



Tetbury & District u3a Newsletter

April 2025

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

I hope you've enjoyed a good Easter break, with this lovely warm spring sunshine. There are just a couple of parish notices from me this month.

First of all, I can confirm that our **Open Day will take place on Tuesday 8th July at the Tetbury Goods Shed, between 10.30am and 2.30pm.** This will have the dual purpose of promoting our u3a to potential new members and also to encourage existing members to participate more fully. Many of our Group Leaders will be in attendance, with a table display, to showcase what we do. Keep the date free and come along to find out more about what we have to offer - all u3a members will be invited.

Secondly, I have now ceased the Friday morning coffee sessions at the Goods Shed. These have been incredibly enjoyable, and I've met

some interesting people and made some new friends. I believe this was worthwhile, as I've managed to induct some new members to our u3a.

Best wishes Bernadette
chair@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Monthly Speakers

Our next monthly talk will take place on Monday 19th May at 10:30am, at the Tetbury Goods Shed. This will be provided by the NHS Falls Assessment and Education Service on the subject of 'Strong and Steady'.



When we reach the age of 45 or 50, balance and muscle strength begins to decline - and most of us don't even notice it!

The team will talk us through steps that can be taken NOW to help prevent future falls and injury.

By Anne Cox
speakers@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Group News

Art Appreciation

This month we looked at the work of Domenikos Theotokopoulos - better known as "El Greco" (1541 -1614). He was born in Crete but spent 37 years in Toledo, the religious capital of Spain, a vibrant community of Jews, Christians and Muslims ruled by Philip II (who never, however, bestowed his patronage on him). He was born an Orthodox Christian but later converted to Catholicism.

We looked at his painting of St John with St Francis, the former resplendent in a red robe and holding a gold chalice and depicted with an eagle. St Francis, showing his stigmata, has renounced his worldly wealth and wore the plain grey robe of the Order of Franciscans tied with a roped belt with three knots referencing his vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. El Greco was much influenced by Tintoretto and Titian and in turn influenced Picasso and Cezanne. He painted in the Mannerist style characterised by elongated figures, exaggerated proportions, winding lines and distorted perspectives.

Closer to home, we considered the work of John Wood, the Elder, (1704 - 1754). After the Romans, Bath declined but its popularity as a spa town in the Georgian period drove its transformation into a popular and fashionable destination. The resurgence of the city was driven by Richard "Beau" Nash who organised social events, Ralph Allen who owned the quarries that provided Bath stone and John Wood, the architect.

John Wood was largely responsible for designing the Palladian buildings, most notably the Bath Mineral Hospital, Queens Square, Prior Park (Ralph Allen's country residence) and North and South Parades. One of his most well known designs, The Circus, was completed by his son, John Wood the Younger. The design of the Circus is believed to be based on the Colosseum in Rome and the measurements maybe taken from Stonehenge that he had previously surveyed. The design on the porticos show a possible Freemason

influence, the designs include a pair of compasses, serpents and acorns. There are three entrances to the Circus forming a triangle also a freemasonry symbol.

By Judy Greeman

artappreciation@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Board Games

We had one session in the glorious tranquillity of the Highgrove room upstairs in the Upton Mill Care Home, before being advised that this was a secure area to which we were not allowed. So the session on the last Wednesday in March was back in the foyer, which is cosy and comfortable but noisy, which some of the group enjoy and others find distracting.



We have asked if there is any way round this, and of course if this glorious weather continues we can play outside, but it seems we will have to stay in the foyer. I am investigating whether we could use Steepleton instead. Watch this space.

We will meet on the 2nd and 4th of every month, somewhere, and are happy to see new members, including beginners. Do come and join us.

By Chris Lees boardgames@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Bookclub Monday

We all come to books with different expectations and previous lived experiences, so it was interesting to observe our differences and discuss this month's book, the Women's Prize for Fiction winner of 2024, "Brotherless Night" by V.V. Ganeshanathan.

This is a novel centring on one family, in particular, Sashi, the young daughter, and her experiences during the Sinhalese-Tamil Civil War (1983-2009). One of our group had lived in Sri Lanka, two had been in Sri Lanka when Indira Gandhi was assassinated, another had never heard of the conflict, and the rest of us were only vaguely aware of "The Tamil Tigers" without being fully familiar with any of the details.



