u3a Tetbury and District Newsletter



September 2026

Message from the Chair

Hello everyone

I hope you've enjoyed the summer, whether you prefer the heat or cooler weather. As autumn approaches, why not try something new - or even start a group of your own?

It may come as no surprise that a recent u3a survey highlighted the organisation's positive impact on members' wellbeing, social connections and quality of life. The findings reflect what local u3as see every week: people join to learn, share interests and meet others, but gain much more. Groups and activities often lead to new friendships, renewed confidence, mental stimulation, restored routines, shared skills and a stronger sense of purpose.

Our September talk on fraud prevention was thought-provoking and offered practical advice on protecting ourselves from fraud. You should have received my email summarising the key points, so please take five minutes to read it. The summary is also on our website; see the Monthly Speakers article below.

Finally, a reminder that our December lunch will be held at the Hare and Hounds, Westonbirt, on Tuesday 1 December, arriving at 12.30 pm for 1 pm. The cost, including service, is £31.00 for three courses or £26.00 for two. You should have received an email with the menu. To book, please contact Chris Gibson using the contact form on our website:
tetbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/december-meal-2026

Well that's it from me for now.

Martin Doidge (Chair)

Monthly Speakers

Our September 2026 talk was presented by Rhiannon Parker of Gloucestershire Constabulary's Cyber Crime and Fraud Unit. She explained practical ways to reduce the risk of fraud, including checking whether emails, texts and phone calls are genuine, creating strong passwords, using two-factor authentication and backing up data. A summary of the presentation has been emailed to all members and is also available on our website.

tetbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_notices/fraud-prevention-talk

Our next talk on the "History of Pantomime Dames" will take place at 10:30 am on 12th October 2026, at the Tetbury Goods Shed, GL8 8EY.



Martin Hannant's talks all centre around comedy and entertainment in the 1940s to 1970s. This one is on pantomime dames. Refreshments will be available before and afterwards, so that you can mingle – we hope to see you there.

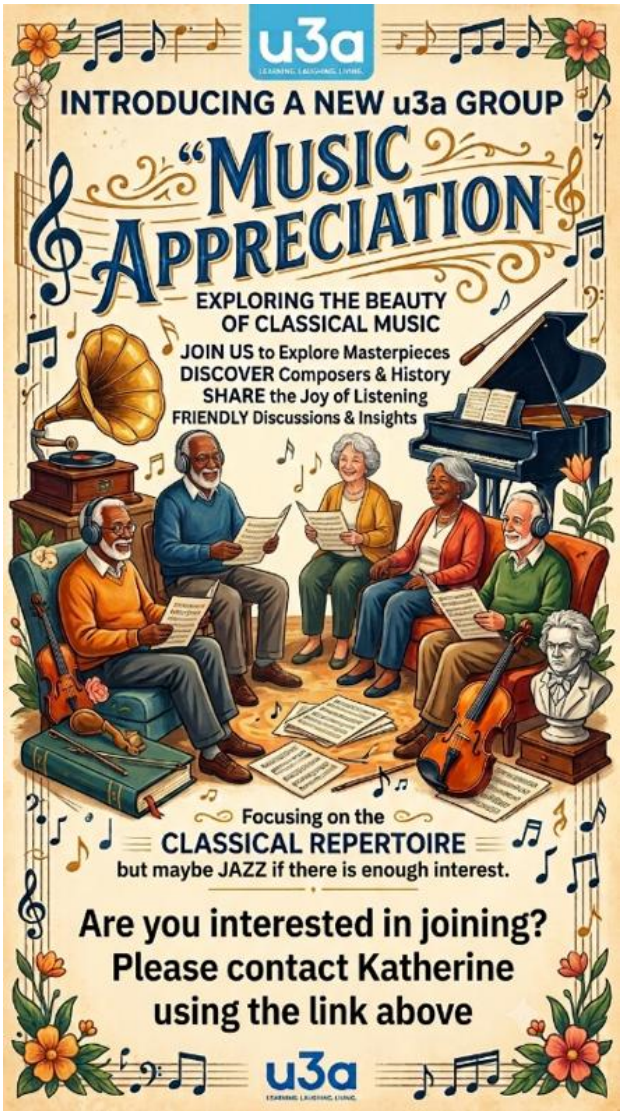
Here's a link to our full 2026 programme tetbury.u3asite.uk/events

By Julia Walter (Speakers Secretary)

Potential New Group

Music Appreciation

If you enjoy chamber and orchestral music and would like to join a group to listen and discuss, let's get together and discuss how we might like to run it.



