

January-February 2026

£1 per printed copy

Notes from the Chair



By the time you read this you may (with a bit of luck) be in the process of nursing the mother of all hangovers, breaking your first New Year's resolution, trying

to get pine needles out of all the places that you never thought pine needles could lodge, "recycling" some of those wonderful presents, or desperately working out the best Winter Sun bargains.

If none of the above apply, then "the world is yours and everything that's in it". I am writing this in the run-up to the big day which actually for many people has become sufficiently protracted to be considered the big week or even the big fortnight. Personally I find it difficult to be happy and joyful for even a couple of hours, so the idea of a couple of weeks of joy just gets me reaching for the Tramadol.

Christmas will be gone in the blink of an eye and as the number of years on this mortal coil progress and we start to slow down it feels that time is doing the opposite and the years themselves are moving faster. A long preamble to the point of this month's newsletter - to slow down, reflect on the year that has passed and think what the coming year

might bring. We exit the year in great shape in many ways - our membership is the strongest it has ever been, we have more activity in new groups offering wider experiences and opportunities to make new friends, the vast majority of our members are really enjoying the membership and we are in a financially sound position.

This does not happen overnight - it is built on the sweat, time and sheer generosity of spirit of so many volunteers. There are too many to mention but you know who you are and we would be so much worse off without you. Thank you!

I have several highlights from this year that spring to mind - the Summer and Christmas socials, moonlight swimming, the launch of the new coffee mornings, Wolverton fair - and on a personal note, the Italian groups where I think we do more laughing than learning.

As I look forward, next year will be a bit of a challenge to keep the momentum from this year. We have already had a couple of people leave the committee and two of our most valued and experienced members will be stepping down at the AGM. If you are thinking about helping out in some way - *we'd love to hear from you!*

Every best wish for the most spectacular 2026,

Chris Ryan, chair@u3awight.uk

News

Know your Committee 2025:

Andy Buckman - Treasurer
Chris Ryan - Chair
Dave Vodden - Vice-Chair
Peter Huckle - Webmaster
Roger Skidmore - Newsletter
Sally Forster - Groups Coordinator
Sara Gilding - Speaker meetings
Sharon Park - Committee member
Sherlie Burridge - Group Secretary
(Members)

We meet monthly apart from July, August and December.

Could you join us in 2026?

Telephone: 0300 102 1747



If you have queries about anything - membership, events, groups or coffee mornings or suggestions for the committee - you can call this number and either you will get your query answered or someone will call you back.



Coffee Mornings around the Island All start at 11.00 am

Newport: Bargeman's Rest, Wednesday 7th January (1st Wed)

Yarmouth: Norton Grange, Monday 12th January (2nd Mon)

Niton: White Lion, Wednesday 14th January (2nd Wed)

Cowes: New Holmwood, Thursday 15th January (3rd Thu)

Sandown: Wildheart Animal Sanctuary, Yaverland,
Thursday 22nd January (4th Thu)

Ryde: Castle Hotel, Tuesday 27th January (4th Tue)

(check the [diary page](#) for February coffee mornings)

We look forward to seeing you there!
Look out for the blue and gold pompoms.



New Groups already started:

Playing the Saxophone, page 5
Family History, page 5
Sunday Lunch, page 5
Bridge Lessons, page 13

New Groups Starting in January:

Monday January 5th

Beginners French, page 6

Wednesday January 7th

Line Dancing, page 5

Friday January 9th

Classical Music Appreciation, page 4

Monday January 12th,

Culture Club page 4

Tuesday January 13th

Discussion Group 2, Cowes, page 6
and
Random Reads 2, Freshwater, page 6

Wednesday January 14th & 21st

Ten Pin Bowling beginners, page 5

Wednesday January 21st

Ten Pin Bowling

Thursday January 22nd

The Play's The Thing - page 4

Thursday January 29th

Singing for Fun, page 4

New group still in the pipeline:

Yoga and Chair Yoga - p6

New groups still at the ideas stage:

Beginners' Spanish
Portraits by Pencil
Film Appreciation
Focused Photography
Fossil Island

Your ideas here ?

Another important date:

u3a AGM 2026



**Thursday February 12th
St John's Hall
15:30 after the speaker
meeting.**

**Please come and support the
committee.**

The Play's the Thing!

To include play reading and other aspects of theatre - workshops, talks, discussion etc. Curtain up on Thursday January 22nd.

If you are interested please contact **Kate Fysh** on 01983 717618, 07708 703677 or email katefysh@gmail.com



Culture Club

Like a book club, Culture Club will meet to discuss in depth a couple of pieces of work. Each doing our research in advance and trying to understand where the inspiration came from, where it sits in the context of its time and perhaps as well having a personal response to it.

