

Crewkerne & District U3a

Newsletter

August 2026

This month, Jeff Hutson has sent me some unusual views of Crewkerne taken from St. Bartholomew's Church Tower at dusk. I found it difficult to choose which ones to include, so I am sending you two of my favourites and I'm sure if you want to see more and you ask Jeff he will send them to you.

I am told that the Tower will be open for 'guided tours' subject to the weather on Bank Holiday Monday together with Bell Ringing demonstrations plus "an introduction to and demonstration of the church organ" details to be posted on Facebook.



Chairmans Chats

As there is so little space - I will copy the second picture on the next page, but whilst I have your attention, I need to ask for some help please for Saturday 24th October when we will be at the Farmers Market in Falkland Square promoting the good things about the U3a.

We will have a Gazebo and a bit of a display and we have handouts to give to members of the public which we hope will lead to a conversation and may result in welcoming some new members. We are trying this in preference to an 'open day' at Henhayes. If you can spare half an hour between anytime 9:00 and 12:30 to help the Committee members on that morning, please let me know. My email is crewkerneu3achair@gmail.com thank you.

And this if my second choice!
What a beautiful Town we live in, aren't we lucky
Thank you, Jeff.



Group Coordinators' August Updates

As the Dance House is being sold u3a groups will no longer be meeting there. The groups involved are aware of the situation and making alternative arrangements.

Can you let Group Leaders or ourselves know if you would like to join a new group?

If you're interested in starting a new group, we'd love to hear your ideas. There's absolutely no pressure to become a group leader, you wouldn't be doing it alone. There might be others who are interested, it could be something you run together, at your own pace.



There are a few people interested in forming a third book group. Please contact us if you would like to be part of this new venture.

Susan and Norman Irving

Group Coordinators cadu3agroups@gmail.com

Only 128 days to Christmas!



There are only 128 days to Christmas at the time of writing this! Would you be interested in decorating and taking down the u3a Christmas tree in December? The u3a have a tree, decorations and lights. More details to follow but please let us know if you think you will have a few hours to spare.

Susan and Norman Irving cadu3agroups@gmail.com

Groups' Showcase

Focus on Mah Jong

Mah Jong translated as The Game of the Four Winds, is a game of Chinese origin played with engraved tiles which are built into a square - each wall is 18 tiles long by 2 tiles high making a total of 144 tiles. It is thought to date as far back as Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD) although the modern game is an amalgamation of games from various eras plus some Western inventions! The Chinese version of the game is much simpler than the Western version and is played all over China with much gusto, noise, shouting and is played for high stakes. The Western version is slower and has many more variations of the runs needed to complete a hand. It is played with beautifully engraved tiles divided into 3 suits (circles, bamboo, characters), 4 winds (N, E, S, W) and 3 dragons (red, white, green) - there are 4 of each tile plus 4 flower tiles and 4 season tiles which do not come into the compiling of runs but do affect the scoring.



The aim is to be the first person to go Mah Jong (i.e. complete a hand) with a complete set of 14 tiles. There are many possible combinations of tiles to make runs and the game is a mixture of skill, strategy and a big dose of luck.

Intrigued? Do you have a set somewhere in the loft but have never learnt how to play? There is a U3A group which meets every Thursday afternoon at 2pm. Come along to see for yourself!

Focus on Friday Play-readers

At our last meeting In July, we almost had a full complement of players., which was wonderful. We were reading a play with lots of characters and a really good story. We meet on the fourth Friday of every month at 10am. Tea and coffee are always available. We have a lot of fun trying to bring the characters to life.

If you fancy yourself as a budding actor, come along and join us. We could do with a few deep voices! We look very serious in the photos but that is because we were concentrating on our parts.



Focus on Short Tennis

Short Tennis is an easy and fun way to get into playing racket sports. It is a great way to keep fit. The pace is slower than standard tennis, which is all perfect for beginners. You can have fun and build confidence up over time, at a gentler speed and a pace to suit you.

