



SHEPWAY AND DISTRICT

shepway.u3asite.uk

Registered Charity No. 1149472

Newsletter May 2026

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COFFEE MORNINGS

Dates for the next coffee mornings are

Wednesday 20th May – Voco (Clifton) Hotel, Folkestone 10.30am

Friday 22nd May – Tin Tabernacle, Hythe, **10.30am**

Friday 29th May – Ship Hotel, New Romney 10.30am

It would be very helpful if those attending can bring the correct money for their coffee i.e. £3.00 at the Clifton, £2.50 at the Ship Hotel and £2 at the Tin Tab. This will ensure that there will be no problem with providing change.

You will be able to register for groups, book for events, and discuss anything with the committee. If you have friends interested in joining, please bring them along. New members are always welcome.

MEMBERS' MEETING – Annual General Meeting

The next Members' Meeting is on **Wednesday 13th May at 2pm** at the Tin Tabernacle in Hythe, and is the **Annual General Meeting**.

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday 29th April Group Leaders Get Together. " 2.00pm Tin Tabernacle, Hythe.

Wednesday 6th May Film Matinee: "The Salt Path" starring Gillian Anderson & Jason Isaacs. See page 5 for details.

Wednesday 13th May Annual General Meeting at 2.00pm at the Tin Tabernacle, Hythe. See page 2 for details.

Thursday 21st May Curry Night at the Green Spice Tandoori, Sandgate. 6.00 pm. See page 6 for details.



Shepway and District

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of Shepway & District U3A will be held on Wednesday 13 May 2026 at the Tin Tabernacle at 2.00 pm.

Agenda

1.	Welcome	Steve O'Neill
2.	Apologies	Steve O'Neill
3.	Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14 May 2025	Steve O'Neill
4.	Matters arising	Steve O'Neill
5.	Chair's report	Steve O'Neill
6.	Treasurer's report	Katherine Robinson
7.	Membership Secretary's report	Sue Dickie
8.	Election of new Committee members	Steve O'Neill
9.	Groups report	David Warren
10.	Members meetings report	Steve O'Neill
11.	Film matinees report	John Hubbard
12.	Events and Visits Report	Jacqueline Mack
13.	AOB	Steve O'Neill
14.	Meeting Close	Steve O'Neill
15.	Tea	Nina Chislett

The Minutes of last year's AGM can be found on pages 17-18.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

This is the time of year when we hold our Annual General Meeting, after going through the membership renewal process. So, it's a bit of a time of reckoning. I'm pleased to say, though, that although we always lose some members, all the signs are that the membership numbers are holding up well. It is good to know that you, our members, find belonging to the U3A really worthwhile. Not only are people renewing for another year – but we have a constant stream of new people wanting to join. Our thanks to Sue Dickie, our Membership Secretary, for leading on this



Our AGM is on 13 May at 2.00 pm in the Tin Tabernacle. You will find the agenda and the minutes of last year's meeting on pages 2, 17-18 of this newsletter. Do please try and come.

With regard to the Committee elections, subject to your approval, Katherine Robinson, our Treasurer, and Roger Wood, our Vice Chair, are swapping roles. Katherine, who has been a brilliant Treasurer over many years, feels she would like a change. And Roger, our excellent Vice Chair has kindly offered to take her place. In return, Katherine has offered to become Vice Chair. Very many thanks to both of them for all their past services, and I am sure you will not only vote them in but support them as they take on their new duties.

Amongst our other Committee members, I am delighted that David Warren, whose term of office has expired has agreed to stand again. Gehad Homsey and Christina Ford have both stepped down. Many thanks to them both for their service over the last few years.

However, at the time of writing we still have no nominations for our vacant Business Secretary post or three general member posts. We don't even have anyone to write the minutes of our AGM or subsequent monthly committees. If you enjoy and value being a member of the U3A please consider whether you can contribute in this way. We are thankful for all our many volunteers, in whatever role they hold, but we do especially need people to help run the organisation as a whole. Out of a 12 person committee, we only have 8 posts filled – and no-one new putting themselves forward. That puts a heavy load on just a few people. Can you help? If you think you can, please email me as soon as possible on u3achairmansteve@gmail.com

By the time you read this, we will have had our end of April get together with our group leaders. There are over 80 of these, some running more than one group, doing a sterling job. Thanks go to Roger Wood and Richard Andrews for their contributions to this and to all those who provided refreshments and contributed to the success of the day.

And finally, in the light of our recent excellent and fascinating talk on the Folkestone dinosaurs from Steve Friedrich (they were here roughly 120 million years ago!), I'm afraid I can't resist the following quote from the *Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show*:

"The largest dinosaur that ever lived was the Bronchitis. It soon became extinct. It coughed a lot"

Oh, do come and bring some seriousness to our committee!

Steve

Picture: Freepik

TRAVEL AND TRIPS WITH VIV KENNY, REAL SOCIALISING – ISSUED 21ST APRIL 2026

REAL Socialising are delighted to share our short break and days out with a difference programme with U3A members...we look forward to welcoming you when the time and theme are right for you.

On the day of writing this article, it would have been the 100th birthday of the late Queen Elizabeth II. We have included many 'Royal' theme visits over the years of running our travel club, and this year is no exception. We are very pleased to have opened up bookings for a second coach visiting **Buckingham Palace, the Royal Mews and the Kings Gallery**, where a special display of over 300 personal items and outfits of our Late Queen are on display in 'Her Life in Style'. This **Royal Day Out** takes place on 6th September and the cost is £87.50 and includes executive coaching and access to the 3 elements being the State Rooms, Royal Mews and Kings Gallery. The booking link is here: www.realsocialising.co.uk/events/royal_day_out-2/

Another of our days out with a difference is a visit to **Lambeth Palace on Friday 29th May**. There are very few open days each year, and we have the opportunity on this special day, to support the Help Musicians Charity (the working name of the Musicians Benevolent Fund). This is the second opportunity for a visit for us and a self-guided tour of this historic place....last year we were lucky enough to meet Opera Singer Lesley Garrett who is an Ambassador for the Charity....you never know, we might be lucky again with the Charity Ambassadors making appearances during this open day! The cost of the day is £39pp if payment is made in full at time of booking, or you can stagger payments at £20 x 2 during the next few weeks. The link to book is: www.realsocialising.co.uk/events/lambeth_palace-2/



With a number of trips selling out very quickly, we invite you to sign up to receive our monthly newsletter by putting your email address into the 'subscribe' box on our website. Then you will be amongst the first to be able to view the latest offers and book your place directly with us. Visit www.realsocialising.co.uk

Please take a look at our monthly newsletter as we have a large range of trips for you to consider. Some are already full, but if of interest, add your name to our reserve list by sending us an email....things usually change in the lead up to the travel dates and sometimes we can offer you places.