We will meet on the 2nd Monday evening of the month in [Newport](#) for a review of "homework". We will have a good discussion at home over nibbles and a drink. At the first meeting on Monday January 12th we will review Schuman's "Kinderscenen" and "The Horsefair" by Rosa Bonheur (both referenced on Wikipedia). Images and media shown on large screen video and Hi-Fi.

[Roger Skidmore](#), contact rogerskid@zen.co.uk R.S.V.P.

P.S. Suggested reading - "The Cultural Tutor" by Sheehan Quirke.

Classical Music Appreciation

This group is aimed at sharing our appreciation of classical music, with excursions into other cultural endeavours through attending performances and exhibitions and monthly meetings for discussion.

A typical meeting might include a discussion about a recent exhibition or concert attended either by the group or by individuals in the group. Possibly followed by a discussion around a theme chosen by a member of the group in preparation for the meeting.

Discussion could cover a wide range of subject matters over the weeks while being more narrowly focused within each meeting.

First meeting at the Bargeman's Rest Newport is on Friday 9th January at noon. Look out for the blue and yellow pompoms.

Contact Geoff on geoff.2puds@gmail.com

The [West Wight Arts Association](#) in Freshwater has a good programme -

Geoff is planning to attend on Saturday 10th January to hear the Northern Chords Ensemble.



Singing for Fun

This group has attracted a lot of interest. Although we are still not sure how it will work we are holding an initial meeting at St John's Hall on Thursday January 29th, 2pm to work it out!

Come and join the fun.

Contact Sally on groups@u3awight.uk

Ten Pin Bowling



There has been a great deal of interest expressed in Ten Pin Bowling. So much so that it has been decided that the first meeting on Wednesday January 14th should be just for beginners with a second meeting on Wednesday January 21st for everyone. Two games each at a cost of £12.50 including shoe hire.

Subsequent meetings would be monthly on the third Wednesday of the month except where that clashed with school holidays. The February meeting will probably be on Wednesday 11th.

For more information contact Neil:
neilguy303@btinternet.com

Line Dancing



The Line Dancing group will start with five sessions to be held weekly on a Wednesday, at 2pm in Newport - four taught sessions and one practice session.

We will then take stock and decide how to continue. Line dancing is not as easy as it looks and these five sessions will be enough for people to get a taste and decide whether we continue as a group, or disperse around the island to other groups or take up Ludo! The cost will be £25 to cover the venue and the tuition for all five meetings. The sessions are not available individually.

Contact Sally
sally.u3awight@gmail.com

Sunday Lunch

Sunday Lunches are hosted by anyone and open to everyone. Restaurants are booked by whoever feels like hosting a Sunday Lunch. Let us know and we will advertise the event and collect the names of attendees.

Simple!

Sunday 18th January

A table has been booked for the Beefeater in Newport by Peter Dorsett.

Sunday 1st February

A table has been booked at the Crab and Lobster Tap, Grove Road, Ventnor by Jennifer Hinton.

If you would like to join either of these parties or organise your own Sunday Lunch party then please contact
sally.u3awight@gmail.com

Which is your favourite Sunday Lunch spot? If you would like to share it with us then book a table for 10 or more and let us know!

On Sunday 30th November eight of us met in the convivial atmosphere of the Red Lion pub/restaurant in Freshwater for the inaugural meal of the recently formed Sunday Lunch group. All were well satisfied with the experience and particularly one member who dined on venison. So now look out for further events.

Chris Champness.

Playing the Saxophone

Our new saxophone ensemble is up and running. The melodies of *Three Blind Mice* and *Good King Wenceslas* are quite recognisable.

If you would like to join them please contact Nikki on
telnikman@gmail.com



Yoga/Chair Yoga

18 prospective members. We are now looking for possible venues and instructors. We have sent an email out to Island instructors and hope to complete our research and come up with a plan of action in January with the aim of starting the first classes in February. There are a few options and potential hoops to jump through to make this work so if you have not already registered your interest please contact:

Chris Ryan.
chrisryan@gmx.com

Family History/Genealogy

25 prospective members. We have been offered a couple of free introductory lessons for the absolute beginners by Newport Library and we hope to have the first groups launched in January.

If you would like to join and have not already registered your interest contact -

Chris Ryan.
chrisryan@gmx.com

Discussion Group 2

The new discussion group will meet in Cowes, twice monthly on 2nd and 4th Tuesday morning 10:30 - 12:00.

'We will "debate" about social, political, historical subjects, about daily life and all sorts. All this in a friendly atmosphere, aware that we don't all have the same ideas but there is one thing we may all have, it is humour'.

Isabelle
isabelle.schloesing@btinternet.com

Beginners' French

For members with no French at all!

Sadly our teacher has withdrawn from this. However there will be a meeting of those interested in beginners' French - as planned - and we will see where it takes us!

An initial meeting will be held in Newport 11am on Monday 5th January 2026.

Contact sally.u3awight@gmail.com for more information.

