

Portsdown Post

January – May 2019



Paddle Steamer Waverley arriving at Swanage (see Travel Group)

Message from the Chair

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope we can get to a normal pace after one of the busiest times of the year.

I am sure we would like to give a massive thank you and a large round of applause to Beryl and Carole for their sterling service to Portsdown U3A over the last nine and five years, respectively. A hard act to follow. We wish them well in their new ventures.

Besides myself we have welcomed on to the committee, Marion Emery, as Business Secretary and the return of Tony Paul as Treasurer. As there have been three major changes to the Trustees at the end of 2018 we are now finding our feet as a committee and everyone is being very helpful and supportive. Thank you.

Simon continues to do a sterling job in keeping our website user friendly, vibrant and relevant. His turn round in inserting, amending and deleting what is out-of-date is astonishing. A recent comment from a non-member was 'how impressive Portsdown U3A's website is'. Thank you Simon for all your hard work.

Equally so, a positive comment regarding the Speaker's list for 2019. Relaxing over lunch after a recent Friday walk, Shirley remarked that we had an 'interesting range of talks for this year'. Thanks Peter for the variety and the fact there is an equal number of males and females delivering a range of interesting topics.

Visitors and new members are remarking every General Meeting on how friendly and welcoming we are as a membership and Judy, the volunteers and of course all of you, play your part in making the experience for them an enjoyable one and where they will come back again. Thanks.

I cannot leave Julie out who is an absolute stalwart as the Membership Secretary, nor the others, Viv, Ian and Margaret who play an integral part in all we do. The committee thanks you all for your support in 2018 and looks forward to seeing you all in 2019.

Linda

Travel Group

Below are reports of a number of trips we made last year.

Judy Jones

2018 Solent Forts Cruise

Eight of us boarded Gosport Ferry Company's boat from the Gosport Ferry Pontoon for their annual cruise around the four sea forts, finishing with a trip around the harbour.

We were lucky with the weather and the mild sea state. In turn No Man's Land, St Helens, Horse Sand and Spit Forts were viewed.

They were built in the 1860s to defend the Spithead anchorage and keep an enemy out of gunnery range of the dockyard, manned by the Royal Artillery; they were later sold.



No Man's Land, Horse Sand and Spit Forts are owned by Clarence as 'Island Retreats' and were put on sale earlier this year for a guide price of eleven million pounds.

There are occasional hazards; in June 2018 a member of staff at No Man's Land fell off the fort early one morning and had to be rescued by Bembridge Lifeboat.

St Helens is the smallest of the forts and was added after the building of Sturbridge Fort (Off Ryde) and was abandoned due to problems with securing adequate foundations. It is derelict, but the outside can be viewed close up every August when the low Spring tide allows one to walk out to it from the Isle of Wight.

Personally, Horse Sand Fort was the most interesting as it is unrestored and a tattered skull and crossbones flag flew from its flagpole.



Newer features were the two sets of yellow marker posts used to delineate the dredged channel for the Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers, now a handy perch for Cormorants.

We proceeded up the harbour and passed HMS Kent, HMS St Albans and HMS Queen Elizabeth amongst other vessels.

There is another set of yellow marker posts towards the top end of the harbour.

The commentary was mostly very accurate accommodating those who wanted detailed information about the forts.

The stone round tower in the Dockyard that we passed, was actually built in the 1840s and was constructed well after the Napoleonic Wars, no French POWs being employed. This was about the only factual error.

A most enjoyable trip.

Ian

[Visit to the Supreme Court in London](#)

At the end of August, the Travel Group arranged a day visit to the Supreme Court in Westminster with a coach for transport. Twenty four of us went. We were lucky as the weather was perfect as the earlier heat wave had abated.

The Supreme Court building looks on to Parliament Square facing the Houses of Parliament. The site has been devoted to law and justice for almost 1,000 years, though the present building was only completed in 1913, designed in neo-gothic style.

Until 1965, the building was used by Middlesex County Council but this ceased after the creation of the Greater London Council. Instead, the building became a Court of Quarter Sessions and then a Crown Court. There were then seven courts with cells and jury rooms.

Later however, the building was chosen to become the Supreme Court which is the ultimate court of appeal. Individuals cannot appeal to this court, which is only used when there is uncertainty about how the law should be applied. It determines points of law of general public interest.



