

March 2026 Newsletter



A Message from the Editor:

I think it's about time I changed this photograph, don't you? After all, we live in a beautiful place. Am I biased? This photo reminds me of when I was young and a teacher at one of Portland's schools. I often used to escape to Tophill and look out over this wonderful vista, taking deep breathes of good fresh air, before returning to school renewed for the afternoon session.

This is our March 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

Hello – and goodbye!

This is my last “chat” as when next you get a newsletter you will have a new chairperson. I will be relaxing as a simple member.

I have filled the post of Chairman twice now and both times it was an honour and I hope I made a decent fist of it. I have seen many committee members come and go, fulfilling all the posts necessary for the smooth running of our U3A, and I am grateful to all of them over the years. Some sadly are no longer with us.

It has not all been plain sailing. The pandemic for example proved to be terminal for many organisations, and I had to step down due to Lynda's health. But we survived. Yes, membership dropped after the free year but it has since bounced back. Membership stood around 725 at the end of 2025. Not bad for a town of Weymouth's population!

It has been said many times before but it stands repeating. Any organisation or group cannot exist without a functioning committee. And a committee needs members. Not just the main offices like Secretary or Treasurer, but people that can feed back what the members think and want. I know I keep banging the same drum, but I make no excuse. Committees need new blood if they are not to become stale, or worse moribund. Please, I know that there is a lot of talent out there, the committee needs you. (Should have a picture of someone pointing out of the page here.)

So, once again, thank you all you committee members past and present for making the chairman's job easier and thank you, the membership for making the job so rewarding. I will see you around.

Steve Millin

A lovely quote:

A member of our u3a sent in this quote to share:

Having taken some children on a nature walk and to play in a sensory garden, their teacher asked them what they thought of their time in nature.

One child said "The flowers were blooming and the garden is like an orchestra of flowers that perform beautiful colours."

Speakers for Monthly Meetings:

Anne has arranged some more interesting speakers for us at the u3a group meeting:

20th March 2026 - Chris Wright "First Responder".

17th April 2026 –Mary Smith "A school girl's war" with pictures.

15th May 2026—yet to be formalised.

19th June 2026 - Tony Dobbs. "Weymouth Swift Project".

What Me! Diabetic!

My name is Norman Wood and I have been disabled all of my life, meeting all challenges with a determination to overcome whatever life throws at me. I suppose I got a bit blasé about the occasional aches, pains and niggles that came my way. So, when I got a phone call in February 2025 from a diabetic nurse wanting to arrange a visit to discuss my diabetic diagnosis, I was stunned.

My GPs over the past twenty-five years have mentioned that I was prediabetic, but as nothing seemed to change, I ignored this and as they say, “Kept calm and carried on.”

A follow up phone call from my GP was firstly, apologetic that she had not rung sooner as she was supposed to tell me about the diabetic diagnosis before the diabetic nurse phoned. Then we discussed changes to my lifestyle. Lo and behold, I stated that I thought nothing had changed apart from a good 2024 Christmas.

“Nothing had changed.”

However, following my visit from the diabetic nurse, it transpired that my HbA1c blood count had risen to 61mmol/mol which put me in the diabetic range and I was prescribed medication to tackle this. My previous pre-diabetic range of HbA1c was between 42-47 mmol/mol so as you can see a significant increase.

What followed was a series of visits. Firstly, I was weighed (difficult when in a wheelchair and being unable to stand up) and I was astounded to find myself at 15st 3lb. Secondly to discuss the way forward, healthy eating, active lifestyle and of course dieting to achieve the right balance.

In addition, I searched the internet for information, attended a zoom meeting re diabetes put on by the British Polio Fellowship, attended two NHS diabetic education sessions and of course put myself on a diet. (That dreaded word!)

The diabetic nurse stated that I could achieve remission status if I was successful. To date. I have lost weight (awaiting weigh-in), changed my lifestyle, able to stop medication and on my target of remission.

I am writing for the Newsletter to share my story with readers.

If you get diagnosed with pre-diabetes, take it seriously, unlike me, and avoid further ill health.

