



u3a

**learn,
laugh,
live**

**GLOUCESTER
& DISTRICT**

[www.u3asites.org.uk/
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Reg. Charity No. 1016356

Coopers Hill Wood, Anthea Bircher

NEWSLETTER

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

When I move next year, I'm going to be living near my sister for the first time in more than four decades. We do not look alike and have totally different personalities. She was always into home and family, while I was the academic career woman. But, ever since sharing a bedroom as children, we have always been close. We were recently discussing local clubs and organizations we might join together. She remarked that I would probably be on the committee within a few months; while, I know, she would be in the background, helping out when asked, but not pushing herself forward.

All this is a long winded way of introducing an appeal to members. As a new year approaches, Gloucester u3a is in dire need of people to step forward to help run our society and to ensure that we can maintain an extensive range of activities for our members. Elsewhere in the newsletter [immediately below] you will see a request for members to join the committee. If you lack previous experience, you might feel that becoming Chair, Treasurer or Secretary (all of which will be needed at the next AGM) is rather daunting. If so, you could join as a member without portfolio – although we would naturally hope, that you might take on a formal role in the future. You can talk to any existing or past committee member, to find out more about what is involved.

We also need volunteers to help run some of our popular, long standing groups. There will sadly be no further trips to concerts, unless and until someone steps forward to replace Rosemary Canning as group leader. I know Rosemary will be a very hard act to follow, but she is willing to assist her

successor and has a wealth of information to pass on. The task might look less daunting, if 2 or 3 people could share it.

Carol Wheeler is stepping down from Travel after years of sterling service, while Horticulture will need a new leader when I move to Buckinghamshire next year. Talks and trips for both groups have been arranged for the first half of 2026, but there will be nothing thereafter unless we are replaced. Every u3a group must have a designated leader. It is also helpful to have people volunteer to help the leader run a group, lightening the load and allowing more activities to be arranged. Do please consider stepping forward to help us maintain a vibrant and interesting programme of activities. I am sure I speak for our group leaders as a whole, when I say that all offers of assistance are welcome.

To close, I wish you all a very Merry Xmas and a peaceful, happy, and stimulating 2026.

Jan

THE COMMITTEE

Gloucester & District u3a Committee is made up of 7 members at the moment although it is possible and indeed better to have a full Committee of about 12. As we are a charity under the umbrella of the Third Age Trust our Committee members are mostly Trustees. At our AGM next July three Committee Officers will be stepping down. Our u3a will not be able to continue unless these Officers are replaced. We will need a Chairman, a Treasurer and a Business Secretary. These positions can be shared.

It is very enjoyable, satisfying and interesting being a Trustee and Committee member. Although we all have our own responsibilities we help each other in many tasks. We meet usually once a month to discuss the finances and to make arrangements for monthly meetings etc. Also of course there are a number of people who are important in the running of our u3a such as our Website Manager and our Welfare Team to name just two.

We are asking members to consider joining the Committee in the New Year in any way they might be able to help. New ideas are always welcome. Joining soon means that new committee members would be able to 'shadow' current Officers and pick up information and routines before the AGM in July. Please do consider joining us. You can contact any Committee member to get more information or email or call our Chairman Jan xxxxx or Secretary Gillian xxxxx .

CONTACT TEAM (WELFARE)

I am your point of contact for members' welfare so please let me know if someone is ill, has been (or is) in hospital or suffers a bereavement as I send cards on behalf of our u3a. It would also be of help if you can tell me to which groups they belong.

MORE HELP NEEDED My team also sign in members and provide refreshments at Monthly Meetings which can get very busy. I am looking to recruit some extra members for the team. Please contact me if you think you can help.

Thelma Miller (xxxxx)
or xxxxx

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Monthly Meetings are held in the **Brunswick Baptist Church** in Southgate Street, Gloucester. Entrance fee is £1. Please bring the correct change. 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**.

