



## Tetbury & District u3a Newsletter

August 2023

### Message from the Chair

Many thanks to everyone who, despite the atrocious weather, supported our u3a at Tetbury Carnival. Particular thanks go to the Ukulele and Singing groups for their performances and to the committee members who organised everything and staffed our stall. Hopefully next time we'll get better weather!



Many thanks too to everyone who has renewed their subscription. We really do appreciate your support. For anyone who is intending to remain a member but hasn't yet renewed, please note that we need to receive payment by the next monthly talk on September 12th.

Best wishes Carmel

## Monthly Speakers

Our monthly talk on **Tuesday 12th September** will be provided by Barry Hamblin, on the subject of 'A History of the Management of Time'. This will take place at 10.30 am at the Goods Shed. Spend your time wisely and come and listen to this interesting and informative talk.

You will learn that our calendar was initially developed by the Romans and has a fascinating history. It was initially a lunar calendar but developed into a solar calendar. Find out why our day is divided into two lots of twelve hours with hours divided into sixty minutes and minutes into sixty seconds.

## Group News

### Art Appreciation Group

We had another varied and thought-provoking meeting in August with three very interesting talks.

Firstly, a talk about Swedish artist, Hilma af Klint (1862-1944). She is now acknowledged as the founder of abstract art, predating Kandinsky and Mondrian, but not well known during her lifetime, believing her work to be too groundbreaking for the public to accept. She was a woman who promoted freedom of expression via her work, her abstracts were influenced by spiritual beliefs, and she stirred

controversy and challenged the attitudes of the day. She currently has an exhibition at the Tate with works by Mondrian.

We then started to make some inroads into Impressionism, an art movement considered revolutionary at the time. Impressionism was used as a pejorative term indicating "unfinished" but was later accepted as fresh and original. Pictures portrayed realistic scenes of modern life using pure unmixed colours to give an intense vibrancy. Impressionism occurred during the 2nd half of the 19th century in response to a rejection of more formal subject matter such as religion and also societal changes e.g. the Industrial Revolution. The coming of the railways and the development of tubes of paint enabled easy access to the countryside and the ability to paint "en plein air" instead of using the studio, thus enabling artists to capture the transparent effects of sunlight. We looked at Renoir's "Bal du Moulin de la Galette Montmartre", an example of how movement was expressed, light was portrayed, and a party atmosphere was conveyed with a sense of multiple stories being played out.

Lastly, we looked at work by a French artist who painted in America, Fanch Ledan (b 1949). His work is unusual in that it is of interiors but with no people inhabiting them. The Art Deco interiors are a blend of art and architecture, they are colourful and imaginative, often showing views through windows that use the background as a key focal point. He paints in acrylics but retains the original with his work sold as giclee prints. The interiors often show precise copies of well known artworks (mainly those on display in galleries) on the walls. We had some discussion about whether these two factors were indicative of the artist's wish for art to become more accessible.

[artappreciation@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:artappreciation@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Badminton Group**

The Badminton Group has continued to meet most weeks throughout the summer despite reduced numbers, with players away on holiday or just taking a summer break.

Following some energetic games at our session on 10th July we decamped to the Italian Chalet at the Cat and Custard Pot where we enjoyed a delicious meal, and three weeks later we made the most of the rare evening sunshine in the Priory garden over a drink or two. With only an hour on the courts we don't have much time during a session to chat, so it was a welcome opportunity to socialise.

We play at Sir William Romney's Sports Hall, Lowfield Road, Mondays 5-6pm. Join us on 4th September (or any Monday) as we start a new term. Rackets and shuttles available. All abilities welcome. Contact the Group Leader for more details.

[badminton@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:badminton@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Wednesday Book Club**

Eight of us met at The Royal Oak recently when we discussed "The Vanishing Half" by Brit Bennett. A fascinating story which raised many issues for us to discuss. A family saga set between 1968 and 1986 in a fictional town, Mallard in Louisiana, for 'light coloureds'. Choosing to leave home at 16, twin girls run away to New Orleans, but then choose different paths when one sister returns home with her black daughter and the other one passes herself off as white, a secret she keeps from her husband. It's only when their daughters meet as young adults they have to come to terms with the consequences of their actions.

