



November 2025

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

This is my first Newsletter as newly-elected Chair of Tetbury & District u3a and I am really looking forward to leading our nearly 420 member organisation this year. I would like to start by thanking Bernadette Bell, Alan Harris, Anne Cox and Maggie Roberts for their service on the Committee over the past few years and welcoming Chris Gibson, Jamie Hamilton, Mark Janaway, Richard Mattick and Liz Taylor who were elected as new members of the Committee at our AGM this month.

We are however still looking for a Treasurer - please contact me (tetburyu3a@gmail.com) if you think you might be able to help with this position.

During her Chair's report at the AGM Bernadette mentioned the success of our u3a Ukulele Group (The TUKES) who have raised an amazing £1,500 for Longfield Hospice through their performances over the last year or so. They have eight Christmas concerts booked at local venues this December, including The Tetbury

Goods Shed on Wednesday 3rd December at 2pm, so they are bound to add to this figure. Do come along and join in the singalong.

Maggie Smith has been busy organising our Christmas lunch at The Tythe Barn on 10th December and we have over 80 members attending this year. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Martin Doidge (Chair)

Monthly Speakers

Our speaker programme for 2025 is complete. We heard about an 11th century saint, Wulfstan; the Sharpness to Gloucester Canal; the Community Connexions bus service and learned fascinating facts about British mammals. We had advice on how to avoid falls and injury from the NHS Falls Assessment and Education Service; learned about the life of Horatio Nelson; reminisced through A History of Sport on TV; the life and works of Henry Purcell; Theories about the Star of Bethlehem.

Finally, in November, we had a fascinating talk, full of interesting detail, on the changes in grain varieties, milling and baking and through human history from Chris Hollister, Head of Product Development and Artisan Support at Shipton Mill (in Long Newnton and Frampton on Severn).

And on to next year:



Our next talk will take place on Monday 12th January 2026, 10:30 am at the Tetbury Goods Shed, where Nigel Lloyd-Jones will be talking about "Driving Safely in Winter".

Nigel is Lead, Gloucestershire Older Drivers Road Safety Partnership; Co-Lead, of the award winning Gloucestershire Older Drivers Forum; and a Trustee with the Gloucestershire Older Persons Association, whose aim is a future where older drivers can continue to enjoy the benefits of driving while minimising risks to themselves and others.

His talk will include lots of road safety tips around driving ability, vehicle preparedness and journey planning. Do come along and meet us there. Refreshments will be available.

Here's a link to our full 2026 programme ...hope there is something there for you.
<https://tetbury.u3asite.uk/events/>

By Anne Cox

Group News

u3a Website

Please can group leaders consider sending any news or updates about their group activities to David Smith (website editor). In particular, he'd really appreciate items that could be included on the front page of the website in the "Latest notices" section. This will help to promote your group activities to a wider audience and reinforce how important the groups are to the success of our u3a. You can contact David via the Committee page of our website.

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, and you will not be able to contact a group leader using the old format email addresses.

Art Appreciation

During the mid to late C19th the preference in the Scottish art market was for brown varnished realism imbued with the prevailing Presbyterian values. The Scottish Colourists were a group of four painters, Samuel Peploe, Francis Cadell, George Hunter and John Fergusson, all born in the 1870/80s in Scotland who were inspired by the burgeoning avant garde movement in France.



Iona by SJ Peploe

They were influenced by the techniques and lively colour palettes of Cezanne, Manet and Matisse, they used bold colours and explored new ways of expressing light, shade and atmospheric effects.

Although friends, they did not work together as a group and only exhibited together three times. We looked in more detail at the works of Peploe and Cadell, specifically their large body of work that centred on colourful landscapes of Iona.

We then looked at the life of Merton and Anne Russell Cotes, who were C19th art collectors. Merton was originally a commercial traveller in textiles, and although not from a wealthy background, he prospered by running a commercial travellers' hotel in Glasgow. He moved to Bournemouth in 1876 and renovated the Bath Hotel - renamed the Royal Bath as the Prince of Wales had previously stayed there - which became very popular and attracted the likes of Oscar Wilde and Sir Henry Irving.

Merton filled it with art works bought on his and his wife's extensive travels, some of it reflecting the new interest in Japanese art (Japonisme) after that country opened up trade with the West. He later built a house on the front in Bournemouth (now the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum) of flamboyant architecture, also filled with art and which he left to the town at his death. We looked at two paintings from the collection there, "Midsummer" 1887 by Albert Joseph Moore and "Spray" 1940 by Harold Williamson.

By Judy Greeman

Aviation and Classic Cars

Our new Aviation and Classic Cars group is now up and running. The objectives of the group are to visit classic vehicles and aviation, places of interest, discuss cars/bikes and aviation in general plus learn more about their engineering restoration and maintenance.

