

The Wimborne u3a
Committee wish
you all a very
Happy, Healthy and
Prosperous New
Year



Hello all

Welcome to 2025, New Year, New Newsletter, New visits to our incredible classes and venues.

In this edition

- An opening word from the Chair
- We welcome the latest member of our Committee: Viv Pink appointed as Groups Secretary
- We will introduce some Convenors and the Venues, what they have to offer and maybe, even, courses you didn't know about or wanted to join but were not sure about
- A contact list
- List of special events and their dates for your diary
- List of events in the wider Wimborne area
- The next Newsletter date

In this edition we are looking at Tai Chi, the Friday Talks and Yoga. But first, let's hear from the Chair who reports on the recent survey he conducted with the convenors. Over to Ashley





Words from The Chair

Thank you to all those who responded to my request for feedback about your experience as a convenor with u3a. 24 got back to me, and, as a new arrival to the Committee, the information provided was very helpful.

Without going into too much detail, and recognising that some of the responses were specific to a particular group activity, the main standouts were as follows:

- everyone was positive about their groups and the general concept of u3a
- the social element of the groups was a common theme, and that came through in a desire to allow individuals to stay in their groups where they want to when it comes to the new academic year.
- there was a common theme around making the application process simpler and easier to track once applications start coming in. Online application was mentioned by several. Clearer criteria for allocation to groups was another. Most of these comments came from Convenors of groups that were historically oversubscribed.
- A linked but separate matter was the need for members to be able to know promptly if they have been accepted, and Convenors to know how quickly and well their groups were filling up.
- a few Convenors expressed an interest in having occasional meet-ups with other convenors, in addition to the September meeting.

Your committee are mostly new, as you know, and are very keen to make the life of the Convenor as easy and straightforward as possible. We will take on board the comments that have been made and review the operational system over the Winter. We are keen to keep the communications with you open and transparent, and we will keep in regular contact as and when changes are made. We will also set up a Convenors meeting, starting with a Christmas event (12th December 2024).

Best wishes for now

Ashley

Editor:

On my travels, and those of Jayne, one of the overriding thoughts are that the groups would all benefit from meeting the different members of the committee. Vic, Horace and Ashley will be contacting as many groups as they can to arrange visits to suit. And, of course, so will I continue my visits to keep the rest of the members informed of the wide variety and brilliant groups and classes that are available in our area. Also, we are planning regular Convenors meetings – see emails and web site for further details.

We welcome the newest member of our Committee: Viv Pink, appointed as Groups Secretary. Over to Viv

"I have lived in Wimborne for 14 years & joined the u3a in an effort to get to know people and settle into the community. My background is Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting but I have been retired for 15 years. I became a Convenor for Short Tennis 2 when the group was formed 10+ years ago. As a Wimborne u3a committee member I hope to help ensure the successful continuation of the group and the valuable service it offers to the community."

Best Wishes, Viv.

Editor: Thanks, Viv, and welcome aboard

Tai Chi

Our first visit is to St Nicholas Church in Corfe Mullen. The large hall is an airy and spacious area, ideal for activities like Tai Chi. Ample and free parking.



I was greeted by the group convenor, Sue Cichocki, and several of the early arrivals with a very warm welcome. I was asked if I would be taking part ... not dressed for activity I said, much to their amusement.

Sue explained that they always begin a session with a gentle warm up and stretching exercises, so as to prevent, as much as possible, any chance of muscle strain.

Sue was miked up to a wireless microphone and the session began with a set of movements they started at the beginning of the season. She stood at the front of the group, with her four assistants strategically situated at the corners of the set to assist other members if required.

Sue's voice was gentle and reassuring as she uttered the precise names of each movement, the majority with animal names such as "Praying Mantis, Cockerel, Tiger and Sparrow."

The group's movements were precise and quiet, in my opinion, balletic in their grace and fluidity. All of this was accompanied by sets of soothing music, the majority of which was authentic Chinese.

Sue has also got printed sheets with the sequence of movements, so that the members can continue practising at home.

It was then time for a new routine. Sue and her lieutenants demonstrated in front of the other 17 members, before the whole team performed it again with Sue's gentle voice describing each movement in turn.

The session finished with the whole team sitting down for a warm down and relaxing time accompanied, again, with gentle mood music.

Sue mentioned at the end that it was super to have a member of the Committee with them. I said that it was part of my ongoing exploration of the u3a's hidden gems of courses, and that it was the new policy of the committee to visit as many groups as possible.

One of Sue's assistants, Sue Topham, along with her husband Mike, told me that Tai Chi was perfect for "people of a certain age" to maintain and/or improve posture, mobility, balance, muscle control and it also lowers blood pressure.

Something, I think, we could all benefit from.



Co-ordinated movement workout without stress or strain

A new routine demonstrated by Sue Cichocki and her 4 lieutenants

Friday Talks

Our second visit is to an activity we can all attend. A series of extremely informative and amusing talks on a huge variety of subjects, many of which, I think, we would all enjoy.

