u3a Blackmore Vale

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026

Open Afternoon
Tuesday 8th September
Henstridge Village Hall

2pm – 4pm

Free entry and a glass of wine
Tea and coffee are also available
Cakes and biscuits too!

Join now and get three free months' membership

VACANCY

We have a vacancy on the committee for a secretary. Main duties include collating reports from other committee members, preparing agenda, taking minutes, and arranging the bi-monthly committee meetings.

You will be co-opted onto the committee immediately for full training, then you will be formally elected at the AGM in March.

Please contact alisonshilling@gmail.com for more details.

THE CAROUSEL

I was sort of just talked into it,
She took me by the hand;
No good to tell granddaughter 'No!'
She wouldn't understand.
Most any kind of funfair ride
Will make me feel unwell,
But with a firm stiff upper lip
I rode her carousel.

Not too bad, I thought, at first,
I shouted 'hold on tight!'
But then the music gathered pace,
And that's when I took fright.
My steed flew round and round at speed,
I shot into the air,
I clung on tight with clammy hands,
My eyes glazed in a stare.

I had to concentrate so hard
To keep myself from falling,
I hardly heard wee Emily
Beside me, loudly calling:
'Look at me! Oh, Nanny look!
I'm holding on one hand!'
I dare not let her see my fright,
She wouldn't understand.

And then at last the music slowed,
My steed slowed down at last,
With trembling legs I found my feet,
My heart still beating fast;
I found that I could hardly stand,
I shook from head to toe;
But Emily just smiled, and said,
'Can we have ANOTHER go?'

Dawn Lawrence



GAMES GROUP

As reported in the last newsletter, we are taking a break until September.

BRIDGE GROUP



The Bridge group meets in Henstridge Village Hall Lounge on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. (though we have a break in August and December). We play at 2:30pm and continue until around 4:30. The group is very informal, with all levels of players welcome, including absolute novices. Beginners and others can be assisted with advice on bidding and play. We normally play several prepared hands, usually between 12 and 16, with all tables playing the same hands, introducing a level of friendly competition. A charge of £2.00 a session, to cover the cost of the room.

Martyn Lennon

WALKING GROUPS

We had two walks scheduled since the last newsletter; the first was in the area of Coneygore and Cucklington and the second was around Inwood. You may remember the weather in July. In case you don't, I'll remind you. It was dry, hot and very hot. We have some guidelines which we consider to be appropriate to ensure our members stay safe; we don't walk if there is rain or if it is forecast and we don't walk if the temperature is likely to be above 25 degrees. It will probably not come as a surprise to hear that both the Wednesday and the Tuesday walks in July were cancelled due to the heat.

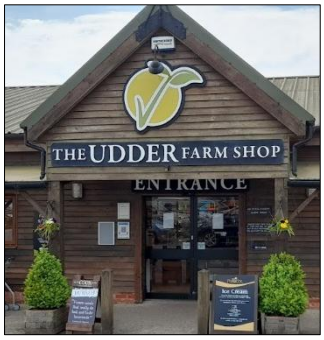
I'm pleased to say that the August walks, although still warm, went ahead. The meeting point was outside the Bird in Hand in Henstridge. We set off down Blackmore Lane and continued along Plott Lane to reach Marsh Lane where we turned left and crossed the A30, continuing along Park Lane until we reached the footpath near a wood where we crossed the fields until reaching Whitchurch Lane. This was a lovely, calm and peaceful stretch on almost level ground with pleasing views. After walking a short way along the lane, we turned off on to another footpath heading towards the A357 where there is a somewhat steep descent to and ascent

from the road. Continuing along the path, we reached the edge of Yenston where we turned down Chapel Lane. This is another good stretch with things of interest to see along the way. After a little way we fork off the left to head towards Inwood, reaching Bowden Lans and an entrance to the estate. From here, we headed towards the A30 which we crossed and on over the fields to Henstridge where most people took lunch and a refreshing draught. The September walk is the Awayday where we go a little further field. Both groups do the walk and it will be held on Tuesday 29th September. The away day walk is usually about eight miles and is split so that about 2/3 is done before lunch, so we have a good break before setting out again. This year the walk will be around Portland.



Picture courtesy of WDLH.co.uk

LUNCH GROUP



We meet monthly; members take turns booking the venue. Last month we went to the Udder Farm Shop and Cafe. I arrived early and parking was not a problem so I took the opportunity to browse around the farm shop.

