

December 2025 Newsletter



A Message from the Editor:

November not only reminds me of the winter to come but also of some of the terrible times in the past. Of course, I am thinking of Remembrance Day. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month. A special time for us all to remember the loss of lives during two World Wars.

This is our December edition with contributions from our members and we have some interesting things. Thank you to all that have contributed.

Susan Francis

newsletter.weyportu3a@gmail.com

Remember I'm only the Editor!

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Here we are again, Christmas knocking on the door... All together now -

WHERE DID THAT YEAR GO!! Well, I hope you all enjoy the coming festive season and that you can attend the Christmas meeting. There will be music, singing, a quiz, and of course nibbles and drinks. Fun for all.

Looking back our U3A 2025 has been quite busy, and very successful. The September group's fayre was a great success with many new members joining. There have been two New Members meetings, both well attended. And in August a coffee morning, again well attended. It was something to break-up a month when there are fewer groups meeting because of holidays and grand-parent duties over the school holidays.

To make all these things happen I have a first-class committee. Your committee, and it is your committee, work tirelessly keeping it all going. Tirelessly makes it sound like hard work, but it isn't, not really and it is satisfying knowing that your efforts result in giving so much pleasure to people. All of which brings me to our AGM.

As sure as night follows day so 2026 will follow 2025 and that means, in February our AGM. You know what that means...that's right committee elections! Don't be shy, don't think "I couldn't do that" – you can! Any and all committees need new blood with new ideas. Dip your toe in the water and be a part of what drives our U3A.

Sadly, during 2025 some of you have lost family and friends. Our hearts go out to you. Among them was Paul Brickell. Paul, membership No 1, was not only our President; he was the driving force behind the formation of our U3A. He was also a lovely, caring human being, never short of a tall story - and sound advice. You will be missed Paul.

It just leaves me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all you wish

yourselves in 2026!

Steve Millin

Speakers for Monthly Meetings:

Friday 12th December 2025:

The u3a Christmas Get together.

Friday 16th January 2026:

Panama to Cambodia with Dusty Old Bags.

By Sheonagh Ravensdale

A talk about a charity that provides motorcycles and training to Tanzanian women in Mwanza so they can earn a living.

Friday 20th February 2026:

Luke Mouland.

A talk about nursing volunteers in Dorset in the First World War.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Of

Weymouth and Portland u3a

Weymouth & Portland U3A

Charity No 1109191

NOTICE of AGM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the Weymouth & Portland u3a will be held at **St Aldhelm's Church Centre, Spa Road, Weymouth DT3 5EW at 10.30am on Friday 20th February 2026** to transact the business set out in the agenda below.

Apologies for absence

- Minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2025
- Chairman's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Approval of examined accounts
- Approval of appointment of an examiner for the accounts
- Election of Committee for 2026/2027
- Motions

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of THE WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND U3A

Friday 20th February 2026

At St Aldhelm's Church Centre, Spa Road, Weymouth

**Nominations for election to the U3A Executive Committee at the
AGM**

You cannot nominate someone without his or her permission.

**ALL NOMINATIONS MUST BE sent (or handed in) to the Secretary and
MUST BE RECEIVED by noon on Friday 16th January 2026**

OFFICE	NOMINEE	NAME OF PROPOSER	NAME OF SECONDER
Chair			
Treasurer			
Secretary			
Committee Member (Membership Secretary)			
Committee Member (Speakers Coordinator)			
Committee Member (Group Leaders Coordina-			
Committee Member			
Committee Member			
Committee Member			
Committee Member			
Committee Member			

GROUP NEWS

Group News from the Group Coordinator, Tomasa.

GAMES AFTERNOONS: Fiona Scott Johnston-Jones has kindly agreed to organise these. Thank you, Fiona.

Angela Holt who started the Darts Group and the Games Afternoons has moved to Manchester; we are very grateful for all the time she has spent on these groups.

