Spire u3a

Newsletter 69 October 2026

Walking in the Countryside Group exploring the boardwalks and new riverside paths - to mark u3a Week 2026



From the Chair

The theme of u3a week this year was 'Expanding Horizons.' For Spire it often meant sitting down and talking to one another while we ate and drank. As we breakfasted together, walked together, picnicked together and drank tea I do hope that you had some good conversations too and perhaps expanded your circle of friends.

As the year goes on our attention now turns to *Men Matters*, the December social events and our entry in the Christmas Tree Festival. The committee are grateful to those of you who understand how tricky arranging some of these things can be, who help out and join in without being nagged. Thank you.

Maureen

Monday 12 October monthly meeting

10am for 10.30 Harnham Memorial Hall - See p.3

Editorial

Hope you like our joyful photo on the cover page. We have not abandoned the customary photo of the cathedral spire - it is there in the background if you look carefully.
Members of the Friday Morning Groups have sent us a wonderful selection of pics this month to illustrate our pages; a picture paints a thousand words, as they say.
Thank you to everyone who participated in u3a week events this year. These things give us something to peg our publicity onto and something for you to talk to prospective members about. Those of you who organise, participate, record and photograph what we do helps us to flourish, as individuals, and as a group. To find out more of what has been happening - Read On.

Christmas Meal - Mon December 14

Eventually we settled on a plan for the Christmas meal. Making decisions on when and where was a bit of a rollercoaster. Feedback from members was inconclusive, the bookings calendar for the Parish Hall proved to be incomplete and misleading and one of the three local venues under consideration was deemed unsuitable; so we picked the option we have become familiar with, the *Rose & Crown* following the December meeting. Many apologies to those of you who hoped for a less pricey menu and a date in January but, in the end, that presented us with more unknowns than we were prepared to risk. Sorry.

- Mary Robson is now collecting names and payment.

Art on the London Underground



I, and many of you, will have seen art on the walls of the London underground but until Mike Grundy's well-received talk entitled 'Dramatic Art of London Underground' probably didn't realise how organised and widespread this art was. He told us that since the 1930s art has been designed and commissioned for specific locations. He gave as an example Leytonstone station, on the Central line, which has mosaics depicting scenes from Sir Alfred Hitchcock's films and life; the 'local boy made good'.
We were shown newer works that were included in the revamp of stations such as 'Diamonds and Circles' at Tottenham Court Road station. This huge artwork by the French artist Daniel Buren includes his trademark vertical black and white stripes along with shapes that, according to Mike, might remind you of liquorice allsorts.
Mike gave many other examples mainly on this occasion from the Northern line.
In all, 90 of the stations have permanent artworks and following this talk I for one will looking about more when next I take the tube.

Frank

TRIP HAZARD



Two of our members tripped over the edge of the new flooring when emerging from the kitchen at the Memorial Hall last month. One was very badly shaken. A report was made to the hall authorities, to our own H&S Officer and written up in the incident book kept in the kitchen.
We will all need to take extra care in the kitchen doorway.

Next Meeting – 10 am coffee for 10:30 start

Leigh Chalmers, Wessex Archaeology - Harnham Field Notes
Monday **October 12** at the Memorial Hall, as usual.

And next month...

Our speaker on **November 9** will be Frank Bryant - Ladies of Lighthouses.

Raffle

We will be holding a raffle at our December monthly meeting.
John Holt will be pleased to receive offers of prizes as early as the October meeting.
Thank you.

Spire u3a Week 2026

With thanks to Frank, Michael & others for pics etc









u3a Week picnickers - Men's Breakfast - Cream Tea limerick (by AI)

There once was a scone from Devon,
With jam and cream—what heaven!
A dollop of cream,
And jam like a dream,
Made teatime last till seven



Interest Groups

Spire Wednesday Book Group

September's reading was "Act of Oblivion" by Robert Harris a prolific writer of historical fiction. The starting point is England in 1660. General Whalley and his son-in-law Colonel Goffe board a ship bound for the New World. They are on the run, wanted for murder of King Charles I. Ten years later the Royalists have returned to power and under the Act of Oblivion, the fifty-nine men who signed the death warrant have been found guilty of high treason. Some of the Roundheads, including Oliver Cromwell are already dead, others have been captured, hung, drawn and quartered and a few imprisoned for life. Richard Nayler Secretary to the regicide committee of the Privy Council stops at nothing to find the traitors and is determined to go to America and find Whalley and Goffe and bring them back dead or alive. This is an epic book, a mostly true story of religion, vengeance and power and the general consensus of the group was it was well-researched and we all learnt something from it.

u3a Choir

David Davies is looking out for someone to replace him as conductor of the Salisbury u3a choir.
The choir is of around 25 members drawn from the various u3as, in and around Salisbury. Repertoire ranges from medieval music to songs from the shows. There are weekly meetings from September to April, on Monday afternoons at Wilton Community Centre, with two concerts annually, and the choir meets informally twice in the summer. There is a well stocked library.
David has directed and accompanied the choir since 2012 but he now has to think about a successor.
Anyone interested should ring David

Explore AI

Explore AI starts **October 16** in Salisbury Library from 10 am till noon.
To join us, please email Michael and include a mobile number if you have one.

