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**GLOUCESTER
& DISTRICT**

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Reg. Charity No. 1016356

Lone Tree: Friday walk on Cleeve Common, *Anthea Bircher*

NEWSLETTER

**Spring 2025
Issue No. 386**

Next Edition: Summer 2025

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GLOUCESTER u3a TRAVEL
STUDY VISIT TO WADDESDON MANOR, NEAR AYLESBURY, BUGKS
WEDNESDAY 26th MARCH, 2025 (NB this is the fourth Wednesday)

This is a u3a Gloucester day trip open to all members.

Waddesdon Manor, built in the French Renaissance style for the Rothschild family who then gave the Manor to the National Trust in 1957.

The Rothschilds were great collectors and the Manor is full of great furniture, porcelain, paintings, etc. The grounds, when purchased by Ferdinand de Rothschild in 1874 were entirely bare. Within 6 years the area had been completely transformed. Since 1989, through a far reaching programme of restoration and innovation the garden has recaptured the high standards and appearance of the 19th century original.

There is a gourmet food shop and restaurant together with a wine warehouse at the Stables, plus Gift Shop, Plant Centre, and much to see in the grounds.

COST OF VISIT: £23.00 National Trust members
£43.00 non National Trust members

This includes entrance to Waddesdon Manor and Gardens, the cost of the coach and the driver's tip.

PICK UP TIMES

Westgate Street	8.45 am		
Brunswick Road	8.50 am	London Road	8.55 am
Royal Oak	9.05 am	Top Shop	9.10 am

If you do not know where these pick up points are, please contact me.

We hope to arrive by 11.00 and aim to leave at 3.30 arriving in Gloucester around 5.30, traffic permitting.

We hope you will come along and join us for what promises to be a very enjoyable day out.

Cheques should be made payable to u3a Gloucester. Please send your cheque, together with the booking slip to:-

Mary Kitchen, 45 Gambier Parry Gardens, Gloucester, GL2 9RD.

Tel No: 01452 419301

Mobile on the day: 07730 049968

REPLIES NO LATER THAN: 1st MARCH, 2025

STUDY VISIT TO WADDESDON MANOR,
WEDNESDAY 26th MARCH, 2025

FROM: TEL NO:

MEMBERSHIP NO: MOBILE NO:

AMOUNT SENT: PICK UP POINT:

NATIONAL TRUST MEMBER YES / NO

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Contact Name: Tel No:

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

My first few months as chair have been busy and involved quite a steep learning curve. Fortunately everyone has been very supportive. I took over from Denis just as the Third Age Trust, the charitable company providing administrative and educational support to all the u3as in the country, was proposing a major structural change to its organization. At the AGM in October, which I attended on your behalf through Zoom, the change was agreed. Currently the board consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and a representative for each of the 12 u3a regions, all of whom are trustees for the charity. The new structure will include a smaller Board, focusing on the governance of the Trust, and a Council, responsible for representing the views and ideas of the wider u3a membership. The transfer to the new structure will take place in April 2025.

The Council will be larger than the existing Board, allowing the number of regional representatives to be increased. Their role will be to ensure that the views of local u3as are heard and fed into the strategy of the Trust. This includes whether and how the Trust should campaign on issues of concern to its members. The current board member for the South West, Susan Parker, will serve out the remainder of her existing term. She will be joined by a second South West member, for whom I will be vote on your behalf. Any member of a u3a in the South West is eligible to stand, so let the committee know, if you're interested. When our regional representatives consult us about issues, it'd be good to know what you think. So, beware of me approaching

you over coffee before our monthly meetings with a gleam in my eye!

After Xmas I'll be preparing a talk on Orchids for the Horticultural Group, which restarts its meetings in February. I was a member of the Cheltenham and District Orchid Society for 2 decades and often used to man the Information Stand at its Annual Shows. The core of the talk will be a FAQ on the care of orchids, based on that experience. I also hope to demonstrate the range and beauty of the world's orchids, beyond what we find in the local supermarket.