A major refurbishment took place to restore the building's former grandeur and to reduce the number of courtrooms to three. There are two impressive light wells covered with glass ceilings. The café is in one of these very pleasant spaces.

Our guide showed us the three court rooms, each very different in style. One of them is used as the Supreme Court not just for the UK but for a number of ex-colonies and dependent territories, mostly too small to be able to afford such facilities themselves. Examples are the Isle of Man, the Falkland Islands and Jamaica. In such cases the lawyers have to apply the law of those territories and must not impose UK law.



There is an impressive law library and we loved the



carpet specially made for the Supreme Court, showing the Tudor rose, leek, thistle and flax flower. We did not all immediately recognise the flax and needed to be told.



The public is allowed to walk into the Supreme Court when it is in session to watch proceedings, but before our guided tour I don't think any of us would have dared to just walk in. Now we might!

Maureen

Torquay

Nine of us joined a group from the Isle of Wight for this trip to the Abbey Lawn Hotel in Torquay from Friday 23rd to Monday 26th November. The hotel was decorated for Christmas and we discovered that it was a tinsel and turkey weekend.

We were the only coach party staying at the hotel, which had recently been refurbished, so we had very good service.

We decided to take the bus to Paignton on the Saturday and then travel on the steam train to Kingswear on the river Dart and then take the ferry over to Dartmouth.



All went to plan and we all had an enjoyable if rather wet day.



We returned to the hotel for a sherry and canapé reception followed by Christmas Dinner. Afterwards there was an entertainer playing 60's music and coffee and mince pies.

On the Sunday we split up, some people visiting Torre Abbey, others the Bygones Museum and others Cockington village.

We returned home on the Monday after a very enjoyable break.

SS Waverley



Twenty of us boarded the SS Waverley at the Hard on Thursday 13th September. We had plenty of choice of seating, either on deck or in the comfortable



lounges within the boat. The weather was glorious and the views throughout the trip were spectacular, we steamed out of Portsmouth

Harbour waved on our way by spectators on the round tower. Our first stop was at Yarmouth where some passengers disembarked to spend the day on the Island while



others joined the boat. We then carried on to Swanage, passing by Hearts Castle, the Needles and Old Harry Rocks. We got off at Swanage and had three hours there while the boat carried on along the Jurassic Coast up to Lulworth Cove.

Most of us opted to have a meal in Swanage although it was possible to eat in the restaurant on the boat. The popular option was fish & chips, either to eat in or take away.

Swanage was very busy as the steam train from Corfe Castle had just arrived as well as the Waverley passengers. We then made our way back along the pier to watch for the Waverley returning. It soon reappeared and picked us up and we steamed back to Portsmouth via Yarmouth with a glorious sunset behind us. We arrived back about 8:00 pm.

We were so lucky to have had wonderful weather and everyone enjoyed the day.

Mary



Photography Group

The photography group is continuing to run very successfully with 15 regular members. We meet every 2nd Monday of the month at our various homes to view and critique our pictures in a friendly yet helpful way.

We have enjoyed some interesting photo shoots this period visiting Chichester, Bursledon Brickworks and Bosham. We are a very widely travelled group who have entertained ourselves with pictures of new places which have developed our interest in the World.

The group has shown much initiative when photographing the topic "signs" as we were presented with edited pictures creating some amusing comments, many puns and much laughter.

Other topics were "birds" and the challenge of "rows of things" which showed that rows can be found almost everywhere if you look hard enough, so we produced pictures with a whole variety of objects and views that met the criteria. These included rows of kittens, rows of camels, even rows of umbrellas. Chichester Cathedral was a particularly good venue for capturing a whole variety of row shots as they welcome all photographers.

The activities above have shown that our photographic standards continue to be maintained as does the camaraderie within the group. We are seeing many more pictures that have been edited or cropped to improve overall composition and presentation.

Our photography group gallery on the website is regularly updated and demonstrates the diversity of the best pictures taken and the improving skills of our members.

You can view the Photography group gallery by using the link below:

<http://www.portsdownu3a.org.uk/photography-group/>

Tony Paul

Computer Group

Over the last year, the computer group has been using LibreOffice 6 - a free downloaded programme that has enabled everyone to work from the same screen.