We would meet at my place in central Tetbury where I have a good collection of recordings. Of course your favourite pieces of music and composers will be an important part of the mix.

We might also consider some group outings to some of the amazing musical events which happen here in Tetbury. All welcome from the very knowledgeable buffs to those who want to start exploring this fabulous world. If this would interest you, please contact me via the contact page on the website

tetbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/music-appreciation

By Katherine Kirk

Group News

Art Appreciation

This month we looked at the work of the Flemish artist Anthony van Dyke (1599-1641) considered to be one of the most influential painters in Britain during the c17th. He trained in Antwerp and came to England, initially briefly, in 1620 to work for James I and later returned in 1632 when he enjoyed the patronage of Charles I as Principal Painter in Ordinary. He was also awarded a knighthood.



He painted a number of self-portraits including the well-known portrait with sunflower (1632/3) that highlights his elevated social standing as he proudly displays the gold chain given to him by Charles I. The sunflower acts as a symbol of royal patronage and his loyalty to the King.

"Venetia, Lady Digby as an Allegory of Prudence"
NPG5727, National Portrait Gallery, London

"The Great Peece" (sic) (1632) depicts Charles I and family looking relaxed and informal, the King's crown is discarded on a table, small dogs play at their feet and Queen Henrietta Maria is holding the baby Princess Mary. This all coveys relaxed, domestic intimacy and dramatically contrasts in style with earlier royal portraits such as the formal and imposing posture of Henry VIII painted by Holbein ("The Whitehall Mural") in 1537 that appears flat, powerful and aggressive.

The vast majority of van Dyck's output however was a body of non royal work that, it has been suggested, was superior and created a "pictorial collaboration" between artist and sitter. One example of this gave us a fascinating insight into the lives of van Dyck's friend Sir Kenelm Digby and his wife Lady Venetia Stanley Digby. The two portraits "Venetia, Lady Digby as an Allegory of Prudence" (1633) and "Lady Digby on her Deathbed" (1633) were both commissioned by her husband after her death.

Venetia Stanley, it was rumoured, had several high profile pre-marital affairs and she was the subject of intense court gossip. Kenelm Digby stated that "a handsome woman could be made honest by a noble husband" and commissioned the portraits to rehabilitate her character through classical allegory and thus silencing court gossip. She is portrayed sitting on a block of stone and being crowned with a laurel wreath by cherubs, symbols of moral stability, victory and virtue. She is handling a tamed snake showing her triumph over slander. The doves indicate marital fidelity and at her feet lie defeated allegorical figures indicating the triumph of chastity and virtue.

"Lady Digby on her Deathbed" shows her lying peacefully as though dreaming and blurring the line between sleep and death. The background is of deep indigo and she wears a ghostly white gown, a single withered rose rests on the blue sheets. Sir Kenelm Digby kept the deathbed portrait in his room for the rest of his life.

By Judy Greeman

Aviation and Classic Cars

The Aviation and Classic Car September visit was to the Cotswold Motoring Museum in beautiful Bourton-on-the-Water. It has over forty cars, motorbikes, bicycles and a couple of 1920s caravans on display in a range of galleries, and a toy museum. Cars dated from the early 1900s to a 1974 Hillman Imp. There were manufacturers of cars rarely heard of, such as the Alldays and Onions; their 1911 car, the Victoria, was on display. The Onions firm had been trading since 1625, and Alldays since 1780. They joined forces in 1885 and began manufacturing bicycles for the GPO in 1888. Numerous bicycles were on display hanging from the ceilings, and the walls were covered in old motoring advertising boards. The

two caravans, the 1923 Angela and the 1926 Lady Nimble gave a glimpse into the holidaying styles of the day.



