



June 2026

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

Here we are at the end of June, and currently experiencing our second heatwave of the year. I'm aware that some activities have been postponed this week due to the extreme weather, and I do hope you're managing to stay cool and hydrated, and not trying to do too much outdoors. No doubt it will swing back to our comfort zone with cooler and wetter weather again soon - until the next heatwave. Oh well, it will be Christmas Day in exactly six months' time!

I haven't much to share with you this month, other than to draw your attention to an exciting new series of '**Explore the UK with u3a Getaways**', organised by the u3a National. Here's an opportunity to join u3a members from around the country on a range of bespoke holidays exclusive to u3a members and their

friends. This exciting partnership opens a new chapter in discovery, fun and shared experience. These themed trips venture across the UK and cover wine tasting, zoology and aviation.

The first trip, taking off on 14th September in Torquay, explores the life of one of Britain's most iconic authors, Agatha Christie. Coinciding with the Agatha Christie Festival, members can follow in Christie's steps and see the locations that inspired some of her greatest works.

For further information and details of how to book look at the website www.justforgroups.com/u3a-getaways
Or call 01603 886773.

Well that's it from me for now.

Martin Doidge (Chair)

Monthly Speakers

Our next talk will take place on Monday 13th July 2026, 10.30am at the Tetbury Goods Shed GL8 8EY, when Brian Etheridge will talk about Three Women Painters. Until recently, Art history all but ignored women painters, even if celebrated in their time. Brian will show us the work of three such forgotten masters, one Italian and two French: Artemisia Gentileschi (1593 - c. 1653), Rosa Bonheur 1822 - 1899) and Berthe Morisot (1841- 1895). Brian Etheridge leads the u3a Fairford Art Appreciation group.

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

This month's talk on Tuesday 16th June was both fascinating and inspiring, presented by Caroline Casterton, who, together with her husband John, has devoted many years to supporting the work of Mercy Ships. Their involvement has taken many forms, from serving onboard the ships themselves and helping with fundraising initiatives, to welcoming and supporting patients and assisting at the centres and facilities that Mercy Ships establishes in the communities where it operates. Drawing on these first-hand experiences, Caroline gave us a vivid and

moving insight into the extraordinary work of the organisation and the commitment of the volunteers who make it possible.

Many people associate Mercy Ships with providing free surgery aboard its hospital ships, but Caroline explained that its mission extends far beyond the operating theatre. Alongside carrying out thousands of urgent operations, Mercy Ships works in close partnership with host nations to improve the way healthcare is delivered throughout the country. By collaborating with national governments and ministries of health, the organisation helps identify each country's specific needs and develops programmes designed to create lasting change. Local medical staff are trained and mentored, hospitals and clinics are renovated, and support is provided to strengthen healthcare systems and influence policy development. In this way, Mercy Ships aims not only to address immediate needs but also to tackle the underlying causes of healthcare inequality and build sustainable improvements for future generations.

We also learned more about Mercy Ships' two remarkable floating hospitals. The Global Mercy, the largest charity-run hospital ship in the world, is an impressive 174-metre, 37,000-ton vessel equipped with six operating rooms and staffed by more than 600 volunteers from around the globe. These volunteers represent a wide range of professions, including surgeons, maritime crew, cooks, teachers, electricians and host staff. When docked in port, the ship can accommodate up to 950 people and features a 682-seat auditorium, a student academy, café, shop and library, creating a unique community dedicated to service.

Its sister ship, the Africa Mercy, is equally impressive. It houses five operating rooms, a four-bed recovery area, intensive care facilities for up to five patients and 80 ward beds. Around 400 volunteer crew members from as many as 40 different nations live and work onboard, united by a shared commitment to bringing hope, healing and compassionate care to those in need.

Perhaps the most powerful part of Caroline's presentation came through the stories she shared of the patients whose lives had been transformed by Mercy Ships. We heard firsthand accounts from individuals whose debilitating conditions had been treated, restoring not only their health but also their dignity, confidence and opportunities for the future. In some cases, the care they received had quite literally saved their lives. These moving testimonies brought home the profound impact of Mercy Ships' work and demonstrated what

can be achieved through skill, compassion and an unwavering commitment to helping others.

If you would like to learn more about this charity or donate please go to their website www.mercyships.org.uk

By Julia Walter (Speakers Secretary)

Potential New Group

Are you looking to join a friendly group of re-cycled teenagers with an interest in music - primarily popular music of the 50's, 60's and 70's? Be in at the beginning to help create and shape this potential new group.

