

BLANDFORD & DISTRICT u3a

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

WINTER 2025-26

RAMBLINGS FROM THE CHAIR

The Newsletter

Most members have said they enjoy reading the newsletter with a cup of tea and a biscuit so, after much head scratching, we have decided to return to publishing the newsletter on paper as well as on-line. Both the logistics and cost of delivering by Royal Mail are prohibitive so we hope to deliver by hand . . . If the new system is to work, we need a few volunteers to deliver about 15–20 newsletters in their immediate area just twice a year. The deliveries could be made whilst popping out to the shops or walking the dog. Most deliveries could be completed in about 20 minutes (10 minutes if the dog runs!).

Please help us – contact either Rob Clarke or Claire Smith (details on the website “Committee” page).

Christmas Meeting

The Christmas meeting this year is on Friday the 28 November at Durweston Village Hall. The trio “Hardy Annuals” featuring our own Lorna Leese (under her stage name of Jan Wyld) will be performing with musicians Richard Willetts and Richard Hall. We will also have our traditional Christmas tea. Many of you will have known Sally Woodlock who was one of B&D u3a’s founder members. Sadly, Sally died recently but left a bequest for everyone attending the Christmas meeting to enjoy a festive drink! Thank you, Sally!

Quarterly Meetings – 2026

Bridget Spiers, who organizes our speakers, has been unwell for some time and we are therefore unable to publish an itinerary for next year’s speakers at present – full details will be published on the website as soon as they are available.

u3a Quiz

The u3a Quiz Afternoon is at 2:00 pm on Friday 17 October in the Parish Centre, Blandford Forum (full details on the website). Last year’s quiz was very well attended and enjoyed by all.

Contact Gerald Killingworth via the “Committee” page on the website to book your place or for further information.

Don’t delay – book now!

Rob Clarke

COMMITTEE

A reminder that our managing committee is made up of the following B&D members, who can all be contacted via the ‘Committee’ page of the website.

Chair: Rob Clarke

Vice Chair: Rex Badgley

Hon. Secretary: Lynne Rogers (see overleaf)

Treasurer: Anthony Kelly

Membership Secretary: Bev Lee

Group Liaison: Lesley Badgley

Website Editor: Lynn Hawkey

Speaker Secretary: Bridget Spiers

Gerald Killingworth

Claire Smith

HON. SECRETARY

Dear Friends,

After five and a half years serving as your secretary I have decided that the time has come to hang up my boots - or pad and pencil anyway! I have enjoyed my time and have made many friends, but, as some of you may know, I am a retired vicar and, as a priest, retirement doesn't really exist. We have been without an incumbent in our benefice for 18 months and those of us in the church are trying to keep things going, which has meant I am spending more time serving there.

If you would like to know what would be involved in the role of secretary please get in touch with me through the website. I would be happy to work with someone to help them fit in. Many thanks. Lynne Rogers

WRITERS CORNER

We know there are many wonderfully creative members of the Blandford & District u3a. We certainly hear very good things about the Writing for Pleasure groups' work! (See below in Group News) So, in every newsletter from now on, we shall offer members the chance to impress us with their poems, short stories, or writings on any subject they care to choose. In this newsletter we start the ball rolling with a poem by Gerald Killingworth, a committee member who has just published his second collection of poems: *Fabrics, Fancies & Fens* (Tears in the Fence press). Gerald apologises that the poem is not exactly seasonal, but he has nothing suitably Autumnal in his collection.

Nearly There

I swear

today is the start of almost-Spring.

The garden holds its breath –

ready, steady...

but not quite yet.

Under last year's leaf-fall

shoots procrastinate,

sparrows still gossip about frost.

But, scenting the air,

I almost skip.

Items for Writers Corner should be sent to the Editor at email: christineu3a@btinternet.com

2026

QUARTERLY 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 30th January 2026

Friday 27th March (& AGM)

Friday 26th June

Friday 25th September

GROUP NEWS

We have a great selection of subjects and activities available to all members, albeit that some are so popular there may be a waiting list. If that is the case, why not get together with a couple of like-minded members and start a new group? You will receive lots of support from Rex and Lesley (Group Liaison), as well as fellow members.