Motorbikes on display were made by ABC, Calthorpe and BSA, which made the Borough Superior, nicknamed the 'widow maker' due to the number of people killed riding one, including Lawrence of Arabia. The collection included the 1924 Levis motorbike, used for motorcycle football, which in the day attracted over 10,000 spectators. A video of one motorcycle football game had those of us watching in awe. I did wonder what the modern Risk Assessment would look like, with young children stood just behind a line of rope, on the edge of the pitch!

The 1935 Austin Taxi was of particular interest, given it had travelled over 800,000 miles to South Africa and back. I wonder what the taxi fare was and how much of a tip was given to the driver. I'm not sure my 2017 Mokka could drive that far! Photo of Brian in front of the London Taxi.

Our next visit combines aviation and classic cars on 14th October, to the Bugatti Museum at Gotherington and then on to the Jet Age Museum at Staverton, Gloucester, with lunch in the café. Come and join us.

By Stephanie Dale

Book Club Monday Evening

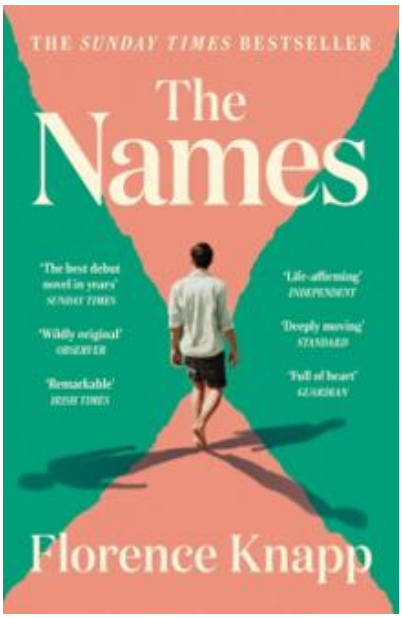


Image credit: Phoenix, 2026

In August the Monday Evening Book Club discussed "The Names" by Florence Knapp which proved to be a great book for discussion.

This novel is not completely like any other but has elements of the film "Sliding Doors", where everyday decisions can completely alter the course of a person's life, and the novel "Life after Life" by Kate Atkinson, where everyday decisions slowly radiate out and change personal lives and those around them.

"The Names" is a debut novel which explores how living with domestic abuse and coercive control affects the lives of one family. Rather than dwelling on, and sensationalising, the physical violence of the husband, the novel focuses on the long-term psychological effects on his wife, Cora, and her two children. This is because the author did not want to make domestic abuse (and the fear that it causes) to become an entertainment.

So as a vehicle to tell the story the novel imagines three alternative possibilities (three what-if's) based on the name that Cora chooses at the registry office for her son - Bear (requested by her daughter) Gordon (demanded by her husband) and Julian (chosen by Cora). And this is more about the naming, rather than the name chosen and the characteristics associated with each name. Bear - strong, brave and warm-hearted; Gordon - immovable, looming, shaped by tradition; and Julian - boundless potential of the sky, limitless and ambitious.

We found this to be a well written book and thought the three different iterations very convincing. However, some of the group found it difficult to keep track, and then readjust, when the story constantly jumped between the three paths of the three groups of people across different timelines, especially as some of the segments were very long. We decided that rather than an organic story, it was over-crafted in places. Sometimes this worked well, such as when some minor characters, such as the vet, popped up across all three timelines. But at other times this seemed a bit far-fetched such as the scenario with a family with names covering animal, vegetable and mineral.

But then, to be fair, some of the events marked the passage of time, such as the Covid pandemic, when coincidently there was an increase in recorded domestic abuse-related offences. As has been said, it is a fine line between a high concept and a gimmick.

We discussed various types and levels of domestic abuse in society, from the most obvious cases of those who live close to each other where the noise of physical violence can be overheard and reported by neighbours, as opposed to those who live in detached houses where the abuse may be more easily hidden. Patterns of behaviour (to gain power and control) may include physical assault but may also be emotional and psychological.

Another criticism is that occasionally the lives depicted in the novel seemed tragic and overly melodramatic, especially the unrelated events, like the anaphylactic shock incident and the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris.

