



Tetbury & District u3a Newsletter

July 2024

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

I hope you're taking time to enjoy the summer, and that the rain hasn't dampened your spirits. Hopefully it will warm up now and the sun will shine.....As always, there's plenty going on with our u3a.

Earlier this month, the Committee held a lunch at the Tetbury Bowls Club to thank our Group Leaders and those who support them. This was in recognition of the crucial role that they have, organising our activities - without them, there would be no u3a.

After tea, coffee and cakes on arrival, we enjoyed a 'taster' session on how to play bowls, kindly provided by members of the Bowls Club. Luckily it stayed dry for the bowls, after a drizzly morning.



We then tucked into a ploughman's lunch with tasty salads, followed by delicious strawberry tarts, all provided by members of the committee.

I would especially like to thank Anne and Caroline for organising it, and David and Maggie for preparing much of the food.



Did you know that there is a new bookable bus service, the Robin? This pilot scheme is Gloucestershire County Council's new on-demand bus service, covering rural areas in the Cotswolds. It's affordable at only £2 per journey and connects passengers with transport links such as bus stops or directly to a location if there are no other transport options available.

Further information can be found [here](#)

And last but not least, Tetbury Town Council is planning to hold an 'Expo Day' on Saturday 14 September to promote local groups, including our u3a, at the Dolphins Hall 10 - 2pm. This will give us an opportunity to showcase what we have to offer and a chance to recruit new members. We may need your support there - further details to follow.

Best wishes Bernadette
chair@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Monthly Speakers

Our July talk was provided by Peter Gill on "Jerry Lee Lewis", which was well attended. We've had nothing but praise for this talk, an entertaining and consummate performance. Many commented on his great voice and brilliant piano playing. Definitely one we'll rebook in the future.

Please note that there will be no speaker in August, and the next one will take place on Tuesday 17 September, provided by Roger Browne.

We will revisit American culture with another musical treat: "The Great American Songbook" and it's political, musical, and cultural roots. Cotton Fields, Places of Worship, Low Down Dives, Minstrel Shows, Ragtime, Blues, Vaudeville, Operetta, Music Hall and Tin Pan Alley.

The fascinating lives and the memorable music and lyrics of: Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, Lorenz Hart, Oscar Hammerstein, Harry Warren and many others.

Roger came to us in 2022 to much acclaim. He is an accomplished pianist and an amusing and knowledgeable speaker.

By Anne Cox speakers@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Potential New Groups

There are two potential new groups starting up:

- Board Games, including Rummikub and Squeeze
- Short Tennis

Please contact groups@tetburyu3a.org.uk if you would be interested.

Group News

Art Group

The Art group is now in its third year and we are still a relatively small group who share together in making art and helping one another in our creativity.



Attendance at the group has been more sporadic this year so if anyone would like to join us you would be welcome. Artists, budding artists or beginners are welcome whether using watercolours, oils, acrylics, pen and ink, pencil, or charcoal. We have no specific tuition, only what current members are able to offer, so if there are any artists out there who would like to share their expertise with us, they would be very welcome.

Despite this some members have enjoyed experimenting with a new medium and trying something new. We hope to hold a small exhibition of our work for family and friends towards the end of the year.

If you would like to join us please email art@tetburyu3a.org.uk

We meet in St. Michael's Church Hall, Silver Street on the second Tuesday of each month from 2.00 - 4.00 pm. Please bring your own materials and there will be a small charge to cover the cost of the Hall each month.

By Gwyneth Richards
art@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Wednesday Book Club

Just four of us met on this very warm afternoon to discuss Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro.

A science fiction book about an era in the future when all children are home schooled using computer screens, as they have little contact with humans some parents buy them A.I. friends to interact with. Klara is an exceptionally observant, sensitive and empathetic A.F. who has been chosen by Josie, an only child who is unwell. Klara is convinced she can save her.

A very interesting read leaving us with lots of unanswered questions which led us to discuss the problems and benefits of A.I. and what life could be like in the future. I think we were all quite relieved that it's a problem we won't have to face.

Our next meeting will take place on 31 July.

By Pauline Whittaker
bookclubwednesday@tetburyu3a.org.uk

French Conversation and Games

Stepping our sessions up to three a month by adding a film matinee has worked out really well. In July, we had a very interesting Conversation session where, to celebrate le Quatorze Juillet, we each found an interesting episode from French history to share. As usual, this was varied and wide ranging from a battle of the Gallo Roman War (no, Asterix unfortunately did not make an appearance) to an air raid in World War Two and the effect it had on one family.

