



April 2026

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

I'm very pleased to announce that **David Walker** will be joining our u3a Committee shortly and taking on the post of Treasurer which has been vacant since I became Chair in November. David has lots of experience in managing charity finances so he will be an excellent addition to the committee.

Some of you might be interested in a new '**Walking Cricket**' club at Sir William Romney's Leisure Centre. Note this is not a u3a group but organised by Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation. If this appeals to you, please respond to the email address on the flyer below.



For **women & men**.
Stay active, meet like minded
people, and have fun.

No equipment
Softball
All abilities

● Tetbury

Sir William Romney's School
Lowfield Rd, Tetbury, GL8 8AE
Tuesdays, 5:00pm to 6:00pm
19th May - 23rd June - Free
23rd June Onwards - £3.50



COTSWOLD
District Council



SIGN UP
HERE

More info
josh.graves@gloucestershirecricketfoundation.org

And finally, last month I mentioned that 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

That's it from me.

Martin Doidge (Chair)

Monthly Speakers

Our monthly talk on 14th April was "**Embroidered With Woodbine and Eglantine: Elizabethan Textile Furnishings**", provided by Dr Gillian White.

Textiles provided the interiors of Elizabethan aristocratic houses with colour, glamour, texture and symbolism. This fascinating talk looked at Elizabethan textile furnishings and considered them first as physical objects and then as the medium for conveying symbolic messages.

Dr Gillian White specialises in the history and visual arts of late medieval and sixteenth-century England. After beginning her career at the Warwickshire Museum, she then worked for the National Trust as Curator/Collections Manager at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, about which she wrote her PhD at Warwick University. She has subsequently taught part-time at Leicester University in the Centre for the Study of the Country House and continues to teach History of Art in the Department of Continuing Education at Oxford University and elsewhere. Gillian is a renowned speaker and we were impressed by the professional and entertaining way she presented.

Our next monthly talk on "**Organic Food & Farming**" will be provided by David Wilson on Monday 11th May 2026 at the Tetbury Goods Shed, from 10:30 am to 12 pm. David's talk will be informed by his long experience of organic and regenerative agriculture.

David Wilson was farm manager at the Highgrove estate for 36 years followed by three years in the north Cotswolds at Fir Farm and Steve Winwood's Lower Dean Manor Farm, establishing organic regenerative systems on both holdings. He is now at Bowden Park Farm near Lacock with his youngest son Benj, in a new venture restoring a rundown estate by reintroducing livestock as part of an organic mixed farming system. He is interested in the links between soil, plant, animal and human health as well as the preservation of rare and heritage food genetics and their role in our future.

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.

Group News

Art Appreciation

At our April meeting we considered two artists who provoked a lot of discussion. We looked first at **Graham Sutherland** (1903 - 1980) and in particular his controversial portrait of Winston Churchill.



Sutherland was a student at Goldsmith's College, although initially specialising in engraving he later branched out to work in tapestry (most notably at Coventry Cathedral) glassware, posters and painting - mainly abstract landscapes and portraits. He was appointed as one of the official war artists in 1940, a position that occasioned a visit to Tetbury to record the bombers at RAF Babdown Farm.

Winston Churchill 1954. The Churchill family. Believed destroyed

In 1947 he bought a house in the South of France where he met Somerset Maugham who was the subject of a striking portrait. In 1954 the artist was commissioned by Parliament to paint a portrait of Winston Churchill as a gift for his 80th birthday.

Churchill found the result deeply unflattering - in part perhaps because his preference was to be portrayed in full Knight of the Garter robes but the artist insisted on his usual Parliamentary attire. After its public presentation the portrait was taken to Churchill's country home, Chartwell, where it was believed to be destroyed. Preparatory sketches for the painting are on display at the National Portrait Gallery and it is thought that the Carlton Club in London has an undisplayed copy of the portrait.