A couple of our u3a members have proposed starting a new u3a group along the lines of a youth club for "oldies". This will be a friendly social group which would maybe meet fortnightly at St Mary's Community Centre, St Marys Road, Tetbury, where music from the golden era of the 50's, 60's and 70's would play a big part, together with chat and refreshments. (Although no era is off limits). Snacks provided but please bring your own drinks.

The name for the group has still to be decided, but might be "Music and Memories" or "Music and More".

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

Group News

Art Appreciation

Our June meeting looked at the art of Ferrara and specifically Cosimo Tura (c.1430 - 1495) and the organ shutters he painted in 1469 for the Cathedral of San Giorgio. In the 15th Century, Ferrara enjoyed peace and prosperity and transformed into one of the most significant Renaissance capitals in Europe becoming the centre of art and culture. It was ruled by the d'Este family for whom Cosimo Tura was essentially a court painter. He pioneered a very different painting style to any known before, his subjects often look gaunt and angular and

often appear to be chiselled from stone. Opinion in our group was divided as to whether this appealed or not.

We looked in detail at the organ shutters, painted in oil on canvas, the sombre colours may be because the canvas absorbed the thin layers of paint. When the shutters were closed they depicted the scene of St George killing the dragon - the dragon perhaps being a representation of paganism - and the Princess he saved representing the holy church.

When open, the Annunciation is shown - the Angel Gabriel on the left and Mary on the right. A dove is speaking into Mary's ear and perhaps is speaking the words of the Angel Gabriel. Some of the symbolism - actual and supposed - was discussed and resulted in a number of interesting theories. The shutters are now on display at the Museo San Romano in Ferrara.



The Organ Shutters from the Cathedral San Giorgio in Ferrara, Italy, by Cosimo Tura.

The individual pictures show 1) The Angel Gabriel 2) Mary 3) The Princess saved by St George 4) St George



By Judy Greeman

Aviation and Classic Cars

Nine aviation and classic car members braved a chilly wind to look around the private Oaksey Park airfield in May. As well as aircraft privately owned and operated from the immaculate grass runways, the airfield is home to a collection of interesting old cars and delivery lorries - owned by the airfield owner - and a maintenance unit.

Starting with the old cars, we marvelled at a selection of TRs, white-walled American Packard, and a LaSalle, a splendid Bentley that looked as if it was just waiting for the bride, various rugged-looking army jeep-types, a Ferrari and many more. The delivery lorry collection evoked bygone days and all looked pristine. We're grateful to the airfield manager Sean for showing us the motors and to airfield owner Brian for allowing it.



Moving on to the aircraft, U3A group member Kev, who has a share in two aircraft based at Oaksey, kindly took us around, explaining about each one. We saw some rare examples such as a Fox Moth through to a very modern RV10. On the Fox Moth (illustrated), the 'bump' on the fuselage behind the wings is where the pilot sits, exposed to the elements, while the passengers sit in the enclosed area!

Then we went into the maintenance hangar, where Steve, his wife and other engineers restore and return aircraft to airworthiness, as well as carrying out general annual and interim maintenance.



We saw a dazzling and rare Ryan ST aircraft whose restoration had just been completed after a landing accident: fortunately the insurance had paid (see cockpit illustration)!

The Ryan ST (below) and its cockpit



A Yak aircraft sitting forlornly outside was not so lucky: being under-insured there was no guarantee that the owner(s) would be able to get it flying again.

All in all a thoroughly enjoyable and fascinating visit. By the time you read this, we'll have been to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton in June. However, if you want to join us for our July event, we plan to visit 'Wallop Wings and Wheels' at the Army Flying Museum, Middle Wallop on Saturday 11 July. This promises historic aircraft, classic and supercars, motorbikes, and more.



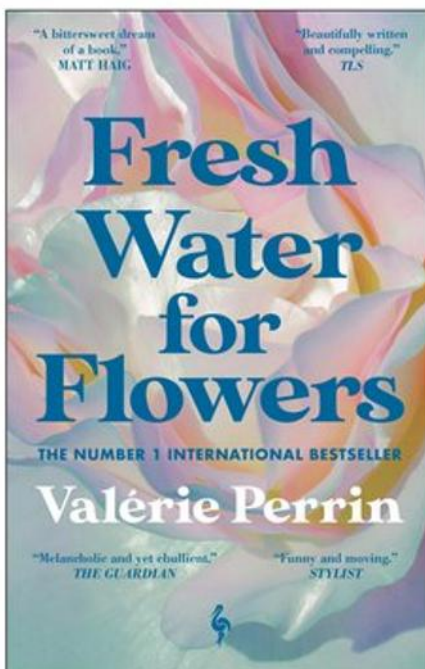


Do get in touch if you want to join the group and come along.

