

BLANDFORD & DISTRICT u3a

Charity no: 1092984 - Website: <https://blandford.u3asite.uk>

SUMMER 2025

WELCOME

..... to the first edition of the “new look”

Blandford & District u3a newsletter.

The previous quarterly newsletter has for some time only been published on-line – which is easy to distribute electronically but not conducive to reading whilst having a cup of tea and a biscuit! So we are trialling a new format which will be available as printed copy from the quarterly meetings and from group leaders. However, you will still be able to read and download the newsletter on-line if you so-wish. Our new look newsletter will be published six-monthly and will include:

- News from the groups (page 3)
- “New group” information (page 3)
- Members’ favourite recipes (page 8)
- “Coffee Time” Puzzles (page 2)

In addition, we hope to publish short stories and poems submitted by members.

So, don’t just sit there! Why not share a favourite recipe with other members or perhaps you can devise a crossword (fiendish or simple) or quiz or share a joke or a poem. Perhaps you have an idea for a new group or need new members for an existing activity – don’t keep it to yourself, there are around 350 other members to share your thoughts with!

As always, we are indebted to Christine Smith for collating and editing the newsletter. Send

any news, recipes or other items for publication to Christine via the website (select “Committee” tab then contact Christine Smith). And finally, do let us know what you think of the return to print and the new additions . . . *it is, after all, your u3a and your newsletter.*

Rob Clarke, Chair B&D u3a.

2025

OPEN MEETINGS

DURWESTON VILLAGE HALL

2.00pm – Doors Open

2.15pm – Welcome & Notices

2.30pm – Speaker

Followed by a cup of tea and the best homemade cake this side of Blandford for just £1.50 – and lots of chat!

--ooOoo--

Friday 27th June

Alban O’Brien: Thomas Hardy
and Blandford Forum

Friday 26th September

The Big Yellow Bus Project

COMMITTEE

Following the B&D u3a AGM at the end of March, our managing committee is now made up of the following B&D members:

Chair: Rob Clarke

Vice Chair: Rex Badgley

Hon. Secretary: Lynne Rogers

Treasurer: Anthony Kelly (new member)

Membership Secretary: Bev Lee

Group Liaison: Lesley Badgley

Website Editor: Lynn Hawkey

Speaker Secretary: Bridget Spiers

and last but not least: Gerald Killingworth

**All can be contacted via the website's Committee page, as can any Group Leader via their group page.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

What's My Quaff - Friday 23rd May.

Venue: The Parish Centre, Blandford Forum.



u3a Summer Picnic - Wednesday 18th June at 12:30pm. Venue: The Big Yellow Bus Project, Shillingstone.

u3a Quiz - Friday 17th October at 2:00pm.

Venue: The Parish Centre, Blandford Forum. Tea, Coffee & Cakes served during the afternoon.

NB: In all cases, emails will be sent out prior to the event, detailing the activity, times, places and, where necessary, the ticket prices.

GRAB A PEN FOR THE

B&D u3a		Coffee Time Challenge	
1 DAMP DAMP DAMP DAMP	2  SKRIPAL + MY i	3 	4 little LARGE little LARGE little LARGE
5 XIST N G	6 OODOMOO	7 ← O V E R S	8 o u C H ^S
9 WAETHER	10 X & EYE SHADOW	11 Tomato Onions Cress Lettuce Cucumber	12 VICER BISHUP PREIST
13 HEAVEN 2 - 3 HELL	14 INJU144STICE	15 The Issue	16 TRANS ^{TA}

If your brain has now turned to mush, find the answers on page 7 – how did you do?

GROUP NEWS

We have a new group with a big history! Many thanks to Claire Smith for a great introduction to ...

HIEROGLYPHICS



Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs date from roughly 5,000 years ago and the fact they came into existence shows this was an immensely sophisticated culture which needed writing to function.

Hieroglyphics were used for all facets of communication and worship for thousands of years until Alexander the Great invaded Egypt in about the 5th century BC. After his death Egypt was divided up among his generals and Greek became the primary language. Following the arrival of Christianity, hieroglyphs were considered pagan and were suppressed by subsequent rulers.