With the warmer weather on its way, we have some lovely days out on offer including a trip on 9th June to **Allington Castle** just outside of Maidstone and accessed via the **Kentish Lady** river boat....its a gem of a place and not well known. June is a very busy month for us with days out to **Brighton, Greenwich**, a visit to the newly opened **V&A East and the incredible V&A Storehouse** and **Crossness Pumping Station**, solution to the Victorian era's 'Big Stink'we are very proud of our days out with a difference!

As well as days out to interesting places, we have introduced more theatre trips too.....**The Mousetrap** has been running for 75 years and we thought it was about time we included it! Along with **Mamma Mia** and **Billy Elliot** (*this one May 2027*) we have also secured some additional seats for **Cinderella Adult Panto** at the London Palladium with Julian Clary, Nigel Havers and this years guest 'French & Saunders' ...seats are up 'in the 'Gods' and we are advertising them as '**The Cheap Seats**' ...at £65pp with the coach, for a London show, believe us they are 'cheap' but it doesn't diminish the fun factor of watching this festive legend! We have so much more on offer, **Faulty Towers Dining Experience, ABBA Voyage, Brick Lane Music Hall** and short breaks too.....make sure you receive our monthly newsletter and start planning your travel diary!

Viv Kenny, REAL Socialising

Email anytime: viv@realsocialising.co.uk

M: 0777 3946828 (10am-4pm - Mon-Friday)

W: www.realsocialising.co.uk Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/REALSocialising>

FILM MATINEE – May / June

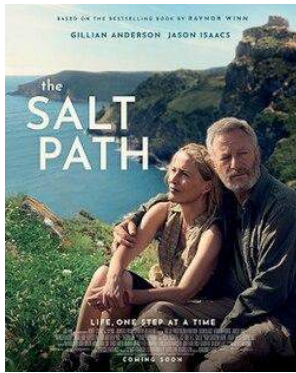
Treat yourself to an afternoon of entertainment with tea and cakes etc and a full feature length film with your friends.

Starting at 2pm at the Tin Tabernacle, Hythe.

Admission is £6 and advance booking is essential. How to book is detailed on the booking form.

Wednesday 6th May

Film: 'The Salt Path' starring Gillian Anderson and Jason Isaacs



A couple have lost their home and later discover the husband has been diagnosed with a terminal illness as they embark on a yearlong coastal trek. Husband and wife, Raynor and Math Winns, embark on a 630 mile trek around the South West coast after being forcibly removed from their home. A story of hope and resilience.

Wednesday 3rd June

Film: 'Song Sung Blue' starring Hugh Jackman, Kate Hudson and Ella Anderson.



Based on a true story, Mike and Claire are two down on their luck musicians who prove that it is never too late to find love and follow their dreams. They form a Neil Diamond tribute band called Lightning and Thunder, rising from a humble garage to bar gigs to unexpected local stardom. When tragedy strikes, their love for each other and the passion for music gives them strength to overcome the hardships. Lots of Neil Diamond songs included.

FILM MATINEE – May / June

BOOKING FORM

1st Wednesday starting at 2pm

I / we wish to attend the Film Matinee

- May 6th The Salt Path
- June 3rd Song Sung Blue

Name/s

.....
.....

Payment and booking (Cheques payable to 'Shepway & District U3A')

- £6 per person per film
- By cheque or cash at coffee morning
- By post: send booking form and cheque to 'The Organiser, 52 Lower Corniche, Hythe, CT21 4SE'
- Online: Pay through your bank, to 'Shepway & District U3A', Sort code: 40-52-40, account number: 00031591 and clearly state in the reference field 'MATINEE 'your name/s'. Separately email names and dates to shepwaybeacon@gmail.com.

Bookings close on the Friday before each matinee.

FUTURE EVENTS

DISCO

The last newsletter mentioned our new event, a Disco. This has now been booked for **Friday 19th June at the Hythe Cricket and Squash club**. However, only a few people have made reservations this far and that is not enough to cover the costs. I will make Wednesday 13th May the last day and if there is not enough interest I will cancel the event.

There will be lots of 60s and 70s Music and outside space to sit and enjoy the summer evening. The club has a bar but does not provide food so if you want a snack, you will need to bring it with you. The event will start at 6.30, finishing at 9.30 and will cost £10.00. Please book a place via the website as soon as you can so that I know that we have enough people to make this event viable. Arrangements for payment will be provided nearer the time.

Let Jacqueline know you are coming via her link at https://shepway.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/seniors-disco-june-2026/

CURRY NIGHT

Thursday 21st May.

There is still plenty of time to book for for the next Curry Night.

At the **Green Spice Tandoori, Sandgate** at 6.00pm. £14.95 plus tip. Booking is required. Click here for more details and book through Jacqueline's link at https://shepway.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/curry-night-may-2026-sandgate/

A Note for your Diary

Christmas Lunch 2026

Friday 11th December has been booked for our 2026 Festive Lunch.

GROUP NEWS

CALENDAR OF GROUP ACTIVITIES

Download the April calendar here: [May Calendar](#)

Group Information

A reminder that for insurance and administration purposes members of each Group need to be registered as such on our Beacon system.

If you are interested in a particular Group, you can, with the Group Leader's permission, attend a meeting as a guest, on a single occasion but if you wish to continue you must register your interest by contacting shepwaygroups through the contact page on the website: <https://shepway.u3asite.uk/contact/> or register at a coffee morning.

The Group Leader will be informed and add you to the list or put you on the waiting list if the Group is already over-subscribed. Either way they will let you know.

If you are unable to attend a meeting, please always let the group leader know in advance as it helps them with arrangements

If you belong to a Group which you are no longer able to attend please inform the Group Leader so that your place can be given to someone else.

When you apply to join a group make it clear which group you wish to attend by giving the exact name and the timing.

Short Walks (East/Central)

These are monthly on the 4th Tuesday and about 2 - 2½ miles long departing from different locations in our area at 11.00 finishing with refreshments in a pub or cafe whenever possible. Apply in the usual way (see above).