Tyiqnqnenq, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

The novel has been so well researched that it almost reads like an autobiography rather than historical fiction and in this respect, it is very educational. The detached style of a journalist, using a documentary approach, is combined with very realistic descriptions of the intimacy between siblings and grandparents, teachers and friends. The book does not shy away from the terrible results of war, the

choices people make and the consequences for women. These are details that are all too relevant today.

Overarching all of this is the question about who is a terrorist? And who controls the narrative of conflict? As the author says: You must understand that the word, terrorist, is too simple for the history we have lived.

Despite some of the difficulties of getting into the book - the local terms, the long names, the unfamiliar religious customs - we found it very worthwhile and rated the book 3.8 out of 5. On Monday 28th April at 7pm at The Royal Oak Tetbury we will discuss "The Fraud" by Zadie Smith.

By Corinne Hinton

bookclubmonday@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Book Club Wednesday

We met on a lovely, sunny afternoon to discuss 'With the End in Mind' by Kathryn Mannix, a palliative physician and cognitive therapist.

Sympathetically written, it's surprisingly quite an uplifting book which explains how death has become the last taboo we need to talk about. It shows us the medical community at its best working together for the good of the patient and their family - in an ideal word that would be available to all of us! None of us know how we will cope when the time comes but her advice is that we need to be more open with each other for everyone's good.

As she says 'There are only 2 days with fewer than 24 hours, one we celebrate but the other one makes us see living as precious'

By Pauline Whittaker

bookclubwednesday@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Gardening Group

This month we enjoyed a most informative visit to the Men's Shed allotment on Herd Lane. This was a departure from our usual garden visits, and we learned how they grow vegetables, their irrigation system, how they control the rabbits, where they get their manure from, and why their soil type is different from ours.

I, for one, took away a few tips - plant your courgettes on mounds for better drainage, and it's OK to plant runner beans on the same spot year after year. We even had the opportunity to take a few packets of seeds which had been donated by a local garden centre.



Our next visit will be to the Courts Garden at Holt, a National Trust garden, on Monday 12th May. Some of us visited this garden in the autumn and wanted to return to see it in late spring. You would be welcome to join us.

By Caroline Hose

gardening@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Historic Buildings Group

By the time you read this newsletter, we will have visited Kingston Bagpuize House nr Faringdon, Oxon, and will be getting ready for our visit in early May to Stratfield Saye House nr Basingstoke. We'll report back on these visits in the next newsletter.

We had hoped to arrange another visit to Frocester Court, but this has not worked out for us so far. We'll try for a visit later in the year.

Our next scheduled visit is to Bromesberrow estate, nr Ledbury on 12th June. This will be a private group visit behind closed doors to see this classical Greek Revival house. The current owner will give an introductory talk about the house, followed by a tour of the house and gardens. The cost is £23pp inc tea/coffee /biscuits on arrival. You are welcome to bring a picnic to enjoy in the grounds.

Our July visit is to Cotswold Farm nr Duntisborne Abbots Glos on 23rd July. This historic Arts & Crafts house is in the heart of the Cotswolds. Designed by Sidney Barnsley and Norman Jewson, it has been the home of the Birchall family for five generations. The cost will be £28pp to include a tour of the house by the owner, refreshments (soup roll, hot drink homemade cake), and entry to the garden. Some of you may have seen the splendid display of snowdrops in February when we visited as part of the u3a Gardening Group. This will be a great opportunity to see inside the house, and also see the garden again during a different season of the year.

Please see our entry on our website

<https://tetburyu3a.org.uk/groups/> for more information about this year's events and download the programme.

Please note that we only take bookings on a visit-by-visit basis. Email invitations to book will normally be sent out around a month before

each visit. We cannot accept bookings or payments before then. Keep your eyes open for emails from us, as visits often sell out very quickly! Contact us if you are interested in joining our Group; send us an email to historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk

By David & Maggie Smith - Group organisers.

History Group

The Industrial Revolution that began in the mid eighteenth century is generally accepted to be 'a good thing'. It increased the production of goods, reduced prices, created more jobs, a bigger middle class and a move from subsistence farm labouring to an industrial and commercial way of life. However, all social changes result in winners and losers, victors and victims and in April Bob Kelley told the Group how his hometown of Shaftesbury (Dorset) suffered.



Bob's Dad outlined on canvass the above depiction of Gold Hill, Shaftesbury which his Mum needlepointed (121 stitches to the square inch) around 1980.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, Shaftesbury had thrived from its provision of hospitality to travellers from London to the West Country, brewing its own beers and as the centre of the Dorset button

making industry. It had returned two MPs to Parliament from its inception until the Reform Act of 1830. The coming of the railways bypassed the hilltop town, which lost its brewing and hospitality industries to nearby towns that were on rivers and rail, and the development of button making machines in Birmingham, especially of metal buttons, destroyed North Dorset's manual, cottage-based industry.

