



Tetbury & District u3a Newsletter

September 2024

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

We had a successful morning promoting our u3a at the Tetbury Expo on 14th September, at which we signed up some new members. I'd like to thank those Group Leaders and others who were able to give up a couple of hours to attend and meet prospective new members - your support is invaluable.

During the morning we came up with a great idea - or so we think - which is to hold impromptu coffee mornings at the Goods Shed, every Friday morning from 10am until 11.30am. This will be available to any existing member or someone new who would like to join our u3a. I will start this on Friday 8th November - feel free to pop round.

Are we getting through?

Occasionally we hear from members that they have stopped receiving emails from u3a about events. If this happens to you please don't

ignore it and hope it sorts itself out! There may be many reasons for this happening but some of the most common are:

- The emails might be going into your 'spam' inbox for some reason
- You might have changed your email address and not advised us of the change
- There might be a problem with your membership status or your membership of a particular activity group

We can help with all of these issues (and many more) so don't hesitate to contact the Membership Secretary membership@tetburyu3a.org.uk if you think you missing out on emails from u3a.

If you are having general issues with email or your computer or tablet we can help with that too as we have groups for Apple, Windows and Android products who can offer support and training. Again, the membership Secretary can point you in the right direction for these.

Best wishes Bernadette
chair@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Monthly Speakers

Our next talk 'Pangbourne to Split, a Balkan Adventure' will take place on Monday 21 October, 10.30am, at the Goods Shed, and will be provided by Nick Brazil.

Nick spoke to us in 2023 about weird inventions and many members said how much they enjoyed his talk and his sense of humour. This time, he has an illustrated travel talk for us encompassing some of Europe's most stunning Cities, including Munich, Ljubljana and Zagreb, finishing in Split.

Do come and join us, with refreshments available before and afterwards.

Group News

Art Appreciation Group

This month we looked at Goya's "Black Paintings". Francisco Goya (1746 - 1828) became a court painter to the Spanish Crown in 1786 and his early career is marked by flattering and attractive portraits of the Royal family. He gradually became disillusioned as Spain endured devastating famine, the Inquisition, and the persecution of non-Catholics, and came to despise the corruptness of the monarchy that backed him. A severe illness left him deaf and with impaired vision and as he grew older, a sense of anger at the impotence of age.

This period of his life is marked by his "black" paintings which he painted on the walls of his house, the Quinto del Sordo in the 1820's (later transferred to canvas and now exhibited in the Prado Museum). We looked at "Saturn Devouring his Son", "Story of Judith and Holofernes", "Witches Sabbath" and "The Drowning Dog". Disturbing themes, blood, gore, gloom and distorted faces reflect Goya's anger and foreboding at the capacity of man for violence, horror and destruction.

We then looked at the work of Percy Kelly (1918 - 1993) who has been described as a "modern primitive". Or, alternatively, Lowry without the people. His style is quite recognisable and often includes a road or bridge rising up through the middle of a composition which conveys a sense of something else to be seen just around the corner. Initially his paintings largely depicted the industrial coastal areas of Cumbria where he grew up. His subject matter was cranes, steam engines, docks, winding gear and chimneys, all reflections of a now lost industry. He later ventured inland to the Lake District and painted the fells, lakes, churches, countryside and flora of Cumbria.

During WWII his work in the Royal Corps of Signals where he worked in map making, led him to meet Churchill and also George VI at an exhibition of soldiers' work at the National Gallery. He became a much sought after painter by art dealers but rarely sold his work believing

he "could not paint for monetary gain". He wrote more than 1000 beautifully illustrated and calligraphically written letters to his friends over the latter part of his life which were kept by their recipients and came on the market after their deaths. Like many artists, he was reclusive, suffered from mental health problems and died in penury.

By Judy Greeman

artappreciation@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Board Games

A new informal group where members can play the games already available or bring fairly short games they know and teach others. The games played so far are Rummicub and Sequence. We do not play games which are too long to complete, so no chess or scrabble. Meetings begin in October.

Venue: Upton Mill Care Home, Mercer Way, Off Quercus Road, Tetbury GL8 8FH

Days: First and third Wednesday of each month 2 -4pm

We look forward to meeting you.

