Street and Glastonbury u3a

Web: https://StreetandGlastonbury.u3asite.uk

AUTUMN 2026 NEWSLETTER

WORDS FROM THE COMMITTEE

From our Newsletter editor, Ursula Dunne

I am sure that you will all have settled into your groups and maybe as the "holiday" season for retirees draws to a close you are finding more time to be involved with the U3a. There are so many good things happening in our area as you will read. Members enjoy being involved, learning new things and meeting new people but we seriously do need a few of you to volunteer to help us. If you want a little bit of involvement but no regular commitment then please read about the ***Really Useful Group.*** If you have a skill or an interest that you fancy sharing then maybe you could become a Group Leader. Most importantly we need a new Treasurer and a Groups Coordinator. Don't be scared, don't be shy! If you think you have a bit more time and a willingness to do more then help, training and support is at hand. Please register any interest you have in doing any of these things by messaging our Secretary, Jenny: go to the **Contact Us** page of our website.

As ever, not all groups contribute to the newsletter each time but are still getting on happily. Much the same is true of our committee: we meet regularly, make decisions and maintain optimism about our S&G u3a, but maybe don't have much to add to our newsletter. It seems to me that we are in a society where verbosity is often used instead of simplicity, so I hope that you, as readers, will appreciate that sometimes "saying nowt" is fine.

It is also apparent that I have fewer photos now than in earlier newsletters. I suspect that some of this is because of concerns about individual privacy.

It sounds as if I am making excuses for a thinner newsletter but I just wish to share facts and concerns. As always, I love reading all about our activities, being able to share them and I hope that you will enjoy this newsletter now.

From our Chair, David Newick

1. I hope you are enjoying meeting old and new friends in our full programme of groups, now the weather has returned to more typical autumn style, full of "mists and mellow fruitfulness". Shorter days seem to fly by, so I begin with a reminder about our upcoming Christmas Party.

u3a Christmas Party 2026 – Thursday 10th December, 12 – 2pm

"When the wind is singing strangely
Blowing music through your head
And your rain splattered windows
Make you decide to stay in bed"

Here's a better idea

Get your party clothes and best (or worst) festive jumpers on and join us at our **Christmas Party**!
Please note the date in your diary: the location is **Compton Dundon Village Hall**.
As usual we will have lunch together, a quiz, a raffle and musical entertainment.
Donations of additional raffle prizes on the day will be most welcome.
More detailed information will be sent out nearer the time –
also check on our website.

The above quote is from "Winter's Song" lyrics by Alan Hull, 1969.



2. While our Group Leaders continue as always to provide a good range of activities, please feel free to assist the Committee in any way you can. You may have seen our request recently for a ***Really Useful Group*** of people who can be called on to help at events, doing meet and greet, refreshments, community events, putting up posters, etc.

Please consider getting more involved as WE NEED MORE HELP.

We still need a Groups Coordinator. If you are interested please contact me or David Chapman via the **Contact Us** page of our website. You are welcome to "try it out" and see if suits you before joining the Committee formally. It is an enjoyable role and you may find new indoor or outdoor activities that you hadn't considered!

We also REALLY need a new treasurer after the AGM in May. Gill is very happy to discuss what is involved and to help you on your way.

From our Treasurer, Gill Donkin

When we retired and moved to this area from Surrey we looked to join groups and meet new people in our village as well as in other areas locally.

Someone had told me about u3a so I looked into what our local group did and was so pleased to join a ukulele beginners' group. I have made some lifelong friends from that initial group. I also joined yoga, line dancing, cycling and walking which I thoroughly enjoy equally. Then I answered a request for a treasurer role being vacant …… and can't believe 6 years have passed since then. I have really enjoyed my time on the committee but now it is time for new ventures. With family living on the west coast of Canada and growing up so fast we want to spend more time travelling to visit them.

The treasurer role is straightforward and all contained on a u3a laptop. Full training is available for anyone interested in the role please contact myself for any more information via the **Contact Us** page.

From our Web Manager and Groups Liaison, David Chapman

Writing first as Groups Liaison, I want to underline what Ursula and the other David wrote above about the need to fill the vacancy for a Groups Coordinator. A wise person said to me recently that no one will come forward to fill the vacancy as long as I continue in the liaison role and things apparently tick along fine. Much of the organisation and running of the Enrolment Morning back in August should have been done by a Groups Coordinator. I was only one of several Committee members who filled in for the vacancy, and quite a lot was picked up by our Chair who is already putting in a lot of time and effort for us all. This isn't how it should be! *Please* consider whether you can help us.