The next walk will be on 24th February.

Short Walks (West)

The short walks cover the Romney Marsh area and take place on the second Tuesday of each month at 11am. They usually take around an hour and end with refreshments at a suitable pub or cafe. An invitation is sent out to all members a week or so in advance giving the walk location and where to meet.

Bryony

Critical Analysis of Poetry

Critical Analysis of Poetry group dates for Summer session:

12th 26th May -

09th 23rd June -

07th 21st July

If interested in joining our group, initially please see U3A Web page

Ray Solly

Sunday Lunch Club

The U3A Sunday Lunch Club meets on the final Sunday of each month at an excellent restaurant in Folkestone. If you would like to join us, and for more details, apply via shepwaygroups@gmail.com or at a regular coffee morning.

Jean Hatton

Long Walks

FRIDAY 1st May 10.00am

The walk will start from the golfers' car park at Broome Park, Barham (CT4 6QX). The car park is clearly signed.

Click here for map: [Broome Park golf](#)

Book Circle 3 – Romney Marsh

This group meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month to discuss our current reading. Members take it in turns to suggest a topic, or author for us to read.

Bryony

June Newsletter

If you have any material about group activities or other pieces that may interest members, including poems, quizzes etc, please send them to Tony at shepwaynews@gmail.com by the **21st May**.

Ten Pin Bowling

The dates for when the Ten Pin Bowling Groups will be playing over the month of April & May are as follows:

Friday Group

8th May 10.30 a.m.
12th June 10.30 a.m.

Tuesday Group

26th May No meeting.
23rd June 11.00 a.m.

All the games are played in the Hollywood Bowl, Station Road, Ashford and we play two games per session at a concessionary cost of £7.30.

Newcomers wishing to join one or both of the groups are very welcome

Registration can be made at shepwaygroups@gmail.com

We look forward to welcoming new members to the group

Anyone wishing to play in both groups should be registered for both groups

I very much appreciate the continued support received from the members of both groups.

Doreen Bishop

Climate in Crisis

Last month we shared the Demonstrably Good (climate) News items we had unearthed:

- Electricity generation from geothermal heat is now a reality in Cornwall
- Renewables overtook coal as the world's biggest source of electricity in the first half of 2025
- Over 80% of Denmark's electricity generation comes from renewable sources
- Insurance companies are becoming averse to insuring fossil fuel infrastructure as climate-induced events are proving too costly
- The average price of electric cars in the EU has fallen for the first time since 2020, driven by the release of more affordable models to comply with the bloc's car CO2 targets
- Hydrogen combustion engines will power machinery building the Lower Thames Crossing

With all the negativity around, that felt better!

Roger Wood Group Leader

Local History 3

At our recent meeting we had 4 presenters: the first continued our theme on local lifeboat stations. It covered the Hythe station which replaced the one at Seabrook in 1893. We were shown photos of the station being built and told about the various lifeboats that were stationed there, what they were named and who donated the money to pay for them and also which rescues they took part in.

There has been a story that in 1940 the Hythe lifeboat crew refused to take part in operation Dynamo (Dunkirk evacuation) resulting in accusations of cowardice. The speaker explained the truth behind this situation which completely exonerated the crew.

The second presenter used the blue plaque near the church gate in the village of Wye as their inspiration. This plaque commemorates the death of two men of Kent: John Philipot and Thomas Stephens who in 1557 were burnt to death at the stake in Wye because of their religious faith.

These men were protestants and the speaker explained why these men along with others in Ashford and Canterbury were put to death by burning.

After our tea break one of our members told us about the dinosaur footprints impressed into the rocks on a Folkestone beach. They explained how they came to be there and why the majority of experts said it was impossible for them to exist and would not acknowledge their existence.

The final presenter told us about the life of princess Pocahontas, the first American national to visit England, and how She became ill on the boat taking her home and was put ashore at Gravesend where she died and was buried in the churchyard of St Georges Church. She brought her young son Thomas over with her. He stayed in England grew up and married here. We were shown his family tree indicating there are now over 50 people in England who are direct descendants of Pocahontas.

John Anstiss Group Leader.

Line-Dancing

The Beginners Group is successfully under way with much fun being had by all! There is still room for new people though!

Ros Battrick.

Photography groups 1 and 2

Photography groups 1 and 2 continue to thrive with new members joining all the time. Both groups are therefore near their limit but can accept new members. All forms of digital cameras are used by members from phone cameras to all sorts of dedicated digital cameras. The format is for a monthly photographic challenge, sometimes with additional events such as photoshoots on that month's project or, usually in the winter, technical workshops. Last month we created stories in three photographs and this month we are taking pictures of seaside towns. To that end we had a visit to Margate on Monday 20 April. Photography Group 1 meets on the first Tuesday in the Hythe Masonic Hall and Group 2 meets on the first Friday in the Tin Tabernacle. Both groups meet in the morning.

Pete Savage & Peter Carroll

Poetry

On 19th February we read sonnets by Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. A sonnet that stood out for its businesslike rather than romantic tone was Howard's Description and praise of his love, Geraldine (a jocular attempt to find the young girl a good husband). She is descended from a "worthy race" – "Fair Florence was sometime their ancient seat". She was born in Ireland - "Her sire an earl: her dame of princes' blood" and then brought up with the children of Henry VIII "where she tasteth costly food". She looks healthy: "bright is her hue". It is as if the poet is trying to sell a good quality horse.

On 5th March 2026 we re-visited the work of the former Laureate Andrew Motion, having previously read his poems in September 2024. Whether he is writing about personal experiences – memories of his father, the death of his father, precious moments with his new wife, or looking back into history (as in the evocative and deceptively simple *Anne Frank Huis*) we feel the strength of his emotions.

He is good at creating atmosphere by descriptions of sunlight. In the *Anne Frank Huis*, the visitor "discovers how / the bookcase slides aside, then walks through / shadow into sunlit rooms..." In *Holy Island* we see "Small orchids definitely / still evolving in a downpour of Arctic sunlight". In *Passing On* the neutral pink hospital

walls are "flushed into definite pale red / by sunlight rejoicing in the flowering cherry outside ..." In *A Glass of Wine* the setting sun / clips the heel of the garden" and later "a final sunlight-shudder pours / away across our garden-floor".