By Chris Lees and Barbara Howarth

boardgames@tetburyu3a.org

Wednesday Book Club

Six of us met at the Royal Oak to discuss Hilary Mantel's collection of eleven short stories. Beautifully written, a random selection of political, biographical, sinister and, occasionally, humorous stories collected over the years. The stories share an insight into the dark recesses of Mantel's mind, showing her individual style and wit.

The title story caused outrage when it was written a year after Margaret Thatcher's death. She'd lived in a flat overlooking the private hospital where Mrs Thatcher was having an eye operation when she came up with this interesting plot.

Following that, seven of our members met on a very wet Wednesday afternoon to discuss "Wandering Souls" by Cecile Pin. The title is taken from a psychological mission used during the Vietnamese War to frighten the natives who believed that their dead need a proper burial in their hometown, if not their souls are cursed to wander the earth aimlessly as ghosts.

Set in 1978, it tells the story of a family who want to leave Vietnam at the end of the war before the Communists move in. The three oldest children leave first on a perilous journey with their parents and two younger siblings aiming to follow them.

The story follows the three children as they negotiate Thatcher's Britain, the narrative is interwoven with the story of their younger brother and a factual record of the time.

By Pauline Whittaker

bookclubwednesday@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Gardening Group

There were disappointingly few takers for the seed collection talk at the Special Plants Nursery on 10th September, but those who were there enjoyed the visit very much. We had an interesting discussion over coffee and cake and then adjourned to the garden to look at seed collection of various plants. You have to get the timing right or you will wait in vain for your seedlings to appear!



Our next outing will be on Monday 14th October at The Courts Garden near Bradford-on-Avon.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/wiltshire/the-courts-garden/things-to-see-at-the-courts-garden>

The gardens belong to the National Trust so don't forget your membership card if you have one. The gardens are also part of the Gardeners World two-for-one scheme so bring your card if you are not a National Trust member.

A quick reminder we will be meeting at Highfield Garden World in November so please save the date of Monday 11th if you would like to attend. This is a great opportunity to do a bit of Christmas shopping!

We are always happy to welcome new members. I am reliably informed that this is a very happy group to be part of, so do come along and give us a try if you like all things gardening and garden visiting.

By Judith Walker

gardening@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Golf Group

The Golf Group has grown steadily from creation a couple of years ago and now has 13 members, male and female, across all abilities from beginners to experienced players. Group members meet most weeks (weather permitting) at local 'pay and play' courses such as Westonbirt, South Cerney, Oaksey and Cotswold Edge for a round of 9 holes.



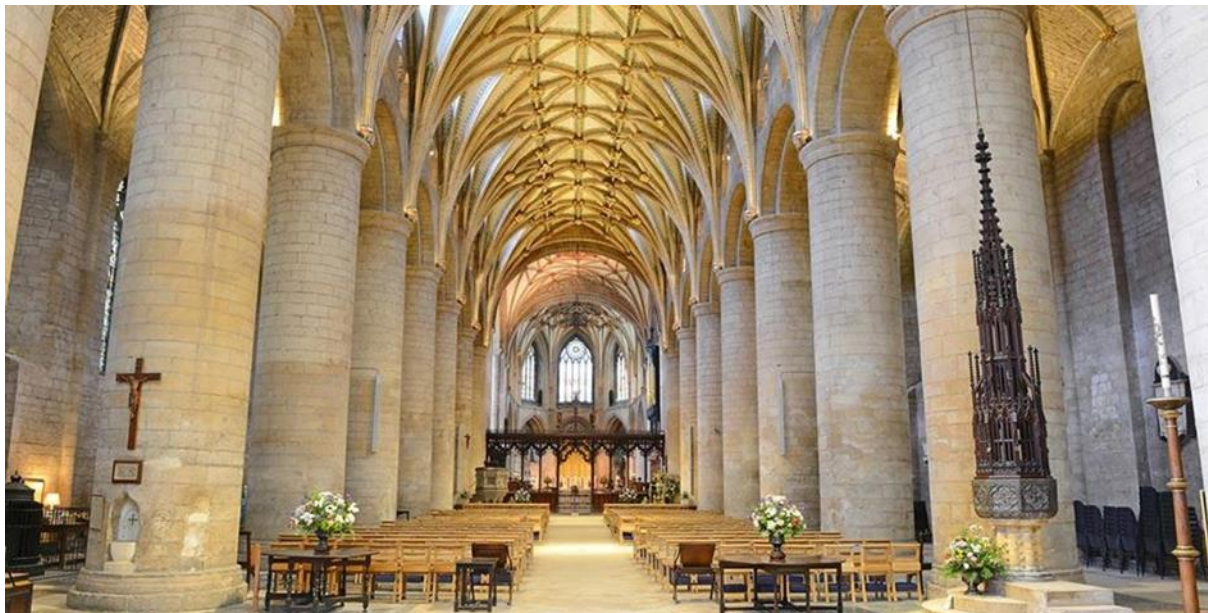
Members enjoying a beautiful Autumnal day at Westonbirt Golf Course