Widespread unemployment and starvation caused wholesale migration from the town to other places in Britain and to Canada. While the population of England rose almost fourfold from 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ m in 1801 to 30m in 1901, the population of Shaftesbury remained constant for most of the nineteenth century before falling continuously from 3,054 in 1871 to 1,873 in 1911 - a drop of nearly 40% in as many years.

By Bob Kelley

history@tetburyu3a.org.uk

And finallyThe deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is Monday 19th May. Without your reports there would be no newsletter, so keep those reports coming in.

Please use the contact newsletter@tetburyu3a.org.uk to send your articles to Caroline, your newsletter editor.

See Annex below for list of u3a National Online Learning Events.

u3a National Events

Online Learning Events

u3a members can join a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free with their membership. Most of these opportunities are presented by members themselves, sharing their knowledge or skills with others across the movement. There is also a wide range of talks on offer from well-known speakers and organisations, plus in-person events at venues like the Royal Institution.

All of these events can be booked at the link below via Eventbrite. Online events are hosted on Zoom - further information and 'how to' guides are here <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Want to be the first in the know? Sign up to receive regular monthly updates on upcoming events: [subscribe here](#)

List of future Online Learning Events

On-line Event	Date and Time
What the future changes in landlines will mean for you	Monday, April 28 · 2 - 3:15pm
Understanding online content, misinformation and disinformation	Tuesday, April 29 · 2 - 3:30pm
Poverty: A Sociological Perspective	Wednesday, April 30 · 10 - 11:30am
Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: Aircraft Carrier Britain	Tuesday, May 6 · 10am - 12pm
Cryptic Crosswords in Context	Wednesday, May 7 · 10 - 11am
Setting up a New Windows 11 PC or Laptop	Wednesday, May 7 · 1 - 2:30pm

Turner and Impressionism	Thursday, May 8 · 10 - 11am
A life living and exploring with the most exciting wildlife on Galapagos	Starts on Thursday, May 8 · 2pm
Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A	Friday, May 9 · 10 - 11:30am
Exploring World Faiths: Chaplaincy	Monday, May 12 · 10 - 11:30am
How generative AI Works	Monday, May 12 · 10 - 11:30am
Simple adjustments for your device and staying safe on social media	Tuesday, May 13 · 2 - 3:30pm
From the Soviet Gulag to Arnhem	Thursday, May 15 · 10 - 11am
On This Holy Island	Starts on Monday, May 19 · 2pm
Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: May	Tuesday, May 20 · 3:30 - 4:30pm
Laughter Yoga with Judith: May	Wednesday, May 21 · 10 - 11a
Editing Long Videos on PCs & Laptops for Sharing to Social Media	Wednesday, May 21 · 1 - 2:30pm
End of Life Doulas and How They Can Help You	Wed, 21 May 2025 14:00 - 15:00
Mass Extinctions: Causes and Consequences	Thursday, May 22 · 9:30 - 11am
Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: May	Thursday, May 22 · 10 - 11:30am
Artificial Intelligence News: May - AI and the Law	Friday, May 23 · 10 - 11:30am
Life on a Smallholding. Is it as idyllic as it sounds?	Thursday, May 29 · 2 - 3pm
Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Five - Hearing	Thursday, May 29 · 2 - 4pm
The History of the 16th Century Ruff	Friday, May 30 · 10 - 11:30am

Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: Combat Stress and Lack of Moral Fibre	Tuesday, June 3 · 10am - 12pm
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Interest Groups Online

Interest Groups Online is an online u3a community that gives you the opportunity to join groups, talks and courses from the comfort of your home. Like with a u3a, the activities are run by members and are a great way to meet people from all across the u3a movement.

It costs £12 to join for the year, equating to £1 per month. Membership runs from 1 April to 31 March of the next year. Membership and your groups are managed via the u3a Beacon Members Portal.

To become a member of Interest Groups Online you will need to fill out a short form and make your payment on the u3a Beacon Members Portal. As part of your subscription to Interest Groups Online, you can opt in to receive a free copy of the u3a magazine, Third Age Matters (TAM).

Take a look at the groups page for details on the wide variety of online groups, courses and talks, and how to join [interest groups online](#)