



March 2026

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

I hope you're all enjoying this lovely spring weather, now that it has arrived (at least for now) after such a wet and dreary start to the year. At this time of year, many of us feel energised to try something new, so do have a look at our list of current groups at Annex A or search our website tetbury.u3asite.uk to see if there's anything that appeals to you. I have quite a few things of interest to share with you this month.

First of all, u3a National is organising their **u3a Festival 26**, which will take place at the University of York between 1-3 July. This involves three brilliant days of learning, sharing and connection. You can explore an existing interest, or take the leap and try something completely new in member-led workshops and sessions. Tickets cost £18 a day, or £50 for a three-day ticket.

You can find out more and book tickets here www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026

We have a few **potential new groups**, subject to there being sufficient interest. These are a Beer Appreciation group, a Discussion group, and Lawrence Moss is planning to restart the iPhone beginners' class this Spring. See article below for further information and details of how to join.

Our **u3a Ukulele Group**, the T'UKES, will be returning to the Tetbury Goods Shed on Wednesday 1st April from 2pm - 4pm. Included in their repertoire is a mixture of Singalong Songs from 1940s to 80s. The words of the songs will be projected onto a large screen to enable the audience to singalong.

Tickets may be purchased from the Goods Shed [here](#) in advance for £4 + booking fee, however you can turn up on the day and pay £5 on the door.



I'd also like to promote **Coffee & Co** which is a new meet-up at the Tetbury Goods Shed, which is intended for people who find themselves on their own in mid-life. Whether you're new to the area, taken early retirement or just keen to connect with some like-minded people, pop down to the Goods Shed for a chat and a coffee (and perhaps cake) from their café. New faces always welcome. This will take place every Thursday morning in the Main Hall from 10.30am - 12.30.

And finally, I would like to draw attention to the **dangers of responding to 'spoof' emails** which can give hackers access to your email account - see article from the Tech Support Group.

That's it from me.

Martin Doidge (Chair)

Monthly Speakers

Over 60 of us enjoyed an inspiring and informative talk on 16th March on the subject of **"The National Gardens Scheme (NGS) and the Gardens of Gloucestershire"**. Vanessa Berridge, county organiser for the NGS in Gloucestershire, gave us a fascinating insight into the work of the National Garden Scheme nqs.org.uk which has a rich and interesting history, funding nursing and health charities since 1927 when it first opened for 'a shilling a head'.

She went on to explain that the National Garden Scheme gives visitors unique access to over 3,300 exceptional private gardens and raises impressive amounts of money for nursing and health charities through admissions, teas and cake, and plant sales - they have donated over £77.8 million to nursing and health charities and in 2025 made an annual donation of over £3.8 million. Core beneficiaries include Carer's Trust, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK, Parkinson's UK and The Queen's Nursing Institute.

The National Garden Scheme doesn't just open beautiful gardens for charity - they are passionate about the physical and mental health benefits of gardens too. They also support charities doing amazing work in gardens and health and grant bursaries to help community gardening projects.

Vanessa went on to showcase some of the variety of beautiful gardens on our doorstep.

Our next monthly talk, **"Embroidered with Woodbine & Eglantine"**, will be provided by Dr Gill White on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at the Tetbury Goods Shed GL8 8EY, from 10:30 am to 12 pm. The talk examines Elizabethan textile furnishings, both as physical objects and then as a medium for conveying symbolic messages. It will look at designs, techniques and uses, as well as subject matter and the Elizabethans' fondness for decoding hidden messages and devices.

Refreshments will be available before and afterwards - we hope to see you there.

Here's a link to our full 2026 programme tetbury.u3asite.uk/events

By Julia Walter (Speakers Secretary)

Potential New Groups

Beer Appreciation Group

The Beer Appreciation Group would meet about once a month at a time and place agreed by the members. There would be trips to selected public houses, breweries or other licensed premises where professional staff would be able to expound upon the beers, but about half the meetings would be in members' residences. At these meetings members would be encouraged to bring along interesting beers that they have found, enough for each member present to savour about one third of a pint, and then talk about its origin, manufacture, characteristics and why they like it. The aim of the group is to be able to understand and appreciate the many wonderful types of beer now available from across the world.

