

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

From Ursula, Newsletter Editor: Christmas seems a long time ago now and it is a bit late to wish you a happy new year really but I do wish you all a happy springtime. There are certainly signs of new growth and spring here in the garden despite the very wet weather we have been experiencing. I trust that you, like the plants are persisting and getting on with life. I have a feeling that u3a members are the kind of people who don't give up easily but keep trying their best to keep on! I have an acquaintance who is well into his eighties and still quite active in his local u3a in another area of the country who, at the beginning of the year, shared an interesting tale. He told me that he has now found a good alternative resolution for the new year which is, "Say yes to more if you can, instead of no". I like that. It can become too fixed a pattern to say no, because it's too far, it's too wet/ dark /cold etc or we don't feel like doing it. Saying yes doesn't have to be about physical activities either, the first time I tried this out I said yes to a hot chocolate in a café instead of my usual black coffee....it was a great decision. So as you read through this newsletter, full of positive reports and ideas maybe you will decide to try something new too this year, perhaps even volunteer to start a new group.

From Dave Newick, our Chair: I hope everyone is enjoying the free activities and perhaps trying out a new activity, or returning to enjoy old favourites and meeting up with friends again. We look forward to our AGM in May when you the members will vote on the fee levels for September 2026. We will also need to fill 3 roles on the committee, for Membership Secretary, Publicity, and Vice Chair. There is also a vacancy open now for the Groups Coordinator (GC). It would be good to find 4 volunteers very soon, so the current holders of the first 3 roles can give a supportive "knowledge handover". Although there is no GC right now, David has kindly been acting as Groups Liaison alongside his Web Manager role. As a committee we work as a strong team, supporting each other and especially new members. If you want to read about the 4 roles you can find descriptions on the website under "Documents", they are currently being updated but are a good guide.

Watch out for news of events during the summer: the Sherborne Castle trip last summer was a superb event.

In the committee we are very aware of the key role played by Group Leaders in the success of our u3a groups, so this year we are also planning to say thank you with an event (to be determined) to celebrate their dedication, hard work and enthusiasm.

If the wet weather is keeping you from attending some activities, I recommend looking on our website on the "Other Sites" page (click "More" at in the menu at the top of the page and choose Other Sites, or go to <https://streetandglastonbury.u3asite.uk/links/>). Here you can look at local u3as in our region, see if there are groups they run which we could also start up here.

Also look on the "u3a Head Office" link. Here there are Interest Groups Online you can join year-round covering over 100 topics, I have joined "Irish Music", and "Family History before 1538". Single one-off cost per year, join as many groups as you like.

I am keen to start up a local Family History u3a group, say, once a month, to share and learn this fun and rewarding topic (very good for the brain). The latest "u3a Matters" magazine also has a very good article on it. Let me know if you are interested!

From John Roberts, our Membership Secretary: Some of you may be aware that I will be stepping down as Membership Secretary at the AGM in May and we are looking for a new Membership Secretary. The Role Description can be found at

<https://streetandglastonbury.u3asite.uk/documents/>

The main requirements are that you can use Excel and email (I have used Gmail) and are keen to help your fellow u3a members.

There is great support from the rest of the Committee and as long as you keep on top of membership requests and payments as they come it's plain sailing, albeit sometimes hectic at renewal times at the start of a new year.

I have set up an Excel spreadsheet which I will make available to a new Membership Secretary and provide support whenever needed if any difficulties are experienced.

If you would like further details please feel free email me at sandgmembersjr@gmail.com

We are approaching 500 members for this year, which runs from September 1st 2025 to August 31st 2026, is back to pre covid numbers. Renewals for 2026/2027 year start after the AGM.

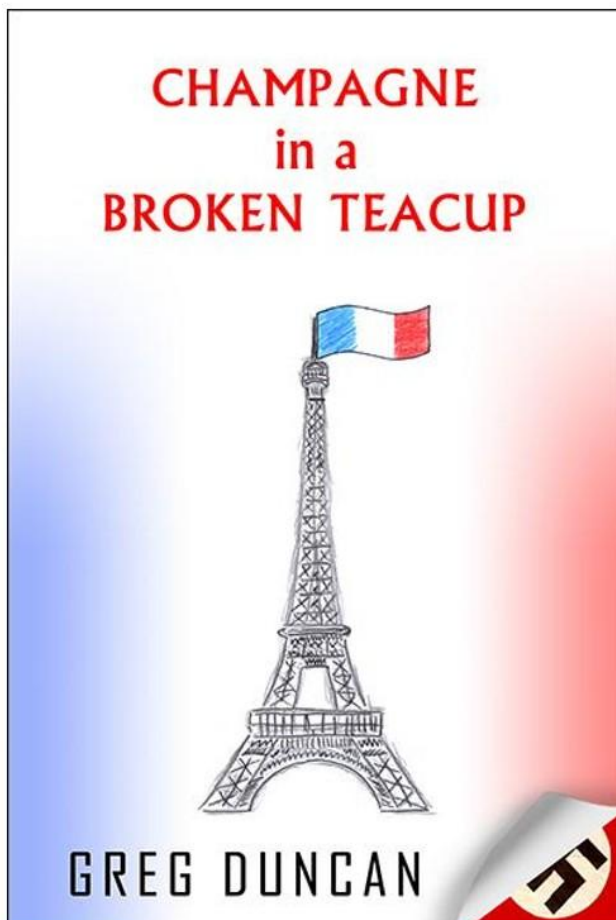
Further details will be available on the website and details will be sent by email to existing members.