African Drumming: This has had a successful start and will continue next year.

Living with Hearing Loss: There is now one group, after a successful pilot scheme with a number of small groups.

NEW GROUP (not previously advertised):

Smartphone Photography Group (10-Week Programme on Thursdays)

Group Leader: Trevor Beech

Location: Weymouth & Portland (walkabouts) + Weymouth Library (practical/editing sessions)

This 10-week group is designed to help members get more from their smartphones by learning how to take better photos, use simple editing tools, and explore creative techniques. The sessions will be relaxed, practical, and suitable for complete beginners as well as those who want to refresh their skills

Aims:

- Improve the quality of everyday smartphone photographs;
- Gain confidence with your phone's camera settings and features;
- Learn how to edit photos directly on your device;
- Build an understanding of basic photography principles;
- Take part in themed challenges to develop style and confidence;
- Enjoy social walkabouts around Weymouth while practicing skills.

If you are interested, please contact Bridget Lister:

assistgc.weyportu3a@gmail.com

I am looking forward to working with Bridget Lister, who has volunteered to act as assistant group coordinator. Thank you, Bridget.

Tomasa

A Christmas story

I do not recall lobbying for anything, as a boy, as hard as I lobbied, with my sisters, for a Christmas tree. My parents objected. "We're Jewish," they said. "We don't do Christmas. We do Hanukkah instead." This did nothing to stop the lobbying. Anyway, Hanukkah was no substitute for Christmas. Christmas presents, that was a battle we had already won, my sisters and me. It didn't matter that my mother wrote "Happy Hanukkah" in my Doctor Who annual with William Hartnell or Patrick Troughton on the cover: the book still arrived on Christmas day, in a pillowcase filled with gifts. What the present was called was mere semantics: as long as we got the swag we did not care what was written on it. We were not jealous of friends who got Christmas presents. We were jealous of the friends with Christmas trees.

Having a Christmas tree was what Christmas was all about. It was trees all the way, properly decorated ones, with tinsel and glass balls and a star on the top. We lobbied and we lobbied hard, and we would not give up. My parents would not countenance it.

They had not had Christmas trees when they were children; instead, they had parents who disapproved of Christmas trees.

You couldn't, my mother told us, be Jewish and have a Christmas tree. I was a precocious child, and I had read widely, and I struck. "But it's not Christian," I said. "I think you'll find it is, dear," said my mother. "That's why they call them Christmas trees, after all."

"They are actually," I told her, proudly, and precociously, "a pagan relic. The trees. The thing of people bringing trees into houses at the winter solstice and decorating them has nothing at all to do with Christianity. It's from pagan times."

I'm not sure why it was better to be a pagan relic, but I hoped it was, and it seemed to shake my mother's certainty. Whether it was, as I thought at the time, my precocious argument or (more probably in retrospect), my sisters' huge, pleading eyes and trembling lower lips, I do not know, but my father went to the local market and picked out a Christmas tree for us and brought it home. We decorated it, and were content. Having won the Christmas tree battle, we had, somehow, won the Christmas war.

My father even dressed up, that Christmas Eve, as Father Christmas, with an enormous cotton-wool beard, to place our presents by our beds. We pretended to be as asleep as we could.

"What was that about?" I asked my sister, after he had gone. "It was just Dad," she whispered.

"Are you sure?"

"He was wearing Dad's dressing-gown," she said, sensibly. "Of course it was him."

It seemed to be one the best things about having a good Jewish Christmas: we were never obliged to believe in Father Christmas, and the experiment was never repeated. But the Christmas trees were there to stay. A Christmas tree was bought, normally on the last Saturday before Christmas, for the rest of my childhood. Our more orthodox cousins, profoundly treeless, were both scandalised and impressed by this. But we were happy. We had a nice Jewish Christmas. We were content

Story written by Neil Gaiman.