As I write this in early December, the lights on my neighbours' houses are beginning to brighten the dark nights and I'm looking forward to the various events I'll be attending to celebrate the season. I hope to see and extend festive greetings in person to many of you at the choir concert at St Mary de Crypt.

I hope you all have a very Merry Xmas and a peaceful, happy, and stimulating 2025.

Jan

NEW MEMBERS MEETING

The meeting will be held on **Monday, February 3, 2025, at 10.30** in **Brunswick Baptist Church**, Southgate Street.

We would like to invite new and recent members to come to the meeting, where you will have the opportunity to talk to some of our group leaders and to meet other new members.

Refreshments will be provided as an added incentive so do come along! Potential new members are also welcome to attend, so please let your

friends and family know about the meeting.

If there isn't a group for a subject you are interested in, please let us know at the meeting and it may be possible to start up a new group.

Babs Morgan and Bridget Berrecloth

MONTHLY MEETINGS 2025

The Monthly Meetings are held in the **Brunswick Baptist Church** in Southgate Street, Gloucester. The **doors open at 10.00** and Thelma Miller and her Hospitality Team will be on hand to serve hot drinks. The **meetings begin at 10.30.**

Monday, January 27 – Paul Barnet will remind us of the dreadful fire which wiped out the *Piper Alpha gas platform*.

Monday, February 24 – Stephen Rowley will tell us about some *Gloucestershire Folk Tales*. In October, 2022 he gave an interesting talk about Charlie Wheatstone's Clever Tricks so we should have another interesting morning.

Monday, March 24 – For those members who were disappointed not to be joining a Probus talk about *the missing link in the A419 at the Air Balloon Roundabout*, do not fret. I have booked Keir Construction to enlighten us on the changes at this function and progress to date.

Monday, April 28 – “Uncle Bill, Britain's forgotten Hero – Field Marshall William Slim” by Ashley Jones. This is the speaker who told us about Sir Douglas Bader

Bristol born Field Marshall, Viscount William Slim known affectionately as “Uncle Bill” by the 14th “Forgotten”

Army in the bitterly fought Burma campaign, recovering from the 1000 mile retreat from Burma to India only to return 2 years later to defeat the Japanese in the steaming jungles of South East Asia. The talk will remind us of his humble beginnings, early military career and then Governor General of Australia as well as high points of his second world war successes.

Monday, May 19 – talk by Nigel Thompson outlining the *Blue Plaque holders in Gloucestershire* including Dr Edward Wilson, Naturalist and Antarctic explorer and his wife Oriana, Naturalist, and Sir Arthur “Bomber” Harris, RAF WW2.

Monday, June 23 – *The Gloucester u3a Choir* will return to entertain us under their Director of Music, John Merrick ably accompanied by Elvin Young on the piano.

Monday, July 28 – AGM, **2.00**, further details regarding agenda to follow.

Monday, August 18 – *Subs and Clubs*, this meeting is on 3rd Monday due to Summer Bank Holiday. Again, meeting starts at **2.00**. This is an opportunity to pay your subscriptions and learn what the groups have to offer in the coming year.



GROUP REPORTS

BOOK CLUB

There are a small number of spaces for book lovers to join the Book Club which meets on the **third Tuesday** of the month at **10.30 in Longlevens Library**. If you are interested, please contact me for more information at membershipsec@u3agloucester.co.uk

Babs Morgan

CONCERT GROUP

Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Unfortunately for those who were interested, there was little response for the January suggestion for a concert in Birmingham to cheer us up in the winter. However, the next concert booked is **March 2 at 3.00 in the Town Hall Birmingham** which is again a lovely venue. It will be Kazuki conducting again so we are in for a treat. It includes the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Brass and Percussion. The programme is as follows: *"Gade's Tzigane is probably the most famous tango in the world; whilst the fabulous music from Piazzola's tango-opera Maria de Buenos Aires deserves to be better known. Eliasson's Kimmo is a wild ride for trumpet and percussion before CBSO brass and percussion combine for Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition."* I have 49 seats reserved so far, so first come first served. Also a coach is booked. The entire programme including interval is just under two hours.

