



## Tetbury & District u3a Newsletter

**May 2024**

### Message from the Chair

Things have been a little quieter this month due to the two Bank Holidays, but there's still plenty to read in this issue. There's a synopsis of our monthly talk, as well as articles from the Art Appreciation, French Conversation and Games, Gardening, Historic Buildings, Playreading, Ukulele and Wine Tasting groups. There's also an opportunity to join the Wine Tasting groups at the Larkhill vineyard in Tetbury on 2nd July - see article by Robin Voice.

I'd like to thank all our Group Leaders and those who assist you. We really appreciate the considerable effort which you put in to run our group events, and for contributing to the Newsletter. It's important not to forget that our u3a is run by the members, for the members - without you our u3a would not exist.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue - and do have a look at the list of Online Learning Events and Interest Groups Online at the Annex. Wishing you all an enjoyable and relaxing Spring Bank Holiday.

Best wishes Bernadette [chair@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## Monthly Speakers

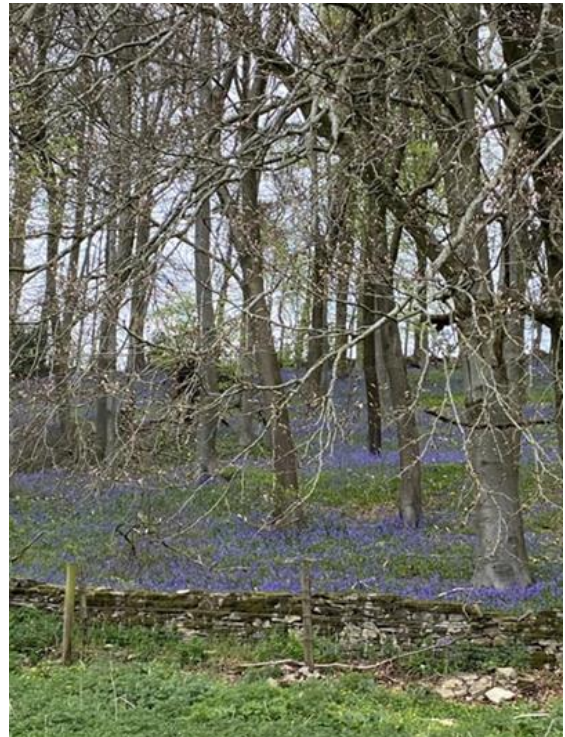
We've had nothing but praise for the amusing and informative talk from Stewart Linford on Monday 20th May, complete with examples of a surprising variety of beautiful Windsor Chairs that we couldn't wait to try out. As a boy he'd been passionate about working with wood and early in his working life, discovering he couldn't work for an employer, he set up on his own in a shed with one power point.

For me, it was confirmation that human talents and potential don't always lie in academic subjects and should be valued more and encouraged. He shared his knowledge of the chairs in a very entertaining and engaging way and his rendition of the Churchill speech was, for me, unexpectedly moving. One to ask back in the future.

And moving on into what we hope will be flaming June .....our next talk will take place on **Tuesday 18th June, 10:30am, at the Goods Shed** (doors open at 10am).

The subject will be **"The Tangled Bank"** by **Dr David Bullock**, retired Head of Nature Conservation at the National Trust, and now Chair of the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

A passionate advocate for the preservation of endangered native species, he courted controversy when, with the National Trust, he advised the elimination of rats from Lundy in the early 2000s.



"It was either that or allow the Manx Shearwater, a burrowing seabird, to disappear from the island through predation. In Britain, we have 90 percent of the breeding population on the planet." Protestors held mock funerals and demonstrations for the rats - but, since the project ended, the number of the breeding seabirds has tripled.

The title of his talk for us is taken from the last paragraph of Darwin's "Origin of the Species" and will particularly reference what we should plant in a climate changing world.

Cotswold Life magazine has an interesting article on him online at the link [here](#) if you'd like to know more.

Hope very much you can join us.

Anne Cox [speakers@tetbury3a.org.uk](mailto:speakers@tetbury3a.org.uk)

## Group News

### **Art Appreciation Group**

At the May meeting we started by looking at the history of Quilting and Patchwork. The word "quilting" derives from the Latin "culcita" meaning a stuffed mattress and the origins of the craft have been traced back to the Ancient Egyptians. A quilt consists of a top layer, usually patchwork made out of different fabrics - probably for thrift purposes so older fabrics could be repurposed - a middle layer of padding and a backing.

Although primarily used for bedding, quilted garments worn under armour were also used by 12th century Crusaders and a similar item dated 100 BCE can be found in the St Petersburg Armoury.

Quilting is particularly associated as an American craft as settlers - many from Holland - brought the skills with them where it thrives

particularly in Amish communities. Quilting was also often found amongst slave communities in the US - notably Gee's Bend in Alabama - where groups of women would gather together to quilt using whatever scraps of fabric were available to them. Slaves who escaped could recognise a "friendly" house by a quilt hanging outside. We ended by looking at the amazing collection of really beautiful and colourful quilts that our group member has made over the years.