If this would appeal to you, please contact one of the group leaders - Stephanie Dale, Judith Austin or Tony Hadfield via the Groups page of the website.

Bookclub Monday



Our novel this month was "Caledonian Road" by the Scottish novelist and non-fiction author, Andrew O'Hagan. His work has been nominated for the Booker Prize and he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

So, it is fair to say that he is a man with talent.

Unfortunately, despite the effusive comments on the cover "Addictively enjoyable", "Thrilling", "Extraordinary" the Book Group were mostly (but not wholly) disappointed with this book.

Image by Janno Nivergall from Pixaby

Coming to the book with no pre-conceptions or expectations can be a bit of a shock, and you may wonder what you are reading. But realising that it is a state-of-the-nation novel aiming to offer a broad overview of national issues, and a snapshot of cultural and ethical values, brings everything into focus.

The book centres on one particular road in London, and includes a whole raft of people (so numerous that they are all listed at the front) both wealthy and marginalised, who live and cross paths in this area. It's a bit like sitting in the tube and wondering what everyone else in the carriage is doing. In this respect it feels a little Dickensian "in its ambition, size and topic". However, unlike Dickens, O'Hagan includes no redeeming compassion or humour, and his characters serve only to highlight the stress, corruption, selfishness, self-indulgence and greed in today's society. As a result the reader is alienated from almost every awful person.

But the book did provoke a very good discussion. We seemed to be split into two halves, half who believed that the whole concept of the novel had to include all of its parts, and half who considered that the novel was spread so thinly that some of the subject lines and characters should have been cut.

We talked about layers of society co-existing with various degrees of separation between them. How some levels of society are only a threat amongst themselves, and how we are all complicit (and selfishly insular) when we choose to ignore what is going on around us at the car wash, the nail bar, or growing in nearby sheds down the road. We realised that there were not many morally good characters in the novel and that they were all rather flawed.

It was a long book and most of us were very relieved when we got to the end. One of our group would have preferred the author to provide some kind of analysis or commentary to sew everything together. But another said that the main character was not really in a position to do this. It was also noted that not one review of the book (seen so far) had mentioned the gangs, which was interesting.

As a result the average rating for the book was 2.83 with one of our group awarding it the highest score of 4.

By Corrine Hinton

Bookclub Wednesday

Ten of us met on the 29th October to discuss Tracey Chevalier's "The Glass Maker". Set on the Island of Murano, it follows the Rossos, a family of glassmakers, as they live through triumph and loss - from a plague devastating Venice, Napoleon plundering the palazzos, the occupation by Austrian soldiers who want to fill in the canals as they don't like water, to the outbreak of covid. Tracey Chevalier's characters were as clear as always, she excels at creating strong characters especially women.

We all agreed that we enjoyed both the history of Venice from 1846 to the present when time moved very quickly and the family story set in the bubble of Murano where time moved very slowly. Were the parallel time-lines a clever literary device or a step too far?

Our next meeting will be on 26th November when we'll discuss "The New Silk Roads" by Peter Frankopan.

By Pauline Whittaker

French Group

We had a great Conversation session in November. The prepared presentations were on the topics "A Book I've Read" or "A Building".

...first, a story about William the Conqueror's wife Matilda and the church in Avening she had built in 1080.



Years before, when she was merely the daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, she fell in love with Brictric, Saxon lord of Avening. He, unfortunately, rejected her advances. Legend has it that commissioning the church at Avening was penance for throwing him into prison in Gloucester castle where he died.

This beautiful old church still stands and is open to visitors every day.

...then, an introduction to the charming book, "Raising Hare" by Chloe Dalton. The author rescues a baby hare from the fields near her home. At first, feeding the little creature is difficult, but after a few months, it begins to thrive and, for three years, spends its days inside the house, returning each evening to its hare family only to come back each morning to feed and spend the day in the house again.

...a description of a second book, "Murder at Bletchley Park" by Christina Koning... we are immersed in the beautifully evoked world of Second World War England. We meet the people who work at Bletchley Park and a blind man leading a nearly normal life (his other senses being more acute). A woman disappears, secrets are stolen, an apparent suicide occurs, and the mystery is solved with the blind man's help.

...then, a tale of a cherished home, acquired after a lifetime of work...the quiet life that followed with kind neighbours and foreign students in an adjacent private school...a sports ground, little used except for the moles workmen occasionally hunt, and the same sports ground years later threatened with development.

...and finally, the description of an historical novel ("Rose Nicholson" by Andrew Greig) set in Edinburgh and St Andrews at the end of the 16th century. A student lives through a time of political and religious upheaval marked by the presence of historical figures and events. Written by an author who is also a poet and musician, the novel brilliantly depicts the life and landscapes of the time, evoking lost times and fascinating characters.