Using the word processing package, the group have learnt to 'insert & construct' a table. Incorporated in learning this skill, the members have developed their mouse/touchpad skills - highlighting, scrolling, drag & drop, enlarging etc. If you would like to join us there is room for more members.

In 2019 I have arranged a lecture/talk from Hugh Cull, lecturer at Highbury College, on "**How to Protect your Online Privacy**" on Tuesday 12th February from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

This lecture will focus on why your online privacy is so important to protect. He will explain how the main Internet companies are harvesting your online data on an industrial scale and why this should worry you. He will also show you the steps you can take to protect your online privacy and reduce your chances of being involved in cybercrime. This lecture will really open people's eyes to the dangers of sharing data online.

There will be an opportunity to ask questions.

This lecture is open to all Portsdown U3A members and is free.

If you would like to attend please contact me.

Joyce Wilkinson

Games Group

See picture on right.

Janet Rowe

Buildings Group

Bears and Elves

A party of 'bears and elves' braved the cruel nor'easter on Tuesday 30th October for a tour of Portchester Castle. The 'bears' (self-styled by one of them!) were those of us who were extremely well wrapped against the wind in layers of cardies and tops and coats! The 'elves' refers to the fact that several of us added pixie-type hats, or bobble hats to enhance our appearance! Some of us did both! We did survive the morning though...

Andrew Negus, who has given several talks to Portsdown U3A, conducted us around the perimeter of the Roman walls, followed by a brief visit to the lovely Norman church and ending by viewing the outside of what we call Portchester Castle, as it has a classic Norman keep in one corner, but we hear that it was actually used as a palace by one of



the many kings who occupied it. We also viewed Roman soldiers' loots from both sides of the wall. (My grandchildren will be fascinated). They'd also like to see the post-holes used for scaffolding poles, the outlets for smoke from the big chimney and the Roman tiles set into the walls at intervals to strengthen them. It obviously worked as they are still there, over 200 years later! A trick we should adopt? Andrew is always interesting to listen to; despite the cold he made it an interesting visit and we are grateful to him for conducting us around in such chilly conditions.

Needless to say, we repaired to the pub to warm up and enjoyed a generous lunch at The Cormorant.

Christine London

The Play that DIDN'T go wrong, in the end!!

Many of you will remember that several times I popped up during the announcements at General meetings in 2018 to announce, yet again, that the price for this play at The Kings Theatre had changed. Don't worry, I got fed up with it, too! This was down to my being so keen to get tickets that I requested them before the arrangements had been finalised!! I had heard from several sources that it was great fun and not to be missed, especially as it would be expensive to see it in London.

This it certainly proved to be! From the moment we entered the theatre, well before 'curtain-up', we were entertained by messages on TVs around the auditorium, and a technician charging about looking stressed. No wonder - it was all down to him. (Spoiler alert!) Chaos ensued, and continued to do so all the way through, becoming more and more manic. The person behind me sounded just like Father Christmas and his ho-hos rang out behind me, so he obviously enjoyed it as much as we did. It has to be said that it was pure slapstick but for such precise timing of 'events' and actions, the troupe had to be very good actors indeed!

We all piled onto the bus afterwards, giggling like schoolchildren, somewhat to the bemusement of the bus driver, who'd never seen the like of it before, I suspect.

A good time was had by all - finally !!!! (but I learned some lessons.....)

Christine London

Stragglers Walking Group

Do come and join us if you fancy a short Friday morning stroll on easy terrain followed by lunch. We meet on Fridays once a fortnight and our walks are about 1 to 1½ miles in length. You will find our walks programme on the web site. We are a friendly group and welcome new members.

Mary Chappel

Local History Group

As I am typing this at the end of 2018, may I take the opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

In general the Group continues to thrive, membership now stands at 21, and new members are very welcome. Meetings are at The Church of The Resurrection, at 10 am, on the first Friday of the month. These monthly meetings will continue to be a forum for discussion of any aspect of local, and not so local, history, with a modicum of nostalgia as well, it must be admitted.

Mentioned in the last Newsletter were plans to visit Edes House in West Street, Chichester. This turned out to be a very interesting and informative visit, to a building that the casual visitor to Chichester might overlook, given its proximity to the Cathedral, where some of us went to the Cafeteria for an enjoyable lunch. Never let it be said that the Local

History Group are not 'trend setters', for the day after our visit, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex also visited Edes House!

