

u3a The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

Committee News

Happy Christmas to all and best wishes for the New Year



On behalf of your Committee, I would like to send you all best wishes for a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.



Some of our Groups have already celebrated in style but I am sure that won't stop them doing it all over again during Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Eve! Several Members will have participated in our annual Christmas Quiz and will, no doubt, have partaken of the excellent Mulled Wine and Mince Pies prepared by Mary Ewens and her Elves by the time you receive your Bulletin. The winning team will be announced in the January edition of our Bulletin, but we won't inflict that on the winners of the Booby Prize.

We would like to send special wishes to those who have sustained injuries recently whilst playing Badminton and to those who will be undergoing surgery in the New Year. Perhaps a good chance for them to sit back and be waited on!



We hope you have enjoyed the activities organised by your Group Leaders during this Calendar Year and will continue to do so in 2024. Our grateful thanks go to them for the sterling work that they do in providing such a wide variety of activities and for volunteering to take on the role of Group Leader. Our u3a could not continue to operate without them.



Myrtle Moreton-Cox, Chair

Group News



Dursley Rotary Club would like to thank U3A members who supported our Walk a Mile for Polio and sponsored Graham and Danielle Ellis. They joined our walk and collected an impressive £180 towards this very worthwhile cause.

This event resulted in £1,300 being raised. Thanks to a 2 to 1 match from the Bill Gate's Foundation and Gift Aid this will be tripled to over £4,000. It was just 35 years ago that polio paralysed 350k children annually.

Rotary and its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative have made great strides to reduce polio cases by 99.9% worldwide. Only two countries continue to report wild polio cases, Pakistan and Afghanistan.



We have an opportunity to make history by ending polio, which will be only the second human disease ever to be eradicated.

Spot the U3A Members

Graham and Danielle Ellis take the lead!

A representative from U3A gave a reading at the Rotary Club's Community Christmas Carol Service which was also attended by several members.

Dursley Rotary Club extends a warm welcome to all U3A members who would like to be involved in any of their projects or to come along to their meetings to find out what they do. They meet at Dursley Community Centre every Monday at 6pm with guest speakers on the first and third Mondays. Please see their website for further information and contact details.



Physics and the Pipe Organ – Science and Engineering group– Paul Sheppard

Andrew Moyes – our speaker – originally qualified in engineering and worked for the railways. Although he played the organ as a hobby from the age of 14 at his local church, he had no idea that it would later form a vital part of his working career. A colleague had suggested that with his engineering knowledge he would be ideal to work at Nicholson's Organ Factory in Malvern. After paying the factory a visit he was soon to become their MD.

A typical small organ possesses about 1,500 pipes. The largest 2 organs in this country can be found in The Albert Hall and Liverpool Cathedral. These venues both claim the most pipes at around 10,000. They regularly add pipes to keep the claim.



He described the 2 main types of pipes, flue pipes and reed pipes. The technical components of the pipes are named after the human body and the entering air is known as wind. He explained how the air vibrates to produce the sound and that the smallest and largest pipes are at the extreme of human hearing. On occasions an organist with many years experience has complained that the high or low notes are not working, only to discover that it is a matter of hearing deterioration.

The relationship between diameter, length and other constituents of the pipe relating to sound were explained in terms of science. Doubling the length of a pipe changes the sound by an octave. Different notes are also achieved by blowing harder and closing the pipe end. Closing the end is known as "stopped", this is where the term opening all the stops comes from. The sounds were all aptly demonstrated using some pipes that Andrew had brought with him. The difference between a flute and a string sound were quite impressive.

Manuals (keyboards) were explained, up to 6 in a cathedral including the foot manual are normal. Although the US can claim 7 manuals. Unlike other instruments the pipe organ keys themselves cannot show feeling, they are more like on/off keys. The feeling is therefore obtained by having different manuals and a variety of "stops". For instance, the bottom manual is "the choir manual" the next up is "the greater organ". These manual keys can be connected via mechanisms at the rear. This makes the keys harder to press and over the years the synchronisation has been progressed to using electro-pneumatics.

Nicholson Organs, one of only 2 major organ manufacturers in existence in the UK originally cast their own metal for making organ pipes. This was cast as flat sheet and hand planed, before forming into pipes. Metal is now imported. The best organs have an alloy of 50% tin and 50% lead to give the best tone, but the percentages can vary to give different effects. Wooden pipes are made of strip wood assembled to form a square section pipe.

Andrew's last big commission before retiring in 2017 was an organ built for Auckland, New Zealand. This was the largest organ built in Britain since 1942. Weighing 40 tonnes and housing 5,432 pipes it took 20 months to build. It was completed 2 months ahead of schedule.