Another recurrent motif is the movement of the wind as a physical manifestation of the passing of time. e.g. in *Holy Island* "Your black hair blows into my eyes and I can see / everything moving fast now".

Our meetings on 19th March and 2nd April were devoted to two poets who influenced Andrew Motion: John Keats (1795-1821) and Edward Thomas (1878-1917). Both died young – Keats had tuberculosis and Thomas was killed in the First World War. Keats was "half in love with easeful death" while Thomas (who struggled with depression) arguably hastened his own death by volunteering for military service (although over the age limit).

In Thomas's poem *Lights Out* sleep becomes an extended metaphor for death. Everyone must succumb to sleep – it is "The unfathomable deep / Forest where all must lose / Their way ..." "Here love ends / Despair, ambition ends; / All pleasure and all trouble ..." The poet relinquishes his conscious identity and ego: "Its silence I hear and obey / That I may lose my way / And myself."

Finally, I must appeal once again for a few gentlemen to join the Poetry Group, whose membership apart from myself is all-female. There must be one or two gentlemen willing to correct this imbalance by coming along to discuss poetry with these articulate and intelligent ladies.

Frank

Courses and Events being held by the Third Age Trust On Line

The Third Age Trust have arranged an ongoing series of online courses and single events which members of any U3A in the UK can join. To review the current schedule please go to the Third Age Trust website on u3a.org.uk/events where you can also book your place. The majority are provided free as part of your membership. They will also be reviewed at the coffee morning.

Flora, Fauna & Foraging

What a simply perfect morning for a spring walk. Wall to wall sunshine against a blue sky in competition with the bluebells.

Reinden Wood, located just north of Hawkinge off the Canterbury Road, served as a vital "dispersed" site for RAF Hawkinge during World War Two and the Battle of Britain activity in the area. To protect personnel and equipment from enemy air raids on the main airfield, the military built a "military village" or camp hidden beneath the tree canopy. This allowed domestic accommodation to be located off-site, reducing potential casualties if the airfield was targeted. Some evidence of habitation still survives in the form of brickworks, shelters etc. Either side of this unusual activity Reinden Wood has been a forested ancient woodland habitat of deciduous trees, coppiced over the centuries from at least the 1600s to create the little gem it is today.

We visited this ancient woodland to enjoy the bluebells at the height of their beauty. But we were immediately struck by carpets of wood anemones, lesser celandine, ransoms (wild garlic), and banks of greater stitchwort. The impression of bright white and yellow stars against a background of deep blue and the acid green of newly unfolding leaves was magical. This display is unique to ancient woodlands with tall, thin trees of birch, beech, sycamore creating just about enough light to allow these delicate flowers to bloom in dappled sunlight during April. In a few weeks, as the tree canopy grows over the moment will pass. Such woodlands are known as the temperate deciduous forest and are the dominant natural habitat of the UK. Ancient woodland is extremely rare in the UK and makes up only about 1.2% of the total land area.

We wandered along paths through banks of woodland flowers and plants and came across an old shelter – now the home address of cave spiders and bats. No one was quite brave enough to lift the ivy from the doorway to peek in and see if any were hanging about. We were treated to birdsong all around us at full lilt – notably the repetitive and changing three notes of a song thrush, and the persistent chiffchaff of a chiffchaff! We discussed how wild bluebells differ from the Spanish garden varieties. Wild bluebells have flower heads hanging from one side of the stem, are deeper blue and finer than the garden variety. Spanish bluebells bloom all around the

stem like a hyacinth, are taller, stronger, a light blue and keep upright.

Here is the list for this morning, inasmuch as I recall it.

FLORA

Lesser celandine, wood anemone, wild bluebells, ransoms, greater stitchwort, dandelion, bittercress, wild rose, dog mercury, wild arum, garlic mustard, ivy-leafed speedwell, red campion, wood spurge, herb robert, cleavers (goosegrass) great willow herb, great burdock, penduline sedge, broom, nettle, dock, bramble, redcurrant, fern, goat willow, beech, hawthorn, silver birch, oak, sycamore, holly (already showing masses of berries), mountain ash (rowan), laurel, elder,

FAUNA

Song thrush, chiffchaff, bluetit, black cap, wood pigeon, robin, collared dove, crow, chaffinch, wren, blackcap, tree creeper, pheasant

black-headed cardinal beetle, speckled wood and cabbage white butterflies.

FORAGING

The young, tender leaves of the hawthorn that we saw today were traditionally a common food for children and rural workers. They were called "bread and cheese" because they provided a quick, nutritious snack during hungry walks home or times of famine. The leaves have a mild, nutty flavour, similar to apple skin. Only the young leaves and flowers are edible, so now is the time. In the autumn the berries (haws) have cyanide-like compounds!

NEXT MEETING

A week earlier than usual in May, as I am away from the 17th. We will meet on Thursday, 14th May at 10 am. (a little earlier in the day) and will be going to Samphire Hoe, west of Dover, hopefully to see the famous bee orchids and much else. Full details will come soon by email.

Happy Days.

We welcomed a new member to the group today – David Gower – who kindly took the fabulous photos below.

Briar Ellis-Blake



MODERN LIFE

WHAT IS an umarell?

Wherever you are in the world, you've probably seen a local version of one. But not many places have a special name for the phenomenon.

In Italy, the word *umarell* has entered the dictionary to denote groups of elderly men who gather at construction sites to observe, comment and give unsolicited advice, often with their hands clasped behind their backs.

The word, coined in 2005 by an Italian journalist, Danilo Masotti, is based on a dialect word for 'little man' in his native Bologna.

Masotti wrote, 'When I first discussed the phenomenon on my blog, I was inundated with replies from people saying, "I know one!" – and I received pictures of men lined up to study roadworks.'

For many Bolognesi, the *umarells'* presence is endearing, rather than a

nuisance. Construction workers now often put up notices to inform them of their next project. There have been books, calendars, board games, apps (which track the location of ongoing roadworks and construction sites) and even action figures.

Thanks to Masotti, the *umarell* has become such a beloved figure that, in 2017, a square in Bologna was renamed *Piazzetta degli Umarells* – ironically, at the time, the square was under construction.

Meanwhile, in nearby San Lazzaro di Savena, resident Franco Bonini became the first *Umarell of the Year*, not to mention the town's most famous son, with a guest spot on the *Miss Italia* pageant.

