

Crewkerne & District u3a

Newsletter

September 2026



All the fun of the fair by Jeff Hutson – more inside!



Group Coordinators' September News

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.



A Third Book Group is starting on October 7th; it will be on the first Wednesday morning of the month in members' homes. More people would be very welcome, please get in touch if you are interested in joining.

As the Dance House is being sold some u3a groups will no longer be meeting there. The groups involved are aware of the situation and making alternative arrangements. If your group meets at the Dance House your Group Leader will inform you of any changes.

Unfortunately, the Family History and Listening to Classical Music Groups have closed. We would like to thank John Bartholomew for running the groups.

If you would like to receive the newsletter in a larger font, please let us know.

Susan and Norman Irving Group Coordinators cadu3agroups@gmail.com

Updates from Groups

Creative Writing Group

We meet on the 1st Wednesday of each month 10.00am, to 12.00pm. Our venue is Misterton Village Hall.

At our October meeting we turn our attention to an unexpected subject: "a chair," an inanimate object that quietly accompanies our daily lives.

As always, if the topic doesn't quite speak to you, please feel free to bring whatever you've been working on, a poem, a monologue, a slice of autobiography, a roman à clef, something factual or entirely imagined. Whether it's lyric poetry, flash fiction, a scene from a play, a reflective essay, a character sketch, a fragment of memoir, or something experimental and genre-defying, we will be delighted to hear it. Whatever form your writing takes, it's welcome. Due to time restrictions our works need to be less than 2,500 words.

Hope to see you all next month: Wednesday 7th October.

Latest from the Folk Dance Group

After what seemed a very long break the Folk Dance Group returned to dancing in the Speedwell Hall on the afternoon of Monday 14th September. We were a small group of just 11 as several members were away on holiday but what a lovely afternoon we had. Being a smaller than usual group we were able to spend more time perfecting our moves.

We would love to have a few more members so here is a reminder. The Folk/Country Dance Group meets the second and fourth Monday afternoons each month and you will be most welcome to just sit and watch if you prefer. It's just £3 for the afternoon which includes refreshments half way through. You don't need a partner, you don't need to be a dancer but it helps if you can count up to 8!

One thing is for sure, in the true spirit of our U3A you will learn, laugh and live if you decide to join us.

T@2 Speakers for the next three months

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.

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.

December 7th

We are still working on the entertainment for the Christmas Tea@2 so watch this space!

Concerts in The West

Saturday 17th October, 7.30pm

The Dance House,

Gouldsbrook View, North Street, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7AL

Lise Vandersmissen; Harp & Gabriela Opacka-Boccadoro; violin

Programme

Claude Debussy Arabesque No. 1

Barbara Strozzi Che si può fare

Jeanne Adrienne Kufferath Deux Pièces: Simple Histoire & Autrefois

Handel Lascia ch'io pianga – Aria from 'Rinaldo'

Andy Scott Sonata for flute and harp

Interval

Henry Purcell When I am laid in earth

Lise Vandersmissen Lullaby for a child & Nature's Calling

Arvo Pärt Spiegel im Spiegel

Astor Piazzolla Histoire du Tango: Café 1930, Nightclub 1960

Giulio Caccini Amarilli Mia Bella

Tickets £20 but £18 with U3A membership.

Next season is already available to view online and advertising The Dance House but, as things stand, likely to be elsewhere in the town. Watch this space.

Ticket price will be increasing but will be held at £18 for U3A members.



A friend and fellow U3a member took this photo whilst we were on a walk around the fields surrounding Crewkerne – isn't nature amazing?

Another photo from Jeff - did you visit the Market organised by the Rotary Club



THIS MONTH'S APPS

We are including two Apps a month that may be of interest. This month's Apps are:

Luminosity

This is a brain training app designed to improve your memory and attention with evidence-based training. You can sign up for free and take a free fit test. There are a handful of games that you can try free but if you want more you can subscribe

Borrow Box

Borrow Box is a digital library platform that allows you to borrow eBooks, audiobooks, eMagazines and eNewspapers, using your local public library membership. It acts as your personal 'library in one app'. It allows you to download and enjoy all of the above seamlessly across smartphones, tablets and computers.

TUBS

My garden is a source of pleasure
I sit out in it at my leisure.
Years ago, in the past,
I've had gardens that were vast.
This one was a stony yard,
The ground compacted very hard.
I missed at first a nice green lawn,
But it's hard work to keep one shorn.
So my garden now is all in pots,
And I have lots, and lots, and lots!
Huge plastic tubs with apple trees,
And pretty flowers to please the bees.
Most things in containers grow,
The watering is a chore I know.
Lupins, snapdragons, sweet peas,
Perennials that are sure to please.
Wisteria, passion flower, clematis,
Roses with perfume to assault us.
Penstemon, pansies, violets too
Just to name a favourite few.
Potatoes, tomatoes, rhubarb, beans,
Giving me pleasure, keeping me keen.
The mower swapped for the can and the hose.
To make quite sure my garden grows.

Christine Dubery





The photo shows St Mary's Basilica in the Central Square in Krakow, where a famous bugle call is sounded every hour.

Krakow Then and Now ***Sue Frackiewicz***

Recently three generations of our family visited Krakow in Poland for a few days. Today Krakow is a vibrant cosmopolitan city, English is commonly spoken and the economy certainly appears to be booming.

