

# u3a

## The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

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### Committee News

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#### Very Important Message....

**Most of you recently received an email asking you to re-register your details and password on the Members' Portal.**

**If you have not already done so, PLEASE do this as soon as possible. It is a process that will need to be completed before you can renew your membership online next month.**

**We thank those of you who have already done this.**

#### Fit for the Future – Myrtle Moreton-Cox, Chair

**Our u3a** will be given the opportunity to exercise our votes on this Proposal being put forward by u3a National later in the year (the number of votes allocated to each u3a will be dependent on its size). It is, therefore, important for you to be kept informed so that your Committee know how you wish our votes on the proposal to be cast. Consequently, I have compiled a brief synopsis of the information given out at a recent Zoom Presentation Meeting to which the Chairs and Secretaries of regional u3as were invited. Following attendance at this meeting I have forwarded some questions to the Pilot Council and am awaiting a reply. Any additional information received from future meetings will be included in future Bulletins.

In a nutshell, the proposal would entail a Council being formed with a limited number of u3a Members with the relevant skills being proposed and elected on to it. It is envisaged that the Council would provide a 'bridge' between u3as and the Board by establishing a communication channel. The Board, which would be reduced in size (up to 10 people) and would be made up of nominated and elected u3a Members with the right skills and not by outsiders as at present. It is planned that the Board would concentrate on Finance and Governance. The reduction in size would enable Board meetings to be held predominantly on-line thereby reducing travel and costs. It is hoped that establishing a Council would enable u3a members to have more say in the running of u3a nationally and avoid decisions being made from above.

We are advised that there would not be any changes to the current working of individual u3as.

If there appears to be sufficient support for the Proposal it will be put forward for voting on at the National AGM in October of this year. The decision as to whether or not it is likely to succeed will be made following the response received at further Presentations which will be made between now and June of this year.

At the recent Presentation, it was suggested that a Presentation Party would enable those who do not have on-line access to attend a future Presentation – this would be an on-line Presentation shown on a larger screen at a local venue. Would this be something you would be interested in us arranging for you?

### **Results of the collection carried out for medical detection dogs on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Our Speaker Baiju McCubbins has asked me to thank everyone and, in particular Ronnie, very much for their generosity. The amounts raised were: £305 donated; £90.50 sales; £50 speaker's fee, making a total of £445.50. Some people who attended asked to receive the contact details for Baiju so that they could invite her along to give a talk to other local organisations to which they belong so here they are:

[baiju.mccubbins@gmail.com](mailto:baiju.mccubbins@gmail.com) 07814 846 819

Well done everyone. It was an amazing talk and very well presented.

**Isles of Scilly Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024** – If anyone is interested in joining Members of the Travel Group on a 7 day (6 night holiday) to the Isles of Scilly please would they contact me as soon as possible. Myrtle Moreton-Cox [moretoncox@gmail.com](mailto:moretoncox@gmail.com) 079562 434255.

#### **Included:**

Return coach transfers from Dursley to Land's End Airport included:

£919.00 per person, based on a minimum of 20 passengers

£1049.00 per person, based on a minimum of 15 passengers

Return coach transfers from Dursley to Land's End

Return flights from Land's End to St Mary's

Return shuttle and luggage transfer to your accommodation

6 nights self-catering accommodation, Cancellation Protection (see below)

The Accommodation: Men A Vaur – sleeps 12 – House 1 – Catering for up to 12 guests in six bedrooms, all with ensuite facilities, this large modern property has recently undergone an extensive refurbishment and offers tastefully presented accommodation to a high standard. It is perfectly located on the edge of Hugh Town and is ideal for large group holidays or multigenerational family gatherings, with a large open plan kitchen/ dining room opening onto a sunny, south-facing patio and garden.

Wingletang – sleeps 12 – House 2 – is a beautiful Grade 2 listed house located in the centre of Hugh Town, overlooking the park. Previously run as a guesthouse, the new owners have made some minor changes to make it a comfortable self-catering property and is currently under refurbishment. The house will sleep 12 people, it is ideally suited to large groups or several families sharing. Perfectly located for island hopping and all the amenities of town, it is just a few moments walk to Porthcressa beach.