If this might interest you, please contact newslettertetburyu3a@gmail.com

Discussion Group

This would be gently structured so that we focus on the chosen subject. A member volunteers in advance to lead on a theme - maybe a social issue, maybe a cultural, philosophical, humorous or other subject. We can discuss anything you like! The volunteer introduces the item, speaking for no more than ten minutes, and then it will be opened out to the group for more in-depth exploration and discussion. This approach can be adapted as the group develops according to members' wishes, and potentially could meet once a month on a Friday morning at a suitable cafe or hostelry.

If this would be of interest, please contact newslettertetburyu3a@gmail.com

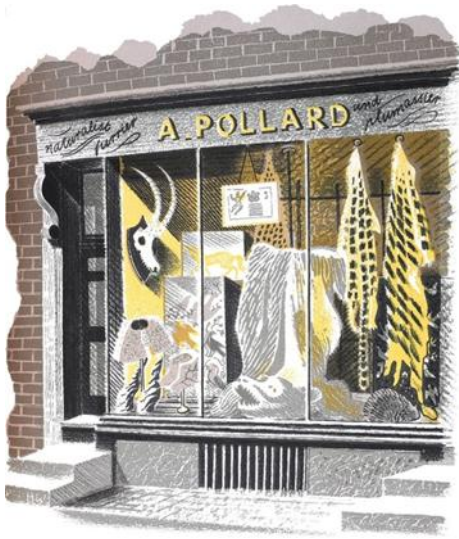
iPhone beginners

Lawrence Moss is planning to restart the iPhone beginners' class this Spring. The class is intended for beginners only, that is those members who just want to use an iPhone. No theory, just practical "this is how to do it".

The class is limited to a maximum of 8 persons, at his home at Long Newnton, every Tuesday 10am to 12noon. If you would be interested, please contact Lawrence via the Groups page (Computing, Apple) on our website tetbury.u3asite.uk/groups.

Art Appreciation

Our March meeting looked at the highly prolific artist, **Eric Ravilious** (1903-1942) who despite his short life, left a huge body of work in varied media including watercolours, prints, wood carving, ceramics and textiles. He attended the Royal College of Art in 1922, a time when British art was in its ascendancy, his contemporaries included Edward Bawden, Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore and his tutor was Paul Nash. His parents ran an antiques shop and his subsequent interest in shops was often reflected in his designs.



This month, we looked at some of his work with ceramics, printing and textiles. He worked for Wedgwood for a few years and designed a Coronation mug for Edward VIII, which was withdrawn after his abdication, but the design was later reworked for the coronations of George VI and Elizabeth II. Other sought after designs included the Alphabet mug and Garden Implements mug.

Eric Ravilious "High Street" book

He was appointed by the British Cotton Board to design artefacts for an exhibition they ran in the States. He also worked on printmaking and lithography and produced a popular book of shop interiors called High Street. He was a war artist on active service and died in WW2 when his aircraft was lost off Iceland.

Our second talk focussed on the American glass artist **Dale Chihuly** (1941-). An early interest in design and architecture led to a glassblowing course and, via a Fulbright Scholarship, him learning new techniques at the Venini glass factory in Murano, Venice. He founded the Pilchuck Glass School near Seattle in 1971 and today it continues to attract artists and craftspeople from all over the world.

His work became known in the 1970s when the Metropolitan Museum of Art bought some of his work which now is exhibited in over 200 museums worldwide and ranges from small bowls and vases to the huge sculptural installations he is best known for. A wonderful example can be seen in the entrance to the V&A

Museum. We went on to look at his two exhibitions (2005 and 2019) at Kew Gardens, his work particularly lending itself to display in the glasshouses where they blend with the organic and freestyle of plants.

By Judy Greeman

Aviation and Classic Cars ~ engineering and action group

In part to celebrate International Women's Day, nine of us had an enjoyable and informative visit to the **Haynes Motor Museum at Sparkford near Yeovil**, in March. It has the largest exhibition of its kind with over 300 vehicles from an 1898 Daimler Wagonette to modern super cars and motor bikes.