November's "Friday Talk" was held, as always, in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church in King Street (opposite the back of the Minster). I met the group convenor, Janice Dean, before the meeting began and was introduced to the guest speakers Jacqueline and Brian Sutton, known as TWOgether Talks. This was not their first talk for Wimborne u3a, having delivered several over the years with great success. This would not be an exception.

The illustrated talk was about the turbulent life and times of the world-renowned poet Dylan Thomas. The talk was entitled "It started with a Kiss" and began with a chance meeting, during the summer of 1967, of Jacqueline and Dylan Thomas's son Colm. This started a life-long fascination for the life and works of this prolific poet, his early life in South Wales, his period as a Bohemian Poet in London, his marriage to Caitlin and her infamous and exhibitionist behaviour, numerous affairs, their neglect of their children in favour of their constant drinking and, finally, his downward spiral into alcoholism and early death.

The talk was full of amusing and sometimes very sad anecdotes, music of the different eras, stanzas of Dylan's poetry, descriptions of other characters of the era such as the artist Augustus John (family friend and former lover of Caitlin), meeting Hollywood greats such as Arthur Miller, Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, and his subsequent demise at the tragically early age of 39 – described as pneumonia, brain swelling and a fatty liver, no mention of the prescribed (by a dubious Doctor) massive dose of morphine which induced a coma from which he didn't recover.

This talk was brilliantly performed by Jacqueline and Brian, with an exceptionally well-presented PowerPoint and captivating interludes (see picture). If you were not one of the 40+ members of the audience who applauded rapturously at the end, you missed a memorable and truly informative talk. So, make sure you go to the Talks in the New Year, details available in the diary section and on the website.

The Talks begin at 10:30 am, with teas and coffees available from the counter on the ground floor from 10:00 am. Cost is £2 for members and £4 for non-members. There is no need to book, but get there early. Car parking is available at the King Street car park adjacent to the Minster.



Jacqueline and Brian Sutton
Known as TWOgether



Jacqueline talking about meeting
Colm Thomas



Jacqueline and Brian acting out an
episode

Yoga

In the large upstairs room of Wimborne Methodist Church, I found the Yoga Convenor Prim Young in preparation for her class. Prim runs two Yoga classes, each alternately every fortnight, from 1.30pm to 3.00pm.



The class, 13 in all, signed in and set up, laying their yoga mats and towels on the floor in neat rows of 4, with Prim at the head of the room at right angles to the class giving all a clear view of her.

Prim introduced Jayne and myself, and Jayne explained how it was part of the new committee's ongoing exercise (sorry about the pun) of visiting as many of the classes as possible, with Ashley (the Chair) and Vic (Vice-Chair) doing likewise. I added that I was there to make notes and take a few photos (with their consent) for an article in the next newsletter, adding that I hoped they all had received and liked the latest edition. (I was relieved to say they all said Yes and Yes).

Prim began with some stretching and warm up movements, all she emphasised, only within each member's comfort zone – no over doing it. Starting with their feet, they moved upwards, each set of movements designed to stretch and improve posture, flexibility and breathing.

With each set of movements, standing up, kneeling or lying down, Prim moved between the group offering advice and help as she went. Each set of movements ended with a shake-down to free the muscles.

All ages and sexes are welcome, whether a beginner or a more experienced yoga practitioner. Prim emphasises that each member is there for themselves in a non-competitive environment with the sole intention of feeling fitter, healthier and improving posture and breathing.

I found myself breathing slowly and deeply with the class, and I realise that I need to improve my fitness, having not played any sport for quite a few years. Food for thought. If you would like more details about Prim and her classes, please go to the Wimborne u3a website or www.yogawimborne.com



Christmas in Wimborne



Wimborne Choral Society; Artificial snow; Christmas Tree in The Square; Canon Andrew Rowland and Town Crier Chris Brown; Nativity in Wimborne Minster; Guess Who? Mr & Mrs A Claus; Carols in the Cornmarket (rain stopped play – in the Minster).

Special Feature: Mindfulness Taster Session info for u3a 2025

Mindfulness – A new Class proposal – meeting date and venue to be finalised before Christmas and FULL report as an advertising feature will be put into Newsletter 2 (2025).

An opportunity to explore the power of mindfulness and to practice mindfulness meditation and mindfulness-based techniques to lower your stress, boost your wellbeing as you go about your day.

The taster sessions are an opportunity to find out more about Mindfulness and how it can support your everyday life, peace, calm and contentment no matter how the day is going.

(Continued on next page)

You will have an opportunity to

- try a short mindfulness meditation
- practise moving mindful meditations
- sample mindfulness-based exercises
- discuss what mindfulness is and how it can help us in all its shapes and forms
- use some everyday mindfulness techniques to reduce stress and anxiety.

The taster(s) will be informal and supportive to allow you to explore a range of mindfulness techniques and meditations.

Please bring cushions, blankets for your needs and wear comfortable clothes for the session. Meditations will be seated but participants are welcome to lie down or sit on the floor during activities whatever suits your body best.