Flights – Land's End to St Mary's 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024

dep: 14:05 – 7 x seats reserved, 14:35 – 9 x seats reserved, 15:10 – 4 x seats reserved

St Mary's to Land's End 12 September 2024

Dep; 12:05 – 16 x seats reserved, 12:15 – 4 x seats reserved

**Important Information: Cancellation Protection** – Your holiday will be covered for cancellation only (conditions apply). Details will be provided should you or one of your members be unable to travel for any of the reasons outlined in our terms. Full information can be found on our website, which we encourage you to share with your members. **Tips and Gratuities** – We do not include tips for your Tour Driver or Hotel Staff. This is left to your discretion. **Itineraries – Recommendations for excursions to be discussed.**

**Invoicing and Balance Payment** – An invoice for the balance will be issued to you, 12 weeks prior to departure. Any fluctuation with passenger numbers will be addressed at this time and the final package price adjusted accordingly. Balance payments are then due 10 weeks before departure. Payment can be made securely online or by phone by Debit/Credit card. Bank details for BACS payment Account name: Airedale Tours Ltd Account no: 00621817 Sort Code: 16-23-37 Cheques will only be accepted if you or your members are unable to use the above methods.

## Group News

### Art Appreciation, January 2024 – Mary Robinson

Our group meets every second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 10am in the Wesley room in the Methodist Church. Recent meetings have included presentations on the German artist Caspar David Friedrich, Danish Art in the 19th century and the work of Gwen and Augustus John.

Our Christmas meeting involved a fun quiz about architecture, focussing on identifying famous buildings around the world and their architects.

In November we went on a visit to the Nature in Art gallery north of Gloucester to see an exhibition entitled “Arctic Visions, Capturing the Uncapturable”, showing magical paintings and drawings of the Arctic by Nicholas Jones.



In



January we followed up the talk in the autumn on Gwen and Augustus John by visiting the excellent Holburne Museum in Bath, where there is currently an exhibition of the works of Gwen John and artists who had inspired her. Nine group members enjoyed this exhibition, as well as taking the opportunity to look at the permanent collections. In addition we were able to see a newly opened installation by Lubaina Himid, a British artist who won the Turner Prize



in 2017. She had transformed the spaces of the museum with colourful fabrics woven across the façade of the building and around the permanent collections. Each cloth was intended to reflect the movement of the oceans and rivers that were used to transport cotton, yarn and enslaved people – all of which enabled parts of Britain, including Bath, to become increasingly affluent in the 18th century.

The Art Appreciation Group welcomes new members! Anyone interested is invited to contact group leader Rita Dee via the Bluebird link or just come along to one of the meetings.

### **Science & Engineering Group Report for the visit to Sharpness, Vale of Berkeley Railway Trust shed (VoBRT) & Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) on the 25<sup>th</sup> Jan & 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2024 – Bob Attack**

We had 20 places filled that the two organisations could accommodate on both dates. Both SARA and VoBRT are registered charities, have no paid employees and are funded entirely by donations. The visits were a “tale of two charities”.



VoBRT has taken over and cleared the sidings at Sharpness, while their repair shed is on the other side of the docks, next to the dry dock. They hope to build a new engine shed on the sidings and move all their engines, equipment and rolling stock over there by low loader. Being shown round the shed, by their volunteer staff was enlightening for us all. By the volunteer’s admission, it all looks a bit like a scrap yard, bits of engines scattered around, parts of railway trucks, steam engine chassis and other railway equipment. They have stationed outside a diesel and a steam shunter, both in working order, but at present nowhere to go. The tool room / workshop is fully equipped with drilling machines and lathes and all the tools required to disassemble, repair, clean and reassemble, steam and diesel locomotives, as well as rolling stock. All this is carried out by their volunteers.

This was a truly fascinating insight into how a heritage railway is run and maintained.

SARA’s HQ and main boathouses are based in the old Harbourmasters building next to the original docks’ lock and the marina. The organisation is entirely independent of the RNLI and covers the River Severn from the bridges to Gloucester docks, they have other bases further upstream as far as Stourport. They also provide rescuers for the Brecon Beacons and around