Future meeting dates, times and venue to be agreed by the participants at the meeting - although Monday is likely.



Random Reads 2

A second book group where the focus is on what you have read rather than all reading the same book.

Just bring your favourites and your disappointments and be ready to discuss them over a cup of coffee. At the **Freshwater café after 14.00.**

Our first meeting will be on Tuesday January 13th at 14:00.

Contact
Jane Stevens
jsteveoffice@btinternet.com

News from the Groups

Discussion Group

Our friendly group enjoys a wide range of issues and points of view.

Meetings are twice monthly on the first and third Fridays. In January and February, they are on Jan 2nd & 16th and Feb 6th & 20th, 10.15-11.45, at Utilita Hub, 121 Newport High St.

Some recent discussions included:

Was the BBC right to censor a line in Rutger Bergman's first Reith lecture?

The line conveyed Bergman's view about President Trump's level of corruptibility. Almost everyone thought the BBC had acted either wisely or rightly.

Is the proposed 'mansion tax' a good idea? It levies a surcharge on homes worth more than £2 million. There was little support for it.

Should the way Council Tax is calculated be revised?

It is based on 1991 assessments of property values. Most thought, yes, though there was a range of opinions as to whether the poll tax, local income tax, a reassessment of property values, a purchase tax, or some other method would be better.

Pauline Hunter

paulinehunter12@gmail.com

Psychology Group

The Psychology Group meets on the third Thursday of each month in Newport. Over the past year we have covered a lot of topics including Freudian theory, behaviourism, cognitive and developmental considerations, and intelligence.

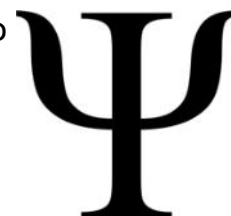
Next term we shall be embarking on biological psychology.

There are no more than ten of us, which allows for informal discussion. The group is currently full, but you are welcome to contact me to go on a waiting list.

Jeremy Turk

jeremy.turk@icloud.com

07814 004456



 **1 in 14 people aged 65+**
in the UK say they are often lonely

 **270,000 older adults**
go a week without speaking to family or friends

 **The Isle of Wight**
has one of the highest loneliness risk scores in southern England

**Join a group. Share a laugh.
You're not alone.**

January can be a miserable time of the year.

Do you know someone on their own whom you might like to reach out to?

News from the Groups - Art etc.

Creative Writers

This autumn we have put finger to keypad to compose accounts highlighting culture.

Personal experiences and the effects of culture have provided much discussion. We do not seem to be doing much about the structure and skill of writing but we are developing our storytelling. Individually styles have been formed which add to anticipation to see where humour and emotion are being demonstrated. Several members of the group attend other u3a events/classes and this ethos of learn, laugh and live contributes to our enjoyment.

Some examples of our work can be seen on our [web link](#).

I have to write that officially our group is over-subscribed and it is not possible to know when vacancies will occur. It will be good if another group can be established elsewhere on the Island. Writing is a satisfying activity and sharing the written word is uplifting.

Regards,
Helena Hewston
Group Leader
sybug@aol.com



Poetry Group

It is lovely to have an increased membership. (There is still room for others.)

Having looked at examples of poetry through the centuries we are now looking at words. Poems about words. There are more than expected. Spike Milligan can see the humour in these individual joined marks while Silvia Plath goes deep into their relationship with creation.

There will be an element of serendipity in our choices to savour from the New Year onwards as we decide where words will lead us. That's the exciting thing about poetry. There is much to appreciate as we discuss and discover the wealth of words from around the world blanketed in time.

Helena Hewston
sybug@aol.com

French Film at Ventnor Arts

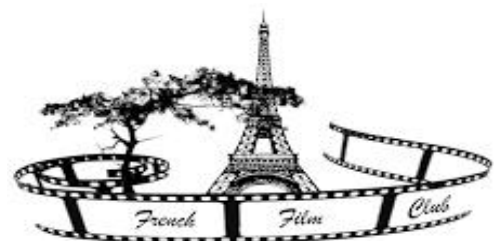
3:00 pm – 5:10 pm
5th January, 2026 (first Monday)

Le Rayon Vert (1hr 34 minutes)
Directed by Eric Rohmer

... a film by Eric Rohmer from 1986, starring Marie Rivière and Vincent Gautier. A romantic drama based on the book of the same name by Jules Verne.

Contact wendy@ventnorartsclub.com

Admission £6
2.30 pm Matinée



K-drama group

We meet on the 4th Monday evening in Newport for a first episode [viewing of a choice of Korean dramas](#). We always have a good "K-drama" discussion afterwards over nibbles and a drink.

Roger Skidmore,
Contact
rogerskid@zen.co.uk



News from the Groups - Art etc.