Sent in by Jean Quick

Outings and Theatre Group

From: Christine Hill

I have started a WhatsApp group for our bus and train day trips called Chris and Dave's Day Trips. Please WhatsApp me on 07491 404884 if you would like to join this group.

In order to help those wanting to join others on coach trips, I have also started a WhatsApp group called U3A Coach Trips. If you wish to share which trips you have booked or would like to book, please WhatsApp me on 07491 404884 and I will add you to this group, The following trips have been added to the U3A Outings page on our website.

17th January 2026

[The Legend of the Titanic](#)

Cost: £72

24th February 2026

[Kew Gardens Orchid Festival](#)

Cost: £70.50

15th March 2026

[Sunday Explorer - Minehead and Dunster](#)

Cost: £40

4th April 2026

[South Devon Railway and Buckfast Abbey](#)

Cost: £58

5th May 2026

[Exbury Gardens and Steam Railway](#)

21st May 2026

[Kinky Boots at the London Coliseum \(Music by Cydi Lauper\)](#)

Cost: £99

9th June 2026

[Painshill Vines and Wines Tour](#)

Cost: £63

29th June 2026

[N.T. Tyntesfield](#)

Cost: £62

22nd July 2026

[Miss Saigon at Bristol Hippodrome](#)

Cost: £87

12th August 2026

Remember to say "I am a member of u3a" when you book with Crossways.

News from our groups continued:

Mah Jong Group

Our mah jong group meets on Thursday afternoons. It has grown and grown and we now have 43 members. Fortunately, not all of them come along every week or we would have a big space problem.

We play at Southill Community Centre which only has 8 tables of a comfortable size for 3 or 4 players at each table.

Up until now we have accommodated everyone who wants to join us and learn to play but one week recently we did have more than 32 players and had to use one of the longer, narrower tables and it was quite difficult to play comfortably. I have therefore decided to start a waiting list for any more new players.

Every Tuesday, I send out an email to the group asking who will be playing that week. They reply promptly so that I know how many tables and how many mah jong sets I need to organise.

Beacon allows me to manage a waiting list so, if there are less than 32 players in any particular week, I could then invite someone from the waiting list to join us. It does mean they would only know the day before but I think this would be better than just closing the group to new players completely. We can certainly give it a try.

Karyn Jeanes

Mah Jong group leader

News from our groups continued:

Scrabble for Fun Group

Carol Green , the leader of the “Scrabble for Fun” Group, would like the members to know that from the 5th January 2026 this group is moving.

On the first Monday of each month, the group is meeting in the Frank Reynolds Centre on Dorchester Road at 11am to 1pm.

Coffee Morning

Bridget Lister, the assistant group coordinator, wants to give members an advance notice of a social coffee morning with a quiz to brighten up the winter months, This will be held upstairs at St.Aldhem’s Church Centre on Friday 27th February 2026 from 10am to 11:30am. Please put the date in your diaries.

News from our groups continued:

Birdwatching

Tony Dobbs asked me to remind you about The South Dorset RSPB Local Group and that he will be leading a walk for the Group around Lodmoor on:

Friday 9th January 2026. in the morning.

If you would like to join in, or want to know more about the group, please contact him first so that he knows numbers using this revised email address:

rspb.southdorsetgroup@gmail.com



News from our groups continued:

