



Tetbury & District u3a Newsletter

April 2024

Message from the Chair

Well, it's been another active month for our u3a, despite the inclement weather. Hopefully it will warm up now, especially for those outdoor activities.

Firstly, I'd like to offer a big thank you to Steve Hammond for producing our new publicity leaflets, which show an impression of St Mary's Church. These are being distributed around the town and outlying villages.

In our previous Newsletter we mentioned setting up a new Green Technology group, subject to demand. This might cover topics such as solar panels, heat pumps, LED lighting, electric cars, and home automation. If this would be of interest, please contact our Groups Co-ordinator if you would be interested at groups@tetburyu3a.org.uk

We are also hoping to establish a third Creative Writing group, as the current two groups are full. If you would be interested in joining this, please get in touch via creativewriting@tetburyu3a.org.uk

At our recent Committee meeting we discussed the possibility of setting up a new Volunteering group. Essentially, this would be a list of people who would be willing to be contacted about the various volunteering opportunities that come our way. This is still at an early planning stage, so we will share more about this later.

I hope you enjoy reading the Newsletter - and don't forget to look at the list of Online Learning Events and Interest Groups Online at the Annex. We would also be interested in your feedback on these.

Best wishes Bernadette
chair@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Monthly Speakers

What a great talk we had in April from Michelle Eccles, giving moving insights into the wonderful work of our local Longfield Hospice. Michelle wanted to thank us for our "lovely hospitality" and for our very generous donations, which came to £292.

We've had some very sad news that the speaker we had booked for May, Oliver Everett, has died. His widow has thanked us for the condolences sent on your behalf.

We are very grateful that Stewart Linford has agreed to step in as our May speaker. **His talk on Monday 20th May at the Goods Shed, at 10.30** will be on "The Remarkable Story of our National Chair: The Windsor".



We are promised a highly amusing and original interactive talk, enhanced by a rich array of Limited Edition Windsor chairs created to celebrate our British Heroes. From Admiral Lord Nelson to Winston Churchill, Stewart draws on a wealth of historic material to captivate, inform and entertain. His innumerable audiences are given the inside story on the craft, the Craftsmen and Clients from Rock stars to Royalty.

Hope to see you there.

Anne Cox speakers@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Group News

Some groups are currently full. These are:

- Apple iPhone
- Bookclub Monday
- Both the Creative Writing groups - (although we plan to set up a third group subject to demand)
- Both the wine groups
- Ukulele

Please contact the group leader for each group to enquire about putting your name on a waiting list if you would be interested in joining these groups in future.

Art Appreciation Group

We discussed two diverse subjects this month. Firstly the Hospital of Santa Maria Della Scala in Siena and its notable frescoes both on the facade of the building and inside. The Hospital was believed to have been founded as a charitable institution in the 9th century on the Pilgrim route, the Via Francigena, in Siena - initially for pilgrims and orphans but later for others. The hospital was often left generous bequests in wills and hence became extraordinarily prosperous. The Hospital continued operating until 1975 when the buildings were renovated and repurposed as a museum.

Inside there are some exceptional frescoes - by Dominico di Bartolo, Vecchietta and Primo della Quercia - in the Sala del Pellegrinaio which was used initially as pilgrims' lodgings and later as one of the hospital wards. They were painted between 1440 and 1444 and primarily depict scenes relevant to the running of the Hospital, the care of patients or the distribution of alms.

We also looked at Vincent van Gogh's "Cafe Terrace at night" - one of his most recognisable paintings and much reproduced. It was painted in the Place du Forum in Arles in 1888. He believed that the night - especially in gas light - was more richly coloured than the day and the strong and vibrant colours he used reflect this. The painting contains allusions to Da Vinci's "the Last Supper" with its depiction of a central figure in a long robe, 11 people sitting at the cafe tables and one (Judas?) disappearing through the cafe door.

The scene is brightly illuminated and crosses can be seen in the background windows in anticipation of what is to come. The artist produced a number of such scenes with a vibrant night sky and interestingly, the date when this one was painted has been definitively placed at around 11pm on the 16th or 17th September 1888 as determined by astronomical data according to the position of the stars. The cafe is still there and renamed "The Cafe Van Gogh".

By Judy Greeman

artappreciation@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Wednesday Book Club

Eight of us met at The Royal Oak on the 27th March to discuss "The Marriage Portrait" by Maggie O'Farrell, an interesting re- working of the marriage of Lucrezia Medici and Alfonse de Ferrara, the union of the Houses of Tuscany and Medici. Like her earlier book "Hamnett" she has mixed historical fact and fantasy and used them as the basis for a good story which we all enjoyed. Lucrezia was quite a character, a free spirit forced to marry at the age of 16. She learns to 'hide herself' from the Duke, a complicated character who tries to control her. Well written with twists which kept us guessing.