Once again many thanks to all those who have enjoyed the concerts this year and have supported the concert group and, hopefully, you will do so in the future.

Rosemary Canning



G&D u3a members at the John Rutter Christmas Celebration at the Royal Albert Hall - an annual event enjoyed by all.

ENJOYING MUSIC

This meeting carries on into the new year with same particulars, viz every **second Tuesday** of each month at **10.30** in the **Congregational Church Hall** in St Mary's Street.

If you are a lover of music of any type and have not attended before, please come along and give it a try. A new programme is made up each month by members or myself and consists of all types of music. Members tastes vary so you never know what you will hear. An hour's worth out of the house and a chat - what's not to like? So, promise yourself that you will come along in the new year.

To all the regulars: many thanks for coming along and please carry on attending.

Clive Harper 01452 533619

FOLK BAND

Third Age Folk has met weekly this term and been delighted to welcome new members on a variety of instruments, including from other branches in the area. We're developing our relationship with a particular local care home and have also played at diverse venues, such as The Folk and (forthcoming) the café at Prinknash Abbey.



Sarah Maidlow

HORTICULTURE GROUP

Meetings will be held on the **first Wednesday** of the Month **in the Cinema at the Guildhall** unless otherwise stated. The meetings will start at **10.30** but the café area is open for hot drinks from 10.00.

January NO meeting

February 5 – Jan Broadway, Chair and new Group Leader, talking about *Orchids*

March 5 – Catherine Williams, *Planting and Plant Care*

April 2 – Study visit to *Cotswold Farm at Duntisbourne Abbots* (self drive). Further details available shortly.

May 7 – Marion Stainton, *For the love of blue poppies*.

June 4 – Carl Sadler, *Woodsman's World, 'Besoms and Gypsy Flowers'*.

July 2 – *Study Visit by coach to John's Garden, Ashwood Nurseries, Kingswinford*. Further details available shortly.

September 3 – Nathalie Mignotte, *My Holiday in Japan*

October 1 – Roger Umpelby will talk about *bugs, the good, the bad and the ugly*

November 5 – Duncan Coombs, Pershore Lecturer, *Winter colour and interest in the garden*

December – Christmas Social, venue and details available nearer to the date.

Ideas for future outings and talks would be very welcome.

Jan Broadway, Carol Tarbox & Mary Kitchen

LOCAL HISTORY

It was gratifying to have such large attendances at our last two talks and we hope everyone found them enjoyable and stimulating.

We have arranged the following talks which we hope you will enjoy. They take place at **10.30 in the Guildhall cinema** apart from the January talk which is in the Main Hall.

Tuesday, January 28 – Tony Roberts will be giving a talk on 'Community Archaeological Excavations in Gloucestershire during 2024'. Tony belongs to Archeoscan, which provides opportunities for public involvement in archaeology.

Tuesday, February 25 – Our speaker is Mary Moxham who is a Blue Badge guide and will be talking about 'Windsor Castle'. The talk was cancelled due to Covid, so we are pleased that it can now take place.

Tuesday, March 25 TBC

Tuesday, April 29 – Richard Goddard will be talking about 'Berkeley Castle'. He spoke about the Battle of Tewkesbury at a recent Monthly Meeting which was well received so we are delighted that he is coming back.

Monday, June 30 – Now for something completely different! We have arranged *a leisurely promenade through Cheltenham* with Captain Henry Skillicorne, aka Phil Collins who has given us entertaining talks in the past. He will regale us with stories of famous people who have visited and lived in the town and then take us to The New Club for a delicious homemade tea. Booking Forms will be available at the next meetings.

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Marian, Babs and Dave

MAHJONG

Once again, it is great to have welcomed more new members to our twice monthly group, most of whom have never played before, so don't let that stop you from joining us.

We meet on the **2nd and 4th Wednesday** of the month at **St Mary de Crypt**, Southgate St from **2.00-4.00**

Our first meeting in the New Year will be **January 8**.

By the time you read this, Xmas will be upon us, so I will take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Xmas and a Healthy, Peaceful New Year.