Umarells' pervasiveness – and nationwide popularity – peaked when Burger King recruited five of them to star in an ad campaign, in response to incessant questions from Milan's cohort about when construction of the company's new premises would be complete.

The concept of a retired busybody

might not be new. But it's heartening to see that in Italy, at least, these retirees – who might not have other ways to fill their time or find like-minded company – have been embraced and celebrated.

At times, construction firms have even accommodated their *umarells* by placing see-through panels in site hoardings to enable the observers to peek through.

And the *umarells* aren't going anywhere. Indeed, their presence has often proved useful, as they have been officially tasked with keeping a watchful eye on construction sites and other public works. In Monza, the mayor recruited pensioners to monitor the streets and report any problem, whether it's a pothole or a faulty streetlamp. The recruits took to their new positions with enthusiasm, although they have been warned not to loiter or proffer unsolicited advice to construction crews.

Every city and town could do with its own battalion of *umarells* – our streets would be spick and span in no time.

Sonia Zhuravlyova

FIRST AID WORKSHOPS 2026

Basic Adult First Aid given by the British Red Cross £6pp

Thursday 7th May 11am to 12.30 at Hawkinge Community Centre

Due to a big response to the recently issued reminder, Hawkinge is now also full.

Tuesday 9th June 2pm - 3.30pm at The Hope Inn Stade St Hythe

This class is fully booked. Future dates will be advertised once arranged.

To go on a waiting list for cancellations, and future dates at Hawkinge and/or Hythe, if you haven't already, please contact me to let me know.

susandickie4@gmail.com

THE FABULOUS SHEPWAY U3a SWING BAND

will be performing for **YOU!**, yes **YOU!!**,
YOU!!! being

The **NEW ROMNEY** ALL Parishoners of
'CHAPTER' OF THE the **NEW ROMNEY**
SHEPWAY U3a **BENEFICE**

This all takes place at

11am, THURSDAY 21 MAY
at **St Nicholas Church**

Church Lane, New Romney, TN28 8EU



REFRESHMENTS ARE INCLUDED

ENTRANCE IS FREE!!!

However, there will be an opportunity for you to give money to 2 excellent charities. All money collected will be divided equally between the **CHURCH** and the **RNLI**, The Royal National Lifeboat Institution

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

For further information
please contact **Ann Rolfe** on
01797 362719



Lyminge Friends

Wednesday 6th May 2026

**10.30am in The Methodist Church
Church Road, Lyminge**

**Mr Garrick's
Fireside; A
personal history
of the Theatre
Royal, Drury
Lane including
almost being
shot by the
Queen Mother's
Security Detail –
all because
of Ken Dodd!**
Speaker – **Pete
Allen**



Entrance Fee is £4.00 (includes tea/coffee)

We are a friendly social group and welcome new members/visitors so just drop into a meeting or call 07904 157897 for more information.

SHEPWAY & DISTRICT U3A

Presents



SOMERSET & AVON



WHAT'S INCLUDED

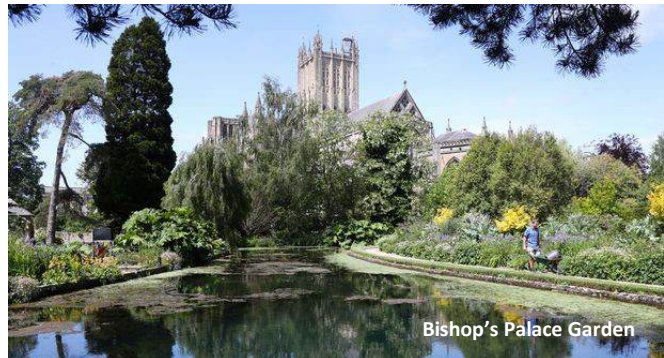
5 days / 4 nights' duration
Tuesday 22nd - Saturday 26th September 2026
Return Executive Coach Travel
4 nights half board
4 *Bristol Grand Hotel by Sunday
Excursion package as detailed overleaf



Roman Baths

PRICES & SUPPLEMENTS

Minimum 30 persons **£799pp**—Two share
Single supplement **£99** (4 nights) - max. 15 rooms
Deposit **£150pp** (non-refundable/ non-transferable)
Balance due in full by the **24.07.26**
Optional Travel Insurance **£34pp**
+ Handling fee **£5pp (email)** or **£10pp (by post)**
No upper age limit (conditions apply)
Includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) @ 20%.



Bishop's Palace Garden

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Lacock + Lacock Abbey (NT)**
- **City of Wells Market Day**
- **Bishop's Palace & Gardens**
- **Tyntesfield (NT)**
- **Brunel's SS Great Britain + Guided Tour**
- **Dyrham (NT)**
- **Roman Baths**
- **American Museum Claverton Manor**
- **Longleat - All Areas Day Ticket**



Tyntesfield NT

HOW TO BOOK

Complete the attached booking form and return with your non-refundable deposit, Insurance premium if required + handling fee to: **Katherine Robinson, 81a Seabrook Road, Hythe, Kent CT21 5QW. Tel. 01303 239420**

This tour is operated by Simply Groups, Dalton House, 1 Hawkworth Street, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 9DU
TEL 01943 605999 info@simplygroups.co.uk
www.simplygroups.co.uk



Longleat



SS Great Britain

SIMPLY GROUPS
Simply the best!



The Specialist Group Tour Operator

Proposed itinerary

Tuesday Day 1 – *National Trust cards required for Lacock Abbey. Non-members to pay locally.*

Departing your last pick-up point at 9am a comfort stop will be made enroute to the historic village of **Lacock**. Its oldest house is older than the thirteenth Century abbey but since the loss of the village's main source of income from wool in the nineteenth century, new development has been minimal. It is a quintessential English village with lots to discover; quaint traditional stone cottages, the old workhouse, the medieval tithe barn, the old lock-up and the village church. **The Abbey (NT)**, located at the heart of the village within its own woodland grounds, is a quirky country house of various architectural styles, built upon the foundations of a former nunnery. Visitors can experience the atmosphere of the medieval rooms and cloister court, giving a sense of the Abbey's monastic past. Lunch can be bought whilst here before continuing on to Bristol where a hotel dinner is included.