There was no film matinee in November but we met as usual for our Song and Games session where we played one of our "Happy Families" games- this one on ailments to practice how to talk about feeling unwell...

and we sang *Allouette Gentil Allouette* substituting human body parts for chicken parts, culminating in:

Je te guérirai les oreilles
Je te guérirai les oreilles
Et les oreilles! Et les oreilles !
Et les jambes! Et les jambes!
Et le dos! Et le dos!
Et les bras! Et les bras!
Et la gorge! Et la gorge!
Et le nez! Et le nez!
Et la tête! Et la tête!
Alouette! Alouette!

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh
Alouette, gentil Allouette, Allouette te guérirai...

Needless to say we got in a muddle but hey ho!



We'll be meeting first Monday in December for Conversation but then have a break till January when, as well as our usual sessions, we'll be celebrating La Fête des Trois Rois with a bring and share lunch and the traditional almond pastry tart, La Galette des Trois Rois.

If you'd like to be more confident speaking French and practice vocabulary and grammar using games, song and conversation, you can contact us through the GROUP page on the website. Just click <https://tetbury.u3asite.uk/groups/>

Joyeux Noël et une très bonne année de la part du groupe français de l'u3a.

By Anne Cox

Garden Visits Group

We rounded off the year with a convivial gathering of about 15 of us at the Tetbury Goods Shed, where we enjoyed planning our programme for next year over coffee and cake.

The programme is in draft form, and not on the website yet, however we will kick off the season with a visit to Painswick Rococo Garden on Monday 16th February, (hopefully around 11 am, subject to availability). Save the date for now, and I will contact group members well before the date to confirm arrangements. Pre-booking via the Rococo Garden website will be essential however.

I'd like to thank group members for your tremendous support, especially those who have kindly shown us around their own gardens this year, and those who have provided plants to swap. Thanks also to Madeleine, who has provided invaluable support, researching gardens to visit, and offering ideas for our programme. A little birdie tells me that Madeleine has volunteered to create and maintain a small garden at the Tetbury Goods Shed, including the planters, and she might be asking some of us to grow seedlings and take cuttings. Watch this space!

By Caroline Hose

History Group

The Group meeting at the Goods Shed at 2pm on Tuesday 18th November was well attended, with 17 members present. George told us about the life of the 8th and last Earl of Berkeley who was a physical chemist, landowner, peer and bon viveur. Bob then summarized the amazing, long career of Sir Barnes Wallis, the British engineer and inventor who came up with the WW2 dam-busting bouncing bomb among many other inventions. Both answered questions.

The Group's next meeting is at 12.30pm on Monday 15th December, when we will be holding our annual Christmas party/picnic and quiz in the railway carriage behind the Goods Shed. Bring snacks and drinks to eat/share and several questions of history with which to challenge the rest of us. There are no scores and no prizes, it is just festive fun with friends.

Thanks to the generous volunteers in the group, we already have next year's programme planned, apart from the summer visits.

2026 Programme

Mon 12/1/26 The World of Aldhelm
Tues 10/2/26 The writing and documents of the English Civil War
Mon 16/3/26 Spain: 1975-2025, 50 years of democracy
Tues 14/4/26 The Institution of the Victoria Cross
Mon 11/5/26 History from Art - The Borgias and the D'Este at Ferrara
Tues 16/6/26 visit to be arranged
Mon 13/7/26 visit to be arranged
No meeting in August
Tues 15/9/26 A Huguenot Migration.
Mon 12/10/26 Highwaymen: who, where and why
Tues 17/11/26 The Mystery of Maud Davies

By Bob Kelley

Pub Lunch Group

The Pub Lunch Group is holding its Christmas Lunch at the Beaufort Arms, Hawkesbury Upton, on Monday 8th December, 12.30 -13.00.



The Beaufort Arms offer normal size meals for up to £34 for 3-courses or smaller options for £22.50 for 2-courses and a good choice of food. We have always found the food to be well cooked and presented and the service is excellent which is why we keep going back.



I have decided to open this up to everybody, group member or not, so as to give everybody the opportunity to have a Christmas meal with like-minded friends at a reasonable price. In fact why not bring a friend or a family member so we can introduce u3a to a wider audience.

Menus can be supplied to all those interested, just send me an email via the contact form on the Groups page of the website tetbury.u3asite.uk or pop into my coffee morning any Friday morning at the Priory Inn for a printed copy.

By Grahame Inman

And finallyThere will be no newsletter in December, and the deadline for contributions to the January newsletter is Monday 19th January. Huge thanks to all those who have contributed - I look forward to hearing more about your group activities next year.

Please send your articles to Caroline, your newsletter editor, at newslettertetburyu3a@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](#)