Short tennis courts are smaller. The rackets are shorter and lighter with a soft foam ball. This helps slow the pace of the game, making it easier to play.

We meet at Wadham School Sports Centre Tuesdays from 5.15 to 6.15 and only costs £3.50. Why not give it a try?



SOME VERY GOOD NEWS

In last month's newsletter I explained that we were trying to start a subsidised trips and events group. I asked if we had any members who were familiar with grant processes and lo and behold, we have two members who have offered their help and both have experience in this field. So, we are one step further to starting this group. The next step is to establish if there is enough interest to carry on with grant applications. So, I am asking for help again!

Could you please let Angie, our Chair, know if you would be interested in this and if so what kind of trips would you like? These would be quarterly so maybe a seaside trip in summer, somewhere a bit further away than West Bay! Or a Christmas Garden Centre trip in the winter. It could also be a theatre trips or a visit to a National Trust Property. Any suggestions would be very welcome as it will help us to set a budget for the application. Many thanks.

Biscuits

from Elizabeth Dalton

Standing proud in its crisp red wrapper, a virtuous Ryvita crispbread surveyed the supermarket shelf, feeling intensely superior to its sugary, fat-laden neighbours. While Jammy Dodgers, Custard Creams, and flimsy Ginger Nuts offered only cloying sweetness, the Ryvita represented pure health and discipline.

Its journey had begun on a small farm, where a hardy rye crop weathered wind, rain, and devastating hail before a grateful farmer harvested the yield. Milled into fine flour in Poole, the grain was baked into a firm, clean crispbread designed to keep ambulatory humans upright and well-nourished.

Eventually, a shopper brought the packet home. The Ryvita was unpacked and placed on a plate, where a young boy named Jack eagerly spread it with butter, watching the yellow paste squeeze through the tiny perforations like little worms. Served alongside cheese, it was quickly devoured.

Its glory was short-lived. That night, the uneaten remains were scraped into the sink and ground to bits in the waste disposal unit alongside cabbage stalks, apple cores, and potato peelings. The resulting sludge washed through the drainage system and into a water treatment plant, eventually being spread back onto farm fields as fertilizer.

As the nutrients settled back into the earth to nourish a brand-new crop, the fallen Ryvita faced the ultimate cosmic irony: restarting the cycle of life with the very real possibility of returning to the supermarket shelf as a despised Jammy Dodger.

Marseilles courtesy of Anthony Berridge

Marseilles once had a bad reputation for crime, sleaze and drugs. A few years ago, it had a makeover like our “City of culture” This is an installation beside the old port or harbour. We were there with a large choir to sing concerts in Marseilles harbour and Arles.



Marseilles is now a delightful city with wonderful restaurants and bars. The old harbour is mostly given over to pleasure craft but there were still a few reminders of times past.



Welcome to John Cross

The fun started about 2 ½ years ago when Microsoft advised that they would no longer be supporting Windows 10 and that my computer would not support Windows 11. After recovering from the fact that my computer could be turned on and off by a company 7000 miles away, I set about finding a solution to the problem. My computing skills are at a very base level so it was obvious that I needed help.

Starting with the usual suspects, local tech vendors, library etc. and speaking to most friends and acquaintances my request for assistance was met with ‘Sorry can’t help you, you’ll have to buy a new computer’ ‘We have already bought our new computer’ through to ‘Carry on using Windows 10 until Microsoft turn it off completely’.

Significantly, at this time, my computer started to run slower and slower until even the ‘Carry On’ answer was not acceptable.

Then a friend in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire advised me to look up the local U3A and see if they had a sub-group which might help. 10 minutes later the friend had also provided me with the knowledge that there was a Digital Technology Group (DTG) and that they met regularly in a local hostelry.

I attended the next meeting and was met with a small group of people who completely understood my situation and immediately recommended a solution. From this point on the DTG and people that they know became supportive friends.