By Judith Austin

Bookclub Monday Evening

Fresh water for flowers by Valérie Perrin. Original title: *Changer l'eau des fleurs*



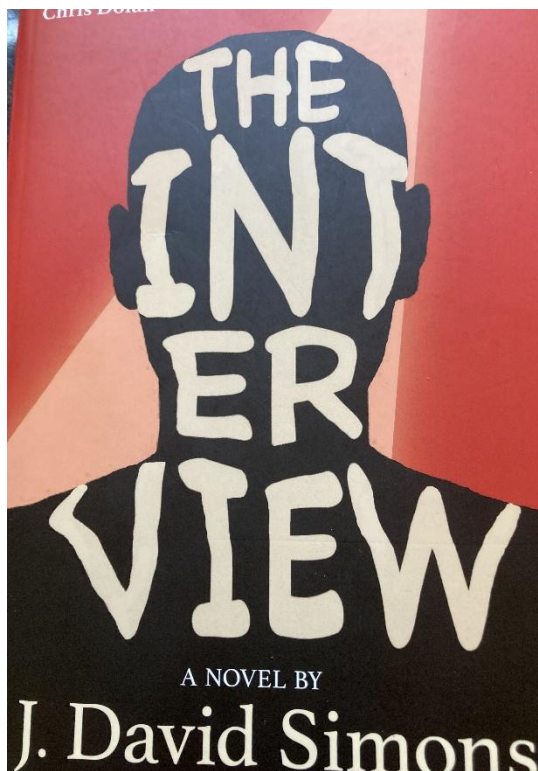
This was a book we all absolutely loved and awarded our highest ever score of 4.03 stars out of 5. Originally written in the French language, it has a unique style and is a totally unusual work of fiction with a clever melding of storylines and characters. I am not going to give you any spoilers about the story, save to say, that it centres on Violette Toussaint, who ends up as a middle-aged caretaker in a cemetery. At the start of the book, she is a quiet, isolated woman, but by the end of the novel she is the heart of her small community of wonderful characters.

Image credit: Cover photo by Galya Ivanova/Arcangel
Published by Europa editions, 2021

I did say that it was unusual. In a very small way, it is also a "who-dunnit". But do not expect this to be a light-hearted, superficial "chick lit" read, because this book covers profound themes and emotions - grief, love, romance, loss and forgiveness. The pace of the writing is quite slow, and this helps it to convey the humble value of the mundane and the every day, but at the same time, it also gives the reader time to reflect. And don't despair, despite ending in a cemetery this is a book about resilience, hope and peace.

By Corinne Hinton

Bookclub Wednesday



Nine of us met on the 27th May, a very hot afternoon, to discuss "The Interview" by David Simons, normally a short story writer he was a new author for us. It was a real treat as we were sent the books free of charge.

An intriguing story with a real twist at the end that surprised us all. Cal Drummond, the protagonist and former chat show host, is in hiding in a friend's hut in the American South after he'd interviewed the Republican president Sterling Patterson, a disturbing Trump like character, live on air.

It was obvious it was never going to end well as they had totally opposing views. High on drugs and alcohol to combat a twisted knee and facing an aggressive President who discussed the death of Cal's parents in Mexico. Cal confronts and swears at the President and goes into hiding. Was it a set up?

After the death of Paterson, Cal is tracked down by an earnest journalist, Nina Fernandez, to whom he gradually opens up and finally agrees to be a guest on the Zack Perry's chat show where he tells his story.

Following that, six of us met on a sunny afternoon to discuss "Kingmaker" by Sir Graham Brady. A huge admirer of Thatcher he joined the Conservative Party when he was 16 and was elected to Parliament in 1997, the youngest Tory in the

House. Kingmaker recounts his rise to political prominence, first becoming MP for Altrincham and Sale in 1997 and then Chair of the important 1922 Committee from 2010 until his resignation in 2024.

In his book Brady offers insights into the last five Tory Prime Ministers and their characters. From David Cameron 'self-centered and greedy' and the coalition to Teresa May with her 'unwavering sense of duty' but not a team worker. His thoughts on Boris and covid to Liz Truss and Richi Sunak 'decent and competent with less ego than is normal for a senior politician', finally commenting on Keir Starmer!