Wednesday Day 2– *National Trust cards required for Tyntesfield. Non-members to pay locally.*

Breakfast included. We begin today in the **City of Wells**, where today is **market day**. Entrance to the moated and walled **Bishops' Palace & 14 acres of gardens** is included. The **Bishop's Palace** and accompanying Bishop's House adjacent to Wells Cathedral, has been the home of the Bishops of the Diocese of Bath and Wells for 800 years. It has been designated by English Heritage as a Grade I listed building. Exploring this historic site will reveal tales of bold Bishops, sensational secrets and how water has shaped the Palace. You will even discover the well pools which give the city its name. Afterwards, you may choose to visit **Wells Cathedral** (donation payable locally), a masterpiece from the 12th-century which is beautiful, historic and a centre of Christianity. It has one of the few **chained libraries** in Britain (circa 1450), which is especially attractive and still in its original location. Wells Cathedral Quire also contains over a hundred beautiful embroideries from the mid-20th Century and one of the most substantial collections of medieval stained glass in England. Vicars Close has a fine selection of architecture and the Market Place is linked to the Green by the curiously named **Penniless Porch**. Lunch can be purchased before this afternoon's excursion to **Tyntesfield (NT)**, a fine Victorian country house created by one of England's richest commoners, William Gibbs, who built his fortune on fertiliser. Spiralling turrets and pinnacles adorn the roof, ornate stone carvings and church-like windows complete the Gothic look, giving the feel of a mysterious fairy tale mansion. Terraced lawns give way to spacious parkland filled with hundreds of trees and a glorious walled kitchen garden. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening.

Thursday Day 3 – *National Trust cards required for Dyrham. Non-members to pay locally.*

Breakfast included. Our first visit is to the nearby **Brunel's SS Great Britain**, which in her working life travelled over a million miles – **guided tour** included. She sailed to New York & Melbourne, was run aground, rescued, sold, carried troops to the Crimean War and saw her most famous captain (John Gray), start and mysteriously end his career all before Bell invented the telephone in 1876. The SS Great Britain retired in 1933 and in 1937, in what looked like a bleak ending to her working life and was scuttled in the Falkland Islands. When the world wars broke-out she was a coal supply for battleships, iron plates from her hull were used to repair HMS Exeter and her timbers were used to make souvenirs and sold to raise funds for Spitfires. Refreshments can be purchased before this afternoon's visit to **Dyrham (NT)**, a spectacular late 17th-century mansion with garden and deer park. Inside the impressive mansion, discover fascinating interiors little changed in 300 years, as well as a rich collection of superb Dutch art and ceramics of the period. Hotel dinner included tonight.

Friday Day 4 – Breakfast included. This morning's visit is to the **City of Bath**, beginning with an **included visit** to the famous **Roman Baths** built around Britain's only hot springs. There will be free time afterwards to explore this unique city with its hot springs, splendid Abbey and Georgian stone crescents. Lunch can be purchased before this afternoon's included visit to the **American Museum + Gardens at Claverton Manor**. This will take you on a journey through the history of America, from its early settlers to the modern day. With its remarkable collection of folk and decorative arts, the Museum shows the diverse and complex nature of American traditions. Since opening in 1961, 30 acres of grounds have been developed to include a replica of George Washington's garden at Mount Vernon, a Lewis and Clark trail and an arboretum. Hotel dinner included.

Saturday Day 5 – Checking out of the hotel this morning, this tour concludes with an included **all-areas ticket** to **Longleat's House & Gardens** including the famous **Safari Park**. The coach will drive through the Animal Park, *with the exception of the monkey area*, so you can see up close many of the wild animals. Longleat House is widely regarded as one of the best examples of high Elizabethan architecture in Britain and one of the most beautiful stately homes open to the public. Substantially completed by 1580 and now home to the 8th Marquess of Bath, the house, set within 900 acres of stunning 'Capability' Brown landscaped parkland. See the ceilings that Longleat is famous for, decorated with ornate painting & an abundance of gilt. It also has one of the largest private book collections in Europe with over 40,000 books catalogued within 7 libraries. Return early evening to Kent.

Simply Groups reserve the right to make minor changes to this itinerary due to circumstances beyond our control.

Somerset Booking Form

PASSENGER NAME & DETAILS

Name _____ Group Name SHEPWAY & DISTRICT U3A
 Address _____
 Email _____ Postcode _____
 Daytime Contact Number _____ Mobile No. _____
 Emergency Contact Name _____ Telephone _____

TOUR DETAILS

5 days / 4 nights' duration departing **Tuesday 22nd September 2026**

Return Executive Coach Travel with selected pick-up points in Folkestone & Hythe ***complete overleaf**

4 nights half board **4 *Bristol Grand Hotel by Sunday** – ensuite rooms –porterage included

Included excursion package as set out on our flyer with entrances / guides as indicated

Price based on a minimum of **30+ paying £799pp** – Two share

Single supplement **£99pp** for 4 nights – maximum **15 rooms** – twin/doubles sole use

Deposit **£150pp** (non-refundable / non-transferable). Balance due date **24.07.26**

100% cancellation charges apply after the balance due date

Optional Travel Insurance **£34pp** plus handling fee applies of **£5pp** (email) OR **£10pp** if policy required by post.

Includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) @ 20%.

Simply Groups Limited is an appointed representative of ITC Compliance Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (their registration number is 313486) and which is permitted to advise on and arrange general insurance contracts as an intermediary.

PAYMENT METHODS

1. Cheques need to be made payable to: **Trustees of PTS Air Travel Trust**

2. BACS : Payee -**Trustees of PTS Air Travel Trust**

HSBC: Sort Code **40-40-14** Account Number: **83664597** (quote **SG/SHEP** as reference)

3. Card Payments can be made by calling **Simply Groups** on **01943 605999**

Title	First Name	Surname	Room Type	National Trust Member	SG Insurance Date of Birth	Total Enclosed

SPECIAL REQUESTS, DIETARY, MOBILITY & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AND ALLERGIES _____

RESTRICTED MOBILITY (specify) _____ WHEELCHAIR/WALKING AIDS _____

ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS (Preferences and requests are not guaranteed) _____

Walking aids/wheelchairs must be declared prior to departure and are subject to weight and space availability
 If there is more than one name on this booking form you must **indicate to whom your special requests refer.**

Signed on behalf of all above named passengers _____ **Date** _____

This signed booking form is a contract between the above passengers and Simply Groups. All deposits, Insurance premiums & handling fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. Booking Conditions apply for all other cancellation charges. Terms and conditions can be accessed on our web site or a copy can be sent directly to you on request.