Playtime Watercolour ...

is now in its 3rd year, or coming out of it, I lost track!, and we are still coming up with many different avenues to explore. While we are not becoming Picassos, playtime is providing us with a very pleasant pastime and hopefully new skills.

Our November session came from an idea for my granddaughter's bedroom. Using a basic drawing and going to town with loads of Zentangle patterns and pretty colours a framed picture was created.

This has now led to loads of other animals being captured on paper and framed. Tis a very easy and rewarding exercise, the smile on my granddaughter's face said it all.



Being December this month's session is the old chestnut of Christmas card design. Again a basic simple drawing, colouring in and outlining. Colourful and personal, plus fun to do.

The photo is of one I'll be using for my friend and I to use, an idea from Pinterest. It doesn't look like us but the sentiment is there!



As we enter into another year of playing around, I have a spare seat at the table if anyone fancies joining us, just give me an email.

Happy New Year
from the Playtime group.

Barbara
barb.mill@yahoo.co.uk

Monthly Lunches

The monthly lunches are open to everyone. We meet at various pubs around the Island. if you have a favourite let us know!

The December lunch was a very enjoyable occasion. Twenty-six of us laughed and munched our way through delicious food at the **Woodman's** in Wootton.

The January lunch will be on Friday January 16th 12:30 at the **Blacksmiths**, Carisbrooke.



Then Wednesdays, February 11th and March 25th.

Organised by Sally -
sally.u3awight@gmail.com

Recorder Group

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, 2-3.30pm in Newport, to enjoy playing a variety of recorder music. New members are very welcome. It is a friendly group with the emphasis on having a fun, relaxing time.

If you are interested but not sure if the group is for you, please do drop into a session and see what we do.

For further information, please contact me by email.

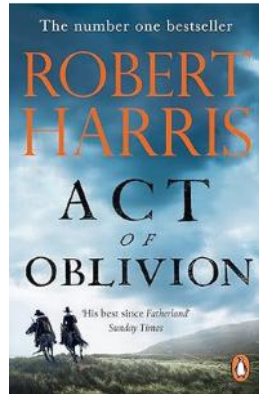
Anne Baylis,
annebaylis15@yahoo.com

News from the Groups - Books

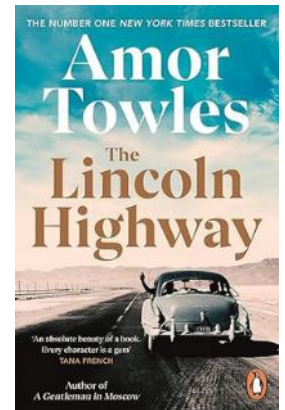
Bookies' Favourites

Bookies Favourites met to discuss "Act of Oblivion" by Robert Harris. The novel, by this well known and popular author, tells the story of the search for two of the men who signed Charles I's death warrant and who flee to America to escape their own certain death.

Much of the novel is built around researched material but there is a great deal of conjecture and embellishment in order to tell this rather over-long tale! Some of the language didn't always ring true to the times. One comment was too much of the novel seemed like a history lesson, others felt they would have liked more exploration of the female characters.



Undoubtedly, it was a story where religious conviction drove obsessive behaviours on both sides of the divide between the Royalist supporters and the Puritans. It was very bloodthirsty in parts. It is a story which could be turned into a screen play. As a group, we were very divided as to whether we enjoyed it or not.



Our next novel for discussion will be "The Lincoln Highway" by Amor Towles on January 28th.

Whilst the group is full at the moment, if you wish to join a waiting list, please contact...

Steph
stephedwards2@gmail.com



2025 BBC Reith Lectures:
Rutger Bregman,
"Moral Revolution"

Find on BBC "[Sounds](#)"

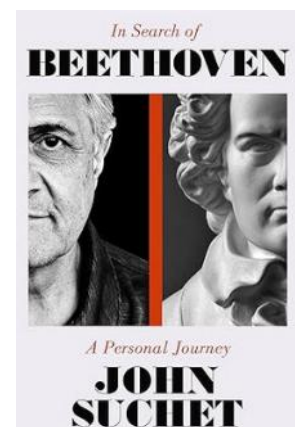


Editor's Choice - "In search of Beethoven - a Personal Journey" by John Suchet

From palaces to warzones, John Suchet goes on a personal Beethoven odyssey and in this book he takes you with him.

See also "*My Bonnie: How dementia stole the love of my life*", another personal odyssey for John Suchet. And then more for Nula Suchet's story... "*The Longest Farewell*".

Previous editor's choices are taken from this list [here](#).