For many centuries, foreigners believed that hieroglyphs were pictograms rather than letters and it wasn't until the 19th century that the mystery was solved through European scholars using the Rosetta stone to finally puzzle it out. William John Bankes from Kingston Lacy had a part to play in this through his research and collecting of artifacts during his "exile".

The group is now up and running and everyone seems to be enjoying the challenge of making our way through such an ancient language.

Claire Smith

TABLE TENNIS

The Table tennis group is a friendly, sociable group and although we always play to win, the emphasis is on having fun. We had a very enjoyable Christmas lunch and a drink in the White Horse, Stourpaine after our first meeting in January. We welcome new players, beginners or more advanced, and bats are provided. If you've never played table tennis before, maybe now is the time to give it a try!

Elaine Huntriss

CRAFT

We knit (among other crafts) and we natter. But did you know, the oldest known knitted artifacts are socks from Egypt dating from the 11th century. The earliest recorded knitted items in Europe were produced by Muslim artisans for the Spanish Christian royal families. Elizabeth I favoured silk stockings which were finer and more decorative and therefore far more expensive than woollen ones. Knitting developed as a way of providing an income to the poor and was such an important occupation in the Scottish Isles during the 17th and 18th centuries that whole families were involved in the making of socks, stockings, sweaters and accessories. From necessity to hobby, knitting has seen a keen renaissance during the 21st century and hand

knitted clothes can fetch a high premium in top fashion stores. Yarn bombing can be seen in our villages and towns (check out the post box outside The Crown in Blandford) and knitting for yourself is gaining popularity among celebrities such as Tom Daly, Julia Roberts and Cameron Diaz.

Mind you, knitting is not for everyone: we have lacemakers, crocheters, embroiderers, quilters and needle-pointers, but all are happy to share what they have learned with anyone who shows an interest.

Christine Smith (on behalf of the Craft group)

DANCING FEET



Our friendly dance group welcomes new members or two left feet! Come and have fun, socialise and practise your steps for VE Day 80th Celebrations in May. Some of the most popular music we dance to at our sessions at Charlton Marshall includes: ‘Penny Arcade’ by Roy Orbison. ‘Jungle Rock’ by Hank Mizell, ‘I Love to Boogie’ released in 1976 by glam-rock band T Rex, ‘Little Sister’ by Elvis Presley and ‘In the Mood’ by The Glenn Miller Orchestra.

Pat Luke

POETRY

One of the poets we often read as a group is Seamus Heaney, an Irish poet who won a Noble Prize for Literature in 1995. We love his descriptions of the characters from his personal life and his beloved Ireland. We often comment that you could paint a picture from his verse. Here is one of my favourites that we have shared more than once over the years.

Sue Murty

The Railway Children

*When we climbed the slopes of the cutting
We were eye level with the white cups
Of the telegraph poles and sizzling wires.*

*Like lovely freehand they curved for miles
East and miles west beyond us, sagging
Under their burden of swallows.*

*We were small and thought we knew nothing
Worth knowing. We thought words travelled
the wires*

In the shiny pouches of raindrops.

*Each one seeded full with the light
Of the sky, the gleam of the lines, and
ourselves*

So infinitesimally scaled

We could stream through the eye of a needle.

RUMMIKUB

Rummikub (actually pronounced Rummy cube) is a tile-based game for 2-4 players combining elements of the card game rummy and mah-jong. It was invented by Ephraim Hertzano, a Romanian-born Jew, who emigrated to Israel in the 1940s. The game

started as a brilliant idea when he was living in Romania where card-playing was outlawed under the Communist regime. Ephraim envisioned a game that would use small tiles instead of cards that could be played by young and old alike and had no ties to any language or religion. He wanted to create a game that would bring people together and one day change the world's leisure time. It became an overnight hit and when he moved to Israel after World War II he continued its development. He started selling the games door-to-door, sometimes giving shop owners copies on consignment to convince them to carry the game. In the 1970s it was taken to the USA by Irv and Arline Kossoff to sell in their New York Gift, Games and Luggage store. Arline translated the rules from Hebrew to English and by 1977 it became a bestselling game in the US, and from there around the world. The World Rummikub Championship is held every three years and the competition is fierce. Japanese, Dutch, Egyptian and Brazilian winners have all been crowned, not only winning the coveted Rummikub World Cup but also a pair of airline tickets for around the globe travel.