Our Songs and Games session celebrated Paris and practised names for professions in French with Happy Families cards. ...with as usual, much banter and laughter.

August will see four meetings,

5th August Conversation: "The Olympics and Me"

9th August: Film Matinee - title to be confirmed

15th August: Song and Games ... and

31st August our half year bring and share lunch fete,

this time for Assumption, the annual August public holiday in France.

Our venues have changed for the summer so contact me for details, if you are interested in joining us.

By Anne Cox

frenchconversation@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Gardening Group

Despite having to change to a different day of the week for our Gardening Group meeting, the visit to Charlton Down House this month was a great success. The garden opened for the National Garden Scheme which meant we could be certain of tea and cake being provided.

The venue boasts extensive country house gardens in a 180-acre equestrian estate.



We explored formal terraces, perennial borders, the walled topiary garden, enclosed cut flower garden and large glasshouse.

The estate also has a resident tortoise and several rescue animals. We were blessed with good weather and the chance to partake of tea and cake and social interaction.

All in all, the perfect afternoon gathering.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 15 August when we will visit Derry Watkins's Special Plants Garden. We will meet at 11 am to take advantage of the opportunity to visit this lovely garden which is open for the National Garden Scheme.

<https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/garden/14566/special-plants>



Looking ahead, we will visit the Special Plants Nursery on Tuesday 10 September to attend a 30-minute talk on "Collecting your own seed."

By Judith Walker gardening@tetburyu3a.org.uk

History Group

“Even more exciting than watching the washing”

The History Group enjoyed a colourful presentation on Home Life in the 1950's



In October 1951 the British People were "Set Free" from wartime restrictions and a period of prosperity started that changed the way we live. At our latest meeting, using images from contemporary sources, George Keeling showed us how life was transformed with labour saving devices, bright new furnishings, exciting opportunities for travel and maybe a new role of women as well as a new look.



On 27th August the History Group will be heading to Tewkesbury where the houses of York and Lancaster clashed in 1471. A guided tour will bring this to light for us. In September we plan to visit the northern section of the Stroudwater Canal.

Any one interested in joining the group will be very welcome.

By George Keeling and David Walker

history@tetburyu3a.org.uk

The Historic Buildings Group

Our July visit was to Eastnor Castle when 37 members enjoyed a splendid day out. The castle lies in Herefordshire at the foot of the Malvern Hills on the edge of the Cotswolds.



Eastnor was built by the 2nd Baron (Lord) Somers between 1810 and 1824. He commissioned the castle to impress his contemporaries and raise his family into the higher ranks of the ruling class. Then, as now, the size and splendour of a country house evidenced the standing and fortune of any family. His architect, the young Robert Smirke, who was later well-known for his design for the British Museum, proposed a Norman Revival style.

From a distance, Eastnor tried to create the impression of an Edward 1st-style medieval fortress guarding the Welsh Borders. It certainly succeeds in this; the castle is massive, and the construction team and materials used were on a similar scale. 250 men working day and night were employed over the first six years of building, and in the first 18 months 4,000 tons of building stone, 16,000 tons of mortar, and 600 tons of wood were used.



Smirke's interiors were simple and in keeping with the external medieval style: architectural details remain in the Red Hall, Dining Room, and Staircase Hall. In 1849, the 2nd Earl commissioned A.W.N. Pugin, well known for designing the Gothic interiors of the Palace of Westminster after the fire of 1834, to redecorate his Drawing Room in the more elaborate Gothic Revival style. Charles, 3rd Earl Somers, undertook further decorating work in the 1860s and 1870s, so Eastnor, possibly in a unique way, epitomises three successive phases of 19th-century domestic taste: Regency Baronial, Catholic Gothic and aesthetic Italian.



The agricultural depression of the 1870's caused a decline in the family wealth. By 1920, when the 6th Baron (Lord) Somers inherited the estate, much of the land had been sold and the art collection from the Castle had been dispersed. In 1939, all the Castle contents were removed, leaving it available for government use during the war, but it was never used and fell into disrepair.

The revival of Eastnor was started by Hon. Elizabeth Somers Cocks and Benjamin Hervey-Bathurst, the parents of the present owner. They moved into the Castle in 1949, when the slow process of reinhabiting the rooms and attending to various outbreaks of dry rot and other long-neglected repairs began. Since then, diversification

into tourism, corporate entertaining, weddings and conferences has enabled the restoration of Eastnor to proceed apace.