2026

Monday, January 26 – Nigel Thompson will take us on a tour of the *Blue Plaques in Gloucester* and detail their accomplishments

Monday, February 23 – Anthony Gerrard will give information on the *work of the RNLI*

Monday, March 23 – Alan Jones, a retired Policeman will share humorous anecdotes of his time in the Warwickshire Force and in India and working for the BBC. Naturally his talk is entitled "*A Policeman's Lot*"

Monday, April 27 – Peter Gill will take us through some of the *songs of Tom Lehrer*.

Monday, May 18 – Ashley Jones will tell us about the *History of the Dicken Medal*, now considered to be the VC for animals

Monday, June 22 – 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 27 – AGM - This meeting starts at 2.00: further details to follow.

Monday, August 24 – *Subs and Clubs*: this meeting is on 4th Monday as usual as there are 5 Mondays in August. (The Summer Bank Holiday falls on Monday, August 31.)

Again this 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.

Monday, September 28 – David Head, *5 new and most weird places on the planet*

Monday, October 26 – Robert Bryant will return to show us more slides of *Gardens here and there in England*

Monday, November 23 – Paul Barnet, another return speaker who is walking “*In the footsteps of heroes*”

Monday, December (date and venue to be confirmed) – The *Gloucester u3a Choir* will return to entertain us under their Director of Music, John Merrick, ably accompanied by Elvin Young on the piano..

NEW MEMBERS MEETING

The meeting will take place on **Monday, February 2, 10.30** in **Brunswick Baptist Church**, Southgate Street, Gloucester. Refreshments served from 10.00.

We would like to invite all new and recent members to come to the meeting, where you will have the opportunity to talk to some of the Group Leaders of the many groups that we have in Gloucester u3a and also to meet other new members.

Potential new members are 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 a new group.

Babs Morgan and Bridget Berrecloth

PARK VIEW CARE HOME

The Park View Care Home in Southgate Street has a very nice quiet room at the back of the building (looking out onto their garden) which can accommodate approximately 15 people and is offering this for the use of u3a **FREE OF CHARGE**. The Manager asks that any of their residents who are able and interested be allowed to join the u3a Group using this facility. The Care Home would enrol them in the u3a. There is no parking at the Care Home. Parking would need to be at the Gloucester Docks or Peel Centre car parks. If this is of interest please contact our Groups Coordinator, Bridget, for more information.

NEW GROUPS

Discussion is underway about beginning a Crochet Group. Anyone interested should contact Bridget (Groups Coordinator) for the time being.

DAY VISITS TO LOCAL SITES

I wish to inform all members that I am not organising further day visits to local sites in 2026. These include The Javelin Park Waste Site, Laithwaites Winery, Beckford Silk Mills, The Bugatti Museum, and The Morgan factory.

I have enjoyed doing them over the last two or three years up until now, but I have decided that it has just become too much for me to handle properly. I very much hope that other Members will volunteer to take on some or all these interesting days out. I will pass on information to anyone who wishes to contact me with the names of contacts to help them.

With my thanks for all those who have attended some or all of these events. I will carry on with my Enjoying Music and Singing Together Music Groups. Best regards,

Clive Harper xxxxx
xxxxx

GROUP REPORTS

ART GROUP

Want to paint or draw? Think you can't? Well, we think you can! The u3a Art Group meets every week at the Community Centre in Highnam on **Thursdays** from **1.30-3.30**. (You will need transport unless, of course, you live in the village as, unfortunately, the buses do not tie up with our meeting times).

We use most media – watercolour, pastels, pencil, coloured pencil, acrylic etc – but not oils. We have a wide range of abilities from beginners to very competent and I do not think there is anyone who has not improved since joining the group.

Please contact me through the link to get more information and we'll have a chat about the way we work, what you will need to bring with you etc and arrange a suitable date to visit us.

Lesley Brain Art Group Leader

BRIDGE IMPROVERS

We are a small, friendly group who enjoy playing bridge and continue to learn and hopefully improve every week. There is always time to discuss hands at the end of a game. If you know the rules and have some experience of the game of bridge, however small, then please come and join us on a **Monday**

afternoon at the Hucclecote Community Centre. If you need any further information then please phone me,

Dorothy Farley xxxxxx

CIRCLE DANCE

I would like to start by saying how proud I am of our lovely group of dancers, as despite there being a lot of absences due to illness and clashing appointments on our most recent class, we still collected an amazing £60.00 for the Children In Need Appeal! Well done all of you!