Andrew Negus's second talk on the history of Portsmouth, that the Group hosted on November 2nd, proved very popular and entertaining. So much so that we have booked Andrew to return on March 1st to present his third talk in the series. Judging by the trailer, this should feature items on ironclad warships and corsetry and their respective influences on the upturn in Portsmouth's fortunes. Again, this talk will be opened up to other members of Portsdown U3A and tickets should be available at the general Meeting in January. These will again be limited due to restricting numbers for health and safety reasons.

Other plans in the pipeline for 2019 are a talk on the Anglo/Zulu wars of the 1870s, Rourkes Drift etc., and, given that 2019 will be the 80th Anniversary of the start of WWII, a look at the changes that the approach of war wrought upon Portsmouth in 1938/39. We may also impose upon Nigel Gossop to present to the Group his research on John Keats' stay in Bedhampton in 1819, at some time during the coming year.

The Open Afternoon in October allowed the Group to showcase some of their latest research on Jutland, and the impact of the loss of so many local men on their families. There was a feature on the celebrations in Portsmouth that occurred in November 1918 at the time of the Armistice. Also, on a completely different topic, it gave an opportunity to present some differing literary views of Portsmouth, by various writers.

On the matter of Jutland, that is an ongoing research project for some of us, we presented a talk on said research at Portsmouth History Centre, as one of a series of talks they were hosting in November on aspects of Portsmouth History. This we duly presented to a small, but select, audience from whom we subsequently received new information on relatives who had been lost, and their families.

We anticipate that 2019 will be as interesting, indeed more interesting, than the year just ended. So, if any aspect of Local History interests you, or you feel that you may want to find out more, please come along to one of our meetings, and give it, and us, a try! We look forward to greeting you.

Steve Doe

Genealogy Group

We are awaiting final results of DNA investigations and have heard the "final" instalment of research on a family with Ceylon connections, which has been absolutely fascinating. I'm sure I speak for the group when I say I hope there will be more.

As a result of the open day we are delighted to welcome several new members to the group.

We had a visit from a gentleman who has just started a genealogy group for Warsash U3A, to see "what goes on" at our meetings

Our planned visit to the Society of Genealogists unfortunately had to be cancelled due to train disruption. So something to look forward to in 2019.

In conjunction with Splodge Designs, some of us were involved with researching the names on St Andrews' Church WWI memorial and a free booklet, along with postcards, was published, ready for Remembrance Day.

We finished the year with a very interesting and informative talk by Dr Bob France entitled "A Butler's Christmas".

Vivien Walters

Art Appreciation Group

Art on Your Doorstep

We are lucky where we live as we have an abundance of free art close by. Just down the road in Southsea there is a wide variety of Street Art. If you keep your eyes open you can spot some unexpected gems (as well as some turkeys!) when walking around, and some are even spot lit at night.

We in the Art Appreciation group keep each other informed when we come across something and then it is good fun to search it out.



The two nice examples above are at the back of the Queens Hotel and are spot lit.

More information and images can be found by searching on-line under Southsea Street Art. Good Luck!

Carol Evans

Striders Walking Group

The new walking programme is now on the web site. There will be some hard copies for those without computers at the next general meeting. Our walks are on Friday Morning and we meet at the arranged parking place at 10.15. We manage about two hours before going for lunch. This is optional.

Some of the walks are our old favourites and we have some exciting new ones. If you would like to come along and experience the beauty of our local region you are more than welcome. Our walks are around 4-5 miles. Some ground is more rugged than others and takes us a little longer to complete the walk.

It is very important that stout footwear is worn. Proper walking boots or strong trainers that you don't mind getting muddy. We do not walk if the weather is really bad, but always check with the leader before the walk, usually Thursday evening.

I wish everyone a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you on our walks.

If you are interested, please use this email: contact@portsdownu3a.org.uk

Janice Henderson

Bridge Group

As we have outgrown my flat, we are now playing at the Nugee room at SS Peter's & Paul's Church, Old Wymering Lane. We are a very friendly group and you are welcome at any stage of ability. Some of our players are very experienced and others are new to the game.

It is a wonderful game once mastered and can give many hours of pleasure. There are lots of Bridge clubs in the area that one could move onto once you have mastered the basics.

We will be doing more about conventions this New Year. If you have never played bridge before, a basic knowledge of whist helps, but enthusiasm is important.

