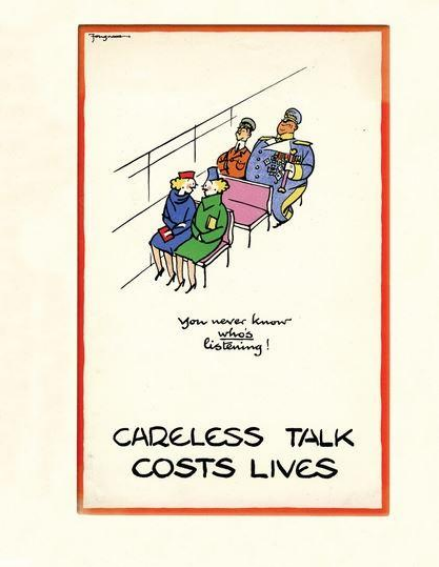
u3a Blackmore Vale

NEWSLETTER
JULY
2026

Tuesday July 7th

Doors open 2.15pm, Speaker 3pm

Henstridge Village Hall



CARELESS TALK COSTS LIVES

SPEAKER: JAMES TAYLOR

Members £2.00 Visitors £3.00 Includes refreshments

++++++++STOP PRESS+++++++

An outing to Dawes Twineworks, West Coker is being arranged for 17th September. Cost is £8 to include tea and cakes.
More details at the General Meeting on Tuesday.

COMPETITION

This year's u3a essay competition is now live

It's time to get writing! This year, we want you to take us on a remarkable real-life journey of discovery, adventure, or transformation - and bring the story to life in fewer than 1000 words. (NOT your own life story).

Free entry: open to all u3a members
Deadline: 31 July 2026
Prize: book bundles for the winner and two runners-up, kindly donated by HX Expeditions.

For more details, visit this link: u3a - u3a Essay Competition 2026

GAMES GROUP

The May Games group was a successful event, thanks to the lovely weather.



We had three groups: one group continuing with Mahjong from the previous month, led expertly by Sue Latimer. A very complicated but enjoyable game.



Another group played Rumikub, brought in by one member. A number tile game where you need to make runs or collect the same number.

And another group played a card game called Phase 10, which is a variation of rummy, but you collect specific 'trick' set out by the game.



The next games afternoon is in June, on the third Tuesday of the month at Henstridge Village Hall. Please contact Sue if you are interested.

We had another successful games group in June – luckily before the heatwave.

Twelve people turned up to play. One group of four played the regular Mahjong game led by Sue Latimer, who is an expert on this game. Two people opted for

chess. Four people opted for Catan, which is like Monopoly in that you buy property and take over the board, but based more on taking over land, and then building, so the game is quite strategic and quicker than Monopoly.
Sue Cadwaladr

WALKING GROUPS

A Walk with Friends

On Wednesday, 20th May, I got brave. I joined the walking group for a jaunt near Old Wardour Castle.

I was a little wary because the walk was four miles and I couldn't remember the last time I walked that far – I was certainly many years younger than I am now. I chatted to another member of the group, who assured me the walk was quite gentle, with no major climbs, and so I joined.



On the day of the walk, I strapped up my creaky knees, put on my comfy walking shoes, and off I went to join the group in the castle car park. When I got there, I thought it would be prudent to take a comfort stop and went to the castle entrance. Although I should have been visiting the castle to use the facilities, the staff were very nice and let me in.



The group set off at a comfortable pace, with the Group leader showing the way, and a couple of members walking at the back to ensure there were no stragglers getting lost. The walk took us through the woods and fields, and past a lake I did not know was there. It was very picturesque.



The walk continued over a couple of stiles, and everyone helped each other over. One of us did a very elegant demonstration of cow pat gymnastics, trying to avoid the said deposit, much to our amusement.



It started to rain, so waterproofs were unpacked and put on, and sweeties were shared. Fortunately, the rain had stopped by the time we left the woods, so no-one got wet.

The route took us past New Wardour Castle, which is more of a stately home than a traditional castle. It is divided into apartments, so a few of us speculated which windows made up each flat and how big they would be.

Everyone was friendly and chatty, and I talked to everyone over the course of the walk. Before I knew it, we were back at the car park, and everyone went off to enjoy a well-earned pub lunch. I had a great time and will certainly go again.
Alison Shilling

--oo0oo--

The June Walk started in Mere. The weather was dry and grey with the possibility of rain forecast at about 11:00 am. As it was dry when we started, we proceeded on the walk, which is a little over 5 miles.



From the car park in Mere, we walked along the road to the path which leads around Castle Hill and leads to a bridge which crosses the A303. We walked up a long and gentle incline past a field of barley on our right and rye on our left with good views back to Castle Hill and across to White Sheet Hill. After about 1.5 miles, we reached a slightly steeper climb with trees on each side where there is a memorial to the crew of a Dakota which crashed after taking off from the nearby Zeals airfield. It had 21 people on board, one from the RAAF (Australian) and four from the RCAF (Canadian).