The end result of my tracking down the DTG is that, with their support and the help of the local Linux Crew, my computer has been restored to ‘full speed ahead’ and software installed that means Microsoft are no longer in charge of my data.

For all the help I received ‘thank you’ U3A and the DTG and the other friends I have met.

John.

PS – Yes, I have joined the U3A and become Crewkerne Member No. 808

APP NEWS

2 new apps for you to download, free of charge!

“Words with friends”

a classic crossword game which can be played either singly or with friends

“Vita Mah Jong”

Mah Jong for seniors.

“Eclipse, what eclipse?”

from Liz Randall

The moment I settled down to watch the eclipse from my back garden, two things happened. First a tractor came roaring down the field behind my house, turning over the topsoil (wheat having been harvested recently). I was engulfed in dust and beat a hasty retreat indoors. Having shut all the windows against the dust storm, I turned my thoughts to the eclipse. But the sky clouded over and obscured the sun. You know clouds sometimes scud across the sky? Well, this time the patch of cloud persisted in the same place, covering the sun for the entire eclipse ‘window’. I watched intently for tiny gaps in the cloud; my partner got one good shot with his camera with the appropriate lens when a small ragged hole appeared. Anyway, here’s our pictorial record of the August 2026 eclipse.



Some more eclipse photos for your memory box!



“The diamond” from Sue Dyke’s daughter

One from Val Warren



Our family went up to Bincombe to watch the eclipse I was proudly clasping my 'Blue Peter' style home made viewing box – which was rubbish!! The colander worked well and my daughter-in-law had managed to buy several pairs of glasses for us all to share, so we all enjoyed the experience but I didn't manage to get any decent photos - so well done those who did! *Angie*

September at the Dance House

Saturday 19 September, 7.30PM

Sophie Rosa & Ian Buckle

Sophie Rosa, violin

Ian Buckle, piano

Programme

Felix Mendelssohn Violin Sonata in F minor, Op 4

Beethoven Sonata no 5 in F, Op 24 'Spring'

Elgar Salut d'Amour, Op 12 – Chanson de Matin and
Chanson de Nuit Op 15

Grieg Violin Sonata no 1 in F major, Op 8

The Dance House, Gouldsbrook View, North Street,
Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7AL



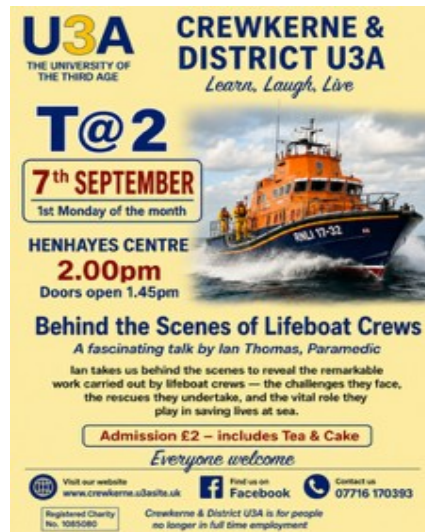
Tickets £20 U3A Members £18 on the door or in advance at The Town Hall.

A fun fact for August

Did you know that a Male gentoo penguins propose to female penguins by giving them a special pebble. “*Wouldn’t impress me!!*”

Your T@2 Speakers for the next three months

September 7th



October 5th

'We built a swimming pool'

U3a Chairman Angie Singleton will share her story of how a small community came together to raise the funds, build and manage one of the most successful community swimming pools in the country. As the Crewkerne Town Council coordinator for the Aqua Centre project, Angie knows the true story.



November 2nd

Miles Barton... focuses on pictures and objects from the 17th Century through to the more recent periods. He is also an acclaimed Author.

Miles has written about rediscovering Portraits and much more. He will bring a selection of his books which will be available to purchase.

This meeting promises to be an interesting and entertaining talk, with illustrations.