If you would like to give it a try, please use this email: contact@portsdownu3a.org.uk

Janice Henderson

Mahjong

Mahjong 1 is now meeting afternoons instead of evenings for the winter months (2-4 pm). Unfortunately, as we meet in some members' homes, we are 'full-up' and so have no room for any more members of this group. Sorry!

Mahjong is a wonderful game. It is a bit like rummy or canasta but played with tiles. It is fairly easy to master and is a very good way to pass an afternoon. We meet on Monday at 2 pm at my home.

We are a very friendly little group and only have limited spaces.

If you would be interested in learning more, please use this email:

contact@portsdownu3a.org.uk

Jan & Heather

Dining Group

Happy New Year to all our members.

Cannot believe it is 2019 already, time flies when you are with a group of friends enjoying convivial company and eating food glorious food (and drinking!)

2018 saw us at our usual haunts and, to jog your memories, a little cryptic puzzle and, to those who are not in the group, put the grey cells into action to find out what wonderful eateries we have visited.

- | | | |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| September: | (a) Nelson and Windsor | (b) Red Café |
| October: | (a) Aristocratic Home | (b) Assassinated Noble |
| November: | (a) "Godfather" of Italian Cookery | (b) Very old Royal Navy Ship's Name |
| December: | TV Series and Female Voices
(hint; just the one restaurant) | |

Over the year our little group has grown but we are still looking for a few gentlemen members to join us so if you are interested, we get together on the 2nd Thursday and 4th Sunday every month. We are also trying to find new restaurants to try so if you have any suggestions they would be most welcome.

Well that's about all for now except the answers, which I nearly forgot !



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|------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| September: | (a) Ship and Castle | (b) Café Rouge |
| October: | (a) Nobel House | (b) Duke of Buckingham |
| November: | (a) Carluccios (see photo!) | (b) Ship Anson |
| December: | Sopranos | |

See you all at a restaurant near to you fairly soon.

Viv Grigson

Popular Music Group

The benefits of listening to music

Recently I came across this list of 10 benefits of listening to music – perhaps they will make us all appreciate what music can bring to our lives.

1. Music increases happiness

If you are ever in need of an emotional boost, let it be known that it only takes 15 minutes of listening to your favourite tunes to get a natural high. This is because your brain releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that leads to increased feelings of happiness, excitement, and joy, when you listen to music you like.

2. Music improves performance in running

If that's what you're into... Scientists found that runners who listened to fast or slow motivational music ran faster than runners who listened to calm music (or ran without any music at all) in an 800 metre dash. The key to enhancing your running performance lies in the choice of music, that being something that inspires you to move forward.

3. Music decreases stress, while increasing overall health

Music has a direct effect on our hormones. If you listen to music you enjoy, it decreases levels of the hormone cortisol in your body, counteracting the effects of chronic stress. Stress causes 60% of all illnesses and diseases, so lower levels of stress mean higher chances of overall well-being. For maximum benefits on a stressful day, turn on some music and sing along. Don't be shy to break out the air guitar!

4. Music improves sleep

A study showed that listening to classical or relaxing music within an hour of going to bed significantly improves sleep, compared to listening to an audiobook or doing nothing before bed. Since we know music can directly influence our hormones, it only makes sense to throw on some Beethoven (or Dark Side of The Moon?).

5. Music reduces depression

Music has a direct effect on our hormones; it can even be considered a natural antidepressant. This is because certain tunes cause the release of serotonin and dopamine (neurotransmitters) in the brain that lead to increased feelings of happiness and well-being. It also releases norepinephrine, which is a hormone that invokes feelings of euphoria.

6. Music helps you eat less

According to research, the combination of soft lighting and music leads people to consume less food (and enjoy it more). Music as the next trending diet? Sounds easy enough!

7. Music elevates your mood while driving

A study found that listening to music positively influences your mood while driving, which obviously leads to safer behaviour and less road rage.

8. Music strengthens learning and memory

Listening to music can also help you learn and recall information more efficiently, researchers say.

9. Music increases verbal intelligence

A study showed that 90% of children between the ages of 4 and 6 had significantly increased verbal intelligence after only a month of taking music lessons, where they learned about rhythm, pitch, melody, and voice.

10. Music raises IQ and academic performances

Research suggests that taking music lessons predetermines high academic performance and IQ scores in young children.