Our group had an excellent "Women in Transportation History" guided tour given by museum volunteer guide, Jon. He told us about Mary Anderson, born in 1866 in Alabama. She was an innovator and entrepreneur who invented and patented the first automatic windscreen, or as it was called then, windshield wiper in 1903.



Haynes Motor Museum

Margaret Wilcox, born in 1838, was an American engineer and invented the train-based car heating system, on the basis that it was cold where the passengers were in the train, but very hot where the steam train's engine was.

Florence Lawrence, born in 1886, who starred in over three hundred silent films, invented the turn and brake signal for vehicles in about 1914. A button was used to raise or lower a directional flag and a rear bumper raised or lowered a flag operated by the brake pedal as a stop signal. Many of the road signs we see today, were designed by Margaret Calvert, born in 1936, while working with Jock Kinnear. She worked as a typographer and graphic designer, and transformed the earlier road signs into the practical ones we pass every day.

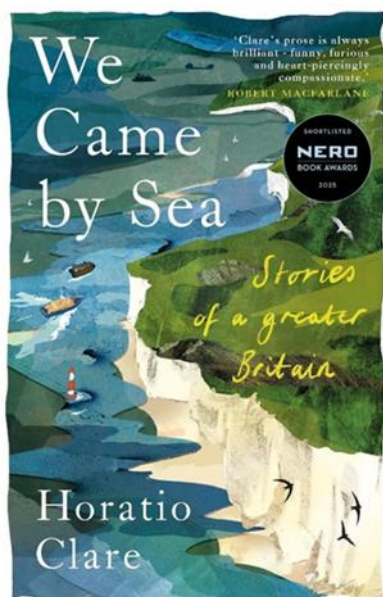
Pat Moss, sister of Stirling Moss, was a racing driver and was crowned European Ladies' Rally Champion five times. In 1960, she won the RAC Driver of the Year Award. The story went that the RAC did not allow women into their Award Ceremony, but as she was the winner, they allowed her to come in to collect her award, but had to leave an hour later. She won numerous international awards with many different cars including MG, Austin, Saab, Ford, Lancia and Alpine-Renault, beating her brother on one occasion.

New members are welcome to join us.

By Steph Dale

Bookclub Monday Evening - "We came by Sea" by Horatio Clare

Horatio Clare's book prompted a livelier discussion than most of us felt the book itself had been.



The book is his attempt to get behind the "small boats" headlines and narrative and what he discovered when he began his journeys between Dover and Calais.

He met and listened to the volunteers who help thousands of people every year, from the lifeboat crews mounting operations to the countless unrecognised, uncelebrated British people who are giving their all to help the vulnerable and desperate. Several of us had also listened to his talk at the Goods Shed last September.

What he made clear was how relatively small the number of small boat refugees/migrants (of whom about 75% obtain refugee status) in the overall scale of migration is and how disproportionate the headlines are. His theme is that while the headlines are universally negative they in turn obscure innumerable acts of kindness, both by volunteers and officials, for whom "being kind" carries a risk.

Our discussion picked up on the differing perceptions of refugees - Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion are always compared favourably to others fleeing wars in the middle east and Africa - and whether alternative approaches would be less costly and more effective.



Shot of old Harry Rocks chalk formations, Handfast Point, Purbeck from Wirestock.

As a book we found it quite repetitive - essentially the same story repeated across different locations -and also lacking the balance that the wider panel brought to the Goods Shed talk. A good edit would not have gone amiss.

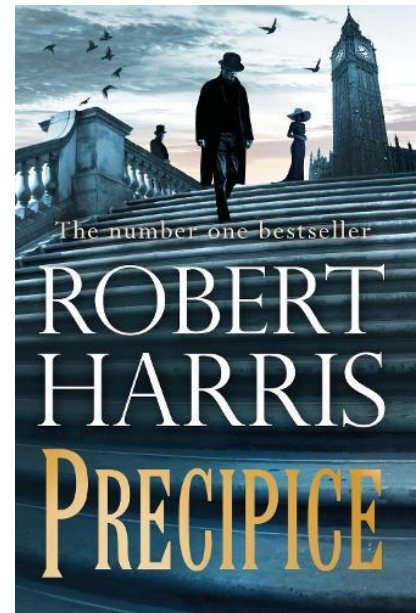
We gave the book a rather lowly 2.9/5 but nonetheless acknowledged its thought-provoking content.