A recent film about the current Constable and Turner exhibition at Tate Britain prompted a closer look at the work of **John Constable** 1776 - 1837. Initially, on leaving school he worked in the family corn business but was able to convince his father of his ability to become an artist and he enrolled in the Royal Academy Schools in 1799.

Constable is most well known for his landscapes of the area where his family lived around Dedham Vale on the Suffolk / Essex border. He mainly concentrated on rural scenes but he liked to include indications of human associations - cottages, churches etc. His concentration on scenes from everyday life were not popular at a time when the preference was for romanticised depictions of landscapes which may have been why he was never financially successful.

We looked at some of his best known paintings over the years. One of his last paintings, Stonehenge, 1836, illustrates the degree to which his work evolved over time and how he was moving towards a more abstract approach. However, the group were impressed most by his depiction of Salisbury Cathedral 1823. It focuses on a fine detailed architectural study of an iconic building although the trees and cattle in the foreground provide a nod to his usual preference for a working landscape.

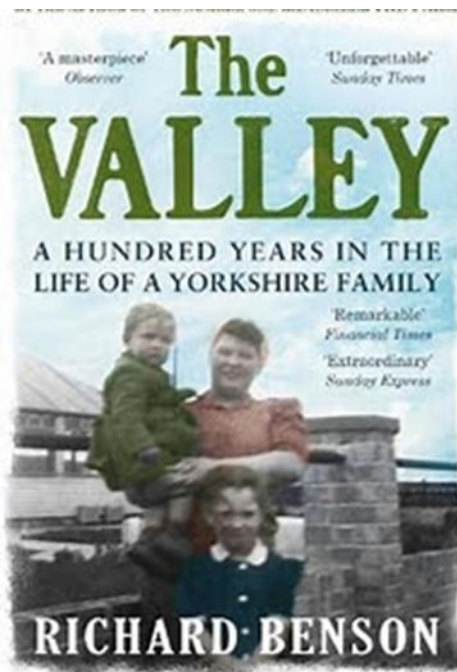


Salisbury Cathedral. Victoria and Albert Museum

By Judy Greeman

Bookclub Monday Evening

"The Valley: A hundred years in the life of a Yorkshire family" by Richard Benson



"The Valley" follows four generations of the extended Hollingworth family in South Yorkshire through the relevant changes of the 20th and early 21st century. Most of these are years through which we all lived but knew little of their impact elsewhere.

For many of us, what we heard of the 1984/5 miners' strike was dictated by the southern-based media, so the detail of that dispute from northern eyes was indeed educational.

Image credit: Scan of book cover by Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014

"The Valley" is a well-researched, factual family and social history, but the writing was not without occasional flashes of poetic description. Most of the group felt that it was rather too long, with the characters in the latter years less interesting, although this might have been due to the writer's concern about offending his living relatives. The family tree had to be frequently consulted to understand those timelines and relationships.

The author resisted the temptation to include family photos, or detailed description of his family's appearances. Reading the book, like listening to a radio soap, one imagines the characters and the reality would almost certainly have been disappointingly different.

Some of us loved the flashes of nostalgia that link the Valley with our own pasts. In the 1980s their spare toilet rolls were "concealed under the crocheted skirts of a plastic doll." Many of us remembered our mums doing that. The Group held a lively, wide-ranging discussion on the merits of the book and opinion differed widely. Some scored it 2/5, while others 4 and more. The average was 3.38.

By Bob Kelley

Bookclub Wednesday

Six of us met on the 25th March to **discuss "The House Of Doors" by Tan Twan Eng**. A fascinating book blending fact and fiction and entwining three different stories.

Set mainly in Penang, the first British settlement in the east, a conservative outpost nicknamed Cheltenham on the Equator. The common theme seems to be the superficiality of ex-Pat life there. The visit of the author Somerset Maugham and his lover, Gerald, is a highlight for the community. This gives the writer a chance to look into the relationships not only of their hosts Robert and Leslie but also the breakdown of Maugham's marriage.

I found it interesting that Leslie who was at first very suspicious of Maugham later trusts him enough to tell him some of the secrets of the people there - including that of Ethel Proudlock, who was the first white woman sentenced to death for the murder of her lover.

