

NEWSLETTER
May 2026



**CLEAN THE AUGEAN STABLES
IN A SINGLE DAY**

The fifth labour was one of humiliation: cleaning the Augean Stables in a single day. These stables housed thousands of cattle and had not been cleaned in decades. Hercules agreed to do the task in exchange for a reward, and completed it by rerouting the rivers Alpheus and Peneus to wash out the filth. However, since he had demanded payment, Eurystheus refused to count this labour.

u3a Chairman's Report May 2026

Isn't it nice that we have had some sunny weather recently. It does cheer you up. I feel more relaxed when the sun is shining. Spring seems to be here at last. However, some events seem to be earlier than usual. All the bluebells are out which is great, but they are usually later. Also, my oak trees are coming into leaf which is early as normally this has been in May. This is probably the effect of climate change caused by global warming. Let's hope the insects and birds can adapt to survive.

I hope you all enjoyed our speaker, Judy Theobald, at our last u3a meeting. She was very funny with all her humorous anecdotes and stories. I have seen her several times now and she always makes me laugh even though in some cases I know what is coming. She has written many more poems than she indicated, all of which make you chuckle out loud. I possess five of her poem booklets which I have collected over the years. I was thinking how live entertainment with actual people is so much more fun. There is a sort of community spirit that pervades the room. Last Friday I went to the Mayflower Studios to see 'The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)' by the Reduced Shakespeare Company. It was very funny. There were three actors who played all the parts with quick changes of costume and wigs. They gave a brief introduction about Shakespeare and what they planned to accomplish. The first play that they tackled was Romeo and Juliet which is well known enough for everyone to understand the story. This was done in about ten minutes. The company skimmed through all the comedies with a very shortened synopsis. The final play they performed was Hamlet where everyone dies at the end. However, they made this very funny. The three actors involved the audience with comments and mimes. Two of the audience ended up on the stage helping out. The whole show was a masterpiece of slapstick comedy with much falling about, humorous asides and interaction with the audience- no chance of falling asleep!

I am planning to book onto the u3a summer school again this year. It is held in September at Chichester University and is quite reasonable. It has a selection of 13 topics you can take part in which are very varied. Details are found on 2026-South East u3a Forum. I really enjoyed it last year. They organised a trip to the theatre as well!

I hope you all enjoy the rest of the spring, come to our meetings and partake in our activity groups. We will have a stall at the Hythe Fair on Monday 25th May, so come and see us there!

Marilyn.



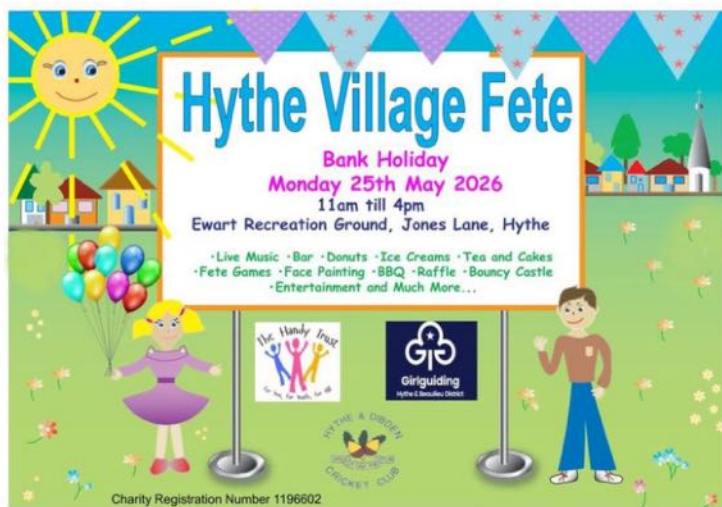
See more about the u3a Summer School on Page 10.



QUIZ

How well do you know Romsey, can you see the differences below?





We have booked our spot at the Hythe Village Fete.

It would be nice if group leaders could come along during the day to talk to anyone interested in joining their group and indeed our u3a!

We may need some volunteers to man our stand during the event and a rota has been suggested - volunteers please step forward!

Again, more details later

Lepe House Open Gardens scheme

On Sunday 12th April I took my elderly mother to visit the Lepe House garden, open once a year for charity under the Open Gardens scheme. The house directly fronts onto the seashore just along from Lepe beach and has its own private slipway. You may have spotted it from the beacon end of the beach beyond the watch house. I was expecting to see a small private flower garden.

What a revelation! The garden is huge, around 18 acres, I think I heard someone say, and incredibly beautiful. There were hundreds of people there, but it didn't feel too crowded. There is a beautiful but quirky old house (now a private family dwelling) which apparently used to be a seafront inn for passing sailors in times past.

The Gardens are slightly reminiscent of Exbury Gardens, containing lots of bluebells, shrubs, flowering trees and camellia at this time of year, with winding grassy paths between them. There is a little wishing well and a rose garden. The photos attached will tell the story.