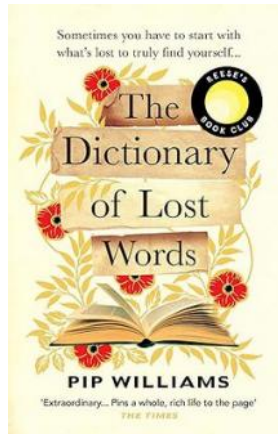
News from the Groups - Books

Bookworms

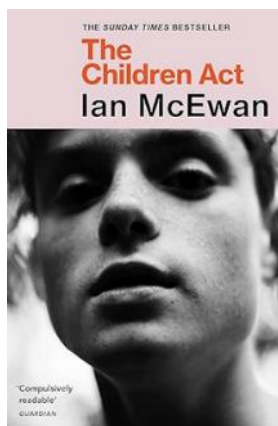
formerly Wootton Book Group

We meet on the first Friday of the month in East Cowes.

Our book for **November** was 'The Dictionary of Lost Words', by Pip Williams. This was a fascinating book, as none of us had ever given any thought to the way that a dictionary was compiled and reading this book educated us on the process. It is written from Esme's perspective, where we see that some words at that time had more value from a female's viewpoint and held no value to the educated, literate men who were compiling the dictionary. The content of the dictionary was skewed towards the male perspective and some words in common usage by the working classes were not valued so highly and not included. Although we felt it was a little too long we would definitely recommend it as a good read.



In **December** we held our meeting at Wolverton Manor, where we all brought along a dish and enjoyed discussing 'The Children Act' by Ian McEwan while enjoying a festive lunch. We all really enjoyed this book. It is thought provoking and centres around Fiona Maye, a High Court judge, who deals with complex family law cases. Fiona has to make a decision about an 18 year old Jehovah's Witness who is refusing to have a life saving blood transfusion.



Our book choices for January and February are 'Any Human Heart' by William Boyd and 'Still Life' by Sarah Winman.

Allison Rogers

01983 616634

davidallison36@hotmail.com



Random Reads

Random Readers usually meet on the first Tuesday of the month at the Bargeman's Rest in Newport.

At our January meeting we will review books read in December and propose exciting new reads for January 2026.

Members are passionate about books they love and it's a great way to discover new writers in a friendly and supportive group.

New members are always welcome. Come for a try-out; the next meeting is Tuesday 20th January, 2.30pm at the Bargeman's Rest.



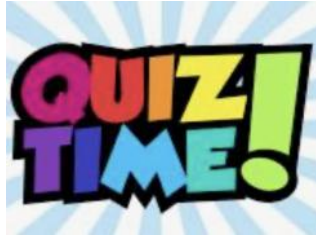
Kate Rickman

07984 892023

katerickman@aol.com

News from the Groups - Games & More

Quizzing



Late November and December were a busy time for the Quiz Group, with quizzes at Newport, Porchfield, Chale, Shanklin, Ryde and Wootton, as well as a Christmas social quiz at Alison Botha's house.

Alison created this lovely group and she has nurtured and coordinated it ever since. She's now stepping back from her role and I will be the main contact/coordinator for it. We are always on the lookout for new quizzes that might be good and new locations that are handy for where people live.

If you're not a member of the group yet but would be interested in taking part in an occasional quiz (no pressure) then get in touch, it could be a nice way to start the New Year!

Beryl Wells

Beryl_Wells@live.co.uk

Scrabble Group

Our merry band of Scrabblers meet monthly - usually on the second Friday of the month - to pit our wits against each other in wordy fashion.

We welcome anyone with a knowledge of the game, no matter how basic. It's about having fun and keeping the old grey matter stimulated!

We always have a dictionary to hand and manage to dig out new words every time. I'll leave you with an alternative to Happy New Year . . . VERLIG UPSY AARTI . . . apparently all acceptable Scrabble words!!

Our next meeting will be on Friday January 9th at 2pm, venue to be decided (one of our homes) but please contact me if you fancy coming along.

Contact:

Alison Botha

alisonbotha@hotmail.com



Editor's Safety Note: As of today, I have now heard of three elderly friends who have spent many **hours** collapsed on the floor without help. None of them had their mobile phone with them. Make sure you always have **your** mobile phone with you and keep it charged, especially if you live alone.

Almost as good as a red button! (Remember - 40% of us live alone!)



News from the Groups - Games and Language



Bridge Players

Great news for The Bridge Group. We are growing again with more people joining.

We meet in people's homes and we usually hold one or two regular games every month. So if you are a casual player or even a regular club player you would be welcome to join us.

Contact **Tony Williams:**
shidehouse@yahoo.co.uk
07796 183087.



Bridge Lessons

...are offered at home in Niton.

Either refresher courses or a beginners set of 12 lessons, suitable for those with some experience of Whist-like card games. Cost £10 for materials.

Thursday or Saturday afternoon.

Contact:
Sue
bridgelessons3a@gmail.com

Mah-Jong +

A small group meets in Cowes weekly and a growing group play at the games night at the Wheatsheaf in Newport on a Monday. There is also a group that meets regularly in Godshell.

