



October 2025

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

I have a few notices to share this time. Firstly, **this year's AGM** will be held on Tuesday 18th November at the Tetbury Goods Shed. This will take place at 11.45am, after our monthly meeting talk and is open to all members. This is an opportunity for you to hear about how our u3a is doing and to ask questions of our Committee. We need 10% of the current membership present for the AGM to be quorate, so at least 42 to be present. Please come along if you are able to.

The agenda and associated documents are available on the website tetbury.u3asite.uk via the Events tab. Members may submit a question in advance to be considered at the AGM. Please note questions need to be received by Monday 10th November 2025.

Now a plea for your support. Like all voluntary organisations we rely on members coming forward to fill our **committee positions** and help us run our u3a. We recently contacted all members to ask if anyone would be interested in joining the committee, and we are pleased that several of you responded positively. Nevertheless, we would still welcome further interest, especially to fill the Treasurer position.

If you would be interested in this position, please contact the current Treasurer at tetburyu3atreasurer@gmail.com to find out more.

And last but not least, we still have some spaces left for the **u3a Christmas lunch** on Wednesday December 10th at the Great Tythe Barn, Tetbury - see note below.

That's it from me.

Bernadette (Chair)

Christmas Lunch

To be held on Wednesday December 10th at the Great Tythe Barn, Tetbury. There is the option of 2 or 3 courses. It includes a glass of festive fizz on arrival, and tea/coffee/mini mince pie afterwards. There are meat, fish and vegetarian choices for the main course. The menu can be seen [here](#)

There will be a bar with a good selection of wines, beers, non-alcoholic drinks etc for purchase at your own expense.

The cost will be £47.50 for 2 courses (starter & main, or main & dessert) or £60.50 for 3 courses. You are welcome to bring a partner or other guest - they do not need to be a member of the u3a.

Further information can be found [here](#) or get in touch with me by email at tetburyu3amembership@gmail.com ASAP.

By Maggie Smith
Membership Secretary

Monthly Speakers

Our next monthly talk on "Bread Through the Ages" will take place on Tuesday 18th November at the Tetbury Goods Shed, from 10:30 am - 11:45 am, provided by Chris Holister. Chris is Artisan Baker with our local millers, Shipton Mill in Long Newnton. He will talk about the changes in milling, baking and grain varieties used through the history of humans.

Do come along and meet us there. Refreshments will be available.

This will be followed by the AGM at 11.45.

By Anne Cox
Speaker Secretary

Group News

PLEASE NOTE - you can contact any of the group leaders via the Groups tab of our tetbury.u3asite.uk website. Just click on the group, then the name of the group leader, and you will be directed to complete a contact form. The old email addresses such as bookclubmonday@tetburyu3a.org.uk no longer work.

Art Appreciation

This month we looked at two Renaissance pictures starting with Antonio da Correggio (1489-1534) "Nativity of Christ (Night)" an altar piece - now in a museum in Germany - which was completed in 1530 shows a group of worshippers around the baby Jesus. It is an early and influential example of chiaroscuro - dark and light - with the illumination emanating from the baby and reflecting on the surroundings. The oil paint has deteriorated over time which lends the picture a yellow sheen that seems to emphasise the light.

It is a large painting, 151" x 74", and at first sight a familiar scene. However, Mary is the only one gazing at the baby, Joseph appears in the darkened background seemingly trying to control the donkey, an onlooker shields her eyes from the light, a shepherd looks down at his companion who is either gazing back

at him or perhaps at the angels above. The out of focus background recedes into the dark distance emphasising the foreground brilliance of the holy light.

We followed this with Piero della Francesca's 1412- 1492 "Resurrection at Sansepolcro" a triangular composition fresco showing Christ in a winding sheet standing with one foot on the edge of the tomb, banner in hand, the guards in front asleep and described by Aldous Huxley as "the best picture in the world". Interestingly the background shows trees bare of leaves on the left and with leaves on the right. It hangs in the Town Hall Gallery in Sansepolcro.

Piero was interested in mathematics, geometry and perspective and the painting seems to be carefully constructed according to these principles. As a result it is possible to construct alternative pictures so that a mirror image of the left hand side would show Christ just starting to rise from the tomb against a bare landscape whereas two right hand sides show Christ risen and sitting in majestic judgement in front of leafed trees in spring.