Mixed Craft Group

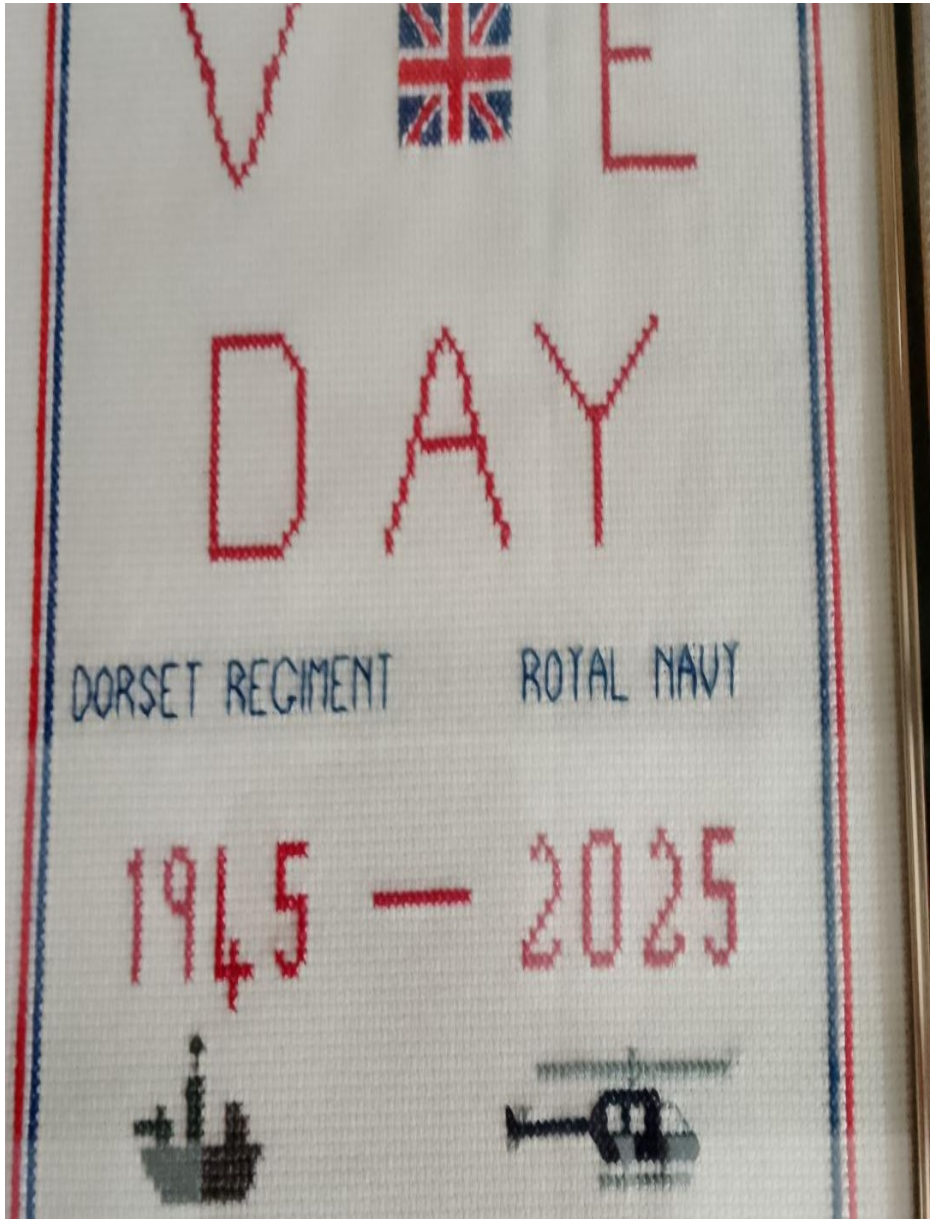
WEYMOUTH REALLY IS GAY FOR VICTORY

Jolly Crowds, Masses of Flags, Esplanade Dancing, and Parties

What was probably the most important day in the history of the British Commonwealth, perhaps indeed of the whole world, was celebrated at Weymouth on Tuesday with the traditional gaiety which goes with great occasions.

Overnight the streets had burst into a blaze of colour, for although the official announcement of victory had yet to be made, VE-Day had been appointed and its dawn was merely a matter of hours.





This year the mixed craft group led by Jane Bennett completed works to celebrate the 80th year of VE Day.

WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND U3A Contact details

WEBSITE: www.weymouthportland.u3asite.uk

Weymouth & Portland u3a website where you can find out about groups and events. You will also find the Members' Portal where members can update their name, address or other contact details. From January each year you can renew your membership via the members' portal, using PayPal.

beacon.weyportu3a@gmail.com

Contact Karyn, the Beacon Admin if you are having any problems with Beacon or you are unsure how to do something.

gc.weyportu3a@gmail.com

Tomasa, the groups' co-ordinator: For group information if you are unable to contact the group leader or you would like to start a new group.

assistgc.weyportu3a@gmail.com

Bridget is our new assistant group Coordinator.

membershipsec.weyportu3a@gmail.com

Diana the membership secretary. All questions about membership.

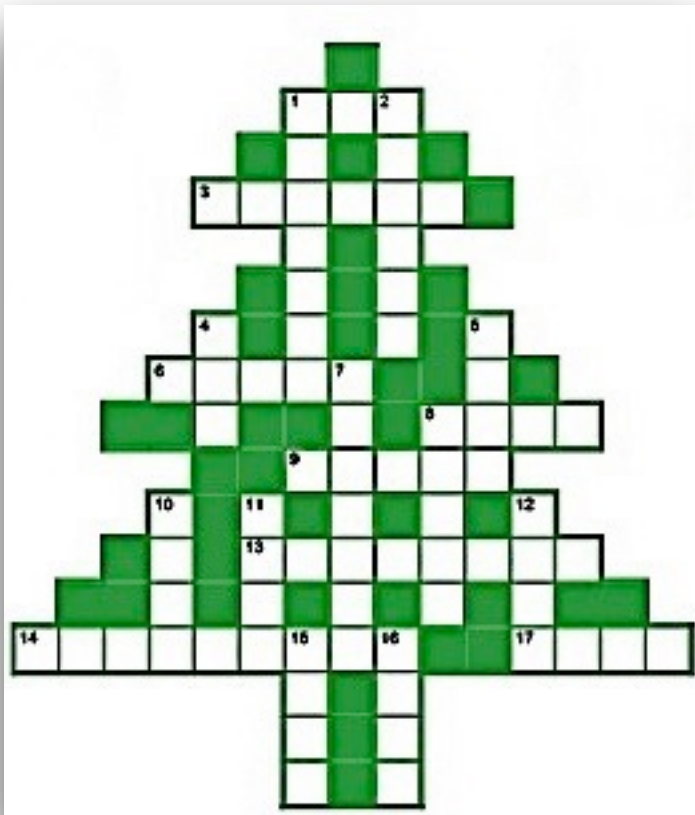
newsletter.weyportu3a@gmail.com

Susan, the newsletter editor would be pleased to receive any contributions for the next newsletter.

treasurer.weyportu3a@gmail.com

Chris the Treasurer. Notify him if you have paid money into the u3a Barclays account. Group leaders can also scan their group registers and email them to Chris if they are not attending the monthly meeting.

web.weyportu3a@gmail.com Caz, the Webmaster. Contact her with any questions or suggestions for the website. If you are unable to use the internet, we have a u3a dedicated mobile phone that we lovingly call the "bat phone". This will be answered by the membership secretary when she is at home. If there is no answer, please leave your name and phone number and she will call you back as soon as possible. The Bat Phone number is 07833417243. Updated September 2024



CHRISTMAS TREE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Ribbon.
3. Relatives.
6. Enchantment.
8. The three ____men.
9. Pictured on Christmas cards.
13. Donner and Blitzen.
14. Christmas bird.
17. "The First ____" Carol.