Don't be like me, shocked and stunned even though I had been told that I had prediabetes.

Face the challenges to achieve success.

Norman Wood

Group news:

It was lovely to meet all of the group leaders at the group leaders lunch today, 6th March 2026. At last, I am putting faces to names.

Weymouth and Portland run many interesting groups and these wonderful people give up their time and energy to run them for us. Thank you group leaders.,

Some groups have vacancies. One of which is the Watercolour Painting group held on 4th Friday of the month beginning at 10am.

Singing for pleasure is another group that could do with more members. Get in touch with the group leaders if you are interested. Indeed , some groups have a waiting list if they do not have a vacancy.

Is anyone interested in getting together to share their stamp collections and chatting about them? Any interested please contact Tomasa.

Group News



Some motos have been enjoying a pop Saturday lunch, with local pubs giving away 40% off vouchers, January & February blues. We stay in touch via our own WhatsApp which is a good life line for these times too.

We always look to share lifts not just for eco friendliness but then you know who lives close to you, if you're not feeling well and could do with a pint of milk being dropped around. Although this has never yet happened, we are always just a text away for information and support.

Singing for Pleasure

This is an informal group that sings for enjoyment. Our growing repertoire includes traditional and folk songs, songs from shows, for example Carousel, Oklahoma, and Lloyd Webber musicals.

We meet usually on the first Friday of each month at the Frank Reynolds Centre from 10 am until midday.

However, the meeting in March will be the 13th.

It is a friendly group and everyone can contribute their favourite song.

Just in case you wondered, there is no audition.

Enquiries to Tomasa, the group coordinator.



First Aid

We are planning to repeat the First Aid course that was organised last March. It was run by a Red Cross volunteer and was well received. It is for new members and members who could not attend last time as the content will be much the same.

Going on Holiday?

Read this interesting piece by Jean Quick.

We are being encouraged by the media to book lovely holidays with good discounts and the promise of better weather. What's not to love 😊



I lived in luxury but outside it's a very different story with tin shack habitation and exorbitant prices for basic goods like toothpaste and paracetamol, clothing and all the things we take for granted. Way beyond the reach of the local people's meagre budget.



You do need to make contact with a local charity and they have to send you a letter of authorization and they usually ok this with the airline. I contacted Mycapeverde and they advised what to bring, organized the paperwork and a local volunteer came to the hotel to collect the donations.



I asked them to come just before my last day then I could add some of the toiletries, shoes and clothes of my own that I really didn't need to bring home.

I went out with thirty five kilos of luggage and came home with ten! Being disabled special assistance made it so easy. The assistance people were astonished at all

What was in my cases? Seventy toothbrushes and toothpaste packs that the charity will take to schools. Forty pairs of different strengths of reading glasses.

So cheap to buy multiple pairs on websites like Temu. Charity shop and new clothes and items for free begged from websites like Nextdoor app.

(continued page 11)

Outings and Theatre Group

From: Christine Hill

CALL CROSSWAYS TRAVEL TO BOOK ON 01305 851697 PLEASE STATE "I AM A MEMBER OF WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND U3A" TO GET THE REDUCED PRICE BELOW.

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 Cost: £58

21st May 2026 Kinky Boots at the London Coliseum (Music by Cyndi Lauper)
Cost: £99

9th June 2026 Painshill Vines and Wines Tour Cost: £63

16th June 2026 Seaton Tramway and Sidmouth Donkey Sanctuary Cost: £47.50

29th June 2026 N.T. Tyntesfield Cost: £62

3rd July 2026 American Museum and Gardens - Bath Cost: £48.50

22nd July 2026 Miss Saigon at Bristol Hippodrome Cost: £87

5th August 2026 Westend of Wheels - Hilarious London Sightseeing
Tour Cost: £72

12th August 2026 The Bodyguard at the Bristol Hippodrome Cost: £79

9th September 2026 Bucklers Hard Guided Tour & Beaulieu River Cruise Cost: £54

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



I went to Boa Vista and of course Cape Verde was hit by a hurricane in the summer of last year increasing their problems. I was on a packed flight and the people next to me, in chatting said they wished they had known about the charity

scheme. If everyone on that flight had taken the equivalent of just one more carry on case of charity items what a difference we would have made to the poverty situation on the island.