Next month's meeting is on the 29th April when we'll discuss "**The Sense of an Ending**" by **Julian Barnes**.

By Pauline Whittaker

Garden Visits Group

This month we visited nearby **Kemble House** which was open for one day only on Tuesday 14th April for the National Garden Scheme. Although the weather had been warm the previous week, it was rather chilly when we visited the garden.

Most of us had never visited Kemble village, our experience being limited to catching the train, and we could see some very grand old houses and cottages over the garden wall. Kemble House is a landscaped garden with many tall lime trees, herbaceous borders (one of which used to be a tennis court), and a walled garden with many fruit trees and two rose gardens. The stars of the show were the red tulips which were looking their best.



Two paddocks surround the property with Hebridean sheep - they looked very warm with their thick fleeces!



After our visit, some of us went to a local pub for a coffee (no cakes available on this occasion) to warm up.

Our next visit will take place on **Wednesday 6th May** when we will visit **Bowood Woodland Garden**. A separate attraction on the Bowood Estate, the Woodland Garden is only open for six weeks during the flowering season, and offers breathtaking vistas of colour and beauty. Covering over 30 acres and considered one of the county's most exciting gardens, this garden is an oasis of bluebells, azaleas, magnolias, and rhododendrons.

You can find details of our programme of visits at the groups page of our website <https://tetbury.u3asite.uk/>

By Caroline Hose

Historic Buildings Group

The Historic Buildings programme got off to an excellent start in April with a visit to **Wallsworth Hall, Twigworth**, near Gloucester. Wallsworth Hall is a fine Georgian Mansion, featured in Simon Jenkins's book 'England's 1000 Best Houses', now housing the "Nature in Art" museum and art gallery.



We were given an excellent and informative one hour talk by the Director about Wallsworth Hall, and the fascinating history of the "**Nature in Art**" museum that it now houses. We were then free to explore the buildings, the galleries, and the grounds.

We enjoyed watching the artist-in-residence painting pictures on bird feathers - a very delicate and painstaking task. Don't worry, no birds were harmed during this process; all feathers are gathered from natural moults. One of the galleries displayed the winning images from the Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2025 competition. As anticipated, there were some splendid photographs.

The Hall and associated "Wildlife in Art" galleries are a real hidden gem. It's open six days a week, and we can recommend the Hayward café, where we consumed some excellent refreshments. See <https://natureinart.org.uk/> for more information.

Our May visit to **The Hall in Bradford on Avon** is already sold out. If you are a member of our Group, keep an eye on your email for the next invitation to book for the visit to the A417 Missing Link. The email will go out in early May.

If you'd like to join our Group, contact us using the link on our Group page here: https://tetbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/historic-buildings/

By David & Maggie Smith, Group Leaders

History Group



Over twenty of us met on a drizzly April afternoon to hear group member Bob Burnett's fascinating illustrated talk about "**The Institution of the Victoria Cross**" the highest and most prestigious decoration of the British Armed Forces, awarded "for valour in the presence of the enemy".

VC showing the dark blue ribbon for pre-1918 awards to naval personnel. Picture from Wikipedia.

Public disquiet arose during the 1853-56 Crimean War when Britain had no appropriate medals, in contrast to our allies. By the time Queen Victoria had approved the concept and design in 1856, that conflict had ended, but in June 1857 Queen Victoria invested 62 of the 111 Crimean recipients in a ceremony in Hyde Park. Originally the VC could not be awarded posthumously, but that was later changed.

Bob took us through the various changes to the conditions justifying the award of the VC as time and various conflicts went by, illuminating his talk with examples of inspiring bravery, including the three men (of 1355 recipients) who won it twice! He answered many questions from his interested audience and was warmly thanked for his research and presentation.

The Group's next meeting will be on Monday 11th May when George Keeling will talk about "History and Art - The D'Este at Ferrara".