DOWN

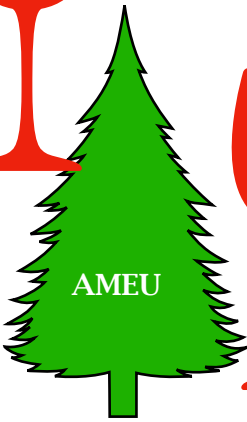
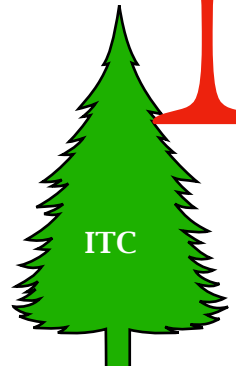
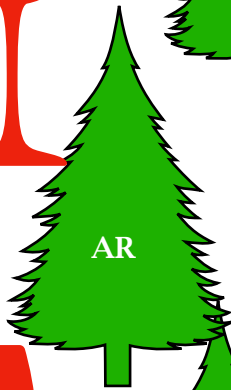
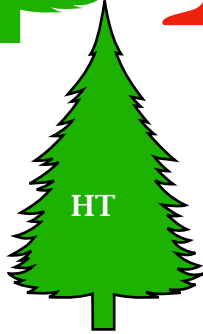
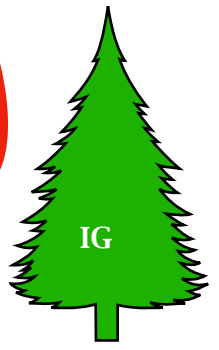
1. Babies.
2. Maybe cracked at Xmas.
4. Sunbeam.
5. A gold wrapped stocking filler.
7. Preparing Christmas lunch.
8. Blustery.
10. Present
11. Arnold, shortened.
12. Santa tries never to be ?
15. Pantomime character.
16. The 3 Kings came from the ?

HIDDEN WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRISTMAS

1. Could this day get any worse, there was goo seeping out of a tube all over the carpet.
2. With a sigh as she looked at the pile of dirty dishes, Susan tackled the washing up.
3. Jennifer chose a tin, selected a recipe and made some shortbread.
4. Stella asked them all to take part, rid George's fear of heights once and for all.
5. Marc and Lesley received an invitation to a drinks party at the Frobisher's on New Years Eve.
6. When the doorbell rang, Elaine was reluctant to answer it. 7. Martyn couldn't believe the amount of stuff, ingeniously hanging from his garage walls.
8. James groaned when the open bottle of vinegar landed on an important document.
9. As he caught the attention of the barman, Gerald ordered another round of drinks.
10. She had asked them to back her, but the answer was no, Ellen admitted defeat.
11. After the flood, Jane was relieved to find the baby's crib bone-dry.
12. Susie was still arranging the table settings as the first guest arrived.
13. They were arguing if their team was going to win the match.
14. Imogen refused to pine, Coney Island in Brooklyn was where he had gone without her.
15. The Bar manager shouted down to the cellar ' Open another barrel, Frank.'
16. They all seemed to enjoy ousting Neville from the team .

FIND THE TWO

XMAS CAROLS



A Poem by Iris P. Bool

Christmas Eve

I wish that I could stay awake
Just long enough to peep,
And steal a glimpse of Santa Claus
Before I go to sleep.

I hope my letter reached him safe,
To say what I'd like most.
If only I could see him once
To prove he's not a ghost.

My Mother says he'll never come
Until he knows I'm sleeping,
So I'll lie still and close my eyes
Just ready for my peeping.

It's getting late, he'll soon be here
I won't have long to wait,
Was that his sleigh bells ringing out
As he stopped by my gate?

It's quiet now, my stockings full
With presents new and gleaming,
And once again I've missed his call,
He came while I was dreaming!

Quiz Answers

No Peeking!

ANSWERS

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

RED WINE GLASSES

God Rest You Merry Gentlemen.

GREEN TREES

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear.