Pippa Zadeh

POETRY GROUP

We've met face-to-face at The Folk this term to read and discuss work by John Betjeman, Stevie Smith and her female contemporaries, and (upcoming) Dylan Thomas. Next term we begin with WWII poets, **January 24**. We've also started our winter season online meetings, on the last Friday of each month, for which invitations to participate are sent to all members.

Cedric Pickin, a published poet among our members, kindly sent the following for inclusion:

Threshold

From the High Street into the churchyard,
the path passes the graves until,
by the high brick wall of the vicarage,
it becomes a gravel track, as it meets
the grassed expanse leading to the lake:
but not before a brook must be
crossed,
for which liminal, an old wooden
footbridge
supports the few moments you wish
to dwell, lean and reflect.

SCRABBLE GROUP

The Scrabble group is currently meeting, with the agreement of management, in the Wetherspoons pub **The Regal in Kings Square**, which is not ideal but better than nothing. We left the Guildhall because of cost and were due to move to the Robert Raikes pub but unfortunately it appears to be shut at present. I will update you if we have any further change of premises.

Janis Thompson

SINGING TOGETHER

A group devoted to Music: members are invited to come along **every third Tuesday** of each month to the **Congregational Church Hall** in St Mary's St **at 10.30**. Here you will be able not only to hear songs but also see the lyrics projected onto a screen. The songs are mainly from the 60s/70s/80s and are chosen at random from a list that has been created (around about 144 songs at present). I can guarantee that you will recognise them and know the words to the first verse but no more, hence the projections. Singing is not compulsory but is difficult to resist either out loud or to yourself as you will find out.

Please note that this is not a choir but is an opportunity for us "non singers" to pretend that we can, that's not in the bathroom! So, do come along and give it a try for an hours entertainment.

To those who are regulars, thanks and please continue to come along. I will do my best to eliminate the problems that seem to crop up from time to time!

Best Regards
Clive Harper 01452 522619

SOCIAL CYCLING

It's been a quiet time for the social cycling group with poor weather playing havoc with the planned rides. However we are nothing if not persistent. Even over the winter there can be pleasant days when it's great to get out in the fresh air, and enjoy the beautiful countryside we're lucky enough to live near. There will be some shorter rides after Christmas to help burn off the

mince pies. If you're interested in joining us and are not currently in the group then please sign up via the website or get in touch - again via the website - if you have any questions.

Simon Pollington

SOCIAL EVENTS

The Social Events group continues to thrive as we celebrate our first anniversary. I thank all the group members for supporting the events that have been arranged, and for being such a friendly bunch!

This term we have had a variety of events organised by Triss including theatre, music, cinema, coffee meet-ups and a wine bar singalong. The venues are all local - so accessible from the town centre - and take place at a variety of times of the day and week. Many are in iconic or historic Gloucester buildings. Clive has also organised trips to places outside of the city centre including Beckford Silk Mill.

[*Message from Clive:* Visits are coming up in the new year. Please look at the website for more information on these; note that if you have already have your name on a list that I will be in touch soon with details.]

We are looking forward to our Christmas lunch in Dr Foster on 19th December which will be attended by 30 u3a members.

This group is perfect for members to get to know each other - and also for those who like to get out but don't want to go alone. To find out when and where events take place please contact one of the group organisers through the Gloucester u3a website and we will add

you to the group. You will then be sent a monthly email with all the details.

Triss Pollington and Clive Harper

STEAM RAILWAY

Hello everybody,

Unfortunately, due to me going on holiday shortly and being unable to locate any speakers, we do not have any more meetings this year. However the good news is that we have two speakers already booked for January and March next year, so please put the following dates in your 2025 diary.

Wednesday, January 22. David Postle from the *Kidderminster Railway Museum* will be our speaker. He is in the process of compiling a new presentation and I will send out further details early in January. Some of you will remember that David came to speak to us a while ago about the history of the Severn Valley Railway which was of great interest to us all.