Please complete this booking form and return with your deposit & Insurance premium if required + handling fee to: **Katherine Robinson, 81a Seabrook Road, Hythe, Kent CT21 5QW. Tel. 01303 239420**
 This tour is operated by Simply Groups, Dalton House, 1 Hawksworth Street, Ilkley, LS29 9DU
 TEL 01943 605999 info@simplygroups.co.uk www.simplygroups.co.uk

**IMPORTANT
 INFORMATION
 OVERLEAF
 PLEASE READ
 & COMPLETE**

Please indicate below your preferred pick-up point

Hythe

Folkestone

IMPORTANT INSURANCE INFORMATION

Simply Groups Ltd is an appointed representative of ITC Compliance Ltd who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (their registration number is 313486) and which is permitted to advise on and arrange general insurance contracts. Insurance if required is available as detailed overleaf and includes Insurance Premium Tax. This cover is arranged through **Wrightsre Services Limited**.

The '**Status Disclosure Document**' and the **policy terms and conditions** are shown on the Simply Groups Website , or please phone the Simply Groups office to request a copy. These show full details of terms and conditions of the policy.

A copy of the Status Disclosure Document and the Travel Insurance Policy document will be sent to those requesting this Insurance upon receipt of payment.

For ALL holidays, no medical screening is required. For passengers with medical conditions which are being controlled by prescribed medication at the time of booking, full cover applies (subject to the policy terms and conditions) unless any of the general exclusions below apply.

In particular please note : Please read the Insurance policy, as any person who is unable to satisfy these conditions, may not be covered.

Insurers shall not be liable for claims where at the time of taking out the policy and between that time and the scheduled date of departure the insured person(s):

Health Condition Exclusions:

We shall not be liable for claims where at the time of taking out this policy and between that time and your departure:-

a) You are aware of any medical condition or set of circumstances that could reasonably be expected to give rise to a claim (for example the state of health of a Close relative, Close business associate or any person on whom your travel plans depend).

b) You are:

- i. Receiving, or on a waiting list for, surgery, in-patient treatment or investigations in a hospital, clinic or nursing home.
- ii. Travelling against any health requirements stipulated by the carrier, their handling agents or other public transport provider.
- iii. Travelling against the advice of a Healthcare Professional or for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment abroad.

Or.....

iv. Have been given a terminal prognosis.

Please note: If you are on medication at the time of travel, your medical condition(s) must be stable and well controlled.

CHANGES IN HEALTH AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

If you are travelling outside of the United Kingdom, you must notify the Change in Health helpline immediately if a change in health occurs (including any change to medication) between the date this policy is issued and your scheduled date of departure. We may reassess your cover and premiums when we are told about changes in your circumstances. If you do not tell us about a change in your circumstances, the wrong terms may be quoted, a claim might be rejected or payment could be reduced. In some circumstances your policy might be invalid.

Should you have any queries regarding the suitability of the policy for your purposes please contact Simply Groups Please sign below to confirm your acknowledgment of the above information.

SIGNED.....

DATE.....

When taking our optional Travel Insurance, a £5pp handling fee will apply for policies emailed

A £10pp handling fee will apply when a hard copy is required by post. All handling fees are non-refundable.

FINANCIAL SECURITY - How Protected Trust Services Works



Simply Groups Ltd is a company committed to customer satisfaction and consumer financial protection.

We are therefore pleased to announce that at no extra cost to you and in accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Tours Regulations", all passengers booking with Simply Groups Ltd, are fully protected for deposit(s) and subsequent balances of monies paid, as detailed in your group / individual booking confirmation.

Your money is fully protected and paid into an independent Trust Account, managed by Protected Trust Services Ltd of 307-315 Holdenhurst Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth BH8 8BX and its Trustees, chartered accountants

Xeinadin London Ltd 8th Floor, Becket House, 36 Old Jewry, London EC2R 8DD.

SHEPWAY & DISTRICT U3A

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 2 p.m. on 14 May 2025 at the Tin Tabernacle

Present:

Committee Officers: Steve O'Neill (Chair), Tony Scofield (Vice Chair), Katherine Robinson (Treasurer)

Committee Members: Linda Fellows, Christina Ford, Gehad Homsey, Christine Hughes, Jacqueline Mack, David Warren, Roger Wood

Apologies: Jacqui Bray

Others: 56 other U3A members attending. **Apologies:** 19 U3A members

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM, and thanked everyone for coming.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 8 May 2024

The minutes of the 2024 AGM were agreed as a correct record with no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report

Steve O'Neill gave his first report as Chair. He thanked everyone who has helped him to date, particularly John Hubbard, Linda Fellows, Tony Scofield, Katherine Robinson, all the committee members, and also Richard Andrews who is in charge of the website and, going forward, takes on the Registrar role. Changes implemented this year included:

- Outsourcing members' trips to Viv Kenny's Real Socialising
- Taster sessions for people who only wish to join U3A for a particular group and nothing else.
- Payments can now be made by card machine as well as the other usual ways.
- A new website has been set up by Tony Scofield and is managed by Richard Andrews.
- The option to renew membership online, offered for the first time, has been very successful.
- Membership has been retained at £35 but an additional charge of £25 is now made for the small number of members who wish to receive the newsletter by post, rather than by email.

Future plans include:

- Ceasing to use the RHDR which has several issues including heating problems, car park charges and uncertainty over availability. Moving out of the RHDR will also save money.
- Making the current process for joining groups more robust and simpler and quicker.
- Attracting more volunteers, not only for the committee but also for activities and events. U3A is a self-help organisation and we need to share the load. With around 800 members, volunteers are much-needed. The Chair thanked everyone who currently volunteers.

Highlights:

- Beaujolais Nouveau evening, Christmas Lunch & Party, Film Matinees, Members' Meetings, Loire Valley Trip, Life is a Circus – the MAD show in March.
- Help received from Ashford, Wye & District U3A, White Cliffs Country U3A, & Canterbury U3A. However, we do need to re-engage with the U3A networks and the Third Age Trust generally.

4. Treasurer's Report

Katherine Robinson' report for the year ending 31 March 2025 was approved although she advised that the accounts were as yet unapproved by the auditors. Total income was £56,452. Total expenditure was £56,152. Net surplus was £300. Reserves were £29,535.

Katherine confirmed that subscriptions were the biggest income. The £1 per member per meeting was also very helpful. Gift Aid was £2,370, Donations £1,124 and Events raised £5,894.