We followed by looking at some of the work of J M W Turner 1775 - 1851. Although from a relatively modest family background - his father was a barber - he showed artistic talent from an early age, he studied at the Royal Academy from age 14 and also later at the Louvre.

His early work showed accurate observation of architectural or natural detail, but he progressed to more fluid painting of the general effects of colour and light in the seascapes he is perhaps more associated with, and his paintings later inspired the Impressionist Movement.

He was particularly influenced by the open spaces and wide skies of the east coast of Britain, particularly Margate and other seaside places in Kent, and also East Anglia and Northumberland. Typical of this period is the painting "Evening Star" 1830. The painting is a study in light and atmosphere, and at first sight looks almost empty.

The foreground merges to the sea and your eye is drawn to the barely visible, loosely depicted details - a small dog, a boy, the trace of a boat, a ship's mast and the star's reflection on the sand. The barely visible evening star itself almost disappearing into the vast sky.

By Judy Greeman

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

## French Conversation and Games

In May, because of one thing and another, we ended up having all of our three regular meetings in one week, but it's not a hardship in such good company.

We were accompanied at our Conversation session by Neville, on accordion, as we opened with the beautiful chanson "La Mer" followed by reminiscences of holidays by the sea and a fascinating history of projects, starting in the 18th century, for a channel tunnel. That'll never happen ....

At our Games session, after a raucous, on my part, rendition of "Au Pres de Ma Blonde", we played French bingo and our board game, which takes us around the medieval walled city of Carcassonne. On our way, we encounter forfeit cards, inviting us to speak on topics or sending us to the "oubliette" (dungeon) outside the city walls (or to find a toilet after some dodgy prawns) missing a turn.....great for taking our mind off the fact that we're having to say something in French.

Our Film Matinee was "Manon des Sources" the beautiful film of the second part of the Novel by Marcel Pagnol. Despite the lack of subtitles and Provence dialect, we decided to watch and were rewarded by the beautiful scenography, exquisite acting and very touching story of the human condition.....and Anne made us French pastries.

Like several of our u3a groups who use local hostelries, we're having to decamp for the summer. Please therefore contact me through the website for details, if you're interested in joining us.

By Anne Cox

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



## Gardening Group



The visit to the Cotswold Sculpture Park on Monday 13th May was a great success. The venue was a bit of a shot in the dark as the park is not strictly a garden.

However, there were enough trees and woodland plants to keep our interest, and the whole experience was enhanced by being able to wander slowly around the gravel paths discovering different sculptures along the way.

There were lively discussions at practically every exhibit and the group expressed their delight at what turned out to be a very special morning. It is a venue to be recommended, even if you have no intention of buying a sculpture!

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





## The Historic Buildings Group

The Historic Buildings Group undertook 2 visits during May. The first was to **Stanway House** near Cheltenham. The House is a perfect example of a Cotswolds manor and has been lived in by the same family since the 16th century. Its fascinating history includes gossip and events of national interest. It has the lovely feel of a "lived in" home with many family artefacts and treasures on display.



Our very knowledgeable guide explained the family and estate history, pointing out many interesting features that we may have missed without her input. One such feature was postage stamps stuck to the very high ceiling in the drawing room. This was the result of a party trick performed by J M Barrie, who was a frequent visitor to the House.

He would wet the front face of a stamp, stick it to the coin, wet the adhesive side of the stamp, then flick it up towards the ceiling. The stamp would stick to the ceiling if it hit the ceiling sticky side up!



We were blessed with lovely weather so we took the opportunity to walk some of the grounds to view the magnificent gravity-fed water fountain.

It is spring-fed from a reservoir higher up the Cotswold escarpment, and has reached a height of over 300 feet, making it the tallest fountain in Britain (seconded by Witley Court at 121 feet), the tallest gravity fountain in the world (seconded by the Fountain of Fame at La Granja de San

Ildefonso, Segovia, Spain at 154 feet), and the second tallest fountain in Europe, after the 400-foot-high turbine-driven fountain in Lake Geneva.

Following the house & garden tour, we visited the fully restored working watermill. This was a delightful bonus to our visit.



The once-derelict mill has been restored by an enthusiastic team of very talented volunteers and was re-opened by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2009. Its massive 24-foot overshot waterwheel, the 8th largest waterwheel in England, was made by local iron-masters James Savory of Tewkesbury ca.1850 and drives traditional cast-iron machinery and heavy French burr-quartz millstones, to produce stoneground Cotswold flour from wheat grown less than one mile from the mill on the Stanway Estate.



Our second visit was a little closer to home - **Frocester Court**. We've probably all driven past the farm just off Frocester Hill without realising what lies behind the hedges - it's amazing!



Frocester Court is the site of a Roman villa, a 15th-century farmhouse (which Queen Elizabeth I visited in 1574) and Frocester Medieval Estate Barn. Our guide was Arthur Price, who farms the land, and he's an expert on building stone archaeology. Arthur and his father have uncovered Stone Age axe heads from Cornwall; pre-Roman coins made by the Dobunni tribe in nearby Bagendon; and more than a ton-and-a-half of pottery, much of it Roman.