Art & Craft

This month's meeting was held at Maureen's house where we discussed colour and its various uses. Have you ever looked closely at a checked shirt for example? Yes, it's main colours are obvious, say blue and green, but on closer inspection you will see a single thread of maybe grey or yellow which breaks up the contrast of the two main colours. When looking at colours used for clothing its quite distinctive that different cultures have different ideas about what colours 'go together'. For example we looked at fabric used for Indian saris and remarked on how vibrant they are compared to designs that would be acceptable to European tastes. The practical side of our afternoon involved colouring in a print of a mandala design (a computer generated pattern found in the popular colouring books that are on the market) using our imagination as to what colours blend best. As you would imagine no two colour combinations were the same!



Next meeting will be on **27 October** at 2pm.

Doreen

Walking in the Countryside

We had two walks last month, the first was to Groveley Wood where we enjoyed fantastic views, some interesting Fungi and great refreshments at the Weavers Coffee shop. Our second walk was for U3A week and was through the new Riverpark which we were joined by 5 members wishing to try the group.
A dozen of us enjoyed a walk along the Avon, through the new River Park to the open meadow on a fine sunny morning. We had a stop at the meadow, listened to the Cetti's warbler and a few lucky ones glimpsed a kingfisher.

Details of our walk for 9 October have been sent out to members and anyone else who has not previously joined us will be very welcome, just let me know by email prior to the walk:

Each walk starts at 9.30am and we try and end near a coffee shop for those interested in partaking. Interesting local facts will be part of the format of each walk.
Dates for walks up to December '26 are as below, so put the dates in your diaries:
9 October – Cranborne – 4.8 miles. Start at Cranbourne Garden Centre with coffee at the end in their tea rooms. Their Cheese Scones are legendary.
20 November – Breamore and the Mizmaze – 4.5 miles. Start at Breamore House tearooms, returning for a coffee at the end.
11 December – Salisbury to Clarendon Park– 5 miles. Coffee venue tbc.

Dave Chapell

Photography Groups

A good turnout from the Practical Photography Group (on 11 September) for the Meeting at Rose Cottage, where James Prain gave a talk on Drones, covering Legislation of using a Drone and Photography using a Drone.





Drone and its operator, James Prain, by Michael Stroud and drone hovering by Juliet ten Doeshate

After lunch James flew his drone over the Water Meadows; interesting to see what it could do and the splendid photos that it took of some of our group.
This was followed by 5 Members having a Tour and Talk about the Water Meadows by John Hunter. We gave a Donation to the Water Meadows Trust for the Talk and use of Rose Cottage.

The Photo Editing Group met on Zoom on 25 September, Homework from previous meeting was shown and then Terry gave a Demonstration of How to Create a Montage in Photo Editing Software using some of our own images. A lively discussion took place on a multitude of aspects of Editing Images.



Montage created by Terry Waldron.

Men's Breakfast

Following the inaugural meeting during u3a Week, the next get-together will be on Tuesday **October 13** at 9.30am (and then November 10).
Charlie's Cafe, 35 Catherine St, offers a large and varied breakfast menu from a cup of tea to a vast plateful.
There will be a sign-up sheet at the monthly meeting or email me -

Alan

French Conversation Classes (HCN - not u3a)

Fancy keeping your French going – or simply having a go at speaking French in a friendly group?
A series of eight French conversation sessions has started at Harnham Parish Hall, on Fridays at 10am …….relaxed and practical, giving people the chance to practise their conversational French rather than sit in a traditional classroom.
To see if there are any vacant places, please email Harnham Community.

