to have one or two new members. We choose a wine in advance of each meeting - either by country, by region, by grape or by style. We each bring a bottle for the tasting, (and take home what is left) and a few nibbles. At the February group we tasted sweet wines, pairing well both with cheese and dessert. In January we tasted Portuguese Red and in December we had sparkles!

Each month we learn something about the wine and have fun too. Perhaps the most important thing that we are learning is how rarely higher price is associated with the most appreciated wine.



Jenny Hale

jennylodc@yahoo.co.uk

News from the Groups

Cycling

After our winter cycling recess we will be starting our monthly rides again in March. This 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.

For those of you new to the Cycling Group, or would like to know more about our rides, the 'newbies' ride is to encourage those who have not been on their bikes for a while to give it a try again, or maybe want to get a bike and need some support to get them started.

Therefore these rides are fairly short and on traffic free cycle tracks, and usually end up at a café where we can have a drink and discuss any issues. My thanks to those who have tried it again in the past, and, of course, also to those more experienced riders who have come along to provide support and encouragement.

Our first ride of 2024 will be on familiar territory, starting at **Merston** in the cycle track free car park on **Tuesday 5th March at 10.30am**. We will be keeping to the cycle track which is level and safe, although the surface can be a bit rough in places. Speed is 'leisurely', there are no steep hills, and no-one will be left behind – a more experienced rider will be 'tail-end Charlie' in case any problems arise.

I will ride the route beforehand so we are aware of any really bad stretches - unfortunately, the winter rain and resulting floods have affected some parts of the cycle route network, and repairs are 'in progress'.

The second ride of the month will be for more confident riders, and will be on **Tuesday 19th March starting at 10.30am**. As yet I haven't finalised a route as I want to make sure any route is safe, but it will be on a mixture of cycle track and quiet roads, possibly with short stretches of busier roads, and will be a longer ride, typically 20 miles or so.

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. We can even discuss travelling to the mainland for a ride if anyone is interested and knows a good route!

As many bikes have been in storage during the last few months I would ask you **check your bikes over** to make sure all fittings and fixtures are secure and working properly, (including brakes, gears, saddles etc.), and batteries fully charged up if you have an electric bike – and you know how to control all that electric power! (Help is at hand if you need it, however!).

I do not recommend using a bike with very narrow tyres (i.e. 'racing' style bikes), or even 'commuter' bikes with small wheels as the cycle tracks can be bumpy in places so are correspondingly uncomfortable with such tyres – some of the roads aren't much better – but the choice is yours, of course, and you won't be turned away!

I recommend you have a **spare inner tube** for your tyre size with you, but there are plenty of willing hands to assist with any punctures etc. Whilst you are responsible for your own safety I also recommend a good cycle helmet and suitable clothing and shoes – no flip-flops please!

If there is someone who you would like us to contact in case of an emergency please carry their contact number with you in an accessible place - or give it to me to store on our Beacon system so that I will have it to hand on future rides.

If you haven't yet joined the Cycle Group and would like to, can't remember if you have or not, or just want to know more about it, please just email me:

dave.vodden@tiscali.co.uk

Happy cycling!

Dave Vodden



News from the Groups

Photography

The next meeting of the photography group will be on Monday 18 March at 2pm on zoom

My apologies for the break in meetings as I've been away for a month or so in Madeira and also celebrating the New Year. This has given me the opportunity to explore my new camera Canon R7 mirrorless. Madeira is a wonderful place for landscape photography and I've been taking best advantage of the opportunity.

Now we're heading out of winter I thought the assignment for the next meeting would be "Signs of Spring" - so a chance for you to get your cameras out and go for a walk and see what signs of spring e.g. around, snowdrops, daffodils and green shoots on the trees.

Could you please load your chosen photographs onto the [Flickr](#) website.



The meeting will also include a short description of noise, ISO and how to control it.

Looking forward to seeing you all in March..

Fred

fred.wp.dawson@googlemail.com

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

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

Group Photos and Pictures

It's not always possible to find space for photos submitted by groups into the newsletter. But the website has a page dedicated to photos which is rarely used. See the "[Pictures](#)" page on the IW u3a website. Contact your Group's Contact for more details.

Signs of the Times: A Dance through History

Our next meeting of the u3a "History through Pub Signs" Group will be on Monday 4th March 2024 at the Travellers Joy, Northwood between 2pm and 4pm.

The theme for this month is "A Short History of Pub Sports" illustrating the various Pub Games that have been played since Roman times.