Our discussion naturally enough centred on names and domestic abuse. We all knew people who had changed their names, and we wondered at the odd names that people choose for their children. It turns out that there is no official list of banned names in the UK. However, Registry Offices and the Passport Office can reject names that do not meet legal and practical guidelines. We agreed that names do have a bearing on people in their lives, but not that the name itself necessarily means it will shape someone's destiny for all time.

Surrounding the hidden crime of domestic abuse, the common question is 'Why women put up with it?' and 'Why did she stay?' But one of the answers is where would you go, especially if you were financially dependent with children? It is also very difficult to understand why some women go back to abuse. We also discussed how it is often possible for a man of prestige (in this instance a doctor) to hide his toxic nature. In this instance there was a hint that it was due to learned behaviour from his own father. We awarded "The Names" 3.8 out of 5.

By Corinne Hinton

Bookclub Wednesday

After our summer break, eight of us, including two new members met on the 26th August to discuss "Half of the Human Race" by Anthony Quinn.

A book with something for everyone, it explores cricket, war, suffrage, love and societal change. Set in the summer of 1911, it is the story of the relationship between Connie Callaway, an outspoken, spirited 21 year old from a middle class family in Islington who is forced to abandon her dreams of a medical career after the death of her father and Will Maitland , a rising star in county cricket who is concerned about adhering to the societal norms.

As their lives separate and come together again we learn that, despite having feelings for Will she is worried that he is so keen to fit into society that he 'was motivated more by the dream of a marriage than by the love of a woman.'

We all enjoyed the book, and it led to a long discussion on Will's character which was weak and conformist until the war compared to that of the legendary cricketer Andrew Tambourlain who we all loved.

By Pauline Whittaker

Creative Writing Group Two - Tales from Tetbury

This month a poem by one of our members was published in the Tetbury Advertiser. Each month we hope to offer readers a story, essay or poem created by our group. At our September meeting members were encouraged to write stories suitable for publication. This I found a huge challenge as the word count is about half that we've used to. How, I wondered would we cope?

As the stories from the group dropped into my inbox, I ceased worrying. As usual we were writing to a single theme; as usual every piece was different and as usual, as I should have known, all were brilliant. I hope you enjoy reading our stories over the coming months; we've had great fun crafting them.

By George Keeling

Historic Buildings Group - Owlpen Manor

The final scheduled visit of this year's programme was to Owlpen Manor a historic Grade I listed Tudor manor house located near Uley, Gloucestershire. Its history spans over a millennium, characterized by centuries of continuous family ownership, a period of Victorian abandonment, and a celebrated 20th-century restoration.

- Early Origins (9th–15th Century): The name "Owlpen" is believed to derive from a 9th-century Saxon named Olla, who established a "pen" (enclosure) near the valley's springs. By 1174, the de Olepenne family was established on the site, serving as local landowners and sworn henchmen to the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle. The core of the manor has medieval origins, with some internal building fabric dating back to 1270.

- The Tudor Golden Age (1464–1616): In 1464, the de Olepenne male line ended, and the estate passed through marriage to the Daunt family, who were prosperous local clothiers. The Daunts were responsible for building the majority of the current manor house. Christopher Daunt added the Great Hall ceiling in 1523, and Thomas Daunt rebuilt the west wing in 1616. Local legend claims Queen Margaret of Anjou spent the night at Owlpen in 1471 before her defeat at the Battle of Tewkesbury, and her ghost is said to still haunt the Great Chamber.

- Victorian Abandonment (19th Century): The Daunt line ended in 1803, and the Anglo-Irish Stoughton family inherited the estate in 1815. Around 1848, the Stoughtons built a large Italianate mansion nearby called Owlpen House. The original Tudor manor was left uninhabited and fell into ruin, becoming a forgotten "Sleeping Beauty" hidden behind overgrown yew trees.

- Arts and Crafts Restoration (1926–Present): After over 80 years of dereliction, the ruined house was brought to the attention of the wider public (having been discovered by the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne). In 1926, the noted Cotswold Arts and Crafts architect Norman Jewson purchased and meticulously restored the manor. Today, the property is owned by the Mander family and operates as a private home, wedding venue, and holiday retreat, maintaining its historic terraced gardens and Tudor architecture.