Learn, Laugh Live

The Sound of History:

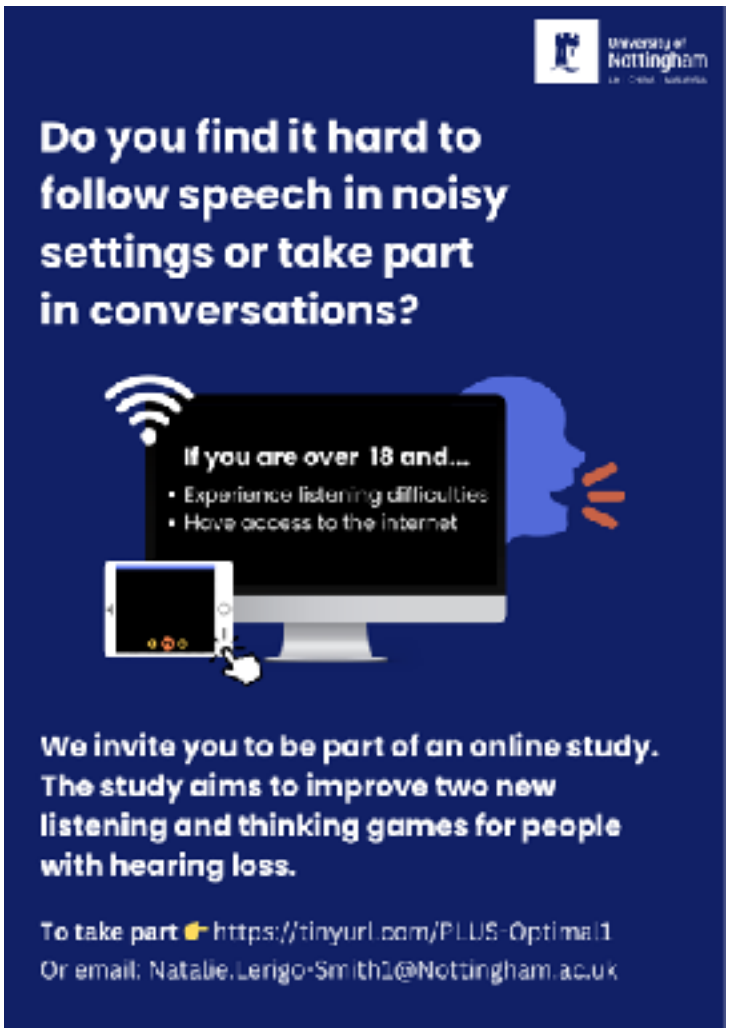
Visit the Cathedral Library for a new, small, temporary, free exhibition: Musical Treasures from the Cathedral Collections.
Access is via a narrow staircase from the South Transept.
(You may need proof of postcode to obtain free entry to the cathedral.)
Always check the website before setting out -
https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/events/the-sound-of-history-musical-treasures-from-the-cathedral-collections-2/?

Add your Salisbury Story to 800th Anniversary Book

Salisbury City Council is inviting people with a connection to Salisbury to share their stories for a special book, *The People's Story*, marking Salisbury's 800th anniversary. Stories could highlight a personal experience, a contribution to city life, hopes for Salisbury's future or a reflection on what Salisbury means to you.
Share your story by 1 December 2026. Submissions are now open, see Salisbury City Council's Salisbury 800 webpage.

Committee Meeting

Monday **November 2** - on zoom - 10.30am
To review July minutes, events since last meeting, hall development, co-options, future plans and AOB.



University initiative for our members with hearing impairments.

Spire members with hearing loss have been invited.

The study aims to improve two new listening and thinking games as a support tool for people with hearing loss. (It is not suitable for cochlea implants.)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Nottingham Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Contact Natalie and ask for the participant information sheet.

natalie.Lerigo-Smith1@nottingham.ac.uk

Christmas Lunch

The Rose and Crown after our meeting on December 14 (menu sent by email on September 18).
If you would like to come, please let me know which two courses you have chosen by November 1.
Payment (BACS or at the monthly meeting) must be made in full by November 24.
As previously, your guests are welcome.
If unable to attend, no refunds, but you may find someone to take your place.

Mary

Spire u3a Christmas Lunch **Monday 14 December** 12.30pm

£33 for 2 courses

Choose either a Starter and Main OR Main and Dessert.

Various dietary options available.

Dig In

Wednesday 28 October
Wednesday 25 November
Short talks from Wessex Archaeology will start in The Playhouse Community Room at 11am but do arrive earlier for a chat over coffee and cake!

Exhibition

Field Notes of Harnham - now running at the Young Gallery until the **October 31.** Additionally, there is an artist talk on **19 October** 5pm in the Young Gallery. This is an opportunity to hear from the four public artists who have been commissioned to create art works that will go into the Wilton Gate housing development and country park. Places free but need to be booked:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/field-notes-community-and-public-art-talk-tickets-2001166323343

Tipple Time



The topic for October is pottery - crocks, porcelain or bone china? Earthenware or Wedgwood? What happened to Granny's best teapot, the elephant from Ceylon, potsherds from Verwood or squeaky utility plates…..tell us your memories, likes and dislikes.
6pm Friday October 16

All welcome. Just click the usual link at 6pm to join the conversation –

nb this is the web version of the newsletter with zoom links and personal contacts omitted

RIP

It is with sadness that we report the death of longstanding member, Mark Wilson