As I write this update the temperature outside has suddenly dropped into something more seasonal, which feels appropriate since the Christmas lights have been turned on in Gloucester and the Christmas Market on the Quays is in full swing! This helps me to focus on planning our dance programmes for the final classes of 2025 when we prepare for Christmas by dancing to traditional Christmas music with some silly, party numbers thrown into the mix.

We will be dancing in the main hall of the Hucclecote Community Centre on **December 18th** and new members are welcome to come and join us.

However if you fancy giving Circle Dance a try but have too much to cram in before Christmas, we would love to see you at our first session of 2026 which will be on **January 15th**.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy Festive Season.

Anne Bostock

ENJOYING MUSIC

Are you aware that on the **2nd Tuesday** of each month, beginning at

10.30, there is an opportunity to listen to an hour's worth of music chosen by a member of this group? It can be of any type from Classical to Jazz or something in between. Always a surprise and maybe something that you would not normally listen to but you will still enjoy on the day. So, make your way to the Congregational Church in St Mary's St for a coffee or tea and chat and listen all for just £2.00. Let's see if we can increase the number of attendees for an even better time.

Regards, *Clive*

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

This summer we started a new family history group, which meets on the **first and third Tuesday** of the month at the Family History Society, Heritage Hub, Alvin Street, between 2.00 to 4.00. There is no charge for the group, but Gloucester Family History Society are happy to accept donations for the use of their facilities. There is also a kitchen where you can help yourself to drinks for a small donation too. At the present time there are about 12 people in the group and, due to the availability of computers and staff to help, I am unable to add any more people to the group. If you are interested in going on a waiting list, then please email your name and contact information to

xxxxxx

FOLK BAND

Unusually, we started the Autumn term early so as to be prepared to participate in the History Festival, playing music with local connections at St Mary deCrypt; good to have support from branch members, thank you. Since then we've joined in Apple Day at The Folk

and recently begun a series of Christmas gigs around the city as well as celebrating Denis's 90th Birthday!



Potential new members are always welcome to come and meet us, initially contacting me via the Groups page on our Branch website.

Sarah

HORTICULTURE GROUP

Meetings in 2026 will be held on the **first Wednesday** of the month starting at **10.30**. The meetings in February take place in the Guildhall Cinema. The March and May meetings take place in the Wheatstone Hall, inside the Gloucester Museum in Brunswick Road. Again, the meetings commence at 10.30. There are hot and cold drinks available from 10.00.

January – No meeting

Wednesday, February 4 –

Gloucester Wildlife Trust discussing *environment emissions*

Wednesday, March 4 – Catherine Williams, *Preparing your garden for the coming months.*

Wednesday, April 1 – Study Visit to Winterbourne House, part of Birmingham University

Wednesday, May 6 – Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, *getting wildflowers back in hedges.*

Wednesday, June 3 – Study visit to be organised by Local History Group.

Monday, July 27 – AGM

Monday, August 24 – *Subs and Clubs*

We are hugely grateful to Jan Broadway for being our Group Leader. Jan is moving away after the May meeting, so if no one comes forward to join the committee and take on the role of Group Leader then the May meeting will see the closure of this group.

LOCAL HISTORY

We'd like to thank members for their support during the year, especially those who attend almost every meeting! We have arranged some interesting talks for the New Year and we hope you will come and join us. All talks take place in **Gloucester Guildhall Cinema** at **10.30 on the last Tuesday** of the month.

Tuesday, January 27 – Phil Collins will be entertaining us with his talk on *Sudeley Castle*, when he will delve into the fascinating story of one of England's most historically significant castle, exploring its architectural evolution, royal connections and rich heritage. He will also talk of his time as a guide there.