All U3A members are welcome to join in, have a drink and listen to stories of the roll our public houses have played.

Best wishes.

Ray Scarfe, rayscarfe@hotmail.co.uk



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.

We meet every Monday on Zoom and we are very lucky to have Lola, from Spain to coach the group. The group is currently full probably. If you would like to be added to the waiting list please contact Brett.

This group is for those with a foundation in Spanish. We were beginners 3 years ago!

Brett Clark: brett_iow@hotmail.com

Spanish and Italian Beginners



with Isabelle.



These groups usually meet on a Saturday afternoon in Newport. Isabelle is taking some time to take care of her health at the moment but will be back up and running soon..

All enquiries to groups@u3awight.uk.

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



Random Rambles walk - Tuesday 2nd April

All being well on the recce we will do a walk around Bembridge - 4 miles. This walk is from the Isle of Wight Ramblers downloadable walks. It will be a strollers walk at a leisurely pace. Hopefully a cafe half way and the walk ends near the Crab and Lobster Pub.



Description: Varied and attractive shorelines, with views across Spithead. Nelsonian naval connections and a rare telephone box are featured.

The walk is generally flat with a couple of short inclines and some rough tracks. Please note there are a few very high steps along the sea wall with no hand rail but a fence and wall to get hold of. We also walk down onto the beach which is mainly sand but some large pebbles to cross and some mud in places. There is some road walking through Bembridge including on narrow pavements hence it is not suitable for dogs.

If you would like to join us please email jackyiowu3a@gmail.com

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.

French 1 intermediate group is held in a lovely room at Co-op Funeralcare in Lake on Fridays at 10 am. There are 10 group members and we generally have 6 to 8 present at each meeting. Some of us are more fluent than others, with one a fluent speaker who can correct our French. We start each meeting with each person relating their news since they were last present, then we have coffee - the Co-op have a kitchen next to the room which we use. The second half is a mixture of games, listening exercises and reading and translating French articles.

French 2 meets at Utilita's room in Newport on Friday 2pm with a tight-knit group of around 6 people, sometimes more. They will be happy to welcome new members. Meetings are very informal with no preparation and an unstructured conversation, so as to achieve as natural and loose a flow as possible, as in real life in France. We have a qualified French teacher who corrects. Some members have made extraordinary progress in French conversation in this liberal environment, with a concomitant improvement in writing skills.

French 3 meets at Utilita's room in Newport on Wednesday 2pm. We have 12 members with varying levels of French, although all members have greatly improved. One new welcomed member is French and able to correct. Each week one person volunteers to email members to prepare a chosen subject which usually becomes very nostalgic, interesting and humorous.

Contact: french@u3awight.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. 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. 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

French Film Matinée

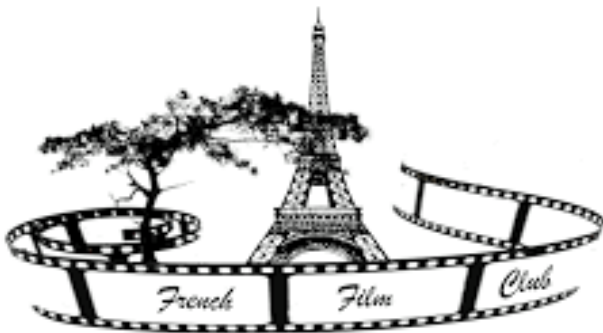
French film Monday 4th March at 3pm at Ventnor Arts Club: 'The Three Musketeers'. These monthly screenings have been well appreciated by many locals and a few loyal u3a members. We would welcome any donation of French films for the upcoming season. Matinée screenings can be booked at wendy@ventnorartsclub.

The award winning café Better Days is a welcoming warm space for a pre-film light lunch just opposite the club.

No 3 bus stops outside Boots nearby. I shall send a resumé of the film with a reminder.

Pat and Anthea

Contact anthealangelan@yahoo.co.uk



Creative Writers

The Creative Writing group have been busy with keyboard and ideas for our challenges.



GREEN ISSUES

Don't forget to check out the Government's BUS (Boiler Upgrade Scheme) scheme for your £7,500 grant towards getting rid of your reliance on gas and reducing your carbon footprint.

Just a reminder that the "Climate Crisis" meeting that u3a Communities presents is every month. Just click on <https://u3acommunities.org> for details of links. It's a really pleasurable way of upgrading knowledge about things that are happening to reduce global warming.

Keep Greening!