We couldn't see even half of it as Mum couldn't walk that far. At the end there was a cup of tea with a piece of cake included in the £10 entry price. Well worth a visit next year if you can get in! They had lots of car parking space but it was nearly at capacity when we arrived.

Julie Cross



Art Workshop

Following our meeting at the end of January, where local artist and teacher, John Edwards, talked about Constable, and gave a demonstration of his own working, a number of those present expressed surprise at how it was possible to produce a piece of art, like that, as if by magic. Well, now is your chance to find out, and create your own masterpiece.

John has agreed to run a workshop for u3a members who'd like to have a go.

No experience is necessary. Beginners will be particularly welcome.

Date - August 1st, 2026

Time - 10am till 1pm

Venue - W I Community Hall, Lunedale Road, Dibden Purlieu.

The class will be limited to 12 students, and the cost will be £10 per person, including light refreshments. Materials will be provided.

There are still a few places left, so if you'd be interested in taking part, please contact Brenda, by email.

brendasmith1946@gmail.com

First come, first served.

There will also be a sign up list in the Rainbow Room, on meeting days.

Brenda Smith

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

We would like to have a few more volunteers, to help setup St. Andrews hall for our regular Tuesday meetings. Some people to put out the chairs at the beginning would be very welcome, the people who have been doing it could do with a rest!

Also, a couple more to set up the laptop/projector and the sound system.

None of these jobs are particularly complicated, but without support it will be difficult to come in, sit down, and appreciate the speakers presentation.

We would like several people capable of these tasks, so we could perhaps take it in turns and to cover when others can't make it.

Please come along before the meeting and all will be explained.



We also require members for the committee.

In particular we have a need for a new Treasurer - our existing treasurer Trish Franks will be leaving the committee in August and we will be unable to operate without a replacement.

If you are interested please talk to Trish, Marilyn or any of the committee members - training and support will be given.

You can be seconded onto the committee immediately and be able to 'shadow' Trish and be fully up to speed when the time comes to fully take over. Someone who may be prepared to be a replacement Secretary would also be welcome, as would just general members of the committee.

South East u3a Forum Summer School 2026

Monday 7th – Thursday 10th September

University of Chichester

The dates to note for 2026 are:

- Thursday 2nd April 2026.- Course list and details go 'live' at 11.00am
- Friday 8th May 2026.- Bookings will go 'live' at 11.00am

Courses

AI – Beginners
Art History – The Male Gaze
Craft – English Paper Piecing - Beginners
Jazz Appreciation - Introduction
Life Story – Social History
Linguistics – Onomastics: What's in a name?
Mahjong – Beginners
Mathematics – for Life
MPT - Memory, Perception & Thinking
Poetry – Australian
Philosophy – Introduction
Spanish – Beginners
Yoga – Seated, Mat and Standing

These 13 courses are now finalised and complete the list of courses on offer this year.

Costs

The prices for 2026 summer school are as follows:

En-Suite Accommodation £390.00
Standard Accommodation £360.00
Non-Residential with dinner £220.00
Non-Residential no dinner £175.00



The residential prices include accommodation; all meals and refreshments offered at break times. A 'Welcome' drink on the first evening, with a 'Farewell' drink on the last evening, both prior to dinner. Also, the evening entertainment is included; available on campus each evening at 8.00pm.

Theatre - We have managed to secure a block of seats for, 'a small and quiet light' production at the Minerva Theatre for Tuesday 8th September, evening performance. The Minerva is the smaller sister theatre to the Festival Theatre and is situated opposite the main theatre. More information on the play will be available in April.

The next update - The Subject and Course Overviews go 'live' on 2nd April at 11.00am, on the Forum's website. No further information is available at present. Current information on 2026 Summer School can be found on the South East u3a Forum's website, here is the web link:

2026 - South East u3a Forum

<https://southeastu3aforum.u3asite.uk/2026-2/>

Questions & Queries

To help you answer those 'Oh, what about ...' that come to mind, please see FAQs - 2026 for more details as the answer may be there.

There will be further monthly updates on this webpage, periodic direct communication with those who have asked for updates and with members who have selected a course for this year's summer school. No further information is available at present.

What a Day - 1st May

May 1st - May Day.

So you can either unite in solidarity with the workers of the world or you could get your dancing shoes on. How about starting a u3a Maypole dancing group and be ready for next year. Wouldn't that be fun!

Or if you are in a dancing frame of mind you could celebrate Beltane, the height of pagan Spring. That probably also involves dancing but around a fire as we've seen often on a certain tv detective programme. Personally I'm not dancing around either maypole or fire.

