

# Spire u3a

Newsletter 57 September 2025



September monthly  
meeting  
Monday 8 Sept  
10 for 10.30am  
Harnham Memorial Hall  
See page 12

Pic The Riverside 11/8/25 MEF

## Chairman's Message

It is not just households which have youngsters involved in education that are anticipating September and the new term. At Spire u3a it all seems to be happening at once with Men Matters, the scarecrow display and u3a Week all looming. That is not to say that we have had a quiet summer. We have had a series of good speakers at the monthly meetings and a number of activities that have taken advantage of the good weather, notably Interest Group meetings out of doors and trips out. Thank you all for your input, support, good humour and willingness to step in, as required.

*Maureen*

## Editorial

Lots of photos this month, thanks mainly to the visit to Rockbourne. There seems to be a lot going on in September I hope I have managed to capture it all but my task will be made easier by our website going live. This month I have left out Gresham College and u3a on-line learning to save space.

## Picnic and Day Out to Rockbourne

On Friday 22 August about 15 members of Spire U3A were picked up by the Community Bus for a visit to Rockbourne Roman Villa. We arrived late morning and had a very interesting guided tour of the site which really made the site come alive – obviously there is not a lot remaining, especially as the site was built on existing ruins/structures over the years and even today has not been entirely excavated. We were shown evidence of how the site had been occupied well before the Roman invasion and would have been a farmstead initially, surrounded by arable land, hence the Romans' interest in it.

Rockbourne has several unique features in its iteration as a Roman villa. The hypocaust system used curved roof tiles (rather than straight sided square tiles to conduct the heat under the floor, repurposed from an old roof. And the mosaic discovered had a unique intricate design at its centre whose significance is not known. After a break for our picnic, we had a tour of the museum followed by another fascinating talk with our guide transformed into a Roman legionnaire! He's obviously very passionate about all things Roman, as well as being extremely knowledgeable. I think everyone learned something new.

We all had a great time, and were also very lucky with the weather. Many thanks to Pauline and Maureen for organising, and to our driver and our guide at Rockbourne, John Smith.



Charity Number 1080479





# Now Live!

<https://spire.u3asite.uk>

Spire now has a u3a themed website. Do take a look.

Officers and Committee can be contacted via the website.

Grateful thanks to Steve Hoffman who has put in many man-hours to get us to this stage

**u3a** Spire (Salisbury)

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**Newsletters**

**Spire u3a**, a local Salisbury-based group for people in their "third age" (no longer in full-time work or raising a family), invites you to learn, make friends, and have fun. We are part of a nationwide and worldwide movement of over 1,000 u3as.

There is no entry fee, but after two meetings, you'll be asked to pay a modest annual membership fee. Members are welcome to attend monthly meetings, interest groups, or both.

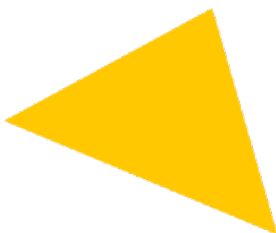
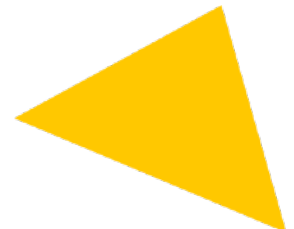
We work with the [Harnham Community Network](#) and the [Bath Area Network](#) of u3as. Members may join interest groups in other nearby u3as if there's a vacancy and vice versa. A few groups are "hybrid," meeting both in person and on Zoom.

**All Spire members** are invited to the [Harnham Memorial Hall](#), usually on the second Monday of the month.

It offers a chance to find out what is going on, what the interest groups are doing, to socialise over a drink and hear a guest speaker.

## August Meeting

John Craig's entirely successful efforts to start the week for us with a bit of fun are probably best described in this series of photos. His stand-up routine, **Going to Blazes**, relied on his experiences as a career firefighter. I am still wondering if that US wonder-machine has emerged yet from the Suffolk bog, given the dry weather we have had.



Ann and Esme admire funeral flowers on Jill Tilley's tricycle

## Scarecrow making

One of the September events is a scarecrow festival to be held to be held in Salisbury United Reformed church in Fisherton Street in aid of Wiltshire air ambulance on the 19th to 21st.. Always wishing to promote Spire u3a our chair said we should enter this.