Apparently, there are lots of airlines that allow charity suitcases to be carried for free. So as you book your next luxury trip think about if you could make a difference to the local community by simply taking some extra luggage for free, to a local charity. All it will cost you is the effort to carry it out with you and pass it on to the charity.



News from our groups continued:

African Drumming Group

Our drumming group is a friendly, relaxed group consisting of people with a wide variety of skills. The aim is to enjoy hand drumming, develop rhythm and have fun.

The group meets fortnightly in St Andrew's Church Rooms.

Tony Redhead

Group leader.



News from our groups continued:

Free Smartphone Photography – Join the Waiting list

Wondering how to get more from your phone's camera? Our Smartphone Photography Group may be just what you need. Over six weeks, we move beyond point-and-shoot. You'll learn to take photos you're truly pleased with.

We cover composition, lighting and using your surroundings. We also look at free, easy-to-use apps.

The sessions are relaxed and hands-on and no prior experience or technical knowledge is needed—just your phone and a bit of curiosity. A highlight is sharing photos with the group. Seeing familiar subjects through different eyes is always a pleasure. Members are often surprised by what simple techniques can achieve.

Our group is kept small (a maximum of 12) for individual attention. Places fill fast so there is a waiting list for the next sessions. If you would like to join the waiting list get in touch. We'll contact you when a place becomes available.

We look forward to hearing from you!

If you would like to view some sample photographs, please email me for a link to the slideshow. You are also welcome to email if you would like to be added to the waiting list.

Trevor Beech

hello@trevorbeech.com

News from our groups continued:

Petanque

Petanque is an easy to learn sport that just about anyone can play.

Weymouth & Portland u3a petanque group is now into it's 4th year and thriving! We play every Monday and Tuesday mornings, 10.15 for a 10.30 start. We play all year round and have an unwritten rule, 'if it is not actually raining, we play'.

We play on the purpose built petanque terrain, that was provided by Weymouth Town Council and is situated in Radipole Park Gardens, Weymouth. There is ample free parking, toilet facilities and the excellent Mumma Bee's cafe.

The group fully embodies the u3a slogan, 'Learn, laugh, live' at every session. We have fun but do not take ourselves too seriously.

Whilst we always welcome new players, we have 61 regular players now, so please contact me before coming along, to make sure we have room for you!

Regards, Lloyd Lewis, petanque group leader.

A book review:

This book called “Erebus” is written by Michael Palin. The Erebus was a nineteenth century Royal Naval vessel. She was lost in the Arctic ice for a century and a half; a very ordinary vessel which was used by heroic Victorian explorers to explore the frozen wastes of the Antarctic and the Arctic.

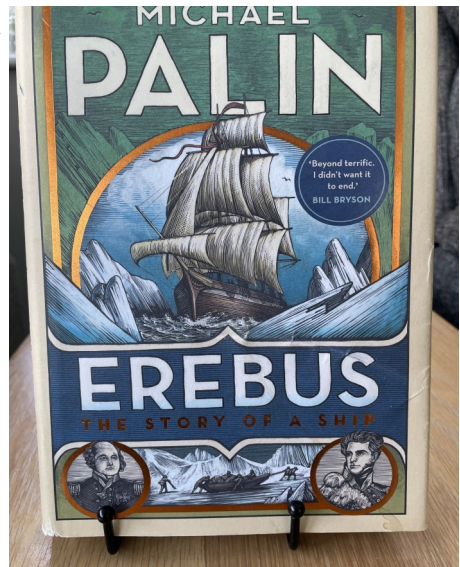
James Clark Ross, who was famously described as “The handsomest man in the Royal Navy” first took the ship to the Antarctic continent. This was all done under sail and many years before ice-breaking vessels. Very stirring courageous stuff!