EVENTS FOR ALL MEMBERS

Both these events are being held in Glastonbury United Reformed Church, opposite the Wholefood Shop near the top of the High Street. Entrance is via the alleyway to the left of the church. First:

A u3a Event at The Glastonbury United Reformed Church

Friday 27th February at 2 pm with Refreshments



All members are invited to an illustrated talk by Dr Greg Duncan entitled "*Champagne in a Broken Teacup - the story behind the novel.*"

Published author, Dr Greg Duncan, will talk about his historical novel "Champagne in a Broken Teacup". This is a fictional story woven into historical reality inspired by the activities of Greg's French aunt who was a forger with the French resistance during WW2. Prior to writing he undertook extensive research into the events of the period and the German occupation of France in order to weave these factors into the story to provide a living background for the plot. His talk includes readings from the novel, an illustrated presentation of his research approach and some of the fascinating facts he discovered.

Then, on **Friday 27th March at 10am**, at the same venue:



Lokababdhu will talk about 'His Year as Mayor' He will tell us a bit about his interesting life and what the role of Mayor involved. He is also open to a discussion about being a Councillor, and the Town Council's current programme. There's a good chance for you to say what you think the priorities should be.

A third event is a real treat: Excellent trad jazz from "The Sunset Café Stompers" featuring Mike Denham. This will be in St Benedict's Church, Glastonbury, on **Wednesday 22nd April at 7.30pm**. More details soon – watch our website front page.

Chris Craig, Events Organiser.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Note: not all groups send a contribution each time

Visit the Groups List web page at <https://streetandglastonbury.u3asite.uk/groups-list/> and click on a group name to get more info about that group and contact details for the Group Leader.

CYCLING – SLOW AND STEADY

The u3a Street & Glastonbury cycling group provides relaxed rides for cyclists of all abilities every other Thursday at 10:00, starting from Glastonbury Market Place. Rides go up to twenty miles on quiet country lanes, with minimal hills and always include a café stop. The group is open to everyone, free to join, keeps a comfortable pace, and ensures no one is left behind — help is provided for any mechanical issues. All rides return to Glastonbury by 13:00.

We do longer rides in summer months too.

Take a look at the group web page to see where we've been recently.

For further details, text Charlie on 07802-422091 or email cbeaton@gmx.co.uk.



Back in the saddle following our coffee stop at Sourdown Farm Shop on 15th January 2026.

FRENCH WITH SHIRLEY



Shirley runs two French groups and although the main writing here is about the improvers group, we have a photo here on the left of the intermediate group. Shirley says “The intermediate class continues to be filled with fun and laughter as we read and translate French texts and articles from magazines. Très bien Shirley.

This is the improvers’ group on the right and one of its members, Julia, explains that it is a very enjoyable, relaxed class which is aimed at beginners or those wanting to improve their basic French. A small group of between 5/7 members meets, usually fortnightly at Shirley’s house. We start by discussing our homework and then attempt a few spoken sentences about what we have been doing between classes. We are currently working from a basic French text book called ‘Voila’. We break after an hour for tea/coffee and a biscuit. This is followed by listening to a recording, reading out sentences in French and translating.



Shirley aims to keep the class light hearted without pressure to be ‘word perfect’; for example, we play ‘numbers bingo’ to help us with pronunciation and to become more fluent with numbers in French.

A really fun class! **Julia.**

FRENCH WITH JENNY

This group too sounds lots of fun. Jenny says “The French conversation group are a lively bunch of folk who enjoy chatting in French about their outings, holidays, hobbies, dogs and many other topics. If the French word eludes us, someone will often supply it, or a dictionary will help. We move on to listening to a French cd then read and translate an article together. It is a great way to boost our vocabulary, extend our language skills and spend a winter afternoon with friends.

GARDENS GROUP

This new group is only just getting going but we now have 25 members and are growing.

We took a break over the festive period - not much going on in gardens in December and January!

