



July 2026

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

This is a very short newsletter, as we are well into the summer holiday period, and many of you will be busy with grandparent duties, so there's not as much going on with our u3a to share with you.

Earlier this month, over 20 of our Group Leaders met for lunch at Mia Familia near Malmesbury, following an introductory game of Boules which was most enjoyable. Our Group Leaders don't get together very often, and it was a good opportunity to socialise and get to know each other better.

I'm pleased to announce that we now have three potential new groups which you may wish to join - French Reading, Philately (Stamp Collecting) and a Youth Club for Recycled Teenagers. Details below.

And finally, don't forget to renew your membership subscription, £10 per person, if you've not already done so.

Well that's it from me for now. Enjoy the summer while it lasts!

Martin Doidge (Chair)

Potential New Groups

French Reading Group

Calling Tetbury's Francophiles! Could your French do with a bit of exercise? I would like to start a monthly French Book Club to read books in French. I am thinking modern books, novels or factual, which we would choose together. We could meet for an hour and a half or so, possibly on the third Friday morning or the third Tuesday evening of the month. We could spend 15 minutes or so chatting in French to ease us in, followed by an hour perhaps on the book and a few minutes to decide on the next one.

Anyone is welcome to join but you would need a reasonable level of French, rusty is fine. Equally, if you are bilingual, we would love to have you too. There will be an initial meeting at Tetbury Goods Shed on Friday 31st July at 10:30 to decide whether and how to take it forward. Hopefully, we could start after the summer holidays, in the third week of September.

If this sounds good to you, please contact Christine Berry via newslettertetburyu3a@gmail.com

Philately Group

Are you interested in stamps? Do you have a stamp collection? Would you like to find out more about it? You never know, you might have a rare stamp!

The main aim of the Group is to share the enjoyment of stamp collecting, sharing knowledge and learning from each other whilst also enjoying the social side. The Group is open to everyone not just collectors.

Send an email to newslettertetburyu3a@gmail.com to express an interest in joining this group.

Youth Club for Recycled Teenagers

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?

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.

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

Monthly Speakers

This month's talk on "Three Women Painters" was presented by Brian Etheridge, who leads the u3a Fairford Art Appreciation group. Until recently, Art history all but ignored women painters, even if celebrated in their time. Brian showed 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).

We will be taking a summer break so there won't be a talk in August. Our next talk will take place on 15th September 2026 on the topic of Fraud Awareness & Advice, 10:30 am at the Tetbury Goods Shed.

By Julia Walter (Speakers Secretary)

Group News

Garden Visits Group

This month we have visited two lovely gardens. The first took place on a hot day (no surprises there!) in early July where over 20 of us visited one of our members' gardens in Tetbury. We were in for a real treat.



This is a garden which was created only two years ago, redesigned from an existing garden, and included a colourful herbaceous border, a rose hedge, formal area, fruit and vegetable plot and some newly planted trees, all against a splendid backdrop of the meadow behind. Our host Linda treated us to refreshing cold drinks, tea, cakes and biscuits too. A most enjoyable and inspiring morning.



This week we visited nearby Charlton Down House Garden which was open for the NGS. This is an extensive country house gardens in a 180 acre equestrian estate. It has formal terraces, perennial borders, a walled topiary garden, enclosed cut flower garden and large glasshouse. There are also rescue ponies, and donkeys, and rare breed goats. And of course, afternoon tea and cakes.

This time we were joined by a few members of the u3a Photography Group, who wanted to take pictures of flowers and insects. This garden is open on most Thursday afternoons in August - well worth a visit.

ngs.org.uk/gardens/charlton-down-house-gl8/



Is it a snail, a squirrel or a cockerel?

Our penultimate visit for the year will take place on Monday 10th August when we will visit Daglingworth House, near Cirencester, GL7 7BX, which is opening by special arrangement just for our group, for the NGS. Details are on our u3a website - please let me know if you are planning to join us.