In addition to these 10 reasons, there are so many more, including decreases in pain thresholds, the relaxing nature it provides to patients before and after surgery, increasing memory pathways for patients with Alzheimer's, the improvement of recovery time for patients who suffered a stroke, the ability to keep your brain healthy in old age, to name a few. Music really does serve as a therapy for all, whether as medicine in a hospital or to ease a heartache on a rainy day.

If you enjoy listening to music, and if this has inspired you to listen to more music in the future, why not come along to the Popular Music group which meets monthly on the second Thursday of the month between 10 and 12. We listen to a wide range of music of all kinds from the past 5 or 6 decades.

Heather Rogers

Craft Group

We have now been active for the last eleven months and there has been a range of Crafts throughout 2018 delivered mostly by group members, but two outsiders have slipped in amongst them, Amy from the Community department in Highbury College and Sue an ex-florist of many years standing.

We gained a number of new members from the Open Afternoon in October who are active and interested in learning new things. They have integrated into the group well and the existing group have embraced them in both a positive and practical way. The atmosphere at a meeting is relaxed and enjoyable.



Amy was our leader for the **September** meeting where we were introduced to Brush Calligraphy. When I looked it up on the internet I knew it would be a challenge but everyone knuckled down and gave it their best shot. It will take more than one session to become a beginner but Amy will be joining us again in 2019.

October and **November** blended in together in making special cards for special occasions as a lead up to Christmas. Yes, that word had to creep in somewhere. Over the two meetings we had help from Amy again and three



excellent crafters, Val, Chris and Joyce, from the group. Some of the members were making cards using a variety of disciplines, such as pressed flowers and techniques called iris and teabag folding, to name but a few.



Sue was with us in **December** using her floristry expertise to demonstrate and guide members in making a wreath, either for the front door or a table decoration. She showed the ladies how to fold a floristry bow for their creation. The industry

attached to this work was thoughtful, creative and beautiful. The buzz was great. We ended the year with a party, everyone contributed and a good time was had by all.

I want to thank the group for making my job a pleasure during the year and the 'icing on the cake' is Chris H. agreeing to be my deputy. Thanks again and a Happy New Year to you all.

Charitable Activity

We are continuing, at this present time, with our current charitable project, which is knitting blanket squares for the Veterans Outreach Support programme. The ladies have risen to this opportunity to assist those who are less fortunate than themselves. Their output has been phenomenal throughout 2018 and we are going to continue for the foreseeable future and we will look round at whom else we can help. The quantity and quality of the knitting that is given at each meeting is remarkable. Pam forwards the squares to the people concerned. A lady in the charity's organisation does a remarkable job sewing them all together as you can see from the image.



General Information

The Craft group meets in Cosham Baptist Church on the 1st Wednesday of the month between 2 - 4 pm in the Front Hall which is situated on the ground floor. The room and building are accessible to all. Future activities will include a variety of different crafts, such as festive decorations, calligraphy and card making with either group members or guest crafters leading the sessions. There are currently spaces available in the group and we would welcome new members irrespective of ability.

If you feel you would be able to lead a session but not necessarily have the time to commit each month please contact the group leader in the usual way. You would be most welcome.

Please use the following Email contact if interested and someone will be in touch: contact@portsdownu3a.org.uk

The programme for the start of 2019 is as follows:

Month	Activity	Session Leader
January	Box Making	Val
February	Hedgehog – Book Folding	Chris H.
March	Needlecraft – Pin Cushion	Cheryl

Linda Hugo-Vieten

Book Group

This diverse group of book lovers experience a range of genres throughout the year.

The discussion is never boring as the members in the group all have their own thoughts and opinions on the theme, characters and the quality of writing. Discussions are always amenable and thought-provoking, as every member's opinion is valued, with members influencing each other to embrace new authors. Generally, all the books are well received but occasionally this is not the case.

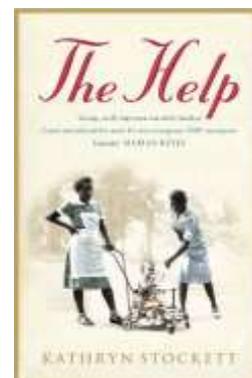
We grade each book from 1 to 10 at the end of each session. The numeral values can range from 3 to 8-9, or even 10 on occasions for the same book!!! Portsmouth Library Service provides our books free of charge.