We agreed that it wasn't an easy read but what a fascinating life Sir Graham must have had to at the centre of every leadership challenge.

By Pauline Whittaker

Garden Visits Group

Since the previous issue, we have visited no less than four lovely gardens to make the most of the season. At the end of May we visited the stunning Hookshouse Pottery garden, where Lise White hosted our visit and provided delicious refreshments with cakes.

Then at the beginning of June we visited Hodges Barn and Glebe House at Shipton Moyne, which were open for the National Garden Scheme ngs.org.uk.

We were especially impressed by the White Garden at Hodges Barn, which was very peaceful and soothing to look at, and the colourful main herbaceous borders which were mirror images of each other. At the Glebe House we enjoyed seeing the naturalistic pond and extensive meadows, and the vegetable patch.

Earlier this week we made a trip to Cerney House gardens near Cirencester, escaping the worst of the heat by going in the morning. After tea and cake we admired the hollyhocks and foxgloves, and the roses which were looking their best. As always, we came away with ideas to try in our own gardens. At least I always do. This time I realised that one of my newer, and still to mature, border plants was actually a thug and would quickly outgrow its space! Back to the drawing board.....



There is a medicinal herb section, where all the plants were labelled with their history and medicinal use. That being said, there was a large notice explaining that the labels were for information purposes only, and if you were feeling unwell you should consult your doctor. In other words, do not try these at home!



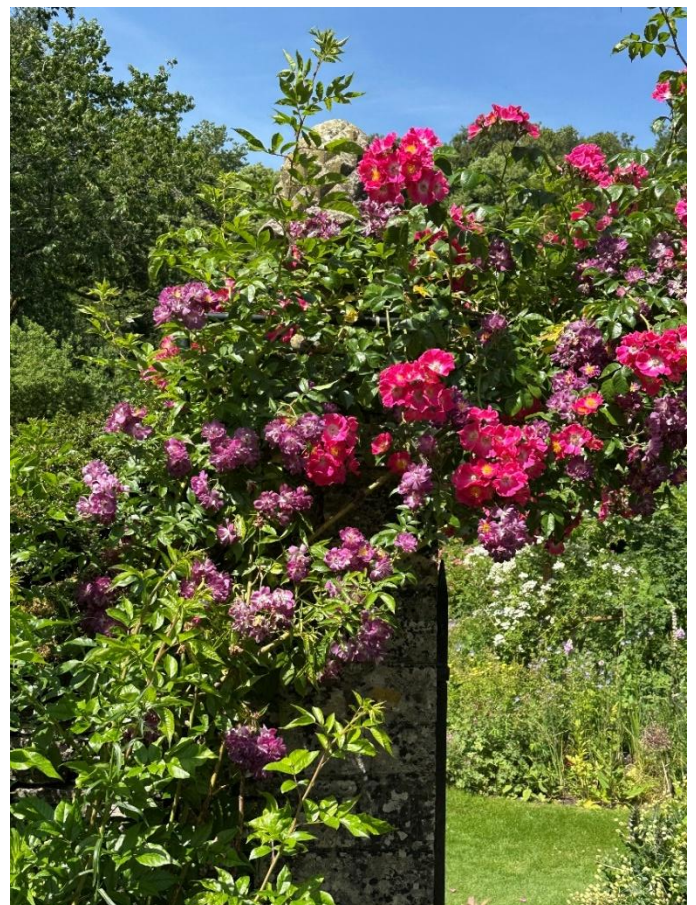
Cerney House garden is open every day of the year except Christmas Day, and it's well worth a visit.

Look out for the large yellow Roman Snails - they were hiding in the undergrowth when we were there due to the heat so we didn't see them.

Our next visit will be on Monday 6th July to one of our members' gardens on the outskirts of Tetbury.

New members are always welcome. 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

Our first visit of the month was a little different from our usual activity. We visited the A417 "Missing Link" road scheme near Gloucester. This major strategic upgrade and offline build will deliver over three miles of much-needed dual carriageway. Crucially, it also supports active travel for Gloucestershire with improved cycling and pedestrian lanes. The increased capacity is anticipated to reduce congestion and traffic delays while improving safety and meeting strict requirements to preserve the surrounding Cotswold landscape.

We are sure we have all been stuck in queues at what was the Air Balloon roundabout. Thankfully, those bottleneck queues will be a thing of the past when the project is completed. A solution here has been mooted for over 35 years—so this truly felt like witnessing history in the making!