Dina

Green Issues Group
dinajung@gmail.com



Recently we looked at portraying abstract nouns. This produced discussion which showed a variety of approaches to providing feedback. This was useful in highlighting what we look for and expect from members.

We continue with our 250 and 1000 word efforts. We can accommodate another person who wishes to trial our monthly meeting.

*Regards from
Helena Hewston*

sybug@aol.com

Much of the news these days is occupied by politics, often with religious elements, be they international, national or local, and it is inevitable that topics of discussion and conversation include such political and religious elements.

Our u3a Committee wish to remind everyone that one of the key elements in the u3a philosophy is that it is an inclusive, non-religious, non-political organisation and as such does not permit the promotion of any individual religion or political doctrine, either verbally or by the distribution of literature etc. during our various meetings, be they social or group gatherings.

That is not to say that discussion of such issues cannot happen as this is part of our daily lives, but there will inevitably be differing opinions in such discussions, so must be conducted with mutual respect for each other's views. Group leaders in particular must be aware of such discussions within their group meetings and control their meetings accordingly.

Remember the u3a philosophy –
Learn, Laugh, Live!

Dave Vodden, Vice-Chair

Poetry or Pickleball, Anyone?

Are there people who would like to form a poetry group? I am hopeful that a venue would be at the Utilita Hub in Newport. Depending on response we could determine leader, frequency, day and time. The aim of the group would be to discover the different styles of poetry writing with some "homework".

The other activity I would like to promote is Pickleball. I have had an introductory session at the West Wight Sports and Community Centre in Freshwater. It would require some financial contribution as the hall would have to be hired and it would

have to fit in with their schedules but it is all manageable. So far they offer Tuesday evening but other times are possible. It just needs an initial commitment from some interested persons to form a group.

Thank you!
Helena Hewston
Contact me on sybug@aol.com



Digital Workshops - remember AgeUK is always holding training sessions for learning IT. Phone **01983 301693** or email digital@ageukiw.org.uk



How to do it!
Also membership portal link is [here](#)

membership card details.
Membership Number: 123
Name: Bob Marley
Email Address: bob@gmail.com
Post Code: PO30 3xx
Renewal Date: 1st April 2024

Renewing your Membership

March 31st will be the end of our membership year - and time for those of you have been members since before September 2023 to renew your membership.

You will be pleased to hear that although the price of everything else seems to be going up your membership fee of £20 stays the same for next year. We have a reasonable bank balance, and believe that we can absorb the expected increased costs by having more members - currently 297.

We do hope that you will choose to renew and continue to encourage your friends to join us.

If you do not have an email address you will have been sent a renewal form in the post. If you have internet access then the simplest way to renew is to log in to the membership Portal:

Go to www.u3awight.uk

- Choose the membership tab from the top of the page
- Click the link to the membership portal at the bottom of this new page..
- You should now arrive at this landing page:

u3a Isle of Wight
Beacon

[Return to Isle of Wight u3a website](#)

Isle of Wight u3a Members Portal

Please identify yourself

E-mail

Password

If you have not created a password for your membership account, use the Register link below to set one up.
[Register for a membership account](#)

If the Membership Secretary has updated your e-mail address use [Verify e-mail](#) (you will also need to set your password)

Enquiries: sally.u3awight@gmail.com or contact the Membership Secretary

If you have not done so already you will need to set up a password for your membership account and to do this click on "Register for a membership account". Otherwise enter your email and password and click on confirm identity.

[Contd...](#)

The screenshot shows the 'Isle of Wight u3a Members Portal' registration page. At the top left is the 'u3a Beacon' logo. To the right of the logo is the text 'Isle of Wight'. Below the logo, there are two links: 'Return to Isle of Wight u3a website' and 'Sign in with email'. The main heading is 'Isle of Wight u3a Members Portal'. Below this is a blue header bar with the text 'Register for a membership account and password'. The registration form is on a yellow background and includes the following fields: 'Membership number' (with a note 'All fields must be completed'), 'Forename', 'Surname', 'Postcode', and 'E-mail'. A 'Confirm Identity' button is located below the form. At the bottom of the form, it says 'Enquiries: sally.u3awight@gmail.com or contact the Membership Secretary'.

Setting up a password requires you to identify yourself using your membership details, these can be found at the bottom of the e-mail that came with the newsletter, then click confirm identity. If that is successful you will be asked to choose a password. Frustratingly, if the information we hold on you disagrees with the information you have entered, the screen above will just re-appear and you will need to double check your details and try again.

Once your membership account is set up please take note of your password as you will need this to log into the Membership Portal.