By Douglas Looman

Bookclub Wednesday

We had our meeting on Wednesday the 25th February to discuss "**Precipice**" by Robert Harris. Some of us had listened to it when it was book of the week on radio 4 but there was so much more in the novel.

It's a work of fiction but, as always, impeccably researched by Harris. Based on Asquith's relationship with the aristocratic Victoria Stanley who was 35 years his junior and set in the run up and start of World War 1.



Becoming increasingly reckless and dependant on Victoria to whom he could unburden himself, he would write her letters, sometimes 3 a day which contained confidential information on British strategy, decoded Foreign Office telegrams and affairs of state which they would then discuss.

There are more than 700 letters from him in the British Library which Harris had access to but, unfortunately Asquith destroyed all the letters she had sent him.

We had so many questions left unanswered most of them started with Why? Was she a support to him or a distraction? Did their relationship affect Asquith's handling of the war which forced him to agree to a coalition government?

By Pauline Whittaker

Garden Visits Group

This month we enjoyed something a bit different - a talk on indoor plants provided by Matt, the plant manager at Nailsworth Garden Centre. We learned about where the plants are sourced from, which are the most popular and how to care for the various types of plant. Matt also showed us some products which can increase humidity around plants which don't thrive with central heating.

Next Monday we visit Hortico Plant Centre, Sherston, at 10.30am.

Our next actual garden visit will be to **Kemble House** which is open for one day only on Tuesday 14th April for the National Garden Scheme. We will meet there at 2.30 pm. This costs £7.50 pp and pre-booking is available via NGS website ngs.org.uk/gardens/kemble-house-gl7

I will send garden visits group members further information nearer the time. As always, car sharing is encouraged.

By Caroline Hose

History Group

Our March meeting was very well attended, when we were fascinated by Group Member Elena Nichol's first hand story of Spain's successful transition (La Transición) from Franco's Dictatorship to a parliamentary democracy and the half century since that process began in 1975.

Elena started by setting the scene of how Franco's fascist military dictatorship began with his 1939 victory in the Spanish Civil War, and explained the terrible times suffered by Spain's population in the following two decades, while the rest of Europe was occupied with WW2 and its repercussions. Franco legislated to support Catholic values and encouraged large families (Elena has six siblings).

Franco had chosen as his successor the grandson of Alfonso XIII, the last king of Spain before the monarchy was abolished in 1931. Juan Carlos Alfonso Víctor María de Borbón y Borbón-Dos Sicilias ruled as King Juan Carlos 1 from the death of Franco in 1975 until his abdication in 2014 following public criticism over an embezzlement scandal involving his daughter and allegedly improper ties to business deals in Saudi Arabia. His son acceded to the throne as King Felipe VI.



King Juan Carlos 1 of Spain & Francisco Franco from destinorepublicano.wordpress.com website

Juan Carlos introduced reforms to dismantle the Francoist regime and to begin the Spanish transition to democracy soon after his accession. This led to the approval of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 in a referendum which re-established a constitutional monarchy. The King's Prime Minister, Adolfo Suarez, oversaw the legalisation of all political parties, including the Communist Party of Spain, a particularly controversial move, and permitted universal suffrage.

Suarez won the 1977 general election and became the first democratically elected prime minister of the post-Francoist Spain. He continued what was known as the transition from dictatorship. By this time Spain had escaped the troubles of the 1950s and 60s by becoming a tourist destination and the economy, especially construction, was booming. Instead of ruling everything from Madrid, Suarez gave autonomy to 17 regions and Spain pioneered liberal social policies.