ART APPRECIATION

An introduction to: Eric Ravilious

The Art Appreciation Group meet monthly and typically there is a presentation about one artist, often a video downloaded from YouTube, followed by discussion. In this article, I briefly discuss an artist we looked at last year, Eric Ravilious. The reason for choosing him is that he is both relatively unknown to the wider public, but, I think, readily appreciable by people who don't have a great interest in, or knowledge of, art. And his work's quintessential 'Englishness' will also appeal to many.



Ravilious was predominantly a landscape painter, and particularly of the chalk downlands of southern England. Above is a landscape with his own particular twist, viewed through the window of a third class

train compartment. It is probably his best known painting, and one many people may have seen without knowing the name of the artist.

He was born in 1903 and brought up in Eastbourne, where he went to art school before going on to the Royal College of Art in London. He became a commercially successful painter during the 1930s. He was also a successful illustrator and printmaker, and his woodcut of two Victorian gentlemen playing cricket appeared on the front cover of every edition of *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack* from 1938 to 2002. On the outbreak of war in 1939 Ravilious enrolled as a War Artist, and saw action in the Norwegian campaign of 1940: shown below is one of his paintings from this episode:



In 1942 he was posted to Iceland, and shortly afterwards died when the plane he was flying failed to return - his body was never recovered. I hope the above piques your interest, and you seek out more of this artist's work.

Jack Shonfield

GERMAN CONVERSATION

If you studied German at school and are planning a holiday there, you may want to brush up on your conversation so you can at least order a frothing glass of beer or a coffee! We have some spaces free at the moment and

would be delighted to welcome you to the group.

Anthony Kelly

DID YOU KNOW: *Gesundheit!* An exclamation made when someone sneezes, this is German for 'health', but it also has the rhythmic appeal of 'God bless you' and of a musical finish (as to a music-hall joke).

Known in English by 1914. Sneezing was believed to be the expulsion of an evil spirit, hence the need for such an exclamation. The Romans cried *absit omen!* (flee, omen!).

Cassell's Dictionary of Word and Phrase

Origins, Nigel Rees

SINGING FOR FUN

I have led the group since last September and they are wanting to continue next term. There are Sopranos, Altos, Tenors and Basses. We can therefore sing 4-part harmony.

The repertoire is wide ranging from Anton Bruckner (*Locus Iste*) to Leonard Bernstein (*West Side Story*). Repertoire requests are welcome and reading music is not essential. We meet at the Dorset Rural Music School fortnightly on Mondays at 10.30am until 12.00noon and the first meeting of our new season will be on Monday 15 September.

We welcome new members.

Winston Leese

PAINTING

The painting group is a friendly bunch of all abilities who meet on the fourth Thursday in Blandford Parish Centre for a communal art session from 2pm-4pm. No experience or skill is required, just a bit of enthusiasm to give it a

go. People bring along their own project for the day, which is usually a watercolour or a drawing, or even acrylic.

Although there is no formal tuition, members are always happy to give guidance, help, and advice to each other. Occasionally we will organise a session where we all work on a common subject, typically a still life set up in the middle of the group.

Some group members are also members of Blandford Art Society, and Geoff and Chris took part in the Members' Exhibition at Pimperne Village Hall towards the end of August. It was a great opportunity to chat with other artists and members of the public and collect ideas for our own u3a painting group. We currently have space for eight artists in a session, but want to expand the group and move back into the large meeting hall where we were before. This should be possible once the Corn Exchange re-opens in October, and the Thursday craft market moves back there. And if you're interested but not sure, why not come along on a fourth Thursday and give it a go with no obligation.

Geoff Poskitt

"The day is coming when a single carrot, freshly observed, will spark off a revolution."