Moving on to my main role as Web Manager, part of my job is to add new information to our website and remove out-of-date material. Of the two, the latter is harder because there are a lot of pages where old information can lurk, avoiding regular gaze. Please, if you spot anything you know to be out-of-date or wrong, message me about it via the **Contact Us** page of the website. Thanks.

Our website is the main channel for the Committee to tell you what's happening in our u3a ahead of newsletters like this and occasional emails. Please visit it regularly so you know what's going on. If you can't remember the web address and haven't made it a bookmark or favourite, just search for Street u3a or Glastonbury u3a.

On your first visit in a given web browser, you should be asked whether you want to accept notifications from the site. Please say yes. I don't generate a lot of notifications, but I use them occasionally to alert you to events happening shortly. You get a box at the bottom of your screen and you can click it to read about the event.

I try to ensure that the front page of the site tells you quickly what the latest information is without having to scroll down too far. Parts of the front page that appear side-by-side on a

tablet or laptop screen are shown one after the other on a phone and more scrolling is necessary. Hence, priority information is on the left of a tablet or laptop screen because that appears first on a phone.

The “Headlines” near the top of the page tell you of the next thing happening soon. The “S&G u3a Notices and Events” come next, and these magically disappear after the event date has passed.

“Activity Group Events” follow on a phone screen or are on the right of a laptop or tablet. Those are set up by Group Leaders, and are most relevant for groups like Cycling and Walking which do different things each meeting. My thanks go to Charlie and Johnny, who lead those groups, for posting that information regularly. If you are a Group Leader and want to add an event to the list, get in touch with me so I can show you how it’s done.

By the way, all these **Contact Us** links in this newsletter can be clicked to take you directly to that web page. There you can click on a name to send that person an email by filling in a message box. This allows the email addresses of Committee members to be hidden from bots that trawl the web looking for emails to harvest for spamming. The same applies when you click the name of a Group Leader in the **Groups List** or on a Group web page – our Group Leaders’ email addresses are all hidden.

As a final point, you may have heard about an internet security howler in something called PHP which is used in about 70% of the web. Our website uses PHP throughout, but the u3a SiteWorks team (which provides the framework on which our website is built) were hot on the case and let me know the same day that the security fixes had been applied.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

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.

CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING. Jeanne Bradban

It was a bit of an erratic start to the term. A couple of long- term members not coming this year and new members not able to make the first session or not turning up at all. However, we have now settled down and into the second half of term. Everyone, apart from the newer members, is now working on producing images for the calendar which is produced every year. It’s good for people to see their work in print and can inspire them to try different topics & ways of working.

THE CLASSICAL LITERATURE GROUP. Jennifer Martin

We have got off to a flying start and have already read and discussed the first three books of the Aeneid. This very lively class of 15 has discussed the character of Aeneas, the hero, has heard a searing account of the Sack of Troy including of course the part of the Wooden Horse, and the very sad account of how he had to leave his wife, Creusa, behind when he set out for a new land to settle without even knowing where that was. The back story of the whole of the Aeneid is that Virgil wanted to provide for the Romans, and especially its new emperor, Augustus, a heroic story to rival what Homer had done for the Greeks, to make them proud of their heritage. We are about to embark on book 4 which tells the story of the tragic love affair of Dido and Aeneas which many of you may be familiar with from Purcell's opera; I have never heard a sadder piece of music.



The sculpture shows Aeneas with his old father on his back carrying the household gods, with his little son Ascanius hanging on behind as they escape from Troy.

The class has three new members this year; new members always add spice to a group as they share their thoughts and opinions with the rest of us.