Contact: **Sally**
sally.u3awight@gmail.com



General Games 'Night' Every Monday The Wheatsheaf Hotel, St Thomas' Square, Newport,

Entrance £3 per head, cash only.

We have booked the back room at the Wheatsheaf, in St Thomas' square, Newport, every Monday 2pm.

Bring a game, bring a friend, bring a pack of cards or a knit and natter if that is your preference.

There are two Mah-Jong sets behind the bar that can be used.

We have also had regular cribbage, scrabble games.

Contact **Sally** on
sally.u3awight@gmail.com

News from the Groups - Languages

German I & II

**Alternate Fridays,
Brading Roman Villa
or Utilita, Newport**



GERMAN IMPROVERS meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month at 10.30am at Brading Roman Villa. The Villa offers excellent facilities - a discrete training room with projection facilities, and a café with a good selection of cakes and light lunches. We practise speaking, listening and writing translation skills, all in a friendly and often humorous atmosphere. If you're interested, please get in touch promptly, as there isn't much space left!

GERMAN ADVANCED meet on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month at 10.30am at Brading Roman Villa. All details above apply to this group, except to say that there are more spaces available. If you're not sure which group might suit you, why not come along and try both!

For further details contact:

Mary Longley

melongley1@gmail.com

07815 901252

French Conversation

**Friday am: Lake
Friday pm: Newport**



Wednesday pm: Newport

These three conversation groups are all aimed at having fun while endeavouring to speak French. There is no teacher and we share the responsibility for supporting each other to improve, or at least not lose, what French we have.

French 1 - with Ally de Trey - is held in a lovely room at Co-op Funeralcare in Lake on Fridays at 10 am. There are 10 group members and we generally have six to eight present at each meeting. Some of us are more fluent than others, with one a fluent speaker who can correct our French.

French 2 - with Robert Carter - meets at Utilita's room in Newport on Friday 2pm. Meetings are very informal with no preparation and an unstructured conversation so as to achieve as natural and loose a flow as possible.

French 3 - with Kay Evans and Corinne White - meets at Utilita's room in Newport on Wednesday 2pm. We have 12 members with varying levels of French, although all able to join the conversation.

Contact french@u3awight.uk

Spanish Beginners "Plus"

...continues as before, mainly in Utilita in Newport. We have had four enquiries recently from absolute beginners (well, they call themselves that, but they have been using Duolingo and a book called "15 Minute Spanish") who really need a separate group that can accommodate them. We wonder if there is anyone out there who could consider this? In the New Year they have been invited to come along to see how they may be able to join in without being overwhelmed.

Brett Clark

brett_iow@hotmail.com

Spanish Improvers

Zoom on Mondays from 4pm - 5pm

The Spanish improvers at a recent online zoom received some good news - Lola Sanchez, who lives in Barcelona and used to come along to the zoom meetings and teach us, is available to come along again on a fortnightly drop-in. A most welcome improvement to our learning.

Feliz Navidad

Brett Clark



Absolute Beginners' Italian

Well, what a Christmas lunch we had! A brilliant end to what has been a brilliant year (well six months) with the group. The location was Tonino's in Cowes and both Tony and his lovely daughter Laura treated us royally. We actually had the restaurant to ourselves which seemed very special. The amount of Italian spoken was sufficient to fit in a very small espresso cup, but that was never really the point (or was it?). However we made up for it with Italian quiz games and the Italian themed Secret Santas topped off the afternoon brilliantly.



<https://chat.whatsapp.com/FqUfnpXPXdjBU1rxrYGEPE>

If you are interested, please also join the [Absolute Beginners](#) Italian group on our Beacon Database through the membership portal. (Membership portal is [here](#).)

Chris Ryan - chair@u3awight.uk

Italian Conversation

Buon Anno! The group has shrunk in size in recent months but we start 2026 with renewed vim and vigour. The remaining members are all of a reasonable intermediate level of Italian so the conversation now flows a little easier and we are all comfortable with each other's mistakes (when we actually notice them). This year will see us introduce a slightly more formal framework as part of each session where we concentrate on one specific area of grammar. I'm hoping that we might start to crack the subjunctive case at some point in the year!

The downside of this is that people with only a little Italian may well find the group a bit daunting, in which case I would recommend either the Step Up or Absolute Beginner groups. It's nice that we have choice!!

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/EwCBPDBhWMN2EMfoHFP5xG>

A la prossima !!

Chris Ryan - chair@u3awight.uk

Italian: Step Up

Saturday Newport 2pm - 3pm

Our group of 8 continues to enjoy our Saturday afternoon meetings at Newport library, so much so that we quite often decide to extend our meeting duration by 30 minutes to help digest the new material that Professore Giovanni, after he has left us, has provided. Giovanni is very patient with us and has no problem going over subject matter from previous lessons. Stock vocabulary involving numbers, dates, telling the time, etc. continue to haunt a few of us and regular practice sessions for these are proposed.