We play relaxed golf - no-one is too worried about keeping score and we have been known to bend the rules of Golf when it suits us (but don't tell anyone!). If you would like to try golf for the first time or get back into golf if you are not a regular player, do come and join us.

By Martin Doidge

golf@tetburyu3a.org.uk

History Group



Last month ten of us ventured over to Tewkesbury for a fascinating day in this historic town.

After a quick refreshment stop at the Abbey café, we met up with our guide for the day, Richard Goddard. Richard is a member of the Tewkesbury Battlefields Society and a volunteer guide for the Society as well as for the Abbey.

The tour lasted about 2.5 hours and we covered just over 2 miles. We stopped at various locations and Richard gave a very informative and enlightening talk on the events leading up to, during, and after the Battle of Tewkesbury.

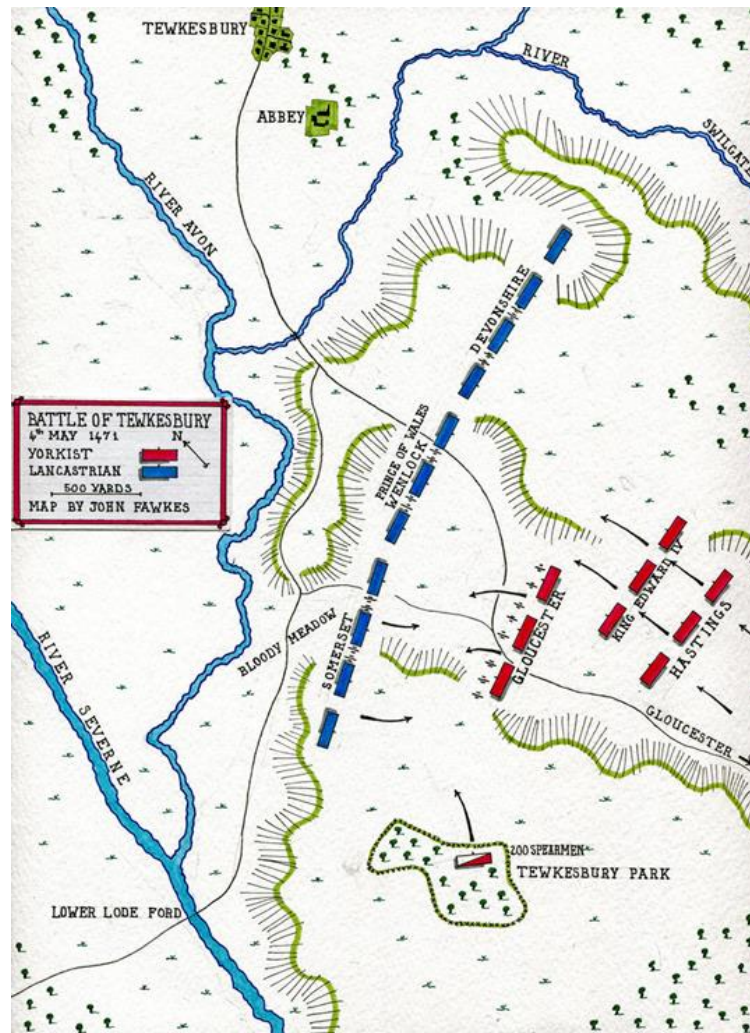
The Wars of the Roses series of campaigns from 1455 to 1485, began as a political struggle between the rival houses of Lancaster and York to rule England in the name of the incompetent Henry VI. This developed into a fight for the crown itself. In 1461 the Yorkists overthrew Henry and Edward IV was crowned king of England. By 1470, Edward IV seemed secure on the throne but his great supporter, Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, the "Kingmaker", fell out with him. Edward then fled to Europe and Henry was restored to the throne.