You can now log into the Members' Portal using your email address and password and then click on "Confirm Identity" again. Should you do run into any difficulties please contact me either by phone on 07796 183087 or email and I will provide assistance.

Once you have logged in you can click the renew button. If there is no renew button then your membership is not due for renewal.

The renewal itself is straightforward. Don't be fooled into thinking you need a PayPal account to pay: if you persist it will give you the chance to enter credit card details.

While you are on the portal please could you also check your emergency contact information. We would like to know who to contact in the event of an emergency.

If you would rather pay by BACS, the bank details can be found in the email or letter that accompanied this newsletter.

Many thanks for choosing us for another year.

Tony

Membership Secretary

shidehouse@yahoo.co.uk

Also membership portal link is [here](#)

Car sharing and lifts

This would primarily apply to Speaker meetings and Socials on the second Thursday of each month, Coffee Mornings in Newport, Ventnor, Cowes and Ryde, and any special events.

Agreed rate is 33p per mile. The driver makes a note of the miles covered, multiplies by 33 then divides by the number of people in the car (including driver).

To offer, could you please contact me with the following information . . .Your name, the town or area you will be driving from, your contact number and the event(s) you go to.

For example: Alison Botha, St Lawrence/ Ventnor, 07805 773097, Speaker meetings and Ventnor coffee mornings.

Alison (Chair)
alisonbotha@hotmail.com or
call 01983 855217

And let us know if you have difficulty getting to meetings or have mobility issues so that group organisers are aware of this.



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 to your phone
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...

Angela Forman.. *our secretary*

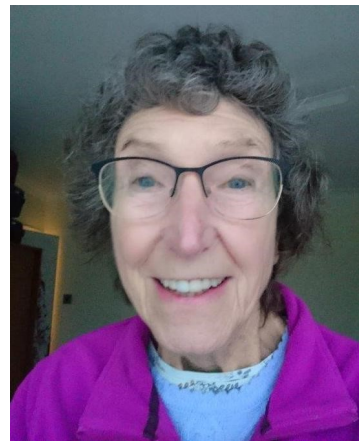


I joined the io u3a French group when I moved to the island in 2021, as I wanted to continue improving what little I had learnt. I then joined the gardening group.

I'm happiest on group rambles and time in my garden, digging, pruning, planting, although there remains much more to do.

Family members are very important to me. I've had a great time taking six grandchildren for days out or even holidays in Europe. Obviously not all at the same time.

I've worked mostly in offices and in my spare time fundraising for the NSPCC. I've enjoyed sightseeing holidays outside Europe.



Twice a year, in June and December, we organise a special social occasion which is open to all members. There is no set format to these events and they have been much enjoyed by the many who have attended.

Now that we have nearly 300 members (although only around 60 usually attend socials) we hope that one or more of you might be willing to organise the next one! You would receive support from Committee members of course.

Ideas we have had in the past include a

buffet and quiz; a picnic; a chat-and-move-on buffet; a simple arrangement of tables for coffee and a chat. It really could be anything! The date is provisionally Thursday June 13th and the timing is usually 2 - 4. However there is every possibility for flexibility if the occasion demands it . . .

Do please get in touch as soon as possible if you think this is something you would enjoy organising . . .
alisonbotha@hotmail.com

Speaker Meetings 2024

May – Insight into Recycling; **June** – Summer Social ; *July/August Summer break;* **September** – Nature Talk;

October 10th Sarah Lang;
November – TBD
December Winter Social

Speaker Meetings

March meeting
2.00 pm, Thursday, March 14th
St. John's Hall, Newport, PO30 1LN

Mark Earp
“Every Pond Matters: Amphibians in your Garden”

Frogs, toads and newts can all be found in gardens where they predate on a wide range of invertebrates.

It's easy to encourage them by providing a pond where tadpoles can develop and with at least one shallowly sloping side up to dry land to allow easy access.



April meeting
2.00 pm, Thursday, April 11th
St. John's Hall, Newport, PO30 1LN
Kevin Shaw on 'Lord Palmerston'

Palmerston dominated British [foreign policy](#) during the period 1830 to 1865, when Britain stood at the height of its imperial power. He held office almost continuously from 1807 until his death in 1865.

He began his parliamentary career as a [Tory](#), defected to the [Whigs](#) in 1830, and became the first prime minister from the newly formed [Liberal Party](#) in 1859. He was highly popular with the British public.



Info, copy, errors and omissions etc. to the [editor](#):
rogerskid@zen.co.uk 07732 480201