The Chair thanked Katherine for her dedication, and her report. She received a round of applause.

Chris Phillips proposed that the meeting accept the Accounts for 2024/2025. Roger Curd seconded. Those present voted in favour.

5. Membership Secretary's Report

In his final Membership Report before stepping down, Tony Scofield confirmed there were 838 members currently. 96% of the current membership now use e-mail and there were only a handful of members who still received the printed version of the Newsletter at £25 for the year (printing/postage), which he would still do himself if numbers stayed low. As of today's meeting, 775 members had renewed, an excellent response rate. It was much easier this year using the online renewal system and payment by PayPal or debit/credit card. In closing, Tony highlighted the many friends he and Linda have made in the U3A over the years, and reiterated the Chair's plea for extra volunteers.

The Chair thanked Tony for his 15 years of service as Membership Secretary and Vice-Chair and presented him with a bottle of wine. The meeting expressed its appreciation with a round of applause.

The Chair also thanked Christine Hughes for her enthusiasm & hard work helping groups not meeting in the main halls. He presented her with flowers as she too was standing down from the committee.

6. Election of Committee Members

There were vacancies for the officer positions of Treasurer, Business Secretary and Vice Chair.

Nominations had been received and seconded as follows:

Vice Chair – Roger Wood – eligible for a 3 year tenure.

Treasurer - Katherine Robinson – can remain in post for 1 year

No nomination had been received for Business Secretary.

There were also five ordinary committee member vacancies. Nominations had been received and seconded for four of them as follows:

Jacqueline Mack – Events – for a term of 3 years

Susan Dickie – Membership Secretary – for a term of 3 years

Christina Ford – Minute Secretary – for a term of 3 year

John Hubbard – Beacon Administrator. On the committee for insurance reasons (2 year term)

The AGM confirmed its unanimous endorsement of the candidates with a show of hands.

7. Group Coordinators' Report

This was presented by Roger Wood on behalf of the group coordinators. There are 81 subject groups with 148 sessions per month and 75 group leaders – the core of our U3A, whom he thanked for their work and dedication. Roger also thanked Gehad Homsey for his work as Groups Registrar, as Gehad was also stepping down from that role today. Roger outlined the various issues (mentioned above) with the RHLR hall. Great efforts were being made to relocate groups currently using that venue. The Chair thanked Roger for his presentation, and for his hard work, also David Warren for his work on the Tin Tabernacle and Christine Hughes for her work liaising with and locating other group venues.

8. Members' Meetings Report

This was presented by the Chair, who has been organising and coordinating these meetings. Nick Taylor had the role previously, succeeded by Helen Peverett. He thanked them, and everyone who helped with setting up for the meetings. He also ran through the wide variety of speakers who had been booked – every presentation had been very interesting and well received. Speakers had now been booked for the remainder of 2025. The Chair thanked Nina Chislett for organising refreshments, and in turn, she asked if new volunteers could get in touch to help her, going forward.

9. Film Matinees

John Hubbard runs these popular afternoons together with his wife Eileen. He paid tribute to her, saying he couldn't do it without her. Films run from October to June each year. He likes to have a couple of "tearful" films, this season's inclusion being "One Life". Other films were Pelican Brief, Grease, Before I go to Sleep, First Do No Harm, Her Majesty Mrs Brown, Les Misérables, and Gone with the Wind –which finished after 5 pm! At each film presentation, tea and cake are provided.

10. Events & Visits Report

Jacqueline Mack reported on the events and visits, which included afternoon tea at the voco Clifton Hotel in Folkestone and Curry Evenings. She has had very good reports from members who've been on the visits organised by Real Socialising. The Chair thanked Jacqueline for her hard work.

11. AOB

- Several new members who had joined recently had heard nothing at all regarding their application to join various groups. Richard Andrews, who had kindly offered to take over from Gehad as Registrar, would liaise with the new members to get this rectified as soon as possible.
- A West Hythe member is unable to get to meetings as much as she would like due to her being unable to get to public transport. She asked if other members could give her a lift on occasion.
- A member said that parking on the Leas for U3A coffee mornings at the Clifton is very difficult. Sainsbury's offer 2 hours free parking. Also, bus stops are quite close if that is an option.

12. Closure of the AGM: The meeting was closed at 3.15 p.m. and was followed by refreshments, for which Nina and her team were thanked.

CF/SON 13.06.25

GROUPS

Afternoon Tea on the Marsh
Art - Mixed Media
Badminton
Bird Watching
Bolivia (Canasta alternative)
Book Circle - 1 - Hythe
Book Circle - 3 Romney Marsh
Book club
Books&Co
Bridge
Carpet Bowls
Chess
Climate in Crisis
Computer Users
Crafting Club
Cribbage
Critical Analysis of Poetry
Current Affairs - Folkestone
Current Affairs - Hythe
Current Affairs - New Romney
Cycling
Early Evening Drinks
Earth Science
England-Norman/Angevin Kings
Family History
First Friday Coffee
First Monday Breakfast Club
Fitness 1
Fitness 2
Flora, Fauna and Foraging
Flower Arranging
French - Beginners
French - Conversation
French - Intermediate
French - Online
Gardening 1
Gardening 2
Gardening 3
Golf
Italian Beginners
Knit and Natter - Groups 1, 2 & 3
Kurling
Line Dancing
Local History 3
Local History 4
Mahjong
Meditation
Mid Week Supper Club
Military History
Music - Classical
Music and Drama
Nordic Walking
Novels 1
Patchwork & Sewing
Petanque - Elham
Petanque - Folkestone
Philosophy
Photography
Photography 2
Pickleball
Pilates
Play Reading - Folkestone
Play Reading - Hythe
Poetry
Rummikub
Saturday Dining
Scone Rangers
Shakespeare
Singing for Life
Sunday Lunch Club
Swing Band
Table Tennis
Tai Chi - Class 1 - Form
Tai Chi - Class 2 - Qigong
Tai Chi - Class 3 - Qigong
Tai Chi - Class 4 - Sticks
Tai Chi - Class 5 - Form
Ten Pin Bowling (Friday Group)
Ten Pin Bowling (Tuesday Group)
Ukulele
Walks - Long
Walks - Short - West
Walks - Short -East/Central
Whist & Other Card Games
World at War – History 1930-1945
Writing Circle 1
Writing Circle 2
Your Favourite Poems