Our next meeting is on 30th August when we'll be discussing "The Snake That Bites it's Tail" by Bob Ferrand.

[bookclubwednesday@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:bookclubwednesday@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **French Conversation Group**

August turned out to be a good month for getting together for conversation and parlour games, what with unpredictable weather here and in the Med and, for some of us, the cost of living crisis.

*We Do it in French* twice a month and we had a great conversation session at the beginning of August. We shared items from Paris Match, from the private lives of stars of stage, screen and tennis court (one of our group has a real fondness for Raphael Nadal), through the story of a duel between a rich aristocrat and a ballet dancer over the right to use some choreography, to the art nouveau architecture of the Paris Metro. As usual fun and fascinating.

Our games session usually revolves around a French song and games to practice language including 20 Questions and French versions of Monopoly and Happy Families. We've just added a board game to give practice of a wider variety of language and launched it at our end of August games session.

The group isn't closed so please get in touch if you are interested in joining us.

[frenchconversation@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:frenchconversation@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Gardening Group**

The sun shone brightly on our group visit to Northfield House on 7th August. Around 25 members enjoyed the hospitality of Caroline and Philip, custodians of this delightful plot. We enjoyed homemade cakes and tea and coffee while sitting in the sunshine and, thanks to our members, there were lots of plants to swap and take away. A visit to Northfield House is always a delight and we are very grateful to Caroline and Philip for hosting the visit.



Our visit in September will be to the gardens at Berkeley Castle. We will meet at the Castle at 11 am on 4th September.

New members are always welcome to come along to a meeting or visit to see if they might want to join the group.

[gardening@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:gardening@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Golf Group**

Did you know that we have a Golf Group?

It is open to any level of golfer from complete beginners to experienced players. We play social golf, usually once a week at either Westonbirt or South Cerney 'pay and play' courses where fees are very reasonable, so you don't need to be a member of any golf club or have a handicap to join us. We can also loan you equipment if you'd just like to try golf for the first time. If you are interested contact [golf@tetbury3a.org.uk](mailto:golf@tetbury3a.org.uk)

## **The Historic Buildings Group**

Our July visit was to Kelmscott Manor, near Lechlade. The private visit was fully subscribed (36 members). After our welcome coffee and biscuits and introductory talk, we divided into three smaller groups for a tour around and inside the Manor led by our extremely knowledgeable guides.



The Manor started off life around 1600 and was originally called Lower Farm. It was greatly extended in the 1660s to become a residence fit for a "gentleman" and eventually became a manor. Following the death of the Lord of the Manor in 1870, it was put up for rent. William Morris saw the advert and came to the Manor in May 1871 for a viewing.

Morris had "been looking for a house for the wife and kids" away from the unhealthy environment of London. When he wrote about it to a friend the very next day, he called it a "heaven on earth". He said it looked as if it had "grown up out of the soil" - very much in line with Arts & Crafts philosophy. Morris took the Manor on a joint three year lease, initially with Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, although Rossetti left in 1874.

William Morris rented the property until his death in 1896. Morris never lived here on a permanent basis but spent as much time as he reasonably could, considering his other commitments.



He loved it deeply and it was a great inspiration for him. His daughter May later recalled that it was the undercurrent to his life. It inspired both designs (e.g. 'Strawberry Thief') and writings ('News from Nowhere') as well as informed his thinking about society, ecology and building conservation.

The trustees of William's bequest later had the opportunity to purchase the Manor. It passed down the Morris family and ultimately to Oxford University. The Manor fell into disrepair because of inadequate funding and restrictions imposed by the will. Ownership was then transferred in the 1960s to the Society of Antiquaries of



London. The Society has since restored and repaired the Manor, including a major project which resulted in the closure of the Manor for most of last year.

The Manor - perhaps the most evocative of all the houses associated with Morris - contains an outstanding collection of the possessions and works of Morris, his family and his Arts & Crafts associates, including furniture, original textiles, pictures, carpets, ceramics and metalwork. Our guides pointed out the priceless collection of artefacts from this era as we toured the rooms.



Following the morning tour, we enjoyed a lovely buffet lunch. The weather was kind to us, so we were able to sit outside and appreciate the beautiful surroundings. We were free to wander around the grounds after lunch to view the gardens.