The barn is one of the most important barns in England and one of the best preserved. It was built shortly before 1300, with some 19th-century alterations. The huge roof is supported on an internal cruck frame raised on stone bases. At one end is a raised platform for milling machinery, inserted in the 19th century. The roof had to be replaced after a fire in the early 16th century. The tiles are from Tetbury!

We saw most of the 12 or so Grade 1 or 2 listed buildings on site, including the gatehouse commemorating Elizabeth I visit, and the Court House.

Arthur's enthusiasm for history and archaeology was infectious. Like his father (who was awarded an MBE for his services to archaeology), even more impressive as it's all self-taught. It was a very memorable visit.

The trip was very popular, so we've pencilled in another visit for late September - the exact date to be arranged. Arthur farms 7 days/week so how he finds time to farm, carry out his research, repair and maintain 12 listed buildings, carry out his archaeological research and host tours is a mystery!

Our next scheduled visit is to Sezincote; arrangements have been finalised for this trip. Our full programme can be found here: <https://tetburyu3a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Hist-Buildings.pdf>

By David Smith - Joint Organiser Historic Buildings Group.  
[historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:historicbuildings@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Playreading Groups**

Groups one and two both read "Deadly Nightcap" by Frances Durbridge on April 29th and May 6th respectively. With echoes of "Gaslight" by Patrick Hamilton (another play about a husband trying to drive his wife mad), "Deadly Nightcap" moves the action from Victorian terrace house thriller to 1980's country home whodunnit. The author takes us right back to his well known "Paul Temple" plays for the BBC with a story littered with clues that developed into a surprise ending which satisfied our readers. The play took about three hours to read but left time for tea and discussion afterwards.

Group one is now full but group two (Meets at 2pm on first Monday of the month) has room for one more member. We could do with a man!

By Jeremy North  
[playreading1@tetburyu3a.org.uk](mailto:playreading1@tetburyu3a.org.uk)

## **Ukulele Group (T'UKEs)**

My goodness we T'UKERS are kept busy.....what with practising, learning new songs, performing a repeat gig at Kingsley house and another gig for a very enthusiastic audience at Christ Church. Life 'on the road' is never boring. Our newbies have now become oldies, and we are passing on requests from prospective new members to Malmesbury u3a ukulele group, as our group is now full. Our success is largely due to the dedication of Mike Hoskin who cajoles and leads us every week. The week he was on holiday made us realise how lucky we all were to have both him and Sue on board!

By Sally Hadley

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

## **Wine Tasting Groups**

The two wine groups are combining for an evening at Larkhill vineyard in Tetbury on 2nd July 2 at 18.00.

There will be a simple supper of bread, cheese and cold meats, an opportunity to buy and taste Larkhill wines, a welcome house fizz and wine group favourites.

The maximum number will be 20, and there are a few spare places available for u3a members (and guests). Please contact me, [robinvoice@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:robinvoice@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone on 01453 834032 if you'd like to join us.

Cost to be confirmed around £15/head.

By Robin Voice

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



And finally .....The deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is Monday 17th June. Keep those reports coming in!

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

## 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 <https://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](#)

### List of future Online Learning Events

On-line Event	Date and Time
Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie - May	Tuesday, May 28th 3:30 - 4:30pm
Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Five: Brain, Pain and Anaesthetics	Wednesday, May 29th 2 - 3:30pm
Rob Eastaway Talk - Much Ado About Numbers	Friday, May 31st 2 - 3pm
Driving on country roads, with IAM RoadSmart	Friday, May 31st 2 - 3pm
Mindfulness and Meditation Series	June 3 <sup>rd</sup> to July 8 <sup>th</sup> (6 weeks) 11am - 12:15pm
Taking revenge: Artemisia Gentileschi's Quest for Justice	Tuesday, June 4th · 10 - 11am

Flight Inspirations Aviation Group Meeting: Sir Geoffrey de Havilland	Tuesday, June 4th · 10am - 12pm
AI Chatbots, asking the right questions	Wednesday, June 5th · 10 - 11:30am
Making plans for the future from home, for free	Wednesday, June 5 · 2 - 3pm
Help Us Remember with the War Memorials Register	Friday, June 7th 2 - 3:30pm
Laughter Yoga with Judith	Wednesday June 12th 10 - 11am
Vaccines	Wednesday, June 12th · 10 - 11:30am
London 2012 - A Games Maker's Story	Friday, June 14th · 2 - 3pm
Expert tips and Essential Apps for Effortless Online Living	Tuesday, June 18th · 2 - 3pm
Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Six: Your Spinal Cord	Wednesday, June 19th · 2 - 3:30pm
Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: June	Thursday, June 20th · 10 - 11am
The Olympics: From Olympia, via Much Wenlock to the World	Thursday, June 20th · 2 - 3:15pm
Artificial Intelligence News: June	Friday, June 21st · 9:30am - 12:30pm
Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie - June	Tuesday, June 25th · 3:30 - 4:30pm
Celestial marvels: Demystifying the Cosmos	Wednesday, June 26th · 11:30am - 12:30pm
Darkness on the Edge of Town: Bruce Springsteen and the American dream	Thursday, June 27th · 2 - 3:30pm



## **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. 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](#)