Participants will leave able to use mindfulness meditations and/or mindfulness-based techniques to maintain and boost their well-being. Recorded meditations and techniques will be available for participants to continue their practice outside of taster sessions. Follow on courses will be planned according to demand.

Who is it for? – the taster session is suitable for anyone interested in mindfulness and exploring ways to maintain/improve their well-being. No previous experience of meditation and mindfulness is required. However, those who have experienced meditation and/or mindfulness before will hopefully find it a useful session to reinforce and explore their practice, experience.

Taster length – Two hours including a comfort break and time for open discussion

Your teacher – Fiona Chapman MA www.fionachapman.online

I am a qualified mindfulness teacher and regularly practise mindfulness in my daily life. I also work as a talking therapies therapist specializing in stress, anxiety and low mood.

Tel: 07766 671398 or email fiachapman@aol.com

Notices

1. Penny Greengrove informs me that the Wednesday morning beginners/improvers BADMINTON group has some spaces. SO, what are you waiting for, give her a call, send an email, Join In.

2. I had this email from June Knighton of the Friday Art Group. Brilliant!

"Hello Mike

Perhaps something you could use in the newsletter: –

We tried something different this morning, a "freeing up exercise".

Using shells, seaweed, star fish, in fact anything collected from the beach. Instead of the usual mediums like watercolour and acrylics we experimented with ink, pens, sticks, charcoal, wax crayon and pencils. Firstly, we attempted to draw by feel only, secondly, drawing the item without looking at the paper, thirdly, from memory, and finally using the non-dominant hand. Next term we hope to "go big" again using untried mediums, including tea, coffee and mud!"

June Knighton

Editor: This pioneering and creative exercise, I think, is what the u3a is all about. Left field thinking and group innovation, absolutely brilliant.

If this appeals to you, pop over or just give June a call.....you never know where it can take you.



Dates for your diary

The Friday Talks

25th January 2025: – The Chained Library of Wimborne Minster, Church of St Cuthburga

The opening talk of 2025 is an illustrated talk by Jayne and Mike Twomey (Senior Librarians) – a fascinating description of one of the first public reference libraries in England that is still being used today with its invaluable source of reference materials. From statesman, explorer and writer Sir Walter Raleigh to Renaissance Philosopher Machiavelli; from a Polyglott Bible in nine classic languages, to the works of "The French Gardiner"; from a hand-written priest's manual of 1343, to a book regarded as the first book in the English language about mental health (dating from 1621); from a book explaining how to build houses out of brick and plaster (from 1667, the year after The Great Fire of London), to a book by an ex-privateer (the "Pirate Botanist") on how to grow grape vines in England.



There is also music dating back to Elizabethan Times with the likes of Thomas Tallis, William Byrd, Handel and Bach.

Opened in 1695, it is the second largest chained library open to the public in England and is still in its original location, at the top of a spiral staircase in a Norman tower.

This talk on the Wimborne Minster Chained Library is a must for all lovers of books and history, or just the curious!

Other details of the Friday Talks and dates will follow, but for your diary here are the next two

14th February, Speaker – Helen Baggott – With Love From Grace

Appropriate for Valentine's Day, Helen will recount the story of Grace, through the postcards she sent, between 1909 and 1914, to the man she would marry eventually. During this period, Grace travelled widely in Europe and her correspondence reveals the fascinating places she visited and the people she met.

14th March, Speaker – Ivan Smith, Manager of Arundells House, Salisbury

The history of Arundells as a house and its connection with Sir Edward Heath.

Special Events Diary 2025

Wimborne Town

4th March 2025	Pancake Race	20th September	Wimborne Folk Festival
18th –21st April	Easter Weekend	26th – 29th Sept	Flower Festival
30th May – 1st June	Family Fest	October (TDC)	Wimborne Green Festival
6th – 8th June	Wimborne Minster Folk Festival	29th November	Christmas Lights Switch-On Christmas Market
Summer Holidays	Summer Holidays High Street Family Safari Digital Trail	13th December	Save the Children Parade

Model Town Events

18th – 24th April	Easter Quiz
3rd- 4th May	Bear Weekend
7th – 8th June	Folk Festival
13th July	Model Building Day
11th – 17th August	Harvest Scarecrow Weekend
13th September	Memories of Yesteryear
27th Oct- 2nd Nov	Halloween Quiz

Tivoli Theatre Highlights

24th January	ELO Experience
30th January	A Night to Remember Motown Show
8th February	Supreme Queen

20th –22nd Feb

26th February

1st March

7th March

21st March

30th March

See www.wimborne.info
www.wimborneminster.org.uk
www.tivoliwimborne.co.uk
www.wimborne-modeltown.com

Wimborne Drama Productions "Worst wedding ever."
Andy Fairweather Low and the Low Riders
Omid Djalili
Steptoe & Son LIVE
Shaun Rider – Happy Mondays, & Fridays, & Saturdays &.....
The Greatest Star: Barbara Streisand Tribute Show

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Answer to Guess Who? (page 6) – Ashley (our Chair)

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