We had a very select meeting of three on 24th April when we discussed Hilary Mantel's "Giving up the Ghost".

Movingly written, it tells the story of her childhood, which wasn't easy, and her battle with the NHS to get a diagnosis for her pain. Her writing is so perceptive and although I'm not a fan of biographies generally we thought this was written as a cathartic experience for her. It led to an interesting discussion and made us realise how much times have changed.

Our next meeting is on the 29th May, at 2pm at The Royal Oak. New members welcome.

By Pauline Whittaker

bookclubwednesday@tetburyu3a.org.uk

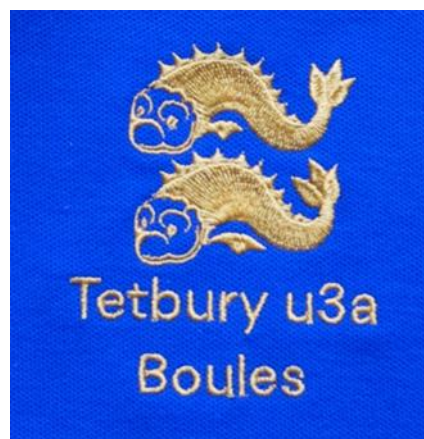
Boules Group

After a very wet winter, when our Boules sessions have been cancelled or interrupted many times by rain, we are looking forward to a new summer season.



We will be proudly wearing our very fetching new Boules group shirts and hoping to engage in some friendly competition with both Malmesbury and Cirencester u3a Boules groups. The Boules group remains one of the largest groups in our u3a with over 40 members

(although not everyone plays regularly), but we still have space for more if you are interested in a game that will get you out in the open air without being too strenuous or difficult to learn to play. The fact that we play at two different pubs and usually end up having a drink after our games is also an incentive to join us!



We will be playing every week during the summer, as long as it's not raining. Contact us if you are interested in joining.

By Martin Doidge

boules@tetburyu3a.org.uk

French Conversation and Games

Bank holidays are great but they don't half muck up schedules when you have a regular first Monday of the month meeting. Luckily most of us have been able to make the rearranged dates, although they're a bit bunched up.

French Games: In April we broke the ice with Frère Jacques; failing abysmally to sing it in round and all ending up singing the same thing, .

Maybe next time.....! An amiable session with laughter, happy families, revising vocabulary on illnesses and our board game Carcassonne with language prompt cards. Next Games will be on Thursday 16th May, 10am at the Priory Inn

French Film Matinee: Our April Film Matinee was the wonderful "Jean de Florette" with Yves Montand, Daniel Auteuil and Gerard Depardieu. Subtitles helped us follow the dialogue, especially as much of it's in dialect. Watch it if you get a chance. At our next Film Matinee on Friday 17th May at 2pm we'll be watching "Manon des Sources", the sequel to "Jean de Florette". Both films are based on the novels by Marcel Pagnol, and there are good translations, if you'd like to get immersed in a darkly human story set in turn of the century Provence.

French Conversation: We have a lot of talent in our group, for example our Neville plays the accordion like a dream and helped us get into the mood for our April Conversation by accompanying us singing one of those lovely Edith Piaf songs L'hymne à L'Amour. There followed memories of past loves; famous Lamours, like Dorothy; Love as a subject in literature... and music; an owners love for a midnight black cat (although you can't really own a cat) and conversation around a beautiful bouquet of spring flowers fresh from a garden-lovers plot.

Our next French Conversation will be on Tuesday 14th May, 3pm, at the Royal Oak. We'll be eased into our May conversation with Neville's fluid melodies accompanying us on the lovely song La Mer leading to our thoughts about the sea.

France in May. Like us they take 1st May as a holiday, the Fête du Travail - Labour Day; but then also 8th May - Fête de la Victoire - VE Day; then May 9th Jour de L'Ascension - Ascension Day; then May 20th Lundi de Pentecôte - Whit Monday. Add to this, a practice (that's also creeping into our lives), the French "font le pont" - taking an extra day off when there is only one day separating a holiday from

a weekend to make a "long weekend". It can make travelling in France and finding shops open in May a bit tricky. But Vive la Fête! I say.

And there's "Le Muguet" (Lilly of the valley). On May 1st, it's traditional to give women a sprig of lily of the valley for luck. Most people give a bunch, a small bouquet, or a live plant that can then be planted out. Yes, please!

"Un délicat brin de muguet pour du bonheur toute l'année".
A delicate sprig of lily of the valley for happiness all year long.