By Caroline Hose

Historic Buildings Group

The Historic Buildings Group visit in July was to nearby Westonbirt House. Our group of 25 members enjoyed a very informative tour led by knowledgeable guides, followed by a splendid full afternoon tea. We then walked around the Grade I listed gardens and visited St Catherine's Church.



History of the House

In 1840, R.S. Holford noted that his father's house was too small for his extensive library. By 1864, Holford and architect Lewis Vulliamy had demolished that residence to build a grand neo-Elizabethan house based on Wollaton Hall, Notts, to accommodate his art collection, library, and family. The family moved into the unfinished house in 1872, and the library was completed by the time Holford died in 1892. His son, Sir George Holford, finalized the interior décor, hosting royal visitors as Equerry to Edward VII.



Following Sir George's death in 1926, the house, library, and art collection were sold, and the property became a school, remaining remarkably unchanged since. The Arboretum was gifted to the nation in 1956 and is now managed separately by Forestry England as Westonbirt, The National Arboretum.



Tour of the House

The house features sumptuous neo-Elizabethan interiors, including a vast marble-columned central Great Hall with carved marble fireplace, ornate wood-panelled rooms, and classical ceilings.

Despite its historic appearance, it was one of the most technologically advanced homes of the Victorian era, featuring fireproof iron roofs, gas lighting, and central heating. Maintenance and restoration challenges for this Grade I listed building are funded by the Holford Trust, and we saw several of their completed projects.

A highlight was viewing the completely intact board of 63 servant bells in the basement, which had been hidden behind wood panelling for over 50 years until the maintenance team uncovered them in 2015. Each bell was cast with a unique pitch so staff could identify which room was calling by sound alone.



The Garden

The 28-acre private school gardens include several significant architectural elements:

- The Italianate Gardens: A formal walled garden with pavilions, stone terrace walks, and central fountains.
- The Camellia House: A Victorian glasshouse built for exotic specimens.
- Ornamental Earthworks: Restored lakes, a rustic grotto, stone balustrades, and gate piers.

St Catherine's Church

This Grade II listed medieval church sits within the private grounds and predates the mansion by six centuries. Founded in the 12th century, it retains a 14th-century south tower and spirelet. R.S. Holford heavily restored the church in the mid-19th century to match his new mansion, and it now features an alabaster effigy dedicated to him. The church was handed over to Westonbirt School in 1996 and now serves as the school chapel. Notably, the original medieval village of Westonbirt once sat southwest of the churchyard until Holford demolished and rebuilt it half a mile west in the 1850s to clear the view for his gardens.

Upcoming Events

Bookings have now closed for our August visit to Shaw House. Members should look out for bookings opening soon for our visit to Owlpen Manor on 3rd September.

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

Playreading Group

"All Balls And Ashes" - a play by Mark Roberts.

We really enjoyed Bernadette's play reading this month. It was a hilarious comedy based in Yorkshire, similar to "Last of the Summer Wine". When the village cricket stalwart Seth "Hot Balls" Hegginsbotham suddenly dies, everyone in the village is affected. In the local pub the bar maid is so shocked, she faints. His pal's Frank and Eli are aware that Seth had told them, when he dies, he wants his ashes scattered on his beloved cricket field. He had spent very many happy times up there but un-beknown to the villagers for other reasons!

Frank and Eli, whilst supping their beers, hatch a plot to steal his ashes, from his fearsome widow Freda, which includes climbing in through her coal chute in their old army fatigues, tin hat and blackened faces. The bumbling friends try to scatter his ashes on the cricket field to fulfil their drunken promise. There are many funny twists and turns including the Vicar and a midnight fertility dancing ritual, causing chaos with a lovely twist at the end. The whole play was an absolute pleasure and we all left with a smile on our faces. Thank you, Bernadette.

By Judith Tookey

And finally the deadline for contributions to the August newsletter is Monday 17th August.

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](#)