Paul Cezanne

WRITING FOR PLEASURE 2

"Can I just say how much I have benefitted from membership of the group. I have always wanted to write and have loads of ideas, but I'm not the most disciplined of people (for which read lazy). Since joining the group,

however, I have found a new lease of creative life and have written six new stories, which is a record for me." (*What a great accolade for the group! – Editor*)

We are 'Writing Group Too'
But don't be deceived
The writing we do
Is hard to believe

We are Pat, John, Jo and Peter too
And Jon and Sandy, Jean and Sue

*I am very proud of Writing Group Too
My first thought is 'Band of Brothers'
Join the queue*

*We open our minds with great success
From the outside looking in, we can't fail to impress*

It's how we do leisure
We write for pleasure

*The subject challenge is sometimes hard
But our enthusiasm is not marred
It's always fascinating to see
What everyone's take on the title will be*

We all come in different shapes and sizes
Some from near, some from afar
With our pens dancing over the paper
I think what good friends we are

Same subject, different ideas to tell
Pen on paper I hope I do well
On and on we all write
I read it back and hope I got it right

All quiet as I tell my story
I so hope my friends don't think it boring

I come to the end with a sigh of relief
And find my friends on their feet

A pat on the back, a 'well-done you'
And with a big thank you

I take a pew.

*We are a merry band of lovely folk
Who like the written word
Our pens are poised and ready to roll
Our creative thoughts do flow*

*We celebrate in each other's prose
And delight as verse unfolds*

(NB: Each change of font/colour donates a different writer)

CYCLING

2024 - The weather improved (a bit) in early summer 2024 but no planned rides were cancelled from May to September. We even ventured out on a rare 'scorchio' day (31 July), when plenty of liquid (non-alcoholic) was consumed. Two highlights were 3 July when we met up with our picnicking compatriots by Upton House after circumnavigating Poole Park and 7 August when we reached Knoll Beach, Studland, where some of us added swimming to our exercise plan.



Upton 3 July

Besides our usual rides to the two ‘Sturminsters’ (Newton & Marshall), we also visited Wimborne, Ringwood, Dorchester, Moreton, Corfe Castle and Pamphill. Unfortunately our festive ride to The Plough, Manston had to be cancelled due to bad weather, but we still got together and enjoyed a splendid meal.

For lovers of statistics – from 15 May to 20 November, we cycled on 15 occasions, covering 248 miles.

2025 - The weather gods have proved unusually lenient this year, with only 3 rain cancellations in the winter/spring. Special rides included the following:

4 June – 16 cyclists - a record! (Herding cats comes to mind!)

18 June – joined up with other u3a members at the Big Yellow Bus picnic

16 July – Stour Valley Way, from Ensbury to Mudeford Spit + swim

6 August – Corfe Castle to Studland + another swim.



30 July at Poets Corner, Sturminster Newton
Just one new ride (Mudeford) this year, but we are still searching for new adventures.

Stats: 19 rides of between 14 & 24 miles, totalling 370 miles; 2-16 riders, averaging 8. Still retain 2 founder (some may say – ‘mad’) members from April 2016, 3974 miles since then.

Come join us, for **Exercise, Exhilaration and Environmental Education** (maybe some engineering, too!).

Peter Aldous

ITALIAN

There are so many areas of Italy that reward visitors with their splendour and interest but a part less well known and very rewarding is Northern Lazio, the area that, before the Romans, was populated by the Etruscans. It offers a quieter, more authentic Italian experience away from the large tourist crowds of Rome or Florence. On our numerous trips to this area we have got to know several locals who have on their land various ancient structures, such as bridges, Etruscan burial sites and amphitheatres. After exploring the historical sites we have been invited to enjoy their hospitality, tasting their produce, including limoncello made from their own lemons, and locally pressed olive oil.