"Ah, in those earliest days of love how naturally the kisses spring into life! So closely, in their profusion, do they crowd together that lovers would find it as hard to count the kisses exchanged in an hour as to count the flowers in a meadow in May." — Marcel Proust

Joyeux Mai, Anne Cox
frenchconversation@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Gardening Group

On 25th March we had an unexpected invitation to visit John and Ann Carr-Jones to see the snake's head fritillaries in their woodland garden at Shipton Moyne.

John proudly showed us round, and explained how the garden had developed over the years, which now includes a birch copse where the fritillaries are thriving in their perfect habitat. They certainly looked magnificent en-masse.

We were also treated to tea and cake in the garden, which provided a nice opportunity to share our gardening experiences and ask questions about the garden.



Earlier this month we visited Philip and Caroline Langston's garden in Tetbury to see their tulips and narcissi. Luckily the weather was kind to us, and we enjoyed their delightful garden in the spring sunshine. We have been there a few times before, during the summer months, and it was interesting to see it in a different season.



After a hot drink and (the now obligatory) cakes, we held our seasonal plant swap, which is an excellent way of acquiring new plants for free.

Visits to u3a members' gardens are always popular, and we would be delighted to receive further offers from anyone who feels able to invite our group to visit their garden - weeds and all.

Our next visit will be visiting the Cotswold Sculpture Park on Monday 13 May. For more information please visit the website.

By Judith Walker gardening@tetburyu3a.org.uk



The Historic Buildings Group

The Historic Buildings Group programme of events for 2024 is now underway!

Our first outing of the season was our re-scheduled walking tour around Cirencester led by Cirencester Civic Society Guides. We had to cancel the visit last September due to stormy weather - this time around was touch and go, but we wrapped up in wet weather gear and survived!

We divided into groups of 10, so it was a very personal experience depending on which guide we had. One guide even took her group into their private garden - beyond the call of duty! Another group guide took delight in taking us into the Bathurst Estate to view the magnificent totem pole carved to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III. This was a couple of days before the introduction of the infamous charging scheme, so I suspect he did it as a matter of principle, judging by his views on it.

We all benefited from our knowledgeable guides who pointed out buildings and features we often hurry by. For example, I've walked through the Market Place many times, but never noticed an inscription on a monument. It's a reproduction of a Roman inscription in plasterwork now in the Corinium Museum, and features a clever Latin palindrome called a "Sator Square". It reads the same left to right, up and down, back to front! If your Latin is no longer up to scratch, read this article to find out what it means -

<https://coriniummuseum.org/2021/07/the-sator-square-by-isobel-wilkes/>



Another plaque I'd walked by and never noticed was on a building on Cecily Hill. It was funded by a shareholder subscription scheme known as the "Tontine Principle". Under this scheme, ownership of the entire building ultimately passed to a single surviving shareholder as all other nominees died. It was an early example of a lottery scheme with dubious ethics; to win, all others involved had to die!

These and many other interesting facts made for a very enlightening and enjoyable visit.

We have filled all the spaces for our next visits to Stanway House on May 9th and Frocester Court on May 12th. The latter has proved so popular that we will try to arrange another visit. We are now taking bookings for Sezincote June 5th.

Our full programme can be found here:

<https://tetburyu3a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Hist-Buildings.pdf>

Keep an eye on your inbox to secure a place for the next visit.

By David Smith - Joint Organiser Historic Buildings Group.

historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Playreading Group 1

This month the play chosen to be read was written by J B Priestley and performed for the first time in London in 1934. He wrote more than 100 plays and books and received the Order of Merit. His best seller was "The Good Companions" in 1929. 12 members of the group sat down to read "When We Are Married" - a Yorkshire farcical comedy. This, needless to say, required a Yorkshire accent which unfortunately I was unable to produce so the maid had a London accent instead. There were many other members who carried it off beautifully so we were saved!

Two hours later we all agreed it was a good choice and much enjoyed, so thank you to Bernadette for choosing it. The story line for those interested is based on three couples married on the same day 25 years previously. Unfortunately the vicar who carried out the ceremony was not fully qualified and this resulted in great anguish and rethinking by the couples. All ended well eventually.

By Dee Buss

playreading1@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Pub Lunch Group

In March, 17 of us had a very good lunch at the Old Royal Ship, Luckington. It was a delightful meal, very well presented with excellent service. I had the homemade quiche and it was the best I had tasted.

By Grahame Inman

publunchgroup@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Ukulele Group

Believe it or not, our Ukulele group started just over a year ago and we recently celebrated our first anniversary with a glass of fizz, a splendid buffet and a sing song (including fancy dress in some cases!).