CYCLING – SLOW AND STEADY. Charles Beaton

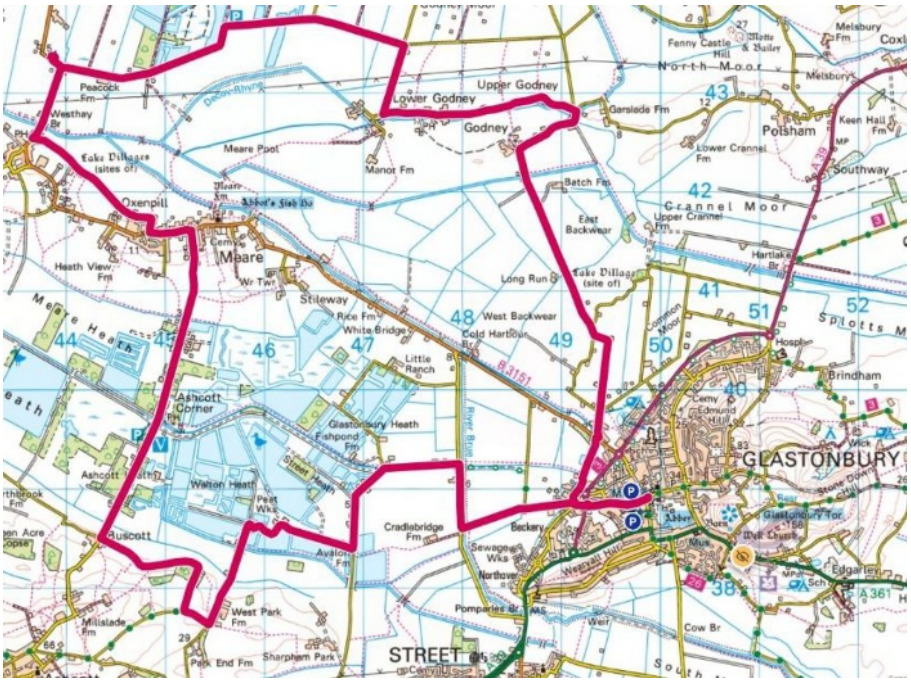
Here's a chance to get out in the fresh air and a have a good chat into the bargain. All you need is a road-worthy bicycle and a little effort. Relaxed rides for all abilities every other Thursday from Glastonbury Market Place at 10:00am. We do up to twenty miles on quiet lanes with few hills and a café stop on the way round. Back in Glastonbury about 1pm.



Lyn's 21 mile Pedal Pounder ride, bound for North Wootton this October

Contact Information:

- Check the **Cycling Group web page** for dates.
- For further details, email Charlie by clicking his name near the top of that web page.
- Join our e-mail list and group chat on WhatsApp.
- The next ride can be seen under "Activity Group Events" on the **website front page**.



A route of a typical outing (in bold red). This one is a 19 mile Westhay zig-zag ride with a stop at Sweet's Tea Rooms 13/08/26.

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP. David Newick

In 2009 Street and Glastonbury u3a had 3 family history groups as it celebrated its 30th Anniversary, meeting in homes and Street Library. This year we had over 20 people sign up for this new group, so the first step was to select a day and a time when most people could make it regularly. The Family History Group started in September and meets monthly on the 4th Monday of each month in St Edmunds Hall, Glastonbury. We have a good mix of experienced and inquisitive newcomers to this most rewarding hobby. We aim to learn from each other as much as possible, and make the most of the free online resources available. We will also learn about local places where we can extend our research.

FILM CLUB. Rosie Jones

Here are a few words from the Film Club who meet every third Wednesday of the month. Members will have watched the film individually at home and then they discuss it at the meeting which is held in the home of one of the members.

The 1961 musical West Side Story chosen by one of our members kicked off our return to this year's programme. It is high on the list of best musical movies ever made and provoked some interesting discussion and generally was liked by the group.

The next genre in October was an Action movie and was Indiana Jones Raiders of the Lost Ark; also chosen by a member of the group. Although it was felt to be a little dated again it was generally liked.

We have many genres to work our way through in the coming year and in November it will be a Thriller – Six Minutes to Midnight, a not so well-known film starring Dame Judi Dench and Eddie Izzard.

Our group is a lively and interesting one. New members are welcome.

FRENCH. Jenny Lewis

On continue! The French conversation group enjoy practising their language skills and have a lot of fun on the way. We converse listen, read and translate. We help each other out when the right word evades us

FRENCH. Shirley Gunter

Nous aussi, nous continuons! There is also a NEW INTERMEDIATE GROUP because there was a waiting list. It is on Monday afternoon of week 1. If you are interested please contact me, Shirley, by clicking my name against one of the French groups on the Groups List web page.

Both groups meet in my house in Wells and we are always happy to welcome new members.

READING GREEK LITERATURE. Rosemary Bradley

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.