Christchurch in New Zealand lost their organ to the massive earthquake and were looking around the world for a replacement. After seeing and hearing the Auckland organ they didn't need to look any further. Nicholsons gained another large commission. The largest pipes of these organs measure 32 feet, the smallest about the size of a pencil. The longest pipe in the Dursley Methodist Church is about 8 feet. One point of note is that organ pipe lengths are imperial. French and German organ pipes are also measured in feet.

In the Q and A session we learnt that ebony is still obtainable and used for keys. Ivory has a substitute. Nicholsons have many ivory keys from organs they have dismantled which is forbidden to be sold.

Organs need regular tuning, the Methodist one is tuned twice a year. The Auckland one receives a week's attention once a year from Nicholsons. Dusting is less frequent provided the organ is covered during building works. Gloucester Cathedral organ needed a thorough dusting after a drone was used inside the building.

Andrew's 20 years as MD at the factory gave the audience a thorough and interesting knowledge of organs. The talk concluded with a video of the inside arrangement of pipes of the Auckland organ, and it being played during final testing.

Natural History Group – Christmas Quiz 2023 December 14th – Alan Keith

14 members attended our annual quiz. This was a slide quiz which I put together, and an identification quiz put together by Greta. The questions ranged over the whole world of wild life and the worthy winner of an excellent bottle of wine was Diane Freeland. This was followed by a seasonal snack of mulled wine and mince pies. Merry Christmas to everybody. See you all in the new year.

Sign Language – Elinor Padfield (Groups Coordinator)

A few months ago, a number of members expressed an interest in learning sign language and we advertised unsuccessfully for someone to run a group. However, Interest Groups Online (IGO), which is run by National u3a is asking for people to express an interest in learning sign language by Zoom.

It would seem that they have somebody able and willing to run such a group online, when there is sufficient interest. Belonging to IGO costs £12 per annum, but I have contacted them and they are willing to take the names and email addresses of our members who are interested in the online group. You would only need to pay the £12 if and when the group is up and running, and you have decided to join it.

If you would like me to forward your name and email to the IGO Groups Coordinator, please contact me through our website and I shall be pleased to do so.

Dursley Wine Group – wishing you all Happy Christmas!



Forthcoming Events

U3a meetings

Thurs Jan 4th	Country Walkers	2 mile walk around the top of Stinchcombe Hill. Meet ay 10.30 in the main public car park on Stinchcombe Hill (not the golf club car park). Flat but possibly muddy in places. Generally easy going
Mon Jan 8 th	French Intermediate Group	The French Intermediate group will be meeting on the second and fourth Mondays of the month from January 2024, therefore our next meeting will be on 8th January at 10:30 am in Dursley Methodist Church.
Tue Jan 9th	Science and Engineering	Visit No 10 (and definitely the last) to the Javelin Park Incinerator, Javelin Park, Bath Road, Haresfield, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3ET. Javelin Park Incinerator has now become fully operational. It accepts up to 190,000 tonnes of residual waste each year from Gloucestershire's homes and Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) and produces over 116,000 megawatt hours of electricity per annum which is exported to the National Grid. We have arranged another 2-hour tour of the plant at 10.00am. This tour is limited to 20 people. Please check that you are ok with walking at height and ascending and descending stairs. To do the walking tour you will be required to wear PPE that they will supply for you. This will be a 'car share' visit. Please note that a risk assessment will be sent to you prior to the visit that must be completed online before the day of the visit. Those with a disability will need to complete an emergency evacuation form. To book a space, please contact Graham Ellis via the bluebird.
January 18th	Monthly Meeting	Monthly branch meeting to be held in the Dursley Methodist Church. Doors open 10.00 a.m. meeting starts at10.30 a.m.There will be a talk on "The Work of Longfield Community Hospice and Wellbeing Centre".
January 22nd	Family History	Meeting in Dursley Methodist Church back room at 2.30pm. Topic: TBA. If anyone has specific questions or subjects they would like to know about in future sessions - please let me know. Please bring £2 to cover room hire and refreshments (volunteers required please).
January 25th		Visit to <u>Berkley Railway Engine shed and workshops, followed by SARA at Sharpness.</u> Berkeley Railway: There will be a guided tour of their engine shed and workshops, where they renovate and rebuild the engines (steam & diesel) and equipment, as well as seeing the yard. The tour will take just over an hour plus time for questions. The workshop is an active working environment, with trip hazards etc, so not suitable for members with walking problems. SARA: Sharpness is the main control centre and lifeboat house for SARA. They have 5 lifeboats and a hovercraft stationed there as well as rescue Landrovers and other equipment. The hour long tour includes seeing the boathouse etc and going into their operations room. Unfortunately, the ops room is up a flight of stairs, so may not be suitable for disabled access. Car parking is very limited, so car sharing will be required. The maximum numbers that they can cope with is 20..Note this visit is FULL , but to be put on the waiting list for another visit, please contact Bob Atack via the blue bird.