We thought you might be interested to see what we've been up to during our first year. Here is a historical record of our T'UKES journey to date.

2023

February 28th: A germ of idea was discussed by three present members Sue Hoskin, Sally Hadley, Gail Moss and one other.

March 7th: The first T'Ukes session with seven members took place at The Priory Inn, with Mike Hoskin agreeing to lead the group for three weeks to get things going.

March 21st: Numbers increased, and the move to a larger venue at The Royal Oak was made.

May 23rd: The T'Ukes first ever gig in front of an audience of residents, staff, family and friends at Upton Mill Residential Home.

May 30th: Numbers increased further, and the group, now of 14, moved to Upton Mill for their weekly practice sessions.

August 28th: Performed at the Upton Mill Summer Party.

October 9th: Joined with UkeStroud to perform at The Goods Shed in Tetbury.

November 1st: Together with UkeStroud, performed at the Goods Shed for the Tetbury WI.

November 9th: Entertained members of the Tetbury Friendship Club at the Dolphins Hall.

November 22nd: Joint session held at St Mary's Hall, with the u3a Singing For Fun group.

December 6th: Performed for residents and staff at the Kingsley House Care Home.

December 15th: T'Ukes Christmas lunch at the home of group member Judith Randall.

December 21st: Together with Father Christmas, entertained at the Friendship Club Christmas Party.

2024

January 23rd: First Gig of the new year, at Burnham Court retirement complex in Malmesbury.

February 6th: Membership numbers increased again, to its maximum of 19, requiring another change of venue, this time to the restaurant at Steepleton Retirement Village.

February 20th: Third gig at Upton Mill.

March 7th: Second gig at Kingsley House.

March 19th: Performed for members of the Sherston Seniors Club.

March 26th: The T'Ukes 1st Anniversary Party took place at Steepleton, with all members proudly wearing their new T'Ukes tee shirts, and with Mike Hoskin still leading the group!!

Forthcoming Gigs

May 14th: Kingsley House

May 19th: Christ Church for the Tetbury Holiday at Home Group.

Wednesday June 23th: Longfield Hospice

Tuesday July 9th: Upton Mill

November 26th: Sherston Seniors Club Christmas Party.



We have a waiting list of those wishing to join, but since no member has left the group, our waiting list continues to grow. However a similar ukulele group has recently started up at the Malmesbury and District u3a, so there is opportunity there. They meet on a Tuesday between 12.15 and 1.15pm, and have spaces for members.

By Mike Hoskin

ukulele@tetburyu3a.org.uk

And finallyThe deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is Monday 20th May. Keep those reports coming in!

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

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
Osteoporosis and Bone Health. The work of the Royal Osteoporosis Society	Friday, May 3rd · 2 - 3pm
110 Years of Aviation History in Hertfordshire, 1913 - 2023	Tuesday, May 7th · 10am - 12pm
Laughter Yoga with Judith	Wednesday, January 10th 10 - 11am
The Harlem Renaissance	Thursday, May 9th · 2 - 3pm
AI Chatbots, a beginner's guide	Friday, May 10th · 10 - 11:30am
Exploring World Faiths: Religious Mysticism	Monday, May 13th · 10 - 11:30am
Turner's Timeless Treasures	Tuesday, May 14th · 10 - 11am
Antibiotics - discovery, mechanisms, and future issues	Wednesday, May 15th · 10 - 11:30am

Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Sessions	Thursday 16th May 10 - 11am
The Story of the Workhouse - Welfare in England Before 1948	Friday, May 17th · 10 - 11:30am
The Stories of Eva & Istvan Wirth	Fri, 17th May 14:00 - 15:00
Understanding Online Safety: Expert Tips for You and Others	Tuesday, May 21st · 2 - 3pm
Science Network Event	Wednesday, May 22nd · 9:30am - 12:15pm
Artificial Intelligence News: May	Wednesday, May 22nd · 3:30 - 4:45pm
Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners: 6 Session Course	May 23rd · 10am - 11:30am
Deafness and beyond: the tribulation and triumph of Ludwig van Beethoven.	Thursday, May 23rd · 2 - 4pm
Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie - May	Tuesday, May 28th · 3:30 - 4:30pm
Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Five: Brain, Pain and Anaesthetics	Wednesday, May 29th · 2 - 3:30pm
Rob Eastaway Talk - Much Ado About Numbers	Friday, May 31st · 2 - 3pm
Driving on country roads, with IAM RoadSmart	Friday, May 31st · 2 - 3pm
Help Us Remember with the War Memorials Register	Friday, June 7th · 2 - 3:30pm

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. 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](#)