Then it started to rain! We put on our waterproof jackets and stayed under the trees for 10 minutes until it eased, before setting out again.

Continuing downhill and then uphill to the top of White Sheet Hill, where we had wonderful views, albeit with quite low cloud. We also enjoyed hearing skylarks, orchids and other flowers, and some butterflies. We walked over the top of the hill and then down a steepish track to a lane which leads to a minor road which crosses the A303 and hence back to the car.

As the pub in Mere was closed for refurbishment, we went to the Hunters Lodge Inn near Wincanton for lunch.

The walk in July will be around Coneygore and Cucklington, and the August walk will be around Innwood. In September, we have the away day planned for Portland.
Hilary Smith



GARDEN VISITS



We have had two very successful local garden visits over the past couple of months. The first one (back in May) was to Minterne Gardens, approximately eight miles from Sherborne. We were really lucky with both the weather and the fact that the rhododendrons and azaleas were still out! There were around a dozen of us on this trip, and most of us stayed for coffee and a snack, taken on their pleasant terrace, overlooking the lake.





The second trip (June) was to an impressive NGS garden in Cucklington near Wincanton, which was a superb house and garden, also with a lake. There were 15 of us on this trip, most of whom stayed for coffee and cake, served in the garden by the ladies from the local church (a delicious selection of homemade cakes!).

Our monthly coffee mornings (at Dikes Cafe) is still well attended and the next one will be on Monday 6th July, Brita, Assistant Leader, will give details of the next garden visit in July, which she will lead, as I'm unable to attend. We do still have 30 members, with no-one on the 'waitlist' at present.
Jan Nast



As it used to be



Lost among her memories,
The sun slid down the sky,
And the woman from her garden seat
Let out a silent sigh;
Heat shimmered on the silver thatch,
And when she stole inside
All was as it used to be –
The cottage door stood wide.
From the brightness of the garden
How shady was the room
Enfolding and enclosing her
In a comforting cocoon;
The clock still stayed at four o'clock,
The table set for tea;
A sponge cake and a dish of jam,
With places set for three.
The kettle singing on the hob
Gave out a spout of steam,
The sunlight through the window
Gave its customary gleam;
And the sigh was of contentment,
For the heart and eyes could see
All was as she pictured it,
Just as it used to be.

Dawn Lawrence



THE CREAM TEA

This picture says it all. It was a sweltering day, but we still enjoyed the lovely scones baked by the team at the Lakeside Kitchen, Todber Manor.

LUNCH GROUP



The Kingsdon Inn, Kingsdon, near Somerton

The Kingsdon Inn is a charming, 300-year-old thatched chocolate-box pub nestled in the quiet, picturesque village of Kingsdon, near Somerton in Somerset. Originally built as a cider house, it is currently run as a family business by husband-and-wife duo Adam and Cinzia, who bring a blend of fine-dining expertise (Adam previously headed the kitchen at the prestigious Ston Easton Park Hotel) and vibrant Italian hospitality. The Lunch group was booked in by Ian Westhall for 12:30 on Friday, 12th June. We were all seated by the window at one long table. The public area can be accessed from at least two directions and is on different levels.
The inn is widely celebrated for its outstanding food, presenting an interesting mix of revamped English comfort food alongside light, southern Italian-influenced dishes. The kitchen strongly prioritises sustainability, utilising locally sourced, free-range meat, sustainable fish, and seasonal vegetables from the Southwest. On the menu for our visit was a Chicken breast covered in Prosciutto ham, cooked in a butter sauce, on a bed of Asparagus and roasted potato slices. Which was excellent. For dessert, a lot of the members picked a chocolate raspberry ice cream bombe. However, I chose a traditional sticky toffee pudding which came with ginger ice cream, once again excellent.
Martyn Lennon



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

Your Committee

Chair	Alison Shilling	alisonshilling@gmail.com
Secretary	Martin White	Martinwhite898@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Alison Shilling	Bvmembershipu3a@gmail.com
Treasurer	Judy Penfold	Bvu3atreasurer.gmail.com
Publicity	Susan Kidd (non-committee)	Skiddsbvu3a@gmail.com 01963 362107
Creative Director	Judy Penfold	Jood58@gmail.com
Speaker Secretary (temporary)	Hilary Smith	Hilarysmith967@gmail.com
Groups Coordinator	Martyn Lennon	martyn_lennon@yahoo.co.uk
Committee Member	Dennis Ollington	

Group contacts

Walking Group, Tuesday	Richard Kidd	richardakidd64@gmail.com
Walking Group, Wednesday		
Reading Groups	Lydia Avery	lydia.1cranbrookcottage@gmail.com
Lunch Group	Gill Westall	Gillwestall@hotmail.com
Bridge	Howard Warden	Warden444@btinternet.com
Garden Visits	Jan Nast	Janice.nast@gmail.com
Arts & Crafts – on hold	Natalie Thompson	thompsonjn@hotmail.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.