Suárez's political power eroded as he struggled to deal with economic recession, mounting violent activity by ETA in the Basque region, calls for further regional autonomy and divisions within his own party. He resigned, and during a parliamentary debate on 23rd February 1981 to confirm his successor around 200 Civil Guards stormed the chamber in an attempted coup and held the lawmakers hostage for some 22 hours. The coup attempt ("El Tejerazo") failed after it was denounced by King Juan Carlos I in a televised address and promised military support for the coup failed to materialise. The plotters were arrested and given long jail terms.

From 1982 to 1996 the Spanish Socialist Workers Party held power, and it continued to promote liberal policies such as permitting contraception and recognising gay marriage. In 1986 Spain joined the EU.

Although not immune to international events, such as the 2008 economic crisis, and renewed demands (since 2017) for independence by Catalan separatists, Spain has probably had the most successful transition from dictatorship to democracy the world has seen.

By Bob Kelley

Spanish Conversation Groups

We have three active Spanish language with laughter groups, from beginner then intermediate Conversation with Grammar and Advanced/fluent Conversation.

The beginner group helps people get started with the language, at 2pm on alternate Tuesdays and the Conversation with Grammar group starts at 3pm until 4pm on the same day, held in a private home in central Tetbury. As it's a self-help group, we help each other in a supportive and friendly way and usually with a lot of laughter.

For the intermediate Spanish Conversation with Grammar group, we have been looking at the present subjunctive. Our next theme for conversation using the present subjunctive is: Advice ~ What advice would you give to Señor Trump? Possibility or wishes: what possibility is there or would you wish for a better world? Request: a request you would like to make to someone that you wouldn't dare say to their face. It is meant to be light-hearted and fun.

The Advanced Spanish Conversation group meets at 2pm on alternate Fridays in central Tetbury. Our last conversation theme was on ghosts with amusing spooky stories, and one about the Rolls-Royce Ghost. It is more of a discussion group with interesting topics and lots of rabbit holes to go down. The next theme is on: Think of our lives 20-30 years ago. What did we think the future would hold? New members are welcome to all three groups.

By Steph Dale

Tech Support Group

A u3a member recently contacted the Tech Support team as they believed their email address had been hacked. Unfortunately this was true and they lost access to all their historic emails and had to start again with a completely new email address. The hack happened because they responded to an email 'from Microsoft' asking them to change their password, but that email was a 'spoof' and all it did was give the hackers their email password which they then used to block email account access and demand a ransom in Bitcoin.

The moral of this story is never to respond to unexpected emails from anyone asking you to change your password or other account details. Reputable companies will not contact you out of the blue either by phone or by email asking you to confirm or change your login credentials. Always be careful when using the internet and if something doesn't look or feel right steer clear!

The Tech Support group exists to provide assistance to u3a members with their phones, tablets and computers. We hold drop-in sessions at The Royal Oak on the second Thursday of each month between 10:30-12:00. Our next meeting is 9th April - do come and see us if you have a question about using your device.

By Martin Doidge

And finally the deadline for contributions to the April newsletter is Monday 20th April.

Please send your articles to Caroline, your newsletter editor, at newslettertetburyu3a@gmail.com

Groups

List of current groups - all are active and accepting new members except those indicated *

For further information and to register interest, visit the Groups page of our website tetbury.u3asite.uk

Art Appreciation	Golf
Aviation & Classic Cars	Historic Buildings
Backgammon (for fun)	History
Badminton	Mah-Jong
Board Games	Meditation & Mindfulness
Book Club Mondays	Photography
Book Club Wednesday	Pickleball
Boules - Friday	Play Reading 1
Boules - Wednesday	Play Reading 2
Computing - Apple beginners	Pub Lunch
Computing - technical support	Quiz
* Creative Writing Group 2 FULL - waiting list	Scrabble
*Creative Writing Group 1 FULL - waiting list	Short Breaks
Creative Writing Group 3	Short Walks - Friday
Cribbage	Short Walks - Thursday
Curry Club	Spanish - Advanced Beginners to Intermediate
Family History	Spanish - Advanced Intermediate to Fluent
French	*Ukulele FULL - waiting list
Garden Visits	Wine Tasting Group A

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](#)