JAZZ AND SINATRA. John Dando

The jazz and Sinatra group meets at the St Edmund's Hall, Windmill Hill and is a light hearted stroll through most aspects of Swing, Jazz, Big Band and the Blues. It is led by John Dando, with the support of three other presenters. It's a two hour journey into much loved music. We try not to take it too seriously. Some of our music is over 100 years old but still sounds good today.

LATIN. Patricia Thompson

This group has now been running for quite a few years. We meet in a private house and apart from working through the text book, we also discuss language in general as well as some aspects of (ancient) Roman life. Anyone who wanted to join us would have to be up to the standard of the book to be able to keep up. (Practically-GCSE level Latin Group)

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP. Chris Craig

Our popular group already has well over 50 members. Due to the growing turnout, we have moved from the Glastonbury URC meeting room to the larger rear hall. It took a little while for us to settle in, with some long-term members missing the more intimate environment. But now we have got used to it, and rearranged the seats people are happy with the more spacious room.

So far, we have enjoyed talks on St Aldhelm, on the interesting work on old architecture by 'The Somerset Vernacular Buildings group', and an excellent presentation on the life and work of the Naish family, focussing on Annie's lovely old rural photos.

We look forward to Francis Thyer's talk on Street History, anecdotes behind Wells Cathedral Latin inscriptions, and a talk on the Marsh family. We already have 4 speakers lined up for the New Year, and I hope to be able to publish our program soon.

There is a friendly atmosphere. Mike and Magee should be thanked for their regular provision of refreshments. There is a friendly atmosphere, and we all enjoy learning together.

LINE DANCING. Elaine Robertson

Hi all, my line dance group are looking forward to a couple of different events over the next couple of months (at least I hope they are).



On the 2nd November we are celebrating the Mexican Día de los Muertos (In English – The Day of the Dead). It is not as dismal as it sounds as it is a way of remembering those who have gone on before and celebrating their lives.

We will be doing several new (very easy) dances. All to encourage the brain and body to work together and also eating CAKE! Hopefully it will be a very social and enjoyable day, and we will be dressing up in wonderful outfits.



Later in the year we are also planning something a little different – but you will have to wait and see what that turns out to be.

Enjoy the Autumn and hopefully there will not be too many storms.

MUSIC MAKING. David Chapman

I'm pleased to say our small Music Making group has welcomed a couple of new members this term, but there's room for more. If you play an instrument and want to come along to join in as we try our hand at pop, rock, rock and roll, country and the like, we'd love to see you. If your instrument is your voice, you're welcome as well.

I recently came across the following, which I've certainly found to be true since joining and then leading our Music Making group:

Ask most players how to get more comfortable performing, and they'll tell you the same thing: practise more. And look, they're not wrong, exactly. There's just a key piece missing… Every player you've ever admired, the ones who sound like they belong up there, didn't get that way alone. They got there by playing with people, messing up in front of them, and doing it again anyway.

Our last meeting before breaking for Summer took place in one of the heat waves and we didn't manage to play very much. No danger of that as the year has moved on and we're already half way through Autumn Term. We've just started preparing for the Christmas party, with the aim of getting you dancing between the tables again like we did last year. See you there, dancing shoes on!

PHILOSOPHY GROUP. Richard Goldring

The philosophy group has been running for several years now. This year we have a number of members who have continued from previous years, and several newer members. There's a wide range of people, some with previous studies of philosophy, and some completely new to the subject. We are open to everyone who wants to learn more about philosophy and discuss and debate it.

This Autumn term we have been studying Metaphysics, looking at questions such as, do we have a soul, causation, freewill, and finding meaning in our lives. We have also been looking at what is critical thinking, rhetoric, argumentation, and cognitive biases.

So, if you want to learn more about the universe and discuss and debate the mysteries of life with like-minded individuals then you are welcome to join us.

THE SEWING BEE. Susan Mackenzie

We, the Sewing Bee, were very happy to come together for the Autumn term and enjoy enthusiastic afternoons. We welcomed two new members to our group and à third is joining us this Tuesday. I'm sorry to have to say that the class is now full. We just cannot squeeze another workstation into the room.

I will be working on understanding pattern alterations using our present paper patterns. These have now become so expensive to purchase new ones for each project.

Last year we made garments such as sun hats, coats, shirts, dresses for ourselves and even one husband got a summer shirt and trousers.