It wasn't always like that. We first visited nearby Katowice in 1983 for a cousin's wedding, a lively event spread over several days! There were shortages of many things, including some foods, but you would never have known that from the spread laid on by the bride's family. Most people in those days used a bartering system or knew someone who knew someone etc. There was also a thriving black market and Pounds and US dollars were king.

In those days of communist rule, English was hardly spoken, as Polish people had learnt either German or Russian, depending on their age. Fortunately, despite being born in the UK, my husband Mike speaks fluent Polish. Travelling there by car in the 80s was an experience in itself.

Petrol was very hard to get hold of, so we exchanged our car for a friend's diesel car for the trip. It took us two days, to allow time to get through borders and negotiate the poor East German roads, before crossing into Poland and driving for another five hours.

When we visited Krakow in the 80s, it was not crowded and all the beautiful handmade crafts were on sale for next to nothing by Western standards. Of course, being shown around by family members always gives one a much greater sense of the reality of everyday life, but whenever our UK car was spotted, there would be someone offering to buy our pounds or dollars.

Poland after 1989, and especially since joining the EU in 2004, is definitely a more liberated, relaxed and cosmopolitan place, but it has definitely lost a lot of its uniqueness.



The photo shows the Sukience or Cloth Hall also in the Central Square in Krakow



CAT

The cat came in on buttered paws
Lay in sunshine bars across the mat,
Her stripes echoed in fitful sun
Her softness promised heat to come.
She purred, the very sound of warmth,
Of satisfaction, of sensuous bliss.
What more than this, what lazy
Comfort, the sun a kiss on soft fur.
She lay outstretched with slanted eyes.

She stretched and let her senses
Pause between the shadows .
A sensuous pause

On a languorous day....

Ilys.

CREWKERNE MEMORIES

Today the main street, Market Street, is dominated by its shops and you hardly notice the elegant eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings which house them. Seventy years ago, it was the other way around.

In those days the big houses had most of the ground and the shops just had little yards. Mrs. Deeley who lived at the end of Market Street could see her old house where the fabric shop is now, a seven bedroom house with stables and a lovely garden. Across the road was another big house owned by Mr. Blake. Mr. Blake also had a lovely garden with lily ponds and a big terrace and this is where Mrs. Deeley was married. Today this area is covered in concrete. It is turned into a small square with shops on three sides and a small car park. It is Falkland Square. Its name is not derived from the Falklands conflict of the 1980's. It actually refers to the Blake family who owned property in the Falkland Islands in the 1930's. When work was scarce a number of men from Crewkerne went to work in the islands for £7 a week, sheep farming, one was married out there and brought his wife back to live in Crewkerne.

Market Square is now a car park but it was once the place where everything happened. The focal centre was Victoria Hall.

“There was a little balcony by one of the big windows. Someone would open the window and go out to speak to the people in the square. That is how the end of the war was announced and other important events.”

Orange and Almond Gluten Free Cake.

Temp, 180'C, 160'C fan oven.

Serves 8.

Ingredients:

- * 2 large clementine or 4 satsumas.
- * 4 large eggs.
- * Zest of one lemon.
- * 160g golden caster sugar.
- * 100gml Olive Oil.
- * 175g ground almonds.
- * 2 TSPs of baking powder (gluten free if possible).
- * 15g caster sugar (for syrup).
- * Juice of one lemon.
- * Icing sugar (for dusting).
- * Orange segments to serve.

METHOD:

- * Boil oranges for 25/30mins until very soft. Remove seeds and blend into a puree.
- * Whisk eggs and sugar, add olive oil, lemon zest and puree.
- * Fold in almond and baking powder
- * Pour into lined 20cm tin.
- * Bake for 45/50mins until firm and golden.

SYRUP

- * Heat lemon juice and sugar. Spoon over warm cake.
- * Serve with dusted icing sugar and fresh orange segments.

** My tips

** I found Satsumas Easy Peelers satisfactory.

** FREEZES well. Dust with icing sugar when fully defrosted.

ENJOY



Denise Smith

Food for thought

Have any of you ever grown Amaranth?



A gardening friend gave me a seedling of Amaranth which has grown really well. Grain Amaranth has been cultivated for thousands of years in the Americas and was a staple food for the Aztec peoples. Leaves and seeds of some species are still enjoyed today. The young leaves can be added to salads and the older ones can be used like spinach and seeds can be eaten as quinoa.

I think I will grow it in clumps next year as the colour, flowers and seeds really stand out. My daughter says the birds enjoy the seeds and it self seeds easily. Amaranth thrives in full sun and hot weather so maybe it's a plant to consider for our promised warmer summers. Leslye Stansfield

As there is space – here is another of Jeff Hutson’s amazing photos.



I would like to thank the U3A, as I moved down here in 2008, mainly because I knew Crewkerne as a child, coming for holidays with my Aunt. I was 66 and had just retired, and when you are young you tend to meet people through your children, not so simple in later life. At the time the U3A here was very large and met in the Methodist Church. I joined lots of groups and soon made good friends. Sadly, in the 18 years many lovely friends have passed away. Now not so mobile, but still attend lots of groups that keep my brain ticking over, so thank you U3A.

Christine Dubery