Kier Construction hosted us at their visitor centre, where we received a very informative presentation. Some of the facts and figures were fascinating:

- **Road Safety:** The main justification for the project is safety. The single carriageway section of the A417 has a fatality rate ten times higher than average. The improvement is estimated to prevent around 300 road fatalities over the next decade.
- **Massive Excavation:** An incredible 3.75 million cubic metres of stone will be excavated during construction.

- **Wildlife Protection:** Three new wildlife bridges will be built to allow local fauna to cross safely over the new dual carriageway.
- **Employee Welfare:** Arrangements on site are impressive. With 70% of the workforce living away from home and travelling back for weekends, health is a priority. On-site medical testing includes prostate, cholesterol, and women's health screenings. To date, four men have been referred for early treatment for prostate cancer, and all are thankfully now back at work.
- **Mental Health Support:** Working away from home for long periods is highly stressful. Tragically, an average of two people in the UK construction industry die by suicide every day. This was starkly illustrated by a moving display of 60 safety helmets arranged in the shape of a heart, representing the lives lost each month. To support the team, there are 16 trained mental health first aiders on site, backed by MIND and the dedicated construction charity "Lighthouse".
- **Impeccable Safety Record:** Over 3 million man-hours have been worked on site to date. There has been only one "lost time" incident (a twisted ankle) and zero accidents or dangerous occurrences reportable to the HSE.



After the talk, we visited a viewing platform to observe the work in progress. We were adjacent to a massive, 37-metre-wide "environmental bridge" designed for wildlife passage. We also had an excellent view of the new cutting, which is topped by beautiful Cotswold dry-stone walls. A total of 7.5km of walling will be constructed using the stone excavated on site.

To date, the project is remarkably on budget (£460m) and on schedule to fully open in February 2027. This is quite an achievement, given that the budget was approved in 2022 before major global inflationary drivers affected costs.

A Heads-Up for Drivers: The first new build section of the scheme is due to open on 29th June 2026. There will be temporary traffic lights where it interfaces with the existing road network. Long delays are expected at peak periods—so you have been warned!

Whilst Kier Construction does not charge for these visits, they encourage donations to their chosen charity, the Great Western Air Ambulance. The members attending raised a fantastic total of £440. This felt like a very apt choice, given how frequently the Air Ambulance attends road traffic incidents in our local area.

Our second visit was to Frocester Court, a working farm that many of us will have seen from the road as we drive down Frocester Hill. It is an amazing place with an incredible history, with a 15th-century farmhouse built on the site of a Roman villa. The full history of the site goes back to the Stone Age, and our guide, Arthur Price, and his father have uncovered Stone Age axes, pre-Roman coins and a large collection of pottery - much of it Roman.

The family have lived and worked on the farm for three generations, and has managed much of the maintenance of these listed buildings themselves. Arthur is indeed a man of many talents and has done much of the maintenance of the entire site, particularly the stonework.

It is a truly beautiful farmhouse, with a wonderful estate barn and numerous estate buildings that have been used for many purposes over the years. We saw them all, with Arthur's guidance. He is a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide with an in-depth knowledge of the history and archaeology of this fascinating site, and he made our visit so memorable and enjoyable.

The highlight was undoubtedly the estate barn. It is one of the most important barns in England, one of the best-preserved and still in use. An amazing achievement. The huge barn roof is almost entirely made of oak. It is supported by a cruck frame raised on stone bases. It suffered a fire in the early 16th century, but was fully restored to its original glory and is a wonder to the eye.



The house has had some famous visitors in the past - namely Elizabeth I. Hopefully, she was as impressed as we undoubtedly were. It was a lovely way to spend a Sunday morning, and we finished our visit sitting in the garden, admiring the farmhouse and enjoying tea, coffee and biscuits provided by our excellent host.



Bookings have now closed for our July visit to Westonbirt House. If you are a member of our Group, watch out for bookings opening for our visit to Shaw House, Newbury on 3rd August.