However, the Erebus’ and her sister ship, the “Terror’s”, legend was created on the Franklin expedition to find the elusive North-west passage to fabled Cathay (China) and the far East. This second polar expedition was commanded by John Franklin’s and was dogged by bad luck and bad weather which led to the deaths of all members of the team. The story was one of mystery and many expeditions to find out the fate of the ships and the crews. It became a mid Victorian obsession to discover their whereabouts.

Modern day expeditions to the Canadian high artic have subsequently confirmed what the Victorians had deduced. The Erebus and the Terror are resting on the seabed in quite shallow water. The Erebus was found in 2014 and the Terror in 2016.

I particularly liked the courageous actions of the men who wanted to explore the world, suffering extreme conditions all in the name of science.

Roger Francis



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.

Chairman : Hugh

Secretary: Janet - secretary.weyportu3a@gmail.com

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 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

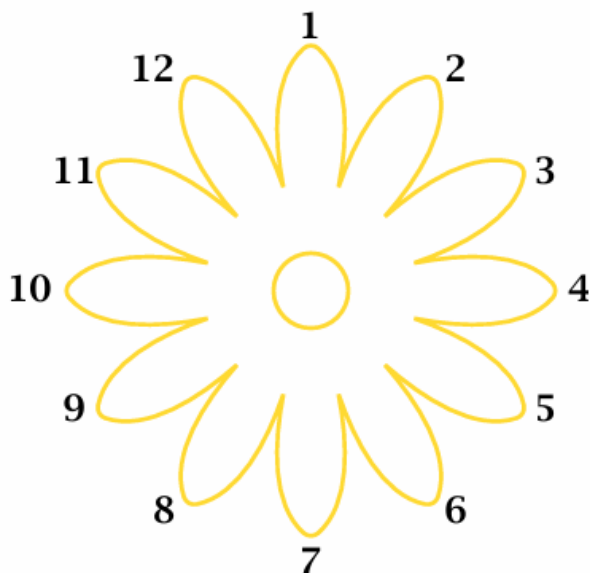
Caz, the Webmaster. Contact her with any questions or suggestions for the website. If you are unable to use the internet, we have a u3a dedicated mobile phone that we lovingly call the "bat phone". This will be answered by the membership secretary when she is at home. If there is no answer, please leave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