Our first meeting was in September when we enjoyed a visit to Cannington Walled Garden accompanied by two enthusiastic Cannington College students who were well informed on plant names and plans for the garden's future.

In October Brownes Garden Centre demonstrated planting hanging baskets and we enjoyed browsing, chatting and purchasing.

A PowerPoint presentation on gardening with raised beds completed 2025.

We have lots of exciting visits planned for 2026; a snowdrop viewing to Kilver Court with a talk from the head gardener in February and a rare opportunity to hear from the gardener in charge of the formal garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll at Hestercombe in March.

On all visits tea and cake are a must!

Linda Wilson

READING GREEK LITERATURE

This term our group continues with the second half of the Odyssey, one of the world's first adventure stories, probably written around 2,800 years ago. We've reached the point where the hero returns to Ithaca, his homeland, to face great challenges and obstacles in regaining his kingdom.

I've always loved the stories of the Greek heroes. To be reading and discussing the poem that was composed so long ago, and to be finding it so enjoyable and relevant to our own world, is amazing. We've had lots of lively discussion and debate, and I've really enjoyed hearing the different views of everyone in the group. We often find ourselves discussing parallels between the story and the world today – perhaps not surprising, as the Greeks did give us the words hubris and chaos! And the story embraces so many of the great eternal themes – courage, coming of age, the quest for power, the value of wisdom, love, loyalty and friendship, and the longing for home.

As Simon Armitage said, "Poetry goes back to the campfire, the theatre and the temple". I think reading and discussing this poem has really put us in touch with the past and its people. I look forward very much to the next instalments and the good company.

Rosemary Bradley

LATIN GROUP

We are now a very small, select (!) group of students who have been together for a number of years. We are nearing the end of Book III of the course (of five in total) so anyone who might wish to join us would have to be up to that standard in order to keep up with us. We meet in a private house, usually in Glastonbury but occasionally in Ashcott. If you are interested, please contact me by either email or telephone. (Landline only out here in the sticks!)

Pat Thompson

LINE DANCING GROUP

Hi everyone, we have a very vibrant group. I will have completed 10 years come April, but am still enjoying meeting each Monday morning for our sessions.

It amazes me that so many of the group have been coming as long as me. I have so many helpers that make the group work so well. We have regular tutors, 5 including me, Brenda who takes the register and money (but not this year!!) Maggs and Mike who have been stalwarts doing the organising of the coffee/tea breaks from before I started. Everybody mucks in to make it a very enjoyable time for all. I see so much improvement in members dancing abilities over the months. This term we are having a weekly raffle – oh not for prizes - but to choose a couple of the dances for the following weeks programme. We are full this year, but hopefully will have more availability come September. Remember –

Keep Dancing!

Elaine

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Next term's talks include

- A presentation by Somerset Heritage on its rich resources
- Local Mapping
- The Pitchfork Rebellion
- Abbey House
- The Cholera outbreak in 19th century Glastonbury
- Ilchester and its notorious Gaol.

We always have a coffee break and a chance for questions and discussion.

Chris Craig.

PHILOSOPHY GROUP

Currently we are looking at various major philosophers from the ancient Greeks to philosophers in the 20th century, and other philosophical topics.

The U3A Philosophy Group meet on Week 1, on a Thursday morning, between 10 am and 12 pm, at the Mission Church , Vestry Road, Street.

Recently we started looking at philosophers in the 19th century. In our last session we studied Hegel and his various philosophies, and Feminism. In our next meeting we'll be looking at Marx.

Below are some words from a few of the group's students and budding philosophers to give you more of an idea about the group and whether you'd like to join us:

Ursula: Richard's philosophy group is great. He always sends us philosopher(s) we will discuss well in advance of the class plus lots of video clips which we can use (or not) The first part of the meeting is a review of the relevant philosophical ideas by Richard plus our thoughts ..which may be intelligent and useful personal and interesting or just vaguely linked! We always have lots to talk about and are ready for our coffee and biscuit time. Then there is a different topic ..probably more modern and not needing research but open to sharing ideas again. The group is very mixed , different backgrounds and ideas but we know how to listen and share. Richard is very good at bringing us back to the necessary if we range too far.

Malcolm: What do we get from the Philosophy Group meeting? Through an introduction to the writings of the noted philosophers from the Ancient Greeks to the present day we are encouraged to think about the world in a different way-To consider critically changes in the way society evolves, the ethical issues which arise, and the way in which it impacts on today. We may not find the answer to the meaning of life, but we have fun trying!