CHRISTMAS TREE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1.Bow. 3. Family. 6. Magic. 8. Wise. 9. Robin. 13. Reindeer 14. Partridge. 17. Noel

DOWN

1. Bambini. 2. Walnut. 4. Ray. 5. Coin. 7. Cooking. 8. Windy 10. Gift

11. Arni. 12. Seen. 15. Dame. 16. East.

HIDDEN WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRISTMAS

GOOSE 2. SANTA 3. TINSEL 4. PARTRIDGE 5. CANDLES 6. ANGEL
7.STUFFING 8. GARLAND 9. MANGER 10. NOEL 11. RIBBON 12. STAR

13. GIFT 14. PINE CONE 15. ELF 16. JOYOUS _____

Tuesday local walks around Weymouth

Not the most catchy name , but we do what it says on the tin – in fact we are just coming to the end of our 10th year !

I calculate probably just short of 1500 miles, a lot of mud, wind and sun, wonderful views of coast and country and most importantly lots of chat and friendship . We seem particularly useful for people on their own, learning to cope without a partner, or moving down and keen to meet people and explore a new area- I've had people booking to join the group before they even moved down here– and this summer people who were coming on holiday! We're also very useful for people who are finally accepting they can't do 15 miles with other groups! And have lots of experience in commiserating and encouraging after hip and knee replacements!



We have so many highlights and favourite places, White Nothe and Ringstead, Portland , coasts and the interesting interior, Bincombe, Sutton Poyntz and the lovely Ridgeway (with Viking and Roman paths to come down) Broadmayne, Chickerell and the Fleet with all the interesting inlets, Portesham and Abbotsbury, our two huge bird sanctuaries at Radipole and Lodmoor and endless permutations of walks in the Jordan valley and the Wey itself from lovely Upwey, (cheese scones!), the great new developments at Radipole Park and down to the harbour and beach areas . Buses in the summer help with walks around Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove. (We only had one hiccup with a bus that didn't come!) We regularly say, we could not live in a more varied, beautiful and interesting place - with history from the Iron to Nuclear ages.

It's so easy to get involved, get on the notification list, come to the indicated start point (having looked for a cancellation notice at 9am if the weather's dodgy; it doesn't happen often,) and away you go, 2 to 3 ½ miles , 10.30 to 12 ish. No need to tell anyone if you are coming – and you can bring dogs, grandchildren , friends, etc. (The latter are welcome as guests for one walk) You will be welcomed – and talked to!

Anne Lindley 07717772203

The Town Bridge

When I was a child the town was called Weymouth and Melcombe Regis. Originally, there were two separate ports separated by the River Wey. Melcombe Regis was on the north side and was a licensed port for wool and the older port of Weymouth, known for importing wine, was on the south side.

The harbour was the dividing line. The towns frequently quarrelled over the shared harbour and finally Elizabeth 1 united them by an Act of Parliament in 1571. This union was physically recognised with the construction of a bridge in 1597.

Prior to the bridge the inhabitants used a boat and rope. Leland wrote, “The trajectus is by a bote and a rope over the Haven so that in this bote they use no oares.” Such was the line of communication between the two towns!

The first bridge was built in timber with a central drawbridge “of two reeves”. Arched braces of timber are believed to have been used over the spans between the piles.

The Civil War of 1645 –1649, had caused structural damage to the bridge. There is a record of repair “with thirty great oaks from the King’s forest.” (The New Forest) In 1713 and again in 1741 major repairs or rebuilding took place.

However, there was an increase in the number of ships using the harbour in 1769 and many moored at Custom House Quay on the Melcombe Regis side. This meant there was a lot of inconvenience having to lift cargoes over several other ships to land it. It was decided to build a new bridge between the Chapelhay Steps and St. Nicholas Street. This increased the length of the Melcombe Regis Quay. It was a gift to the town of T.Tucker Esq. M.P. The seventy yards extra quay encouraged more trade and warehouses were built.

The new siting of the bridge encountered opposition and a permanent bridge of stone was planned on the original site.

Completed in 1824, the stone bridge was a handsome structure of two graceful stone arches and a centre swing section of iron.



The present town bridge was built in 1930 in a neo-classical style.