I don't think any of us in the Blandford and District u3a Rummikub group will ever go on to take part in the World Championship but we certainly have fun every third Tuesday afternoon from 2.30 p.m. in the Woodhouse Garden Pavilions. Please come and join us some time – it really does what Ephraim Hertzano intended and brings us together.

Lynne Rogers

MUSIC APPRECIATION



What type of musical instrument is a kora?

In February the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra had a well-attended concert of kora music, but speaking to friends few people knew that it is a 21-stringed “harp” very popular in West Africa.

At the Lighthouse concert Seikou Keito, who is from Senegal, played his compositions ‘*African Rhapsodies*’ and ‘*Alhambra*’. You can see him on YouTube playing with the Scottish National Orchestra.

If you had been a member of u3a Music Appreciation Group a few years ago you would know all about the kora as Marion shared her enthusiasm for its music when she brought the CD “SOAR” to one of our meetings. This CD (released in 2018) is a combination of kora played by Seikou Keito and harp played by Catrin Finch. Track 4 includes an excerpt from Bach's ‘*Goldberg Variations*’.

Traditionally the kora was made from a gourd cut in half and covered with cow skin to make a resonator, and a long hardwood neck. Today they are often made with guitar heads instead of the traditional leather rings, which makes them easier to tune. A kora does not fit into a single group of instruments but is classified as

“a double bridge harp lute”. The strings run in two divided rows, making a double harp. They do not end in a soundboard but are held on a bridge, making a bridge harp. They originate from the neck and cross a bridge supported by a resonating chamber, making it a lute too. This may sound complicated but the end result produces a lovely sound resembling that of a harp.

Friends who attended Keito's Concert found it “magical”

Viv Chapman

WRITING FOR PLEASURE

We are still meeting fortnightly and we are at our capacity number of eight. If anyone would like to start another group there are two people on the waiting list already and another four would make it viable. Any of the current writers would be pleased to give guidance on how we operate but a new group may have fresh ideas.

Our output is very varied with poems, serious prose, light-hearted pieces and always a session of spontaneous writing. We are a merry bunch and our colleague, Paula, has written a poem for your enjoyment, celebrating our joy in writing. Bee Wallis

My Ladies by Paula Harding

*I'd like you to meet my ladies
We gather just twice a month
Sharing our poems and stories
We're such a gregarious bunch*

*There's Bernadette, Bee and Sylvie
Ursula, Carol and me*

And then we have our Melanie

And our new girl, Ann Marie

Our stories are always different

A great array of themes

Each choosing different topics

With all of our hopes and dreams

We always have tea and coffee

Each host provides a feast

The sugar feeds our brain cells

For our ideas to be released

So three cheers for our ladies

Always a joy to behold

With our pens and our books at the ready

Our words are waiting to be told

BOOK GROUP (with some recommendations for summer reading)

We continue to meet once a month apart from August and have had a mixed collection of books over recent months with some being more popular than others. We all enjoyed reading *Wolf Border* by Sarah Hall a fascinating story of an attempt to rewild a pair of wolves in Scotland. We also appreciated *Crossroads* by Jonathan Franzen, *Walking Away: Travels on the South West Coast Path* by Simon Armitage (Poet Laureate since 2019) and *After You'd Gone* by Maggie O'Farrell. Some books have not been received so warmly by many of the group namely *Power* by Naomi Alderman, *Home* by Marilyn Robinson and *Little Red Chairs* by Edna O'Brien. We have noted that the books we haven't enthused about often generate a dynamic discussion!