- 1169** Norman mercenaries invade Ireland.
Just when the Irish people thought they had been overlooked!
- 1468** Christopher Columbus sets out his plans for a western route to the Indies. - He didn't make it.
- 1707** The Act of Union joining England and Scotland/Scotland and England takes effect.
- 1769** Duke of Wellington born
- 1807** Abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire.
- 1840** Penny Black stamp issued. Bit more expensive now.
- 1851** Great Exhibition opens at Crystal Palace
(that's a big glass building not a football team)
- 1873** David Livingstone dies
- 1910** First flights from the New Forest Aviation School situated at East Boldre.
For a while East Boldre was a prominent location for the development of flying in the UK and of course important in the two World Wars.

- 1915** RMS Lusitania leaves New York only to be torpedoed by a German submarine a week later
- 1930** Dwarf planet Pluto named
- 1945** Death of Hitler announced
- 1956** Salk polio vaccine available.
Is that the one we used to have on sugar lumps?
- 1999** Body of George Mallory discovered on Everest 75 years after he went missing.
Did he make it to the top and beat Hilary and Tenzing?
- 1999** Finally one for the experts. Tiffany Stratton was born.
Don't bother to let me know if you've heard of him/her – American wrestler.

Peter Dudley



u3a Lunch at The Boathouse, Hythe Marina

Thursday 28th May 2026, 12 for 12:30 pm

Two Courses £22.45, including Tip

I'm organizing a lunch at the Boathouse on 28th May. We ate there last year and it was very successful. We have 50 seats available so do come and support your u3a.

I will be collecting names and cheques at the next meeting, Tuesday 5th May in the Rainbow Room. You can also pay by bank transfer if you wish.

Margaret Andrews



Mains

- Slow Cooked Pork Belly with Dauphinoise Potatoes, Confit Apple and Cider Jus (G.F.)
 - Pan Fried Seabass Fillet with Leek, Potato & Saffron Prawn Chowder (G.F.)
 - Chicken Supreme with Potato Spring Onion Cake & Bourguignon Sauce (G.F.)
 - Chicken Tikka Masala (G.F.)
 - Veggie Burger in Brioche Bun & Chips (V, G.F.O)
-

Desserts

- Cheesecake with cream
- Bramley Apple and Forest Fruit Crumble with Custard (GFO, VEO)
- Salted Caramel Chocolate Brownie served with Vanilla Ice Cream & Chocolate Sauce (GFO)

Tea & Americano £2.50 per person

urza Garden Group

This month a small group of us visited Exbury Gardens. We arrived about 10:00 a.m for a coffee and chat. We covered many gardening topics and exchanged seeds. I have planted my mirabilis seeds already. Let's hope they grow!

We then walked around Exbury Gardens at a leisurely pace. The magnolias were mainly over but the camellias were beautiful. For those of you who don't know there is an original camellia walk and a new camellia walk. We chose the new one. There are so many different colours and shapes of flowers to admire. The blossom trees were out and there were many rhododendrons and azaleas flowering although the main display will be a little later. The bluebells were glorious and found in many parts of the garden. The huge wisteria was not out yet so something to look forward to later, on my next visit. I go quite often as I am a member.

Next month we are going to Mac Pennys nursery near Bransgore.

Marilyn Wheelband







Lyburn Farm and Cheese Supper, Landford

Thursday 2nd July 6:30 p.m.

£15

A few weeks ago I announced that I had been able to secure 25 tickets for an evening at Lyburn Farm and Cheese Supper. The itinerary is a tractor and trailer ride around the farm which takes approx. one and a half hours and on the way we will look at the issues of organic vegetables, visit the reservoir, the pumpkin fields & the cows and return to the farm to hear a bit about the cheese which is made on the premises and has recently won a top award. We will then sit down to a cheese supper.

I'm told it can be a bit bumpy and you need to dress in casual clothes and don't forget a jacket. It can get chilly. We have been informed that the trips are rarely cancelled, even in wet weather.

I will be taking names from 1:15 p.m. in the Rainbow Room at the u3a meeting on Tuesday 5th May. I'm afraid you can only book 2 tickets per person to make it fair to everyone when there are so few places available.

Unusually this is a cash only event as the money is passed directly to Lyburn Farm who after expenses donate the money to their charity of the year. The farm has been running these trips for charity since 2008.

Margaret Andrews



LYBURN

FARMHOUSE CHEESEMAKERS

QUIZ

Did you find your way around?



COMING SOON

MEETINGS:



◇ Our forthcoming talks
at St. Andrew's

- ◇ Tuesday : 5th May - at 2pm.
Subject : "Trek Africa"
Speaker : Fran Sandham
- ◇ Tuesday : 19th May - at 2pm.
Subject : "Mrs Martins Library"
Speaker : Jane Glennie
- ◇ Tuesday : 2nd June - at 2pm.
Subject : "Noel Pemberton-Billing - a unique character"
Speaker : Julian Gee
- ◇ Tuesday : 16th June - at 2pm.
Subject : "The Music of Salzburg"
Speaker : Christopher Le Grand



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