Our Christmas lunch at Michelangelos in Ryde was fully subscribed and we had fun with our waiter with our ordering attempts.

We were glad when he told us he didn't speak Italian.

John Mittelheuser
john.mittelheuser@gmail.com

Random RAMBLES

Random Rambles, as the name suggests, are walks organised wherever and whenever someone feels moved to organise a walk. They are dependent on members offering to lead walks - help is available for the planning, advertising and the pre-walk where required. Do you have a favourite walk that you could offer to share with your fellow members?

Why not think about offering a walk? The more varied, the better - short, long, flat, accessible, challenging, dog-friendly, picnic-lunch, fossil-hunting, sun-downing or just for the ice-cream. Whatever you fancy, there will be probably be someone else that it appeals to. Let us put you in touch with them.

If you are interested in offering a walk or participating in a walk email Sally on groups@u3awight.uk

There will be a Random Ramble at Yaverland on Sunday February 8th.
Time will be tide dependent.
More information nearer the time.



Beach Walks

The **December** beach walk was on the last day of 2026! Along the Waterfront Café at Totland Bay along the shore path to Colwell and return.

And that was Carol's swan song. She has been doing a monthly beach walk, high summer excepted, since the spring of 2020. Come rain or shine or wind!

Sometimes walking six feet apart.

Now it is time for someone else to pick up the mantle.

Thank you Carol!



Contact groups@u3awight.uk if you could carry on the beach walk tradition
- or start a new one.

News from the Groups - Cycling

Cycling Groups Less Experienced and More Experienced

The November ride for the less experienced saw five of us have a very pleasant ride along our usual route from Merstone to Newchurch and back stopping at the Garlic Farm for refreshments.

On a glorious, but chilly, morning the ride for the more experienced took six of us on a 'new' route from Godshill to Newport via the Stenbury Trail and then East Lane before joining up with the Newport to Sandown cycle route, continuing on to Newport and The Bargeman's Rest by the quayside for some refreshment. We returned by the same route by which time it was even colder, but an enjoyable ride nonetheless!

Unfortunately, the December ride for the less experienced riders was cancelled because of wet and windy weather, but the ride for the more experienced went ahead, albeit on a shorter route than usual. The weather was now a bit damp and 'mizzly', the forecast was not too bad, but only three of us hardy souls ventured forth on a route we have not done for a couple of years.

This started at Island Harbour, Binfield, and took us alongside the River Medina to Newport where we looped around Quay Arts to join the Newport to Cowes cycle trail - recently reopened after repairs to one of the bridges. At Cowes we continued up Arctic Road to The Duke of York - a very cosy old style pub - no blazing log fire but a welcoming gas fired stove to thaw us out. Suitably refreshed with coffee and hot chocolate we returned via the same route just managing to avoid any heavier rain. Nevertheless, an enjoyable ride in good company as always.

With the cold weather upon us I am putting a hold on future rides until it improves, at which time I will email the Cycling Group. I will also be sending out a short survey on how we might improve the Cycle Group activities in 2026.

Meanwhile, you could take some time out to have a good look at your bicycle and check tyres, brakes, gears, chain etc. to ensure that all are in good condition and lubricated to prevent rusting during the damp winter months. You will then be ready to ride when the better weather returns!

A big 'Thank You' to everyone who has joined our rides this year - it has been good fun for me and I hope you have enjoyed them too. We are always looking for new routes, especially for the more experienced riders so any suggestions would be very welcome.

If you wish to join our cycle group, can't remember if you have or not, or require further information about our rides etc., please contact me at dave.vodden@tiscali.co.uk.

In the meantime, have a very Happy, Healthy, and Safe New Year.

Happy Cycling!

Dave Vodden



News from the Groups - Wine

Cowes Wine Appreciation

With the group unable to determine a mutually convenient date for a November wine evening, the members elected to meet up at an intriguing Cowes coffee shop for morning coffee instead. This went well, with individual choices of appropriate drinks being enjoyed; maybe the circulation and sips from a bottle of Tia Maria would also not have been amiss? However, December ushered in a final 2025 wine evening at our ever-popular and welcoming Gurnard venue, with wines from France brought for taste and consideration.

A predominantly 'white wines' evening - with two comparable Cremant De Loire wines to consider, together with a Viognier wine, as well as the usual Saint Emilion from the Bordeaux region. The surprise of the evening was a 'limited edition' Rosé wine, which had some impressive depth to it and nice to savour. As generally happens, the convivial evening was concluded by sampling a sweet wine, this time being a delightful Petit Manseng originating from the foothills of the Pyrenees. This received group approval by emptying the bottle. Some group members also 'incriminated themselves' by enjoying some "stollen" bread to accompany the wine as well as a liking for some festive German Lebkuchen also distributed around the table.