Our introduction to Italy was the small market town of Soriano nel Cimino (above) in the hills

not far from the city of Viterbo. Rather than a tourist resort, Soriano nel Cimino is an Italian town that welcomes tourists and encourages them to take part in the local customs, especially the Sagra di Castagne. This is the annual chestnut festival, which takes place over three weekends in October, when the town is divided into four Contrada, or clans, each with its own crest and colours. There are medieval contests, such as jousting and archery between the contradas - each contrada sets up a temporary, tented medieval tavern, similar to a refectory, serving food for the duration of the festival, which is cooked on fires fuelled with chestnut tree prunings. The whole town is authentically decorated to resemble a medieval town. Equally authentic are the costumes worn by the participants. A wonderful experience!

Angela Warsany

Part II of Angela's travels in Italy will be in the Summer 2026 newsletter

"My first rule of travel is never to go to a place that sounds like a medical condition and Critz is clearly an incurable disease involving flaking skin." Bill Bryson

UPCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

As anyone who has lived in Blandford for a while will know, there is always something going on, either in the town or in one of the surrounding villages. Not to mention the long-awaited reopening of Blandford's Corn Exchange (promised for November) following its much needed refurbishment and redecoration. On Sunday 9 November there

will be Remembrance Services in Blandford and at local churches.

Keep an eye out for talks and quizzes organised by Blandford Town Museum (<https://blandfordtownmuseum.org.uk> and coming up in November will be the Blandford Literary Festival, with workshops, performances and meet-the-author events from Friday 14 November to Sunday 16 November. Our own Gerald Killingworth will be taking part in an evening of music and verse – tickets and more info available on the website <https://blandfordliteraryfestival.co.uk>

And, starting off the Christmas festivities will be the Blandford Yuletide Festival on Friday 5 December.

There will of course be a host of events taking place in the surrounding village halls during the winter months, from craft fairs to pantomimes, as well as the usual selection of keep-fit and sport activities. Not to mention the seasonal offerings at Coade Hall at Bryanston School, which are always worth checking their website for.

Keep an eye out for films and live performances at The Tivoli and Allendale Centre in Wimborne, plus all sorts of musical performances at Lighthouse Poole, just a short bus ride away if you want to catch a lunchtime or matinee performance.

Who said there is nothing going on in Dorset?

LIVE – LAUGH – LEARN

with Blandford & District u3a

<https://blandford.u3a.org.uk>

RECIPE CORNER

KENT LENT PIE

When I was a child growing up in Kent, my Mum used to cook us something we called ‘pudding pie’. I discovered that its real name is ‘Kent Lent Pie’ and it comes from the Folkestone area. It was inspired by frugal housewives trying to break the monotony of their diet during the time of Lent. Lynne Rogers

Here is the recipe:

6oz shortcrust pastry

½oz butter

½ pint milk

1 egg (beaten)

2oz sugar

Nutmeg

1oz ground rice

Method:

Roll out the pastry and line a 7 inch flan or pie dish. Bake blind at 190°C, 375°F, gas mark 5 for 7-10 minutes.

Warm the milk and sugar in a saucepan, add the ground rice and heat gently, stirring all the time, until the mixture thickens. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly, add the butter and egg. Pour the rice mixture into the pastry case and sprinkle the top with nutmeg (and currants if liked). Bake for 30 minutes at 180°C, 350°F, gas mark 4. Serve warm or cold.

Whilst at the moment we're more likely to be thinking about Advent recipes, this is definitely a dish to save for the run-up to Easter next year or when we need a simple but tasty pudding during the cold winter months.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR ...

I hope you have enjoyed reading the contributions from not only our committee, but also members of various groups. It is great learning how the singing and painting groups are getting along or as written about by Jack Shonfield, an artist regularly seen but not really appreciated – and what a great introduction to the new "Writing for Pleasure Too" group. 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 or to my newsletter email: christineu3a@btinternet.com

Our next newsletter will be the Summer 2026 edition, which will be out in June; deadline for articles will be mid-May.

Wishing everyone a great winter and festive season, as well as a happy and healthy New Year.

Christine