By Judy Greeman

Bookclub Monday Evening

Correction. Reporting on the book discussion that the Monday Book Club had after reading "Klara and the sun" by Kazuo Ishiguro, I wrote about risk and trust surrounding AI. During our meeting we discussed the Indian plane crash in June, and I wrote that the crash was due to a fault with the aircraft's software.

In the interests of accuracy Judith Austin (a pilot) would like to point out that 'At the present time, no specific reason has been identified as to why the engines went into cut-off mode, and the official air accident investigations continue.'

For those interested they may read the [Preliminary Report](#)

For our September meeting we read and discussed "The umbrella murder: The hunt for the Cold War's most notorious killer" by Ulrik Skotte. This is a book about the extraordinary murder of Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian novelist and dramatist, who defected to the west in 1969, and was killed with a ricin-filled pellet shot from the tip of an umbrella on Waterloo Bridge on 7th September 1978. To this day nobody has been prosecuted for the attack.



Image by daniele trevisan from Pixabay

The author is a Danish sports journalist who met Franco Inverinizzi, an Italian filmmaker, in Copenhagen. Franco told Skotte that he knew the man who killed Markov and that he once lived in his house. This is the start of an obsessive search to publicly solve the umbrella murder and reveal the man responsible.

The book has been described as a compelling real-life spy thriller and it is true, for those who know little of the events, it does have moments of enthralling detail. However, many of us found the structure of the book, as it jumped back and forth in time, would have been improved by being more organised. It was also challenging to follow the murky world of Cold War politics with its numerous figures and threads leading everywhere across many countries.

It seemed to the group that the ending was disappointing and unsatisfactory and for this reason we collectively awarded it 2.9 out of 5 stars.

By Corinne Hinton

Garden Visits Group

In mid-October, eleven of us visited **Batsford Arboretum** near Moreton-in-Marsh on a misty Monday morning. Batsford Arboretum is home to a unique collection of some of the world's most beautiful and rare trees, shrubs and bamboos spread across 60 acres. We were not disappointed!



The Batsford estate was inherited in 1886 by Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford. During the 1860s Mitford worked for the foreign office in Russia, Japan and China, during which time he fell in love with the oriental landscape, a passion which directly influenced his design for the arboretum. On his return to the UK in the 1870's, Mitford was secretary to the Ministry of Works which, at that time administered Kew Royal Botanical Garden, and this proved to be of great benefit to Batsford.

He all but erased any trace of the old layout and created a wild garden of naturalistic planting derived from his observations in China and Japan. By now an accomplished plants man and authority on bamboos, he created one of the foremost collections of the time - some of which remain to this day. Many of the trees he planted at that time form the backbone of the present collection.



The Arboretum was certainly looking spectacular, showing its autumn colours. Despite being peak season, we were grateful that the Arboretum was not too busy, and it was very peaceful there. We enjoyed the views over Batsford House, the Oriental gardens, rockeries and ponds, with trees including Japanese Maples, Liquidambar and Euonymus (Spindle) looking amazing with their flame-coloured reds and oranges. After lunch in the restaurant, most of us enjoyed a shopping

experience at the extensive garden centre before heading off home along the Fosse way. Well worth the effort to get there!



This was our last visit of the year, however there is an opportunity to meet for coffee and contribute ideas to the Garden Visit Plan for 2026, at the Tetbury Goods Shed "Off-the-Rails" café on Wednesday 12th November at 10.30am.

I hope to see you there.

By Caroline Hose

Historic Buildings Group

Our September visit was to **Tewkesbury**. Tewkesbury's history centres around the establishment of the Benedictine monastery (now Tewkesbury Abbey) in the 12th century and its pivotal role in the medieval period. The Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471 was a decisive Yorkist victory in the War of the Roses, solidifying the town's place in history. Later, it became a thriving market town, with industries like brewing, milling, pin-making, and making Tewkesbury mustard balls! It was a significant coaching stop before the railways arrived. The railways never came to Tewkesbury, so today the town retains much of its medieval character, visible in its architecture and alleyways.



In the morning, we had a short tour around the Royal Hop Pole hotel, one of the historic coaching inns in Tewkesbury. It is famous for being mentioned in Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*. The hotel is now part of the Wetherspoons group, which has won many awards for building conservation. Having purchased the unloved property, they spent many £million on a major restoration and conservation project.

Our guide Emma, the Hotel Manager, was very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She explained the history of the three buildings that now form the hotel, pointing out the architectural features. We then visited some of the rooms that

are not normally open to the public, including a former medieval banqueting hall discovered during recent renovations. The hall is now restored to its original layout, resulting in the loss of 3 guest bedrooms. There are several panels of medieval wall paintings in some of the guest bedrooms, making for a rather unusual stay.