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

History Group

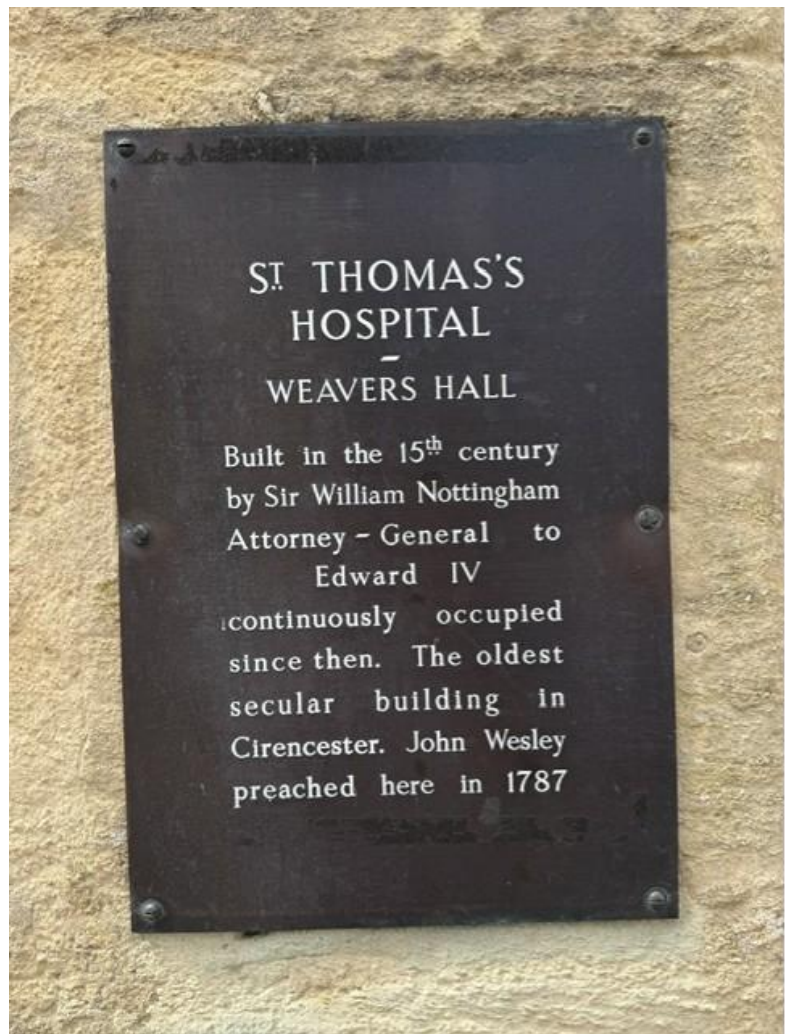
Instead of our June meeting at the Goods Shed, a dozen Group members (the most allowed by safety rules) were led on a walking tour of Cirencester by an expert from the Corinium Museum. He pointed out buildings from the medieval period and explained the influence of the wool trade and the dominance of the Abbey until 1539. A fascinating afternoon in the warm and dry.



The Group (above) opposite St Thomas's Hospital (below) still in use as an alms house.



The plaque on the door reads:



By Bob Kelley

Photography Group

Despite the unpredictable weather, the Photography Group has managed to come together for a couple of interesting and challenging photo shoots, one to Malmesbury Abbey and the last one to the Cotswold Sculpture Park.

Group members took full advantage of the cafe facilities at both venues before embarking on adventures to capture images using any number of techniques that our cameras and mobile phones allow us to use and by exploring alternative angles from which to take our photos. The fascinating element to all shoots is how each photographer sees the same things from differing perspectives. That's what make our trips so interesting and rewarding.

Here are a few of the captured images:



“A Heavenly Light” by Jocelyn Hayes



“Gothic Arches” by Caroline Hose



"Not Your Average Ceiling" by Mark Janaway





Wine Tasting Group

Meeting on the second Monday of the month, in June we enjoyed wines from two independent local suppliers, namely Tetbury Wines and Nailsworth Wines & Spirits. Our host was keen to see what was available locally and we were all surprised to learn that five of the six wines (all priced between £8 and £11) were bought more cheaply than the online price! So, contrary to perhaps what we had expected, independent doesn't mean more expensive! However, while Tetbury Wines was able to offer knowledgeable advice, Nailsworth didn't.

The wines were from a variety of countries and different grape types and, as usual, there were differences of opinion on our preferences. We also found - again as often - that food changes our perception and appreciation of the various wines, as can the wine's temperature.

Our next meeting will be al fresco (hoping the weather will cooperate!) in a member's garden. Later in the year, in November, we plan to have a private wine tasting at Tetbury Wines. We may have space for a few extra u3a members to attend the tasting, so keep an eye on this newsletter nearer the time.

By Judith Austin

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

Please send your articles to Caroline, your newsletter editor, at newsletttertetburyu3a@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](#)