Tuesday, February 24 – Historian Andy Meller will be giving an intriguing, illustrated talk on *'Tolkien & the Cotswolds – The Shaping of Middle Earth'* which will uncover Tolkien's life-long passion for archaeology, myth and Gloucestershire landscape that brought Middle Earth to life.

Tuesday, March 31 – Our speaker, David Elder, will give an illustrated talk on *'Dr Edward Adrian Wilson: Cheltenham's Antarctic Hero'* who was one of the major influences and personalities of the heroic age of Antarctic Exploration and has also been recognised as one of the top-ranking ornithologists and naturalists in the UK during this period.

Tuesday, April 28 – Simon Chorley will be giving a talk on *'50 Years Change*

in the Auctioneer's Lot'. He has been in the business for 50 years, having begun his career at Bruton Knowles, working with auctioneer Cecil Bruton and specialist Arthur Negus. In 2006, he bought out its Art and Antiques division and renamed it 'Chorley's Auctioneers', moving to its current location at Prinknash Abbey Park.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Marian, Babs and Dave

MAHJONG

Once again, we are very pleased to have welcomed more new members to our group since September, many of whom had never played before. So, if you think you might be interested, in joining us, let me know.

Where: St Mary de Crypt, Southgate Street.

When: **2nd and 4th Wednesday** of the month.

Time: 2.00 - 4.00

Cost: £2

By the time you read this, Xmas will be upon us so I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Xmas and a happy, healthy, peaceful New Year.

Pippa Zadeh

POETRY

We've continued to meet in person most months and also restarted our online sessions as the clocks went back, usually on Friday mornings towards the end of the month. If you think you might like to join us, please contact me via our page on our branch Groups page in the first instance – you'll be very welcome.

Sarah

Restoring

As I left home this morning,
passing by the lounge door,
which stood open, I caught
the early, low sun burnishing
a single shelf of the bookcase there,
(a glimpse of found pleasure,
a first show of colour)
as if beginning to clean
the canvas of the day ahead
and what that might reveal.

Cedric Pickin

SINGING TOGETHER

Non singers: may I have your attention?
This is the Group for you. Every

Third Tuesday of each month we
get together at the Congregational
Church in St Mary's St for 10.30 to try
to resist joining in humming / singing to
pop songs of our past. It's very difficult
not to I can assure you, especially when
seeing all the words. You may prefer
just to listen of course and bring back
memories.

Come along and try it. Why not?

Regards, *Clive*

STEAM RAILWAY GROUP

At our last meeting of 2025 our
members were treated to an excellent
talk by the well known local historian
Tony Condor about the history of
railway lines in and around the City of
Gloucester. Tony showed us some
incredible pictures of our railway
network dating back 150 years in
addition to some superb aerial
photographs. Many of the pictures were

able to show the vast difference in the
landscape of our City that has
occurred since the Victorian times.
There was a record turnout in the
number of members for one of our
meetings.

As yet I have not arranged any meetings
or talks in the new year but I hope to
be able to do so in a few weeks' time.

I seem to be running out of ideas as to
where we should visit on our 2026 day
out. If any members have any ideas
then please let me know. We seem to
have visited most places of railway
interest within 2 hours from Gloucester.
Otherwise we could repeat some of
our previous trips such as the Didcot
Railway Centre Steam Gala or the
Paignton and Kingswear Railway in
Devon.

May I thank all the members for
supporting the group through 2025 and
I wish you all a Happy Christmas and
good health through 2026.

John

TAI CHI GROUP

Our Tai Chi class meets every **2nd & 4th Tuesday** afternoons of the
month from **2.15 to 3.30** in the
Wheatstone Hall, Museum of
Gloucester, Brunswick Road.

Dates are as follows:

9 December, 13 & 27 January, 10 & 24
February, 10 & 24 March, 14 & 28 April.
Please note there is only ONE class in
December.

Gillian Talbot

TRAVEL GROUP

The talks in January and February will
be held in the Guildhall Cinema with
the **café open from 10.00** and the

meetings commencing at 10.30.

Admission is £3. Please bring the correct change.