Forty seven of our members braved the journey down narrow lanes to the venue – there is no good route! The estate is set in an idyllic valley location, with bucolic views in all directions. We were welcomed by Sir Nicholas Mander and his son Hugo Mander. Sir Nicholas has carried out extensive research into the history of Owlpen Manor and other country houses of the Cotswolds, and has published many books.



He delighted us with a potted history of the estate, delivered whilst we were stood in the garden, admiring the splendid view of the front of the Manor.

We then entered the Manor and divided into groups to tour around the Manor and its beautiful Church of the Holy Cross. Our hosts were available to provide information and answer our many questions.

A visit to the Church – a short walk away from the Manor through a beautiful lychgate – was rewarded by views of a spectacular chancel decorated in mosaics, and a richly painted ceiling.



We ended our visit with a generous cream tea served in the Cyder Barn. The barn houses a magnificent 300 year old cider press, built with massive oak and elm timbers.



This was the final scheduled event for this year, but we are now working out a programme of visits for 2027, so keep your eyes open on our website page (see link below) for any updates.

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

By David & Maggie Smith

Photography Group

Our Group met on Friday 28th August after an early summer break, (not all of us holiday in August!). We presented photos on themes of group members' choice, in this case, Macro ('close ups' to some of us), Wide Angle shots and music festivals.

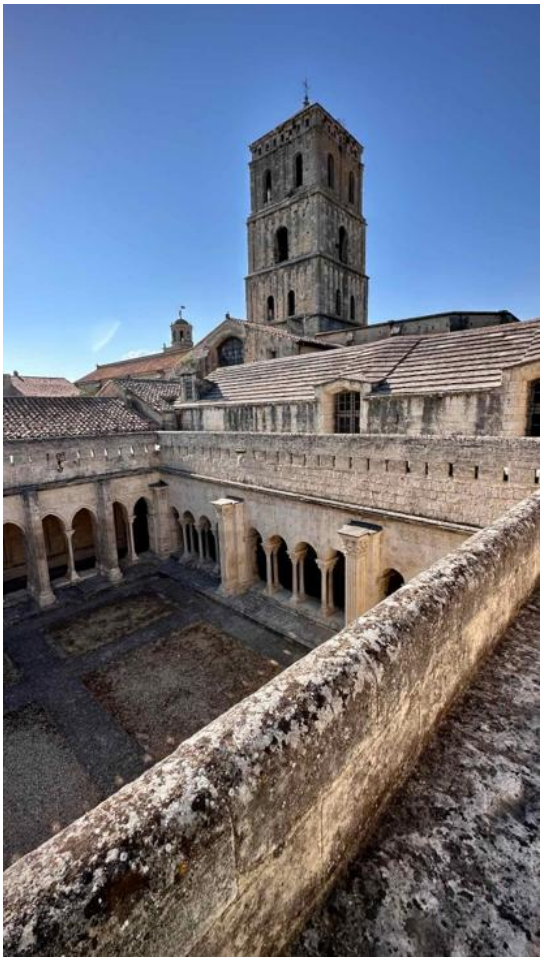
Here are some of the varied and excellent shots.



“Peacock” by Caroline Hose



“Miss Willmott’s Ghost” by Caroline Hose



“Arles Cloister” by Jocelyn Hayes



“Romans Were Here” by Jocelyn Hayes



“Music Festival” by Mark Janaway



"Music Festival" By Mark Janaway

Following the presentations, the Group discussed future themes, trips and our end of year dinner. It was agreed that, following the Macro themed presentation, our September session would be on how to take close up images.

Several group members have specialist kit that they are going to bring along and demonstrate how this can be used. We will also be looking at how we can take these images without the need for such kit. That's the beauty of our sessions, we look at different aspects of photo taking, from using top of the range cameras and lenses, to how to get better pictures using your mobile phone. We all have a hands on opportunity to use the variety of kit, and we will offer short visits to a series of project related venues to put our learning in to practice, with images being presented at our November meeting (followed by our end of year meal).

We are working on next year's programme and are considering visits to beach and seafront locations (not just in the sunnier months) and iconic local landmarks. We will continue our theme related presentations and projects and we will be looking at how we might hold a small exhibition of our work for u3a members to view.