In March 1471 Edward returned with an army and advanced towards London. Warwick pursued him and the two sides fought at Barnet on Easter Sunday, where Warwick was defeated and killed. Henry was returned to captivity.

Hearing the news of Warwick's defeat, Henry VI's wife, Queen Margaret of Anjou and her 18-year-old son Edward, Prince of Wales, arrived back in England. She met with the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Devonshire at Exeter to raise troops and then marched towards Gloucester. Disaster struck Margaret at Gloucester. Her once ally, Sir Richard Beauchamp, closed the city to her, on Edward's instructions, so Margaret was forced to march further north and she arrived at Tewkesbury at 4pm on May 3rd 1471. The Lancastrians made camp at Gaston Field.

Edward raised a new army at Windsor and moved west, to Cirencester and then towards Margaret. They stayed two miles away from Tewkesbury at Tredington.

Early next morning, Saturday 4th May 1471, the Lancastrian army prepared for battle and the Yorkists marched to meet them. The battle opened on the west flank with the Duke of Gloucester attacking the Duke of Somerset's battalion.



The Lancastrians were getting much the worse of the exchange. Edward's army had secreted away in the woodland of Tewkesbury Park. The Yorkists attacked and forced the demoralised Lancastrians back. In retreat, they stood no chance. Many were killed in Tewkesbury Park and in the Bloody Meadow. Edward, Prince of Wales, the Lancastrian heir was killed. Men were rounded up from hiding places all over town and many sought sanctuary in the Abbey. Seventeen of the most prominent Lancastrians, including the Duke of Somerset were found guilty of treason and were beheaded at a scaffold in Church Street.

Queen Margaret fled but was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London. That very same night her husband Henry VI mysteriously died there. Edward ruled unchallenged until he died in 1483, a death which precipitated another crisis in England.

After lunch, we met up again with our guide Richard outside the Abbey. The Abbey was founded in 1087 by Robert Fitzhamon, but the present building did not start until 1102. It was built to house Benedictine monks and was consecrated in 1121. After the dissolution in 1540, most of the claustral buildings and the Lady Chapel were quarried for their materials but the Abbey Church was sold to the parishioners for £453.



The Abbey boasts the largest Norman church tower in existence measuring 14 metres square and 45 metres high. Records refer to a wooden spire, but this collapsed in 1559.

Inside the Abbey, Richard pointed out many of the important features, in particular the impressive ceiling with its unique roof bosses, medieval and Victorian stained-glass windows and the 17th century Milton Organ which is still used today. We also found the resting place for Edward, Prince of Wales.

A fitting end to a very enjoyable day in Tewkesbury.



By Maggie Smith - History Group Member
history@tetburyu3a.org.uk

The Historic Buildings Group

On Monday 16th September, 28 members of the Historic Buildings Group visited Painswick. Our hosts were members of the Painswick Local History Society. Our guide Carol arranged a walking tour around Painswick to view some of the historic buildings. We had splendid weather, which made a change for this otherwise disappointing summer!

Painswick has much in common with Tetbury. From about the middle of the 15th century to the 19th century, the prosperity of Painswick depended mainly on the wool trade and the production of super-fine broadcloth. This cloth was made from short-staple wool obtained

from the large flocks of sheep kept on the Cotswolds. The prosperity of the clothiers in the 17th and 18th centuries is shown by their fine houses, several of which are still private residences. By the end of the 19th century, there were almost 30 mills, all water-powered by the many streams around Painswick.



After a short introduction, Carol took us for a 2-hour walk around the town, starting at St Mary's Church. The churchyard is renowned for its 99 splendidly manicured yew trees. Legend has it that the devil won't allow the 100th tree to grow. There are stories of an extra tree being planted, but mysteriously an older tree then died!