All being well, it is hoped to commence the New Year's January wine evening with a theme of "My Favourite Wine" where members can reveal their personal taste choice and selection of wine, either country of origin, grape variety, whatever? Maybe some revelatory surprises ahead. Who knows?

Maurice Fairall

Contact Jenny Hale
jennylodc@yahoo.co.uk

St Lawrence Wine Tasting

As ever we managed to have some fun in the last couple of meetings, which is what happens when sociable people get together to enjoy sampling wine. We try to educate ourselves about wine along the way, but it is always secondary to the enjoyment of spending time with like minded friends.

In November, limited numbers meant we had to work with a smaller budget, and this usually gives us a reason to sample lower priced wines from a supermarket. In this case we chose the Co-op. As with most other supermarkets, they try to appeal to the discerning wine buyer with something like 'The Best' or 'Specially Selected'. The Co-op have gone with 'Irresistible'.....how could we resist?

Two wines from Chile gained the most votes. The 30Degrees Pinot Noir light-bodied red and Indomitable Carmenera, a much fuller red, were closely followed by a delicious soft white Grenache Blanc from the Languedoc in southern France. These three are definitely worth seeking out if you find yourself in your local Co-op and are desirable alternatives to the big brands you see in every store. All wines were around the £7-£8 mark.

We had our traditional Xmas gathering in December and splashed out on iconic French wine styles, such as Chablis, Chateau-Neuf du Pape, Sancerre, Burgundy, Bordeaux, Sauternes, Champagne, and Provence Rose. No marking this time, just an appreciation of why generally they are enduring marks of quality and prestige.

We are approaching the end of our third year with this group and as one or two members have dropped out over time, we have availability for the coming year if anyone would like to join us!

Happy drinking! Cheers!

Frank
frankj.kelly@icloud.com



[u3a matters](#) is published by the u3a trust five times a year.

It is posted direct to members' homes in an environmentally friendly paper wrapper. It is packed with stories about members and u3a activities, plus celebrity interviews and features on technology, recipes, travel, competitions, and a lively and popular letters section.

How to receive u3a matters:

[u3a matters](#) is available to any u3a member. Isle of Wight u3a members receive u3a matters automatically for their first year and a bit. After that, every November, each member needs to actively re-affirm that they want to receive it.

Simply log into the **[Members Portal](#)** (you will need to set up a password if you have not done this before) and clear the check against 'no u3a matters'. It is also possible to sign up for lunches this way and to join (or leave) some groups.

We like to make receiving u3a matters a positive choice.

You can read extracts from the magazine **[here](#)**.



[u3a Friends Extra](#)

The u3a is an organisation which exists under the umbrella of the **[Third Age Trust](#)**. U3a members can sign in **[here](#)**. The u3a also has a membership oriented marketing web site called "u3a Friends Extra" which offers many commercial discounts if you sign up for it.

Check it out at "**[u3a Friends Extra](#)**".

[Newsletter edited by Roger Skidmore](#)

Always happy to answer questions or point you in the right direction for further advice.

Call 07732 480201 or 01983 822900 or email **rogerskid@zen.co.uk**

Note - almost all underlined words are actually web links (for those reading this online).



Footnote for those wishing to print out the newsletter themselves - possibly choose to set your printer to "A5 Booklet" (unless you want large print).



IoW u3a has a public **[Facebook](#)** page **www.facebook.com/u3aWight**

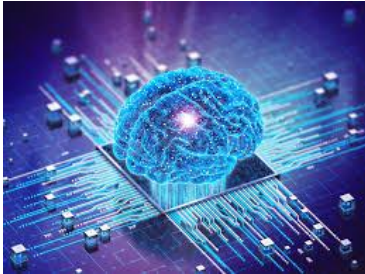
Speaker Meetings

Second Thursday of the Month
2.00 pm St John's Hall, Newport, PO30 1LN

Speaker Meetings are open to all.
The presentation is followed by refreshments and chat.

January 8th - talk on "Artificial Intelligence"

Colm Watling has worked in technology from long before it was fashionable, and most recently has worked for the Government's Innovation Agency (Innovate UK) helping businesses across the UK create and adopt new inventions and ways of working.



Demystify AI for beginners.

Practical everyday uses.

Interactive Q&A.



For more information contact Sara at rykastopdog@gmail.com

Alan Clark talks about Island Erosion - February 12th

Dr Alan Clark will be presenting a talk titled, "***The Island's Unstable Coast***".
Dr Clark said the rate of loss is currently a metre a year on the South Coast.

Of interest to residents given the recent [landslides in Bonchurch](#) and coastal erosion along the [Military Road](#).

Dr Alan Clark, is a retired geologist and civil engineer with a wealth of experience.

"It is impossible to say where the next collapse will occur. But you need only to look at the geology of the British coast to see where it is at risk."



Followed by A.G.M.

www.u3awight.uk