Mary: This is my second year taking part in Richard's philosophy course and I am very pleased to recommend it to all. In these times, when we are constantly bombarded with news of war, stark divisions and polarised opinions, fake news and, even more appalling, 'genuine' news, sitting in a room once a fortnight with people who are curious, respectful, concerned and knowledgeable is a joy in itself. I had never studied philosophy before but I think that taking time to look at theories of knowledge and ethics, truth and beauty together, sharing our life experience and listening and responding respectfully to each other's views, has opened up a new and important field of learning for me, which has helped to keep me sane in these challenging times! So if you want to learn more about philosophy with welcoming and interesting people, under excellent guidance, do join us. You also get a nice cuppa and a good selection of biscuits, of course.

So if you'd like to come and join us for a bit of philosophy then you're more than welcome to join us for a free taster session and more... with plenty of coffee, tea and biscuits to stimulate our brain cells of course!

FRIDAY MORNING TABLE TENNIS continues all year at Ashcott Village Hall, 10am to 12noon.

It is lovely to see several new members this year.

We have the use of four tables. Balls are provided and bats are also available. Tuition can also be provided for beginners.

The emphasis is on enjoyment and having fun. We have a break at 11am for coffee/tea and biscuits.

We would love to see you.



TAI CHI

Happy New year. The new year has brought an influx of people wishing to join the classes, some disappointments as the classes are full, and beyond capacity in some cases.

Having some respite with fees certainly made the first class easier and more productive, maybe encouraging a few to try something new. Trying to look back at when the classes first came about exercises the brain cells, and having to account for that 'Covid' period where we continued "On Line" for some. I believe we are close to 9 years, in that time counting the number of students now in the hundreds.

The classes remain unchanged over that time, balancing those with no experience to those with several years' experience behind them. Old hands or new, we soon realise we all have something more to learn. The organisation I belong to, Wu Shin Do Association, totals experience collectively of over 200 years and still we are learning.

I apologise to those wishing to experience the benefits but are unable to join us. Keep looking!

UKULELE BAND

WE NEED A NEW GROUP LEADER

The ukulele band will need a new group leader because I am stepping down at Easter after running the group for 10 years. So far no one has been forthcoming despite several requests. The group is a lovely, friendly, good fun one and I have enjoyed my time being group leader. I would be sad to see the group fold if no one steps up.

We meet every 2 weeks on a Friday afternoon and spend our 2 hours playing well known songs, learning new chords, rhythms and how to read some tablature and generally having fun. Most sing as they play but this is certainly not obligatory. The ukulele is an easy, fun little instrument and anyone can learn to play it.

Let's hope someone turns up to take on the role of Group Leader.

Wendy Howiantz

WALKING GROUP

THIS GROUP RESTARTS AFTER EASTER

It is really good to be able to announce that our Walking Group, which has not been meeting this term due to lack of a Group Leader, will restart after Easter. The first walk will be on Wednesday 15 th April.

Johnny Heriz-Smith got in touch in February and offered to take the group on. He's an experienced walker although not formerly a member of our Walking Group. Thank you, Johnny!

This group has been one of our best supported groups, having offered fortnightly walks in the area of around 4 miles throughout the year. Take a look at the group web page at

https://streetandglastonbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking-group/

for more info.

Details of the first walk will be posted on the group page and in the Activity Group Events panel of our website front page in due course.

David Chapman – Groups Liaison

YOGA



This class is a relaxing and calming way to stay flexible and improve strength and balance.

We start with gentle warming up exercises either lying or sitting on our mats then move into more active movements called 'postures' either standing, sitting or lying down including familiar postures like the 'The Cat, Downward Facing Dog, Salute to the Sun, Sphinx and Cobra. At the end we have a relaxation, usually to gentle, calming music and Ursula talks us through a sequence to help empty our minds of 'chatter' and really let go of any tension.

Ursula teaches in a way that enables everyone to work at their own pace, listen to their own body and only do what feels right ensuring no one does anything which hurts. She is very positive and encouraging. It's a friendly, non-competitive, mixed group and a great way to start the day!



EXTRA

In my request to group leaders for information I asked if anyone wanted to add anything extra as used to appear in our newsletters. I was pleased to receive the following from Julie Hillman.

GROWING SPACE: Have you ever wanted to grow your own fruit and veg but don't have the space? Street Allotments have a few plots available for new applicants on their Brooks Rd and Strode Rd sites. Get yourself fresh, healthy produce and great exercise! If you might be interested to take on a plot, either alone or with a partner or friend, please send an email with your telephone number and postal address to street.allotments@gmail.com and Membership Coordinator, Julie Hillman, will be in touch.

Hopefully this may be of interest to some of you.

For future editions it would be good to continue an "Extra" section, maybe ideas for reading, recipes, reviews of activities experienced, different things to do and see, although we do not intend to provide a market place for selling please

More photos are always welcome too.