Tuesday March 25 Ian Boskett will be our guest speaker once again. You may well remember Ian previously came and spoke to us about the Great Train Robbery which was not only most informative but also contained some very humorous details and facts. The subject this time will be entitled *A Walk Down Memory Lane*. This will include photographs along with detailed historical information about local railway stations and buildings that have been lost over the years.

Both of these meetings will be in the **cinema at the Guildhall starting at 2.00.**

May I thank you all for supporting the Steam Railway Group through 2024 and

I look forward to putting together further talks and our annual 'day out' in 2025. Over the 11 years that the group has been up and running it is most apparent that so many of our members still have some wonderful memories of Steam Railways in the UK.

Meanwhile an early MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all.

Regards
John

TRAVEL GROUP

The programme of talks for 2025, all of which will be held in the **Cinema at the Guild Hall** starting at 10.30, are as follows:

January 15 – Peter Berry will talk about *sub zero China*

February 19 – Arthur Ball will tell us about *Botswana*

March 19 – *Study Visit to Waddesdon Manor*, home of the Lord Rothschild but now a National Trust property. Please see booking form included in this Newsletter.

April 16 – *Missionary Work in Japan*

Thursday - Monday, May 1-5 – *Residential holiday in Torquay.*

June 18 – *Study Visit to Rodmarton House*, near Tetbury. Prices and further details together with booking forms will be available after Christmas.

Best wishes
Carol Wheeler and Mary Kitchen

WALKERS

33 members attended the Wednesday and Friday Walkers Groups Christmas

Meal at The Fountain Inn, which was enjoyed by all. Beforehand, Sue Bartlett, in her guise as a Civic Trust Guide, gave us a very informative tour of Gloucester Docks.

Charles Martin



CURRENT AFFAIRS & CORKS

The Current Affairs group is currently in abeyance due to a lack of members. So, if you fancy an hour's chat about items currently in the News, and there's plenty at the moment is there not, please contact me and see if we can resurrect the meeting. Look out for e-mails ref this.

Thanks again for those members who have brought in corks for re-cycling throughout the year.

All the best
Clive Harper 01452 522619



GROUP MEETING DAYS & TIMES

DAY	MORNING	AFTERNOON
Monday	German Improvers (2 & 4) Recorders (2 & 4) MONTHLY MEETING (4)	Badminton Bridge {Improvers} Folk Band
Tuesday	Book Club (3) Chess (3) Committee Meeting (1) Enjoying Music (2) Local History (Last) Singing Together (3)	[BellyBollyHula & Fun] Play Reading I (4) Scrabble (2 & 4)
Wednesday	French (2 & 4) Horticulture (1) Rummikub Club (2) Travel (3) Walkers {Wednesday} (Last)	Bridge Mahjong (2 & 4) Piano Duets (1)
Thursday	Table Tennis {Beginners} Current Affairs (1)	Art Circle Dancing (1 & 3) [Cryptic Crosswords] Benvenuti in Italia (2 & 4)
Friday	Electronics (1) Poetry Group (3/4 & Last) Table Tennis {Intermediate} Walkers {Friday} (3)	Choir
Various (any time)	Concert Group Kayaking Social Cycling	Social Events & Vists Steam Railway [Theatre]

Key:

() Week in the month the group *usually* meets

[] Group currently in abeyance. Please contact the Groups Co-ordinator if you are interested in re-starting it.

Picture acknowledgments: Thanks to Anthea Bircher for our cover picture, Roz Watts for her Christmas card designs on p2, and Jean Williams for her flowers placed here.