Recently experienced books

The Help by Kathryn Stockett

This book was an interesting and detailed insight into the relationship between the white employers and the black maids in the 1950s in the southern states of the USA. As they become older, the children, who were brought up by these maids from birth, were taught to despise the maids because they were black, so therefore unclean and inferior. The novel flowed making it very readable. The day to day lives of both black and white individuals, the demarcation between the two and how they conformed to fit into their respective places is extremely illuminating and quite disturbing. Excellent read.

Awarded 8



The Miniaturist by Jessie Burton

A story set in seventeenth century Amsterdam - a city ruled by glittering wealth and oppressive religion. Two of the main characters are a successful merchant, Johannes Brandt, who has a high standing in the community who marries, in 1686, an unworlly 18 year old, Nella Oortman, from the country to hide his homosexuality and give his family life an air of respectability. Eventually, he was convicted of depraved acts and was weighted down and drowned as the standard religious punishment of the time. This book was accepted by the majority of the group as informative, and a snapshot of the lifestyle of the time but not seen as plausible by some.

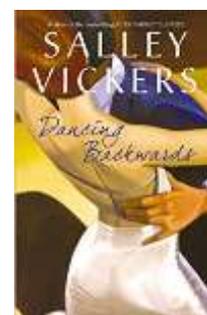
Awarded 7.5



Dancing Backwards by Salley Vickers

Most participants felt the key character, Violet Hetherington, lacked in substance which obviously affected the depth in the storyline. The story takes place on a liner crossing the Atlantic to New York where the main character meets a diverse range of people and learns to ballroom dance whilst her back story is played out showing an unconfident woman who had allowed people to manipulate her throughout her life.

Awarded 4



Days Without End by Sebastian Barry

The group's thoughts on this book were that it had graphic imagery and language but tended to be rather monotonous as it meanders through the lives of two very naïve young teenagers in the army during the 1850s eradicating Indians and fighting during the American Civil War. Some of the group did not finish the book as it was not to their liking.

Awarded 5



We meet once a month on the 2nd Thursday from 2–4 pm. The group size is limited to 13 because that is the largest set of the books the library provides. At present this group is full with two members on the waiting list. This is a fluid situation so please let us know if you are interested by using this Email address: contact@portsdownu3a.org.uk

Shirley Russell

Strollers Walking Group

There was a variety of walks during this last season – some close to home, Hilsea Lines and Portsmouth Golf Course, and others, further afield in Emsworth and Waterlooville. All the walks were well attended and we seem to be blessed with good weather on Fridays - no walks had to be cancelled.



The walk at Wickham was extremely enjoyable with good views from the disused railway of historic interest, wooded areas with a range of plants and trees, the openness of a golf course, mushrooms and a water section with some white water. A really delightful walk – thank you Ken. Most of the strollers stay for lunch after the walks, and the various places we have frequented have had varied menus to suit a range of palates.



Our walks are usually 2 1/2 to 3 miles across easy terrain, with normally very few, if any, inclines. The walks culminate with lunch; this is optional, but most people over a season join the enthusiastic eaters. We are an extremely social group, both on the walk and at lunch. We make new members very welcome and can provide lifts for those who need them.



Please use the following Email address if you are interested and someone will be in touch: contact@portsdownu3a.org.uk

We walk every alternate Friday, weather permitting. The winter/spring season started on Friday 4th January. Walks are listed in **Groups** under **Strollers** – see website for details.

Linda Hugo-Vieten



Meetings in the Coming few Months

Unless otherwise stated, all General Meetings will be on Wednesdays at the Cosham Baptist Church (48 Havant Road PO6 2QZ) starting at 1400 (2 pm) and will include a talk by the speakers and on the subjects named below.

16 January	Malcolm Wells MBE	So Far So Good (Gulf War; Behind the Scenes at the Palace; Training Dogs)
20 February	Nigel Linger	Portsmouth Royal Dockyard; a Moment in Time
20 March	David Yaldren	The Mid Hants Railway (the Watercress Line)
17 April	Cheryl Jewitt	The Triangle Girls
15 May	Karen Pritchard	The Work of the Stroke Association
19 June	Sandy Wansbury	Africa Organics (Sustainable Farming)
17 July	Andrew Negus	Salisbury Part 3

Peter Smith, Speakers Secretary