We are taking bookings for our September visit to Cirencester for a guided walk led by an experienced guide. We also have a visit planned for October to Malmesbury Abbey. See [Historic Buildings Programme](#) for the full programme.

Please contact [historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk) to join our Group. We now have 111 members, so make sure you book your visits as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

### **Play Reading Group 1**

On the last Monday of the month nine members of group 1 of the Play Reading section ambitiously attempted "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by that well known author, William Shakespeare. Now to say this was a challenge is putting it mildly but we were up for it. First issue was

the pronunciation of names. We could manage Bottom but Pyramus and Hippolytus was more challenging. Secondly, some members had a number of parts with one having eight! This was due to all the fairies. It was all good fun and included a couple of songs led by a member. For those readers not familiar with the play, it is a tale of love and mishaps, but it all ended happily. We look forward now to August's reading of "Hobson's Choice - a Lancashire comedy" by Harold Brighouse. Variety is the spice of life.

[playreading@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:playreading@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Play Reading Group 2**

On the first Monday of August Play Reading Group 2 came together for its inaugural gathering at the home of our host, Jeremy. This group has formed as an overflow from the hugely popular and oversubscribed Play Reading Group 1. This month we borrowed the scripts from Group 1 and also read Shakespeare's magical comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream". The play has many characters, and many interconnecting plots, but we were not daunted, we didn't get muddled and we kept on reading.

It was surprising how everyone managed the Shakespearean language so well, considering that some of us had not read the play since our school days! Of course one of the funniest parts of the play is when Nick Bottom (one of the mechanicals preparing to put on a play) enthusiastically volunteers to play three roles, including a lion, at the same time. It made me wonder whether this actor was based on anyone Shakespeare knew. A good time was had by all, and we look forward to doing it all again soon.

[playreading@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:playreading@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Singing Group**

Well done to all those from the Singing for Fun (SFF) group who managed to get to the u3a Carnival Stall. In spite of the horrific weather, all enjoyed singing a few numbers with the Ukulele Group. Perhaps we can plan to do it again as soon as our repertoires overlap.

The SFF group will restart on Wednesday 13th September 2-4pm at St Mary's Hall. Cost £2 per person to cover printed song words and contingency fund. Gail brings refreshments which we brew up in the kitchen, but you may prefer to bring your own mug or your own drink. New members are most welcome.

We just email suggestions of songs we would like to sing to Gail. She prints out words and brings along a small speaker and **You Tube** clip to sing along to. We can also choose from Anne's comprehensive compendium of favourites.

Aside from singing we reminisce about where we heard the song, what it meant to us and lots else besides. Also Carolyn does a Quiz. And you know what that means-- Prizes!

Do come along and give us a try. We assess the only risk you will suffer is having fun, making new friends and enjoying a good biscuit.

You can email Gail for more information [singing@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:singing@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Ukulele Group**

We are still practicing hard for our second (requested) gig at Upton Mill where we hope to impress 40 or so people with our outstanding talents! We have a repertoire of some 20 songs and although we have suffered with absences for holidays and injuries, we feel very proud of our achievements in learning so much in only four months. We have new talent, and our original team is strengthening weekly under the invaluable and enthusiastic leadership of Mike. We may

think we are better than we sound but we are now adding solos and riff endings to our 60s favourites.....when we remember!

[ukulele@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:ukulele@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## New Groups

Would you like to join other members to play Backgammon?

It doesn't matter if you've never played before, all you need is the willingness to join in, and if you know how to play, to show other members.

Please let Audrey (Groups Coordinator) [groups@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@tetburyu3a.org.uk) or Anne Watkins (experienced Backgammon player) know [annewatkins209@gmail.com](mailto:annewatkins209@gmail.com)

Please copy Lawrence if interested, so he can help Anne with the technical stuff [lawrencedmoss@icloud.com](mailto:lawrencedmoss@icloud.com)

**And finally .....**

The final date for contributions to the September newsletter is Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September. We would love to hear about your group activities, ideally with photos to bring it to life.

Please use the contact [newsletter@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tetburyu3a.org.uk) to send your articles to Caroline, the newsletter editor.