By Bob Kelley

Playreading Group 1

30th March saw us for the first time being invited to the snug at Steepleton Court, for our monthly play reading, after many seasons at the Royal Oak. A big thank you must go to Bernadette for all her hard work in arranging this, including the tea & coffee etc. We all agreed that the Snug is perfect for our use, with good light and comfortable sofas & armchairs.

We read "**The Technical Rehearsal**" which is a comedy in two acts written by Alan Marshal. The play is an hilarious fly-on-the-wall look at the chaotic process of a technical rehearsal for a pantomime being performed by an amateur dramatic group. It is depicted as a complete disaster where scenery, egos, and difficult characters collide. The play requires a large cast, meaning we all had at least two parts to play and was driven by the ego of the set builder and his monstrous take on Cinderella's golden coach that did not fit through the set doors and was then hung from the ceiling where it promptly crashed on the cast.

The whole play reading group had a good laugh throughout the play and we will be looking forward to our next play together.

By Clive Jarman

Short Walks Group

Following several dry days, the Short Walks Group decided that the mud had dried sufficiently on the path leading from Trouble House to Ashley to undertake this really pleasant walk. A sunny day made it even more delightful with beautiful views over the countryside, blossom cascading from the hedgerows and, best of all, a skylark serenading us from above.

The group was fortunate to be allowed to go into the Church at Ashley and, in return for the privilege, the one man in the group was 'volunteered' to carry a heavy watering can for the lady key-holder.



Now the weather is improving, we are looking forward to more adventurous walks in the locality i.e. not sticking to hard surfaces! Do join us if you would like a 3-4 mile walk on the first Thursday of the month in the morning or the third Friday of the month in the afternoon.

By Judith Richardson

Ukulele Group - T'UKes

Our Ukulele group, the T'UKes, has been out and about recently, playing three gigs in just over a week and resuming our fund raising efforts for Longfield Hospice. On a memorable Friday afternoon we played at Upton Mill care home, upstairs and downstairs to two different audiences. Our repertoire extends from the 1930s to the 1980s, so there is something for everyone. Some of the residents appreciated it so much, they leapt out of their chairs to dance to the music, which was a joy to see.

At St Mary's Monday Club, a small but select group of us provided the entertainment at the ladies' regular lunch, and they enjoyed the singalong. We were kept on our toes, as we had to quickly respond to three requests which we

had not recently practiced - "Putting on the Style", "Annie's Song" and "I Have a Dream".



Mike, our leader, took the opportunity to try out his new kazoo, only to find that it flew out of his mouth and nearly landed on someone's lap. Kazoos should come with a health warning!

For those who are not familiar with the Kazoo, it's a type of wind instrument that you hum into, and it makes a buzzing sound rather like a duck.

Needless to say, no musical training is required to play a kazoo.

And last but not least, on 1st April the majority of us played to a full audience at the Tetbury Goods Shed, as part of their series of Wednesday afternoon concerts. We were surprised to receive a last minute message that we would all be asked to sing a solo - but of course it was an April Fool, so the audience was spared!

We started with "Memories are Made of This", went on to play favourites such as "Five Foot Two Medley" (aka the Charleston) and "Wonderful World", finishing with "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" and "Under the Moon of Love" as an encore. Thanks to Lawrence, the words to all our songs were projected onto a big screen so that the audience could singalong with ease. Someone in the audience even recorded 22 videos, which we have shared amongst ourselves to fine tune our performance for next time - the songs sound very different from where we are sitting or standing, compared to what the audience hears.

We raised £163 for Longfield Hospice through our bucket collection at this event (thanks to Mike and Sue's granddaughter Poppy), and were delighted to present a "big cheque" for £2000 to the Hospice during the interval, representing our fundraising total to date.



We are about to embark on learning 20 new songs, which we will practice at our Tuesday afternoon sessions. Please note - our group is currently full, and there's a waiting list.

By Caroline Hose

And finally the deadline for contributions to the May newsletter is Thursday 14th May.

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

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](#)