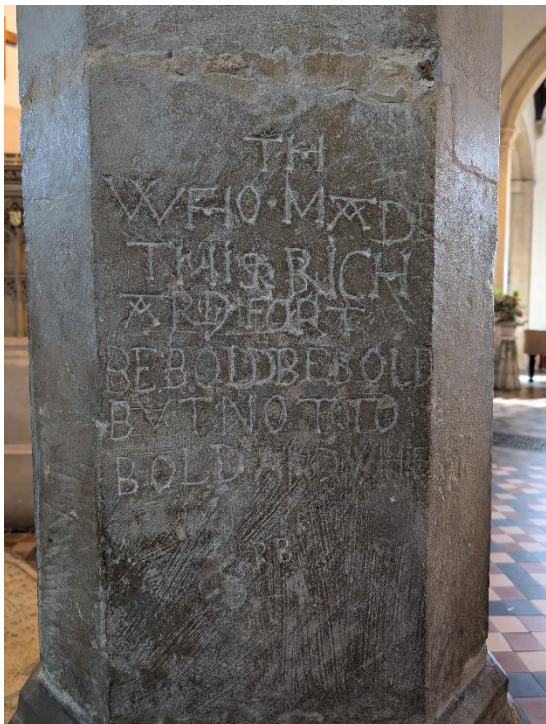


The graveyard features an unusual pyramidal tombstone, unlike any other in the churchyard.

This belongs to the local stonemason John Bryan who had carved lots of the tombstones in the graveyard.

He decided to make his stand out from the rest, and he certainly succeeded!

Inside the church, Carol pointed out many of its unusual features, including some graffiti dating back to 1644, carved by Parliamentary troops sheltering in the church when it was besieged by Royalist troops. It reads: "be bolde, be bolde, be not too bolde"



Just outside the churchyard, we saw an example of the very rare 19th-century spectacle stocks - the name is self-explanatory - see the photo above.

Another interesting feature we saw was the only surviving wool tower in Painswick. Before the wool was spun, it was washed and hung in round towers to dry. The 3-storey tower was built in the 18th century. The current owner proudly described the renovation work he had carried out on this tower. He now uses it as a rather unusual workshop!



Our guide pointed out lots of unusual features of the properties in the narrow roads and lanes that we walked along. Such an example was the old gents loo, now being used as an artist's studio and galley - its name was of course "The Loovre"

There are lots of examples of "Arts & Crafts" movement architecture in Painswick, especially work by the Barnsley brothers. These properties were often developed from old tumble-down cottages that had once housed the poor of Painswick. They are now much sought-after! We were shown around inside a beautiful property by the kind

and generous owners - it was a delight! We were also allowed inside the Friends Meeting House, which was very interesting.

The tour finished with a visit to Gyde House, a building with a fascinating history. We were shown around by one of the current residents of the building. He explained that it was built in 1919 as a children's home using a bequest from a local resident Edwin Gyde. It became part of the National Children's Home charity in the 1930s, but eventually closed in 1997. It has now been converted into rather splendid apartments enjoying magnificent views over manicured gardens and the surrounding countryside.

En route, we had lots of stories from our guide about Painswick, including the origins of "Clypping Day" when the parishioners encircle the church holding hands, then dance around it singing the clypping hymn. They then enjoy "puppy dog pie". We were assured that no dogs are harmed in its production!

Talking of food, we finished off in the Church Hall, where we enjoyed homemade cakes and tea provided by some of the members of the Local History Society - a splendid and well-deserved end to our visit! Our last visit in this year's programme is to the (now-closed!) historic Gloucester Prison on Tuesday 22nd October. There are a few places left, so contact us at historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk to book. Further details may be found here: [Historic Buildings Programme](#)

By David and Maggie Smith and Anita Stride - Joint Organisers,
Historic Buildings Group

historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Playreading Group 2

On 2nd September we read "Candied Peel" by Falkland L.Cary, which was a very amusing but unusual murder mystery, with a big twist at the end. There were a large number of parts on the stage frequently, so all of our members had to read two parts. This meant they occasionally had to speak to themselves, which made for excellent practice using two different voices whilst keeping us all on the hop.

We next meet on October 7th and you are welcome to come and try us out, or just listen.

By Jeremy North

playreading2@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Pub Lunch Group

Seven of us have just enjoyed a very pleasurable meal at the Mia Famiglia restaurant just outside Malmesbury. They have converted what was the Red Bull public house into a very delightful Italian restaurant.