The cafe is a large, open-plan space and can be quite noisy. Although on the day we went it was not too busy. The room is air-conditioned, which was a blessing in the hot weather. The menu is small and more designed for light lunches. The staff are very pleasant. Although the main courses were limited, the starters and desserts were delicious. The next venue will be the Stapleford Arms in Buckhorn Weston. I must say I am looking forward to this event.

Martyn Lennon

GARDEN VISITS



We have had a very busy couple of months since my last report back in July.
The last two events have been good and also well-attended:

In July we went to one of our member's houses for a 'Charity Tea in the Garden', where 13 of us went to see her lovely garden (in Okeford Fitzpaine) and were also served the most delicious tea and selection of homemade cakes. The good news is that the event made: £160 - £80 each for her two chosen charities, so she was very pleased it was so successful (it may also become an annual event).



Our next garden visit in August was to a lovely local NGS garden in the village of Stour Provost, which the owners opened for the first time (Manor Farm), and included delicious tea and cake, as usual!

On a more sombre note - one of our members recently passed away, and another has been in hospital for several weeks after an operation, but is now recuperating and having treatment at home, so we are wishing her well and hoping she may return soon.



We are still full (30 members) but have one new u3a member on the 'waitlist'. Our next usual monthly coffee morning is on Monday 7th September at 11:00 AM in Dikes Café. We also plan to have a stand at the Open Afternoon the following day, so look forward to seeing you all for both events.

Jan Nast

In the last newsletter, Dawn Lawrence wrote a poem about how it used to be. This inspired me to remember those sunny summer days during the school holidays back in the sixties.

Fruit Picking

Picking fruit has its problems. Usually, thorny stems or out of reach branches. During school holidays back in the 1960s, the family went on picnics, and Mum would always spot something worth picking in the hedgerows. In early summer it was elderflower—to make champagne, a deliciously refreshing fizzy drink which might have been alcoholic. In midsummer, it was a trip to pick-your-own farms for tons of strawberries and raspberries and any other berries the farm may grow, usually gooseberries. These were used to make jam or just piled onto Mum's famous (in the neighbourhood) meringue with whipped cream and chocolate. The meringue was slowly baked onto two large baking trays, once cool, one layer was smothered in melted chocolate so the whipped double cream would not seep through, topped with fruit, then the second meringue placed on top with more cream, fruit and melted chocolate drizzled over the lot. In a cafe that would probably serve eight or twelve people. But for a family of four, it was quartered, and each of us had a piece after a roast dinner on a Sunday. Pure Heaven!



Picture created using AI via perchance.org

Late summer, it was those dreaded blackberries with their thorny stems, and having to reach over nettle-filled ditches, and all taking turns to use the walking stick to hook branches to collect those fat berries just out of reach. Then came the elderberries for a rich, sumptuous wine. Yes, we kids were allowed to drink the wine!

Judy Penfold

Future events

(CAN BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

All talks and meetings are held in Henstridge Village Hall from 2.15pm

September 8th
Open Afternoon
bring a friend to let them know what we and you do

November 3rd
Charlotte Carty
In my Grandfather's Footsteps

2027

January 5th
Mandy Driver
Scottish & Southern Electricity
Benefits of joining the Priority Service Register

March 2nd
A talk
Somerset Spirit Company
Castle Cary

May 4th
Howard Clarke
Milborne Port Historical Society

July 6th
A talk
Royal Signals Museum

September 7th
Open Afternoon

November 2nd
Ray Wiles
The Gypsy Poet

Your Committee

Chair	Alison Shilling	alisonshilling@gmail.com (retiring)
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Bridge	Howard Warden	Warden444@btinternet.com
Garden Visits	Jan Nast	Janice.nast@gmail.com
Games	Sue Cadwaladr	scaddiewag17@gmail.com

GENERAL MEETINGS

Are usually held in Henstridge Village Hall from 2.15pm on the first Tuesday of alternate months.

Members £2.00 Visitors 3.00

All our general meetings are publicised in the online Blackmore Vale magazine, local Facebook pages, websites and magazines. Posters are circulated to public places in Stalbridge, Henstridge, Wincanton, Templecombe and Milborne Port.

Venue hire

Please remember when making bookings that each group is self-funding, therefore, if there are any costs involved, a suitable fee should be charged to attendees to cover these costs. **Also, a copy of the invoice and receipt is required to be sent to the Treasurer each month to be entered into the main accounts**.

Privacy Policy

Please be assured that we will never pass on your details to third parties without explicit consent from you and that we will never share your details with any company or charity for marketing purposes.

The contents of this newsletter are provided by the members for the members and is produced at no cost to the members.