Wednesday, January 21 – *Birds, tigers and the Taj* with Arthur Ball

Wednesday, February 18 – *Iceland, land of wind and war* with David Head

Wednesday, March 18 – *Study visit to Oxford and the Ashmolean Museum*

Sunday to Thursday, April 19 - 23 – *Residential Study trip to Eastbourne*

Wednesday, May 20 – *Cuba, the story of a beautiful island* with Robert MacLachan. This meeting will be held in the **Wheatstone Hall**, inside Gloucester Museum, Brunswick Road starting at 10.30. Entrance £3. Hot drinks as available.

We are hugely grateful to Ann Williams for taking on the role of Group Leader and leading the Residential Study trip to Eastbourne. We desperately need more committee members to share the load and also a Group Leader to take Travel Group forward. If no one volunteers, then the May meeting will see the closure of this group.

WALKERS

Notwithstanding the imminent arrival of Storm Claudia, 20 hardy Friday Walkers turned up in full wet weather gear for a 5 mile walk from The Frogmill Inn at Shipton Oliffe on Friday,

November 14. The weather forecast was for heavy rain and that's exactly what we got!! An excellent lunch afterwards was well earned.

December 17 sees the The Wednesday and Friday Walkers Christmas Meal taking place at The Fountain Inn. Forty members are looking forward to the event with Sue Bartlett, in her guise as a Civic Trust Guide, leading the group for a walk around Lower Westgate Street before everyone enjoys their Christmas Lunch.

**HENRY, PLEASE AND THANK YOU
WINS THE DAY!**

Henry, PLEASE may I have a banana,
Not CAN I have a banana.

And THANK YOU for the banana
Not THAT'S MY banana ...

Here Mummy, you can have it,
I don't want it.

I want the satsuma.

Henry,
PLEASE may I have the satsuma,
Not I want the satsuma.

And THANK YOU for the satsuma
and NOT it's MY satsuma.

Oh alright Mummy, well,
I'll have the apple then.

Henry, PLEASE may I have the apple,
Not I'LL HAVE the apple then.

And THANK YOU for the apple.

Well Mummy,
I'm going to tell Daddy of you!

You've got All the fruit!

You're just a greedy pig.

You wait till I learn to say

please and thank you.

You'll see ... you'll get nothing then!!

Jean Williams

CORKS COLLECTING

I am stopping collecting any further corks. As Gloucester u3a we have collected many hundreds of corks (I did not count them!) so I think we have done our bit for charity.

Many thanks to all who have contributed whether it be with large or small packages. I will miss going home from meetings with bulging pockets but not the falling over boxes of them in the house or garage!

Regards, *Clive*

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

I thought members might be interested in my daughter's work as a dedicated Travel Counsellor. If you're thinking of exploring new destinations, hoping to be able to travel with complete peace of mind, Julie specialises in creating stress-free, tailor-made holidays for mature travellers. She is also experienced in assisted travel for anyone needing extra help on their holiday: Julie xxxxx

Sheila Fowler

GROUP MEETING DAYS & TIMES

DAY	MORNING	AFTERNOON
Mon day	German Improvers (2 & 4) Recorders (2 & 4) MONTHLY MEETING (4)	Badminton Bridge {Improvers} Folk Band
Tues day	Book Club (3) Chess (3) Committee Meeting (1) Enjoying Music (2) Local History (Last) Singing Together (3)	[BellyBollyHula & Fun] Family History (1 & 3) Play Reading 1 (4) Scrabble (2 & 4) Tai Chi (2 & 4)
Wed nes day	French (2 & 4) Horticulture (1) Travel (3) Walkers {Wed} (4)	Bridge Mahjong (2 & 4) Piano Duets (1)
Thurs day	Table Tennis {Beginners} Current Affairs (1)	Art Circle Dancing (1 & 3) Benvenuti in Italia (1 & 3) Spanish Conversation (2 & 4)
Friday	Electronics (1) Poetry Group (usually 4 / Last) Table Tennis {Intermediate} Walkers {Fri} (2)	Choir
Var ious (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.