Several years ago, Emma appeared on Antiques Road Show with what turned out to be a very valuable table (estimate £15,000 - £20,000).

It is still in everyday use in the hotel in a public area!

In the afternoon, we were taken on a tour of the historic alleys of Tewkesbury by members of the Alleycat Project. Tewkesbury has a unique town pattern based on the three main roads hemmed between the Avon river and the Swilgate stream. Access to the long but narrow plots of land from the streets created gaps between the buildings, which turned into alleyways.



These rights of access allowed cottages and workshops to be built in "courts" behind the main frontage of the roads as the plots became subdivided. Tewkesbury still has most of its alleys and "courts" today. They provided a fascinating insight into the history of Tewkesbury.



Our two guides Steve and Geoff pointed out lots of features that would have been very difficult to spot without their encyclopaedic knowledge of the alleys.

We are now busy planning next year's programme. Details will be provided in due course. If you have any suggestions for venues to visit, please let us know. We aim to keep travel times to no more than 1hr from Tetbury. If you are interested in joining our group, please send us a message via the contact form using the link on the Historic Buildings group tab on the [website](#)

By David & Maggie Smith - Group organisers.



One of the first visits made by the Historic Buildings group was to **Chavenage House, Tetbury** so we thought the time was right for a second visit as the Group has so many new members, some new to Tetbury. We were fortunate to select a beautiful, Autumn day in October, when the air was clear and the countryside looked wonderful.

Fifty-seven of us collected in the ballroom where Caroline Lowsley-Williams told us of the current filming schedule for "The Rivals", signs of which were obvious from the 1980s televisions collected in the hall to the cherry-pickers attaching, or possibly removing, foliage to the outside of the building.

We listened to a brief history of the House, told with Caroline's inimitable humorous comments.



We divided into two groups for a tour of the house starting in the Hall with its gallery and organ, unusable since the Second World War when American Servicemen shot through the bellows, on to the two Cromwell rooms with the original 17th Century tapestries, the Chapel, added later but with a Saxon font (saved from use as a horse water trough) and wood and stone carvings from many earlier eras, and on to the library.

There we saw a painting 'attributed to the school of Rembrandt' (no desire to investigate further with Fiona Bruce), a copy of one of the water- coloured Windsor Castle interior designs from a portfolio which paid for a new roof and a moving tribute to Great-grandfather McCorquodale who died at Dunkirk.



The afternoon was rounded off with a wonderful spread of scones with cream and tea or coffee made by Joanna Gouriet, Caroline's sister.

By Anita Stride

History Group

On Monday 20th October the u3a History Group met at the western entrance to Selsley Church, now the main entrance, after squeezing through the narrow lynch-gate to reach the car park.

How the architect, designer and stained-glass artists were connected.



William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones met, and became close friends, at Exeter College in Oxford in 1853 when they were both students training to enter the church. As a follow on from the Oxford Movement of the 1830's and 1840's (which sought the revival of High-Church, or Catholic traditions, within the Church of England) many clergy were trained, churches built, enlarged and restored.

However, neither William Morris nor Edward Burne-Jones joined this spiritual and theological movement, though they were influenced by its Anglo-Catholicism and medieval themes. Instead, they both rejected a formal religious path and

dropped out of their religious training.

William Morris decided to study architecture with the office of George Edmund Street in Oxford, and Edward Burne-Jones became a painter in Red Lion Square in London (which became the focal point for the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood) and had painting lessons with Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Whilst he was with George Edmund Street, at the architecture office, William Morris met and became friends with Philip Webb and George Frederick Bodley. But after nine months he also decided to pursue painting and moved to London with Edward Burne-Jones where they both followed the principles of John Ruskin and threw themselves into the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

William Morris fell in love with Jane Burden (the Pre-Raphaelites model) and following their marriage in 1859 moved to the Red House, an Arts and Crafts building in Bexleyheath co-designed by Philip Webb and William Morris.

How Selsley in Gloucestershire attracted these talented men.

All Saints Selsley is the last of the Cotswold wool churches and it was built with money from the textile mill down in the valley at Ebley Mill, belonging to the Marling family. Samuel Stephens Marling, was the owner of several local cloth mills and bought Stanley Park, a large property in Selsley in 1851. Living in Stanley Park his large house up on the hill, Marling was away from the noise, the smoke and the smell of the mill but he could ride down to the valley on his white horse in just a few minutes. But on the 20th January 1853 disaster struck.