Most of us chose from the 2-course set lunch menu which was very varied and extremely tasty at a very reasonable price. The service was very good, the staff were friendly and pleasant and the restaurant was very clean and tidy. The emphasis is on good service, and good food without ripping people off. Some soft drinks are even free whereas other establishments nearby charge through the nose for the same thing. As this is a family owned business they can also tweak the menu to your taste if required.

It doesn't matter if you are not a pasta fan, as there are plenty of dishes the don't have any. I would not hesitate recommending Mia Famiglia to anybody looking for a tasty meal at a reasonable price.

By Grahame Inman publunchgroup@tetburyu3a.org.uk

Storytelling

Here is a story told at our last meeting as a response to the monthly challenge: a story about the Peace Rose. The author would not normally use the written word but compose in his head and deliver without notes in order to maximise interaction with his audience. It has been considerably shortened, the original took 15 minutes to tell.



Mathew was a very successful merchant banker who had the nickname at work as "the Pirate" as he was so ruthless. He had three great loves: his wife Anne, his cats and his roses. He particularly loved a rose called "Peace", which he had bought for its fresh pink tinged petals and prolific flowering. Every time one of his cats had to be put to sleep he would call the vet to the house and hold it in his arms whilst the injection took effect. The ashes would then be gently forked in, round the Peace rose. One by one they went: Ginny the nervous one, Coco the kitten who got run over by the milk man, Homer who loved to sleep in the window, Bobo who seemed to think she owned him.....and many others, all gone.

And it came to Mathew`s turn. He would love to have died like his cats with a gentle injection, to fall asleep in the arms of his wife but that was denied him. He walked the plank alone as a good pirate should.

Now his ashes lie well forked in round his beloved rose, mingled with all his cats. What he did not expect was that he would feel part of the plant, that he would smell the delicious scents around him, that he would feel the patter of the rain drops on the leaves, that he would hear the laughter of the grand children playing in the garden. Yes, the roots have sucked him up and he lives on in the plant. But what happens when the Peace rose itself comes to its natural end and is thrown away? Will Mathew join the great compost heap in the sky?

Take part or just listen. Have a cup of tea to recover! We have room for three story tellers and three listeners. Contact: storytelling@tetburyu3a.org.uk

By Jeremy North

Ukulele Group

As with all u3a groups, success or failure depends on numbers and enthusiasm. Very strict monitoring goes on at Steepleton on Tuesday afternoons! Oh yes it does!

Even when down on numbers from holiday and grandparent duties, the summer programme of strumming, picking and plucking has flourished. Repeat performances at The Friendship Cafe and Kingsley House have given some of the new recruits a time to shine and there is no diminishment of enthusiasm.

Christmas is a'coming and last year's Carol folders are being polished off in preparation for further gigs at Sherston and Cirencester. A huge thanks from all of us to those who keep the records straight,

keep us on our toes and our fingers moving, do all the technical stuff and make Tuesday afternoons such a highlight. It's not just all about the cake. Oh no it isn't!

By Sally Hadley

ukulele@tetburyu3a.org.uk

And finallyThe deadline for contributions to the October newsletter is Monday 21st October. Keep those reports coming in!

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

For Online Learning Events and Interest Groups Online please see Annex below.

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
Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: RAF Special Duties Service	Tuesday, October 1 · 10am - 12pm
The Unification of the British Isles: A Lesson in Geology	Thursday, October 3 · 2 - 3:30pm
Vincent van Gogh: a personal journey through the places he painted	Friday, October 4 · 2 - 3pm
Laughter Yoga with Judith - October 2024	Wednesday, October 9 · 10 - 11am
Visualising Statistical concepts	Thursday, October 10 · 2 - 3pm
The Vital Role Chemistry has to play in Saving our Planet	Friday, October 11 · 2 - 3pm

Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: October	Thursday, October 17 · 10 - 11am
Thursday, October 17 · 10 - 11am	Friday, October 18 · 11am - 12:30pm
Science Network Event	Thursday, October 24 · 9:30 - 11am
Artificial Intelligence News: October	Monday, October 28 · 10am - 12pm
Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie	Tuesday, October 29 · 3:30 - 4:30pm
Sustainability	Thursday, October 31 · 2 - 3pm

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](#)