GROUP INFORMATION - this does not appear on the website

GROUP	VENUE	TIME	GROUP LEADER
Art Group	HMCH	1.30	Lesley Brain (01452 306671)
Badminton	CS	6.00	Greg Barton (07980 871323)
BellyBollyHula & Fun	NH	-	<i>in abeyance</i>
Book Club	LL	10.30	Barbara Morgan (540673)
Bridge	HCC	1.30	Phil McLellan (01452 616305 07512 385844)
Bridge (Improvers)	HCC	1.30	Dorothy Farley (713883)
Chess	-	10.30	Ian Smith (07866 729493)
Choir	SMCC	1.30	John Merrick (504376)
Circle Dancing	HCC	1.30	Anne Bostock (539937)
Concert Group	var	-	Rosemary Canning
Cryptic Crosswords	MDLH	2.00	Sue Bartlett (371122) <i>in abeyance</i>
Current Affairs	GH	10.30	Clive Harper
Electronics & Robotics	-	10.00	Keith Bostock (539937)
Enjoying Music	SMCC	10.30	Clive Harper (522619) / Barbara Morgan (540673)
Folk Band	LMC	2.00	Sarah Maidlow (07479 580580 – TXT Only)
French	NH	10.30	Jeremy Furtado
German (Improvers)	GH	10.30	Sue Parker (728331)
Horticulture	GH	10.30	Jan Broadway (07768 131852)
Italian <i>Benvenuti in Italia</i>	RR	2.00	Gaia Parfitt (07579 793709)
Kayaking	var	-	Pamela Moss mosspeg@icloud.com
Local History	GH	10.30	Marian & David Carroll (424927) / Barbara Morgan (540673)
Mahjong	SMdC	2.00	Pippa Zadeh (07792 914741)
MONTHLY MEETING	GH	10.30	Mary Kitchen (419301)
Piano Duets	-	1.30	Elizabeth Carr (501314)
Play Reading I	-	2.00	Ian Smith (07866 729493)
Poetry Group	TF	10.30	Sarah Maidlow (07479 580580 – TXT Only)
Recorder	MBC	10.00	John Thorn (616326)
Rummikub	CCC	10.00	Ken Beedon (382977)
Scrabble	TR	1.30	Janis Thompson (424574)
Singing Together	SMCC	10.30	Clive Harper (522619)
Social Cycling	var	-	Simon Pollington (07544 922554)
Social Events	var	-	Triss Pollington (07949 617954)
Steam Railways	GH	2.00	John Smith (536270)
Table Tennis (Beginners)	LCC	11.00	Mary Kitchen (419301)
Table Tennis (Intermediate)	HMCH	10.00	Dave Ginman (01452 505781)
Theatre	var	-	<i>in abeyance</i>
Travel	GH	10.30	Carol Wheeler (690162)
Vists	-	-	Clive Harper (522619)
Walkers - Friday	-	10.00	Charles Martin (07914 004642)
Walkers - Wednesday	-	10.00	Sue Bartlett (371122)

Members who are considering joining a group should always contact the Group Leader before first attending.

VENUES

BBC	Brunswick Baptist Church, Southgate St	GL1 2DR	MBC	Matson Baptist Church	GL4 6LA
CCC	Churchdown Community Centre	GL3 2JH	MDLH	St Mary de Lode, Archdeacon St.	GL1 1TP
CS	Crypt School	GL2 5AE	NH	Northgate Hall, St John's Lane	GL1 2AN
GH	Guildhall	GL1 1NS	RR	Robert Raikes	GL1 2DR
HCC	Hucclecote Community Centre	GL3 3RT	SMCC	St Mary's Congregational Church	GL1 2QS
HMCH	Highnam Community Centre	GL2 8DG	SMdC	St Mary de Crypt, Southgate St.	GL1 1TP
LCC	Longlevens Community Centre	GL2 0AJ	TF	The Folk, 99-101 Westgate St	GL1 2PG
LL	Longlevens Library	GL2 0AJ	TR	The Regal, St Aldate's St	GL1 1RP
LMC	Lonsdale Road Methodist Church	GL2 0AT	var	various locations	

COMMITTEE MEMBERS + other responsibilities

Chair	Jan Broadway 07768 131852 chairman@u3agloucester.co.uk	Groups Co-ordinator	Bridget Berrecloth groupscoord@u3agloucester.co.uk
Vice Chair & Membership Sec	Barbara Morgan 540673 membershipsec@u3agloucester.co.uk	Monthly Meetings Organiser	Mary Kitchen 419301 marytaffykitchen@yahoo.co.uk
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