The Gloucestershire Chronicle reported: Fatal boiler explosion at Ebley. "On Thursday last a fearful steam boiler explosion took place at the woollen cloth manufactory of Messrs. Marling, Strachan, and Company, at Ebley, near Stroud, by which the life of the engineer was sacrificed on the spot, and other parties have received severe injuries."

Samuel Stephens Marling had built up a very considerable business and when the boiler exploded it took out the end of the mill building. This could have been disastrous but fortunately, the accident was covered by insurance, and he was able to rebuild a block and the tower at the end of Ebley Mill which was designed by the architect George Frederick Bodley. The mill was opened in 1859, and in the meantime Samuel Stephens Marling thought that it would be a rather lovely idea to build a church in Selsley (because it was rather a long way for him to go to St George's Church in Kings Stanley.) So, he set in motion the idea of creating a new ecclesiastical parish, donating the land and building a church next door with George Frederick Bodley as the architect. Marling provided three quarters of the money, and the rest was raised by local subscription.

George Frederick Bodley impressed with the furniture and furnishing designed for The Red House suggested to William Morris that he started a company which could be supplied with commissions from Bodley. And so, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. (1861-74), or 'The Firm', as it was colloquially referred to was established as a groundbreaking collective of pre-Raphaelite artists including William Morris, Edward Byrne-Jones, Ford Maddox Brown, Philip Webb, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Peter Paul Marshall and Charles J. Faulkner. At the start of the project William Morris had no idea that he was going to be involved with stained-glass. But luckily, Burne-Jones had been successful in this field and had already produced a stained-glass window for Waltham Abbey Church in Essex. In addition



The Rose window

to this, he had facilities in the basement of the place in Red Lion Square where there was a stained-glass studio with kilns.

In 1861 the foundation stone was laid at All Saints church, and on the 28th November 1862 the church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol (with admission to the Morning Service by ticket).

Unfortunately, the ceremony was performed in the absence of Mr and Mrs Marling who rushed to attend to their second son at Torquay, ill of consumption, and it was feared dying.

The exterior of the church was built with local limestone and stone tiles from Tetbury, and today its impressive tower is easily visible from the A419 as you drive towards the M5. As there was not much time to design and finish the interior, Bodley and Morris roped in all their friends to work on their first ecclesiastical stained-glass window commission. Philip Webb came up with the overall scheme for the church. Cleverly, the stain-glass does not fill the entire window (an idea he took from Merton College Chapel in Oxford) but follows a ribbon of colour across the windows, from one end to the other, with different artists filling in the panels in between.

The windows in the church at Selsley are notable for their naturalistic style (a deliberate move away from the more medieval designs common at the time) and showcase a range of biblical stories in rich, earthy colours. They are full of animals, people from the bible, as well as friends and family, each one a little jewel of colour. Describing the windows *The Gloucestershire Chronicle* Sat, 29 Nov 1862, wrote: " Merely regarded as lights they are exceedingly good, and they are rendered highly effective by the sacred paintings which they contain".

By Corinne Hinton

Play Reading Group 1

Play reading group 1 meets on the last Monday of the month at The Royal Oak.

Play reading group 2 meets on the first Monday of the month at Steepleton.

Our Playreading Groups are a very sociable and enjoyable event with members sitting and reading the play. Parts are allocated beforehand. Members have a choice of reading the play before the day if they wish. If any 'acting' is involved it is in the voice. Plays range from Murder mystery, Farce, Comedy and drama.

Play Reading group 2 would welcome new members.

Please contact Margo Smith, Group leader, via the Groups Page of the u3a website tetbury.u3asite.uk

By Margo Smith

Ukulele Group

Our Group Leader, Mike, recently invited members of the group to contribute to the newsletter, offering their reflections on what joining the T'UKEs has meant for them. Here is Sally Hadley's contribution.

If I knew the answer to "what makes a good u3a group", it would, perhaps, be worth bottling and sending the recipe round the country. Perhaps it's "tried and tested" perhaps it's "enthusiasm", perhaps it's "leadership". Whatever it is TUKes has found it.

Every Tuesday we fill Steepleton (Retirement Home) with strumming and singing. It's intense, it's fun and we certainly have improved. There is certainly a backbone now of those who can master difficult chords and different strumming patterns, there are the plodders (who miss the occasional difficult chord) and there are one or two whose skill does not quite match their enthusiasm. There is singing talent and musical talent. No-one notices where the skill lies, we're all having fun and supporting each other.