Well we don't have a scarecrow to hand, no problem, she said, we will get Doreen to make one. So that is what we are doing. My daughter reckons the head is scary.....RESULT



# u3a Week: 20-28 September 2025

u3a Week is an annual event to showcase the activity, learning and fun which takes place across the movement every day. It is a celebration of positive ageing, highlighting our members' lived experience.

**Group Leaders** are asked to keep in touch with Groups Coordinator Hilary Glyde about anything special that you have arranged to mark u3a Week this year. Also please remember to send us a bit about it for the next newsletter - thanks.

## Spire u3a Week Lunch

Saturday 20 September, Parish Hall

- Pauline Oliver needs your names
- Mary Robson needs your money by **Monday September 8**, please: £15 each.
- You need to tell us your menu choices On the sign-up sheet or contact Pauline -
- The options will be much as last year: Roast Vegetable Lasagne, Cottage Pie, Salmon Quiche or Gluten free.

## Raffle

all offers please to John Holt.

plants  
games fruit  
confectionery perfume bottles  
books chocolate  
wine gifts

Doors open 12.30 for sit-down at 1pm.

Please do not arrive earlier unless you have agreed to help set up.

Partners are welcome.

Car sharing advised as spaces are limited and we should keep clear of the Scout area.



# Archives and Library visit to the Cathedral

Chris Hayman is collecting names. Look for the sign-up list at the monthly meeting or email her.

## Interest Groups

### Art & Craft

The next meeting will be hosted by Doreen on Tuesday 23 September at 2pm when we will start on the Christmas Tree project for this year.

At our in-the-garden get together in August we learned how Tatreez embroidery is worked, drank tea and shared thoughts on what we do next.

### Friday Mornings

Practical Photography – September 12

Digital Imaging – September 19

Social Meeting on zoom – September 26

### OBC

From Mary Mitchell. The OBC group met in Maureen's garden on Tuesday 12th August to discuss our latest reads. (Maureen splashed the grass under our feet with cold water to keep us cool)!

We had continued reading stories with a Dorset theme, many featuring Thomas Hardy. Frank had read *The Mayor of Casterbridge* which had originally been serialised, so the chapters were entities in their own right, and it was felt this made for an artificial structure and not an easy read.

The *Wessex Tales* were also read, in which Salisbury is named as Melchester and maps of the local area were included. The *Distracted Preacher* tale was highly rated.

I read 11 short stories by Hardy, but it wasn't until I finished each one that I realised I'd read them all before in the dim and distant past!

The novels contain many words which aren't in common usage today, such as 'farrel' meaning the binding or cover of a book. Hardy was certainly a prolific writer.

We had also read other novels such as *The Ladies Detective Agency* by A. McCall-Smith – such gentle and polite stories. Mary had also read the sequel to the infamous *Salt Path* by Raynor Winn – *The Wild Silence*, which seeks to improve the health of her husband Moth. This novel is set in Iceland. It was deemed to be less interesting a read!

Malcolm commented on *The Uprising*, a novel by the West Indian Alex Wheatley, a 'true' account of the difficulties and disadvantages experienced by people living and

working in Brixton London. Malcolm could relate strongly to the experiences of those working classes, where perhaps the only means of escape was by academic success. The other book I read was 'Giants Bread' by Agatha Christie under the pseudonym of Mary Westmacott, set at the beginning of the twentieth century and WW1. It proceeded at an even pace throughout, but the last chapter was the culmination of events and personalities, which I found overwhelming, and worried that I might have nightmares!

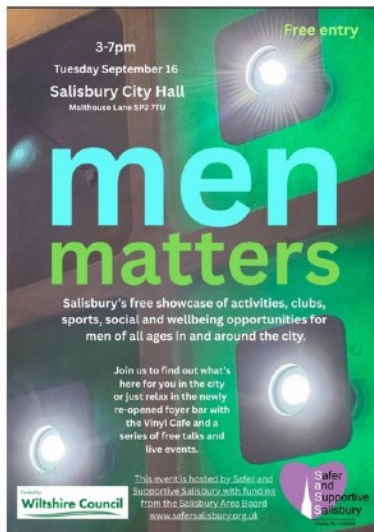
An eclectic selection of books discussed on a sunny afternoon by an eclectic mix of people.