The Bat Phone number is 07833417243. Updated September 2024

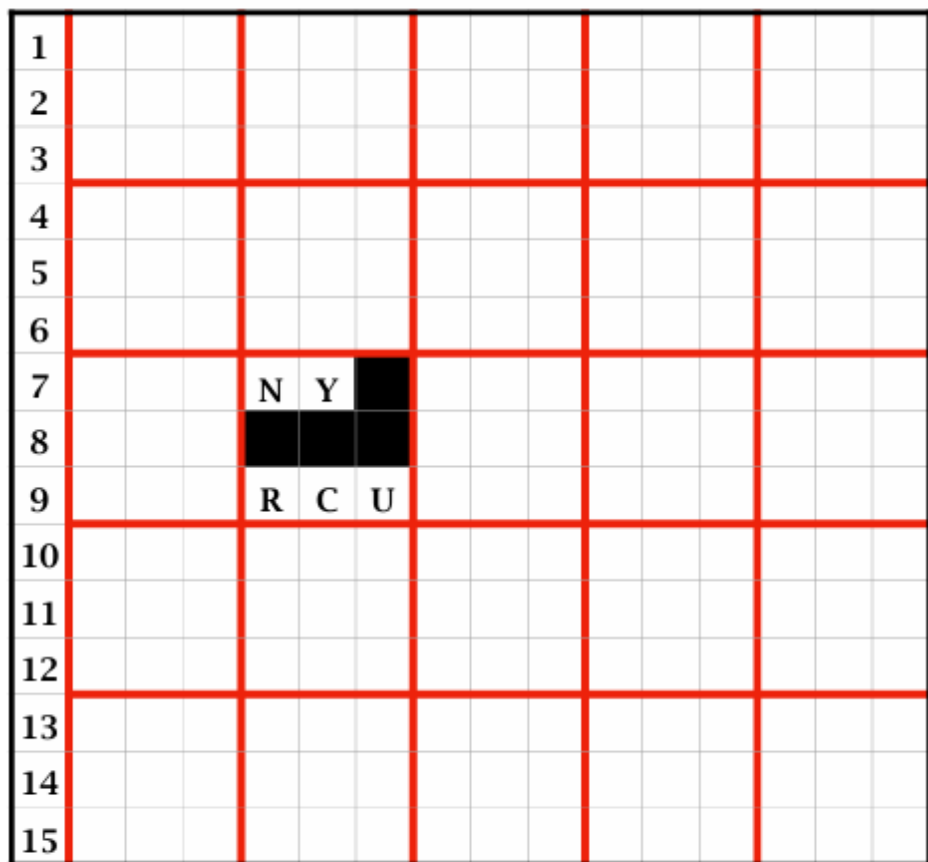
Quizzes

DAISY

Each petal has a 5 letter word ending in E. When answered correctly a 12 letter word appears at the tips clockwise meaning seductive , tempting.



1. Angry, livid.
2. German river.
3. Con man, rascal.
4. Bird of prey.
5. Vegetable
6. Topic, latest instalment
7. Gaze at.
8. Popular herb
9. Mental picture
10. Gallant, heroic
11. Liquid measurement
12. Circumvent, dodge.



CROSSWORD JIGSAW

Answer the Across Clues and fit the 25 pieces in the grid correctly to make a symmetrical crossword. One piece has been given

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sudden rush of wind. | 1. Memento. |
| 3. A fabric. | 3. A fruit. |
| 5. Frivolous. Irreverent. | 5. Quiet. |
| 7. Glossy. | 7. Cheese type. |
| 9. Hero of super strength. | 9. Legal. Permitted. |
| 11. Astute, smart. | 11. Enticing, seductive. |
| 13. Lenient, pampering. | 13. Musical drama. |
| 15. Adversary, competitor. | 15. A volcano |

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News from other Groups

Bubble Community Choir

Trudy Baddams is one of our u3a members who goes to the Bubble Community Space in Stanley Street.

These clubs are held:

Choir Rehearsals on Tuesdays 2-3:30pm

Dancing for Fun on Thursdays 2-3:30pm

Singing for Fun on Fridays 6-7:30pm

Jamming Club on Sundays 12:30-3:30pm.

All above clubs are £4/person to help with costs.

Chatty Craft Club, 1st Saturday on the month. £5/person

New Club Monday evenings - Darts/Games and Jamming upstairs.

Special Themed Sing-a-longs on some Saturdays - the next one is celebrating Women Artists/Songwriters for International Women's Day March 7th.

We also have. Fully equipped music studio for music production, videos, podcasts, show reels, band rehearsal and lessons.

We can be found on Facebook The Bubble Community Space, Weymouth.

Weymouth Museum

Teas and Talks Programme Spring 2026

2 March 2026 Graham Perry-The Development of Weymouth in Maps and Pictures

9 March 2026 John New Railways on Portland

16 March 2026 David Leech Pelham Puppets

23 March 2026 Dr Will Ward Churchill's Secret Army

30 March 2026 Jeff Little The Portland Spy Ring

Venue: Centenary Club, 21 Jubilee Close, Weymouth DT4 7BG 2.30 pm

£3 Friends' members. £4 Non-members

Quiz Answers

No Peeking!

ANSWERS TO DAISY 2 PUZZLE

**1. IRATE 2. RHINE 3. ROGUE 4. EAGLE 5. SWEDE 6. ISSUE 7. STARE 8. THYME 9. IMAGE 10. BRAVE 11. LITRE 12. ELUDE
IRRESISTIBLE**

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD JIGSAW

ACROSS 1. GUST 1. KEEPSAKE 3. LINEN 3. MANDARIN 5. FLIPPANT 5. SILENT 7. SHINY 9. HERCULES 11. SHREWD 13. INDULGENT 15. OPPONENT 7. PARMESAN 9. LICIT 11. TEMPTING 13. OPERA 15. ETNA