We experienced some of their excellent hospitality, both before and after our very informative guided tour of the Castle. Our lunch was delicious and was served in the spectacular setting of the Octagonal Drawing Room. After lunch, we roamed around the lovely grounds. A great day out was had by all!



Our next visits are to Woodchester Priory on 29th July and Corsham Court on August 14th (bookings closed for both visits).

Next month, we will start taking bookings for the walking tour of Painswick on Monday 16th September, so keep an eye on your inbox to secure a place for this visit. Our full programme can be found [here](#)

By David Smith - Joint Organiser Historic Buildings Group.
historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Playreading Group 1

Our June meeting was again full of hilarity whilst reading this play - Last Tango in Whitby by Mike Harding. First performed in 1980 it is a story based on a group of northerners who every year go for a week's holiday to Whitby on a coach out of season. They are determined that it will be, as usual, full-on laughter, drink and dance.

The only change is one of their party, Pat, has recently been widowed but she found love in the form of Phil who is married to hard hearted Edna, both of whom are in charge of the entertainment. In amongst all the hilarity of the characters there is a lot of lovely sentiments from Pat on grabbing the opportunity to love.

By Dee Buss

playreading1@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Playreading Group 2

We also read "Last Tango in Whitby" by Mike Harding and found it an entertaining risqué Yorkshire romp, with plenty of scope for developing our Yorkshire accents. The play started quite mildly but soon developed into some pretty earthy interchanges. Indeed one of our number was so embarrassed by what she had to read, she could not stop laughing!

Our next read is on Monday August 5th when we will perform "Arsenic and Old Lace" by Joseph Kesselring..... We hope to be in the garden, weather permitting.

This group is now full but we have opened a waiting list.

By Jeremy North

playreading2@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Storytelling Group

The group was set up originally to celebrate the ancient art of storytelling, well before the written word was invented. It was felt that communication skills would be enhanced by banning notes or reading from a script. Skills like eye contact, use of hands, varying the speed and tone of the voice, spontaneity etc are important and best served by the freedom to interact without a piece of paper in the hands.

However at our last meeting (July 3) it was agreed to allow members to have prompts or notes or to read their contributions if they so wished.

The challenge this month was to create a story that started "Walking along the Cliff". This was taken up by Jeremy North painting a picture around the sighting of a young girl lying on the rocks below and the attempts to rescue her by lifeboat. Like all good stories it had a surprise ending.

Our next meeting is on 31 July and we have room for two more members. Why not come and listen and see if this is for you?

By Jeremy North

storytelling@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Ukulele Group

Our success has meant we cannot (for the moment) take any more strummers; but the feel-good factor continues each week as we sing and play our ukuleles. Amongst our numbers are those with a greater understanding of keys and methods, and some who have taken up the ukulele without any prior knowledge or skill and have thrown themselves in at the deep end more recently.

We are lucky to have tuition each week, and have a member who is a techno wizard producing professional song sheets complete with coloured chords and our own Logo. We have good singers and those that keep quiet some of the time, and we have progressed from three chords and "How Much is That Doggy in the Window" and "Happy Birthday" through Christmas Carols, Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard, Skiffle, Calypso, Rock and Roll and Country and Western music.



It is easy for us oldies to know all the lyrics but some of the younger members have to step up and learn the hard way. We have had repeat requests to perform and even Tetbury's own Goods Shed has come calling. As they say, the Ukulele is a happy instrument and we all leave Steepleton each Tuesday afternoon after tea and cakes with a smile!

Thank you Mike and Sue and Martin. Most of our success is down to you.

By Sally Hadley (one of the worst singers!)

ukulele@tetburyu3a.org.uk

And finallyThe deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is Monday 19th August. 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
Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance	Monday, July 29 · 10 - 11am
Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie	Tuesday, July 30 · 3:30 - 4:30pm
Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk 7: Brain Research, Imaging and Scanning	Wednesday, July 31 · 2 - 3:30pm
Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: The 'Bloody Hundredth' Bomb Group	Tuesday, August 6 · 10am - 12pm
Cryptic Crosswords in Context	Wednesday, August 7 · 10 - 11am
Agriculture and Climate Change	Thursday, August 8 · 10 - 11:30am
Laughter Yoga with Judith	Wednesday, August 14 · 10 - 11am

From Monet to Modern: Exploring 'The Water Lily Pond' 1899 and Beyond	Thursday, August 15 · 10 - 11am
Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie	Tuesday, August 27 · 3:30 - 4:30pm

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](#)