There are also those who give their time to help with technical problems, the organising of gigs and much else; they really need lots of thanks. This month we all enjoyed a wonderful party and a celebration of over two years teaching with

songs, fabulous party food and laughter. Solos were performed, groups of two and three played together and a great afternoon was had by all.

We are now moving forward to a new tranche of 60s and 70s songs and will soon be encompassing Christmassy numbers mixed with the old favourite carols. We really seem to grasp a new song these days with ease and the majority of players have upgraded their cheap ukes to more pleasing shapes and sizes. We have a commitment to lots of gigs in the future, all of them repeat visits. We continue to raise funds for Longfield Hospice, who are running a campaign to increase their much needed funds. We hope the residents and helpers at the homes and halls where we play enjoy our efforts as much as we do!

One slight criticism came from my daughter this week, who was impressed by my rendition of an Elvis number. She knew so few of our "back" numbers and shouted "why don't you play anything I know"... Sorry Kate, we're u3a. There's a clue in the title!

By Sally Hadley



The "Vintage People" performing their rendition of YMCA

And we have a budding poet within our midst - this one is from our Group Leader, Mike Hoskin. We liked it so much we thought we would share it with you. Without the musical score, obviously!

ODE TO THE T'UKES, AND TO Em AND Bb

IT WASN'T VERY LONG AGO, THREE WEEKS I SAID TO SUE
I'LL HELP TO GET YOUR UKE GROUP STARTED, THAT'S ALL THAT I CAN DO.
FOR AT THAT TIME I MUST ADMIT TO SIX GROUPS I DID BELONG,
EAGER FOR A DAILY STRUM, AND CHANCE TO SING A SONG.
UKESTROUD AND STANLEY STRUMMERS, CHURCHDOWN AND
GLOUCESTER STRINGS,
CROSS UKIES AT THE GALA CLUB, AND CHUG AT CHARLTON KINGS.
BUT NOW I ONLY GO SOMETIMES TO UKESTROUD IN THE SUMMER,
AND NO MORE GO TO CHUG, OR TO CROSS UKIES, OR TO STRUMMERS.
WHY? I HEAR YOU ASKING, HAS MIKE'S DAILY UKING FADED?
NO, I HAVEN'T LOST MY INTEREST. NO, I AM NOT FEELING JADED.
IT'S SIMPLY THAT THE GLOUCESTER STRINGS AND T'UKES HAVE TAKEN
OVER
THAT I'VE BECOME A "STAY AT HOME", NO MORE A "UKE CLUB ROVER."
LEADING GIGS, AND CHOOSING SONGS ISN'T ALL I DO,
THERE'S PICKING PLAYLISTS, SORTING SHEETS, AND CHECKING VENUES
TOO,
I HAVE TO SAY THAT OVER TIME WHAT I'VE ENJOYED THE MOST
IS THIS FAMILY OF TUKERS, AND TO YOU I RAISE A TOAST.
TO EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU, FOR THE PROGRESS YOU HAVE MADE,

FOR THE PLEASURE YOU HAVE GIVEN FOLKS, FOR WHOM YOU'VE SUNG
AND PLAYED,

FOR THE ENJOYMENT AT OUR PRACTICES, FOR THE FUN WE HAVE AT
GIGS,

FOR THE HUMOUR AND THE BANTER, AND ALL THE CHEEKY DIGS.

FOR THE FUNDS YOU'VE RAISED FOR LONGFIELD, I HAVE TO RAISE MY
HAT,

FOR YOUR OPEN MIKE SOLOS, FOR Em AND Bb,

OUR REPERTOIRE HAS GROWN AND GROWN, OUR PLAYLISTS THEY ARE
MANY,

IF I GO ON MUCH LONGER YOU'LL WANT TO SPEND A PENNY.

WHAT A SUPER BUNCH YOU REALLY ARE, SO LOYAL AND SUPPORTIVE,

I'M ALSO VERY LUCKY FOR ALL THE GIFTS YOU GIVE,

SO THANK YOU ALL FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE, TO MAKE ME VERY PROUD,

I'LL NOT GO BACK TO STRUMMERS, TO CROSS UKIES, CHUG OR STROUD.



The "Dolly Pardons"
performing Jolene

And finallyThe deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is Monday 17th November.

Please send your articles to Caroline, your newsletter editor, at newsletttertetburyu3a@gmail.com

Annex

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 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](#)

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](#)