On the exhibition note, two of our members have images accepted for the Gloucestershire Photographic Network's inaugural exhibition, titled 'Under the Sky' which is going to be held at the Tetbury Goods Shed between 28th October

and 6th December. Congratulations to Warren and Jocelyn. Please come along and view theirs and others' work.

If anyone is interested in what we do as a u3a group, please feel free to contact me through the u3a website and I will be more than happy to meet up and explain all.

By Mark Janaway

Pub Lunch Group

If you fancy a traditional Christmas lunch why not join the Pub Lunch Group at the Beaufort Arms, Hawkesbury Upton on Tuesday 15th December 12.30-13.00 where good quality food and excellent service can be assured at a reasonable price. As it is Christmas this is open to all u3a members, their friends and relatives. A pre-order will be in force so your menu choice, and the menu you are choosing from, will be needed by the start of December, also your contact details. If you would be interested, please get in touch with me via the contact form on our Groups page of the website

tetbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/pub-lunch



By Grahame Inman

Short Walks Group

Ten of us walked from Chavenage to Beverston, a walk attempted once before in our earlier days without success as we missed the path and were then overcome by a thunderstorm whilst on high ground so, on that occasion, retreat seemed the wisest decision.

This time, however, the route having been previously practised and memorised, on a cooler, perfect walking day, we had no trouble finding both Beverston Castle and the Church. The Norman church, which was built on Saxon foundations, has 13th and 14th century additions with a complex 19th century timber roof. The castle, which is privately owned, has 13th century towers and a 14th century gatehouse incorporated in a 17th century manor house. All well worth a visit although the castle is not generally open to the public.

We returned on a different route through a small wood, across the fields with Chavenage House in the distance, dropping down towards the Hermit Cave area and then back to the car park.

The walk had some wonderful country views across to the Marlborough Downs and for quite a long time we could see the comforting sight of Tetbury church steeple in the distance.



By Anita Stride

Ukulele Group – T'UKEs

My experience as a newcomer to the Tetbury u3a Ukulele Group.

I really enjoy being part of the Tetbury u3a Ukulele Group (T'UKEs). It's a friendly, welcoming group where everyone is encouraged to join in, whatever their level of experience, in playing the Ukulele and singing. I joined T'UKEs back in March this year, 2026, after a relatively short wait. There is usually a waiting list of people who wish to join.

The Group normally meets for practice sessions every Tuesday afternoon at Steepleton from 2:30 to about 4:30, for a cost of £2.00 per session, which includes tea or coffee and nibbles. The sessions are relaxed and enjoyable, with a good balance of learning, playing together and having fun. The group leaders are supportive and patient, and there's a lovely sense of camaraderie among the members. The Group is organised and led by Mike Hoskin.

It's a great way to begin or improve your ukulele skills, learn new songs and, most importantly, meet people and enjoy making music together. I would definitely recommend the Tetbury u3a Ukulele Group to anyone looking for a friendly and enjoyable musical activity.

By Tim Bond



Here we are setting up at the Dolphins Hall ready to play for the Friendship Cafe members on 24th September. Our gigs are ramping up over the coming months, including Holiday At Home on 30th October, and our Christmas Singalongs, especially at the Goods Shed on 16th December and at the Dolphins Hall the following day.

And finally …… the deadline for contributions to the October newsletter is Monday 19th October. Please send your articles to Caroline, your newsletter editor, at newslettertetburyu3a@gmail.com

Annex A

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	NEW Philately
Book Club Wednesday	Photography
Boules - Friday	Pickleball
Boules - Wednesday	Play Reading 1
Computing - Apple beginners	Play Reading 2
Computing - technical support	Pub Lunch
* Creative Writing Group 2 FULL - waiting list	Quiz
*Creative Writing Group 1 FULL - waiting list	Scrabble
Creative Writing Group 3	Short Breaks
Cribbage	Short Walks – Friday
Curry Club	Short Walks - Thursday
Family History	Spanish - Advanced Beginners to Intermediate
French	Spanish - Advanced Intermediate to Fluent
NEW French Reading	*Ukulele FULL - waiting list
Garden Visits	NEW Youth Club for Recycled Teenagers
	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