## Scrabble

Following the sad demise of Jill, the reins have been taken up by Jackie Hankinson and we had held the first meeting at Jackie's house on the new day, the fourth Wednesday in the month. I played Norma (she won) but our first game was marred by there being no 'I' tiles or blanks in the set we were using, the sets are now going to be checked by the two Mary's prior to the next meeting. You will notice in the photograph that the biscuits and cups have a central position.



# Learn, Laugh, Live



Safer and Supportive Salisbury will be bringing clubs, social activities, advice and support for local men together under one roof on September 16. The Mayor Councillor John Wells will open the event at 3pm and it will be open until 7pm to allow people to drop in after work.

The **Men Matters** showcase will bring information about a range of clubs; from motorbikes to chess, walking football to weightlifting, debating to dancing. There will be stands offering advice and information on all aspects of health and wellbeing and also the chance for a health and blood pressure check if you've been meaning to get round to it but putting it off.

You can take part in one of the free workshops see the

details below for pre-booking.

Find out more about the history of entertainment in the City Hall with talks and slide shows by Frogg Moody and Roger Elliott.

There are many routes to positive wellbeing. If you want to just come and have a look round the newly re-vamped City Hall and relax with a beer in the Vinyl Café that's fine too. Men of Salisbury – it's your day!

Please contact Dave Chapell if you can help man the Spire u3a display.

Prebooking see <https://safersalisbury.org.uk/> for a range of free workshops which include Dance, DJing and novel writing.

## Tipple Time

**Friday 19th September** at 6pm for one hour of gentle conversation.

*To have and to hold* Weddings: Royal or fictional? Jane eyre or Meghan Markle? Fairytale or save the money?

Have weddings changed over the years? Late bridegrooms, bad photographers, last minute panic, great music .....why bother?

## Harnham Community Network

### Salisbury Folk Club

**Wednesday 10 September, 7.30 pm**

at Harnham Social Club.

Guest artists: Carrie Martin and Ribble.

£5 at the door, bar open, and a special cake raffle!

### **Film Night - Mr Burton**

**Wednesday 17 September, 7.30 pm**

at Harnham Social Club. This month's film is *Mr Burton*. £5 at the door, bar open all evening.

### **Harvest Quiz and Supper**

**Saturday 27 September,**

at Harnham Parish Hall. Save the date and look out for further details soon.

### **First Wednesday Talk**

**Wednesday 1 October, 7.30 pm,**

at Harnham Parish Hall. Joanna Nair will speak on *Learning from Nepal since 1993*. No entrance charge, but donations invited.

## Archaeology

Dear 'Dig In' folks

I'm delighted to let you know that I now have the dates for the next round of Dig In cafes. Huge thanks as always to Abi and the team at Wiltshire Creative for providing us with the use of their community room. The first session is on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September, from 10.30am for an 11am talk.**

I'll look forward to seeing you there!

## Monthly Meeting

Doors open for refreshments at 10am.

Speaker: Dr Chris Pawson is an Associate Professor in Applied Psychology and Behavioural Science, and a Reader in Anthrozoology.

Having initially trained as a psychologist and completing a PhD in child psychology, he then spent a decade working at the Institute for Research in Child Development in East London, and with H.M Home Office in prisons and young offenders institutions. He subsequently moved to Bath in 2014 to take up a job as Head of Psychology at UWE Bristol. He continued to work in the field of mental health but began researching human behaviour within frameworks offered by evolutionary theory. It was through this work that he began regularly travelling to Lundy Island in the Bristol channel.

Subject: Lundy Island" - Chris will provide an overview of the history of the island, including the flora, fauna and archaeology and explain how the wildlife and unique natural history of the island continues to provide stimulus for his research in both animal behaviour and mental health.

Our Speakers for October will be Phil Harding and Leigh Chalmers from Wessex Archaeology - "Digging for Erlestoke".