Our u3a is thriving with sewing enthusiasm and I have directed craft sewers to Somerton u3a rather than dampen their hopes of joining a class.

SHAKESPEARE. Julie Hillman (reported by Malcolm Allen)

The Reading Shakespeare Group is up and running with a full complement of members.

This season we are reading The Tempest, best described as a comedy with underlying tragic tones. Shipwrecks, magic, monsters, duplicity and that's just Act 1! We are of course not just reading the play-we are also watching a Royal Shakespeare Company production starring Simon Russell Beale and having some lively discussions as to the interpretation of the words.

We have not yet reached the most famous line from The Tempest which is "We are such stuff as Dreams are made on". Maybe readers of the newsletter would like to tell us what they think this means?

QUIZ GROUP. Angela Middleton

This small group meets at the Mission Church on Thursday mornings and on week 1. Angela says "We are a friendly group and happy to welcome new members. Everyone chooses a topic and makes up questions for the next session, along with correct answers of course. There is also a break with tea, coffee and biscuits plus a lot of chat."

SUNDAY LUNCH. Pamela Prentice

This group is currently full.

WALKING GROUP. Johnny Heriz-Smith

Just a few pics from a summer dominated by heat, such that we had to cancel one walk for being dangerously hot, and organise others through the shade of woods. I've enjoyed the company of my companions, and discovering new paths and byways that criss-cross our small corner of Somerset.







WORLD HISTORY. Richard Goldring

This is a new group, born out of my love of history. It's early days establishing the format of the group, but we are making progress. We have several members from the previous British History group, folk who are very knowledgeable about history and some new to studying history. We are open to everyone who wants to learn more about world history and discuss it to try and understand what happened in the past and why.

This term we started working our way through world history, beginning with the beginning of the universe, the Earth, Life, and human prehistory, Ancient Mysteries such as worldwide Cyclopean multi-ton stone walls, ancient handbag motifs, sunken cities, Creation and Flood myths, and the beginning of human civilisation, starting with Mesopotamia and the Sumerians. We have also been looking at particular historical topics and eras such as the 1960s, the 1970s and China and the Chinese Treasure fleet commissioned during the early Ming dynasty which embarked on seven epic expeditions between 1405 and 1433.

So, if you want to learn more about the world history and discuss history with like-minded individuals then you are very welcome to join us.

YOGA. Ursula Dunne

As in previous years we are a really big group and it always amazes me how positive folk are about doing this regular gentle movement class as “self-administered therapy”. When I started to train about 20 years ago I remember hearing that some people were still doing yoga in their seventies and telling my new classes this. Well here we are now, many of us in that age bracket, a couple in their eighties too! We know that bodies age, change, stiffen up and so on but it is remarkable that providing we listen to our bodies we can continue to benefit from developing and/or maintaining , suppleness, strength and maybe a calmer mind set. Sometimes I glance around at the class and am amazed at how well we move. I feel really happy to be able to lead the group and of course, over the years, as we get to know each other a little bit, it is good to have a quick chat before we begin.

I always have a theme and this term it is using the letters of the alphabet to focus on specific aspects of yoga. So apart from ahimsa and alignment we have thought about breathing and the bandhas, levels of consciousness and calm, dharma and drishti, exercise and exhalation, flexibility and flow. Of course there are many other words that I may well have added each week, such as the names of specific postures like crocodile, dog and fish or the Sanskrit such as asana, brahmari, chaturanga or dandasana. There are so many possibilities and it is fun to focus on different aspects of yoga each time.

Sometimes I add famous quotations from yoga literature and one I always like is this “We look to the world outside and see not the self within” I think that many of us spend time doing just this and maybe just the odd bit of yoga helps us to feel the body, develop the breath and recognise that person within!

EXTRA

In my request to group leaders for information I asked if anyone wanted to add anything extra like a poem to our newsletter. This time I have a couple of little verses from Walter de la Mare (1873-1956).

This is just the first verse from **Autumn**… I think it describes some days very well.

"There is wind where the rose was,
Cold rain where the sweet grass was
And clouds like sheep
Stream o'er the steep
Grey skies where the lark was. "

You might prefer **Apple Fall**...

"Rosy the blossom that breaks in May;
Autumn brings the apple;
Jackdaws in the belfry tower,
Jackdaws in the steeple.
Comes a wind, blows a wind
Headlong down they tumble;
But bloom and berry share the sprig
Of the prickly bramble"