Adrienne Shaw

STROLLERS



The photo shows a Group outing to Upton Country Park. It is an ideal place to visit for a leisurely stroll, with easy pathways on the shoreline and through woodland with beautiful views over Poole Harbour. A new Welcome Centre has recently been opened and features a living roof planted with 34 species of wildflowers. The park is a great place to take the grandchildren!

We have such a beautiful County and our walk leaders are always finding new places for us to walk with fairly easy terrain. Join us on the 4th Friday of the month and see areas of Dorset you may not have visited before. You will be made to feel very welcome and have a good chat along the way. Pam Rees

ANSWERS TO COFFEE TIME CHALLENGE

1-Rising Damp, 2-I spy with my little eye, 3-The Good, The Bad & The Ugly, 4-A little on the large side, 5-10 Downing Street, 6-Domino's, 7-Leftovers, 8-Growing pains, 9-A bad spell of weather, 10-Kiss & make-up, 11-Side salad, 12-Clerical errors, 13-Paradise Lost, 14-Gross injustice, 15-The Big Issue, 16-It fell off the back of a lorry.

BLANDFORD ATTRACTIONS

We have a great selection of places of interest in and around the town, all of which would keep many an adult or child enthralled for a morning or afternoon. All the information as to opening times and admission fees is on their websites or visit Blandford Information Centre

Blandford Fashion Museum – the history of fashion from the 1700s told through exhibitions and events. And there's a lovely tea shop!www.blandfordfashionmuseum.co.uk

Blandford Town Museum – tells the story of Blandford and the surrounding villages through displays and exhibitions. There's also a small gift shop and the Museum Garden. www.blandfordtownmuseum.org.uk

Royal Signals Museum – sited out on Blandford Camp with booking/entry conditions. Find out about the “exciting story of communication and information from laying line through to advanced, secure satellite, cyber and more”.
www.royalsignalsmuseum.co.uk

Blandford Information Centre – situated on the edge of the Marsh and Ham Car Park, this is a great place to visit to find out more information on where to visit and what's going on throughout the town and local area.
www.blandfordinfocentre.uk

RECIPE CORNER

Bring a bunch of u3a members together over a cup of tea or coffee and it is almost inevitable that the conversation will turn to food in one guise or another! Who has eaten what where recently or maybe food memories from school or childhood. It was this latter topic that occupied our minds on this occasion and there was a mix of ration book dishes, school dinner hates and comfort dishes. One memory that baffled some in the group was Eggy Bread, aka Angel Slices or its sweet version, French Toast*. “What’s that?” one asked and was a bit unsure as to whether this could indeed be a ‘thing’. But it is and it’s delicious.

Eggy Bread – for one person

1 slice white bread, 1 medium or large egg, salt & pepper, butter or oil for frying.

Break the egg on a large plate and whisk with a fork until thoroughly mixed. Season and then soak your slice of bread in the eggy mixture, turning so that both sides are fully soaked. Gently heat your butter/oil in a frying pan, add your egg-soaked bread (pour any egg left on the plate over the bread in the pan – don’t waste any!) and fry over a medium heat on both sides until golden brown. Serve on a warm plate with a good dollop of tomato sauce (this was the favourite condiment of choice) or maybe add a couple of rashers of bacon, a grilled tomato or mushrooms for a hearty breakfast. And enjoy!

*French Toast can be made as above (or maybe with slightly stale brioche), then sprinkled with castor sugar mixed with ground cinnamon and served with maple syrup and fresh fruit.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR ...

I really enjoyed putting together this edition of our B&D u3a Newsletter and I hope you enjoyed reading it; so many interesting articles from a selection of our Group Leaders, and I for one have learnt a lot. Who knew there was such an instrument as a kora? My thanks to all our contributors for making my job so much easier – maybe next time *your* name will be in print (no more than 200 words please) with perhaps a description of a visit to a great place of interest, a recipe or a poem! Get writing and get in touch via the website.

Our next newsletter will be the Winter edition, which will be out in October; deadline for articles will be mid-September.

Have a great summer with B&D u3a and I look forward to hearing from you,
Christine

“Read over your compositions and wherever you meet with a passage that you think particularly fine, strike it out.”

Samuel Johnson