



Spring Newsletter

From your Chairman

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2026. We have lots of Group news to share with you in this edition. Our annual Groups Open Day was another success. We have lots of interesting groups to choose from but if there is something you would like to do and it isn't already there – tell us and we will help you get it up and running. In this edition we have a very colourful quiz compiled by Wendy, who is the Contact for the Wildflower Group. See if you can identify the various wildflowers and then look out for them on your walks in the woods.

Our u3a group is getting larger and we need more members to help at events. So, if you are a hands-on person who likes to meet other people and join in, then let us know – there is plenty to do. The more you put into the u3a – the more you get out of it with activities, meeting people and learning new things.

We have a meeting every first Tuesday in the month at The Bridge in Milford on Sea when we have a talk followed by refreshments. This is a time for members to get together and catch up with u3a news and their friends, find out what their groups are up to and any local news. These meetings have a real buzz to them and the talks are very interesting and informative on lots of different subjects. If you haven't been to one of our monthly meetings, details of the next two are in this Newsletter or check our website and see what is planned for future talks. Pop it into your diary and come along for some fun!

If this newsletter has made you want to write an article or compile a quiz then please get in contact with Jenny Whitley and/or Annette Hodgson and send them your copy for our next edition

Hilary Harris Chairman

Monthly Meetings are held at 2pm on the first Tuesday of the Month in the main hall at the Bridge. There's always an interesting Speaker, followed by announcements and then plenty of time to chat over tea and biscuits. Here are details of the talks at next two meetings.

Tuesday March 3rd 2pm: The Yeoman of The Guard



The Speaker at the March meeting will be Alan Saunders. Alan is a former member of the (then) Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeoman of the Guard - a ceremonial Guard that attends the sovereign on state occasions. He served from 2002 until March 2018.

He will tell us about how the Bodyguard was formed following the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, and the duties of the Yeoman of the Guard today. Here is Alan looking very grand in his ceremonial uniform.

Tuesday April 7th 2pm:

The Story behind "The Shout" - Saving lives at sea.

The Speaker at the April meeting, Steve Billett, is Chair of the Lifeboat Management Group at Lyminster. Steve joined Lyminster RNLI Station as a Volunteer in 2015. He also has a role as a Water Safety Officer and manages a team of Volunteers who support the RNLI with the all-important tasks of fundraising, providing safety training to schools and activity groups, and keeping the shop staffed. Steve, who lives in Milford on Sea, will talk about how the RNLI saves lives at Sea and how the mechanics of a 'Shout' develops from that first call in distress.



February Monthly Meeting



Steve Roberts presented a whistlestop tour on the life of Mr Selfridge - as the business man certainly had a very busy time!

The real life story of the retail entrepreneur was contrasted to his fictionalised story shown in the TV series based on the man's life. Celebrated for his revolutionary ideas in retail in the early part of the twentieth century, his local connection was perhaps a surprise to many. Selfridge was fond of the Highcliffe area, for a while renting Highcliffe Castle for his family and purchasing Hengistbury Head where he had grandiose plans to build his own castle. It was a tale of rags to riches; Mr Selfridge eventually lost a great deal of his wealth and now lies in a simple grave in St Mark's church in Highcliffe.



The Groups Open Day - A Great Success!

The recently formed Interest Groups Support Team for our u3a - Vice-Chairman Ewan McGregor and longstanding member John Haigh, held a Groups Open Day at The Bridge, on January 23rd.

35 of our 60 or so active Groups, a little over half, were represented at the Open Day, where Members could browse the Groups on offer. The Group Contacts and some Group members were at the tables to answer interested members' questions, and discuss the activities of their Groups.

The Open Day was preceded by a welcome meeting for our new u3a members, to help them get to know about all the things we do. There was also a discussion session for Group Contacts where John and Ewan could answer questions and offer support. The Open Day was a big success, with almost 100 members in total registering their interest in joining the Groups present. We hope to run these events on an annual basis.

The Groups Support Team took away some actions from the event, to improve our support for Group Contacts and about how the Groups are managed, in particular with a view to simplifying things as far as possible. All Group Contacts will be included in a simple online survey very soon, to obtain up to date information, as a start to the Team's initiative. Group Contacts are thanked in advance for their cooperation, which will be greatly appreciated.

To get in touch with John and Ewan please use the Groups' Contact link on the website, or feel free to chat to them at the Monthly Meeting.

Group Support Team

To contact any of the Groups mentioned in the Newsletter or to find out more about all of our groups go to our website: [Milford on Sea u3a](http://www.milfordonsea.co.uk/u3a)



News from the Groups

Art Appreciation Group 3 meets on the 4th Monday in the month at 10am at the Beach House for up to 2 hours, and has room for one or two new members. We take it in turns to lead on a topic, with all group members doing their own research to contribute to the discussion.

In November 2025, we looked at the work of May Morris (1862 - 1938) and in January, the work of Katsushika Hokusai (1760 - 1849) of 'Great Wave' fame. In December 2025, we met at St Barbe's Gallery to view the exhibition 'The Life of the Fields' together, followed by coffee and cake.

Coming up in February, we will be looking at the Turner/Constable Exhibition at the Tate Britain, and in March, Women in Mycology: The Mushroom Ladies of the Victorian Age.

If you have an interest in art, but not necessarily loads of knowledge, and are prepared to contribute with your own research, then think about joining us. We are all learning together!

Chris Chaundy Group Contact

Scrabble. If anyone would like to join our friendly group, we meet fortnightly at 10am on Thursdays in the Beach House, Milford on Sea. Beginners are welcome.

The u3a Scrabble group enjoying a delicious Christmas lunch at the South Lawns Hotel; a delightful afternoon was had by all.

Linda Daniel Group Contact



The Questors Group met in November to make plans for 2026. There were lots of ideas, and we now have some great trips to look forward to this year.

It is always difficult to decide what to do in January but a few of us braved the elements and visited Fort Nelson to view the Standing with Giants installation. It was an extremely wet day but there was plenty to see inside the fort and afterwards we all enjoyed a good lunch at the Jolly Sailor in Bursledon.



Over the next few months we will be visiting the Sea City museum in Southampton and the Hospital of St Cross and Almshouses, Winchester. In June we are looking forward to the Blue Funnel Four Rivers Cruise.

At present our group is full but we have a waiting list for anyone who might be interested in joining us when spaces become available.

Anne Rustomji, Group Contact

Local Explorers Group

January 2026 saw the start of a new season for the Local Explorers' Group with a visit to the St. Barbe Museum. Here, after coffee in the cafe, our morning was divided taking in the current exhibition of paintings by the artist Kurt Jackson depicting the Lymington River from source to sea. Unlike many rivers the Lymington remains healthy and Jackson's paintings reflect the river through the different stages in its life, in different seasons of the year and sometimes from locations inaccessible to the public. They are enhanced by the fluent and descriptive writings from the artist himself. A beautiful exhibition well worth a visit.

In addition we were also able to study a selection of maps, postcards and photographs relating to Old Milton and Barton on Sea displayed for us by the museum archivists. These added to our knowledge of the local area and amongst other items a survey map including the coastline showed very clearly how it is retreating rapidly as the cliff is eroded. We could also see the way in which farmland in the late nineteenth century was sold off for building development in ever smaller plots to form the resort of Barton on Sea including its esplanade. Meanwhile the coming of the railway moved the centre of population from Old Milton northwards to New Milton. We were also intrigued to learn of the recent discovery of a Milford Horde of gold coins from around the mid fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries recently auctioned in Switzerland.

We enjoyed a contrasting and very interesting morning which re-emphasised the value of our local museum and the dedication of its volunteers. Our visit was completed with lunch at the Angel and Pig and we shall undoubtedly be discussing our findings further in our next meeting.

Elizabeth Hall.

The Lymington River exhibition is open until 14th March

www.stbarbe-museum.org.uk

You are invited to join an exciting new group:

Music Appreciation Group



A new Music Appreciation group will be started soon. The group will meet once every month and play and discuss recorded music from different genres, including classical, jazz, pop, rock, blues, folk, country, etc. Members will take turns in preparing playlists and providing background information to the music. We'll probably meet in the homes of members, which means that the size of the group may need to be restricted. Anyone interested in joining the group should contact Hanlie Croeser via the [group's page on our u3a website](#). The date and time of meetings will be decided by the group to suit the majority of members.

A Wildflower Quiz

How well do you know our local wildflowers?

Wendy Thomas, our local u3a expert has set a quiz to challenge us!

There are a wealth of wild flowers in various habitats around the village - these are samples from a late March walk along the Pleasure Grounds.

How many can you name???

We'll put the answers on the website in a couple of weeks. Or contact Wendy on her Group's page.

Why not join the Wildflower Group? Wildflower walks are held in various areas in Milford - on random days from late March as long as there are flowers around. Walks are rarely more than a mile. Wendy also enjoys finding the history of plants where possible, and their medicinal uses.

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We are looking for a volunteer to work with the committee as an Events Co-ordinator. Our Groups are currently very active, but the committee feels that we could organise more social events, open to all members. We are thinking of a small number of events in the year, and are hoping to find someone with enthusiasm or experience in this area. We are looking for fresh ideas and the committee would support you in this role. We always have members who volunteer to help with social events, but we need an organiser. If this is something which would appeal to you, please get in touch with myself or any member of the committee
Ewan McGregor Vice-chairman.

The Annual Milford on Sea u3a Christmas Party was held at The Bridge on November 28th. It was well attended, and members were entertained with Christmas music, a slide show from our photography group, and a performance by the Sway hand-bell ringers. There was also Christmas fare, drinks, and a raffle. The hand-bell ringers were a particular highlight with members invited to take part.



A poem from Shirley Leonard from Creative Writing for Fun.

Fancy being creative? They have room for a few more members.

Lost & Found

I've put it down - somewhere quite safe

I know that it's not lost

It's not that it's so valuable

(I don't care about the cost)

I can't remember where it is - and that makes me quite sad,

Do other people mislay things?

Or am I going mad.

I've looked upstairs - I am sure it's there

Though I think I've looked before -

Under the bed (just in case), or in that little drawer.

Who is the person people pray to?

(It's St Antony I think)

It's said he'll find a missing item - before you even blink!

I've found some things I'd lost before,

(And some I hadn't missed)

If I could remember what I've got - then I could have made a list!

I've decided to stop looking now

For one thing is plain to me -

I've forgotten what I'm looking for

So I'm going to make a cup of tea! ☕

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Please send articles for the Newsletter to Jenny Whitley Newsletter Editor

We also welcome community items of interest to u3a members.

To contact us with comments please email: [milfordonseau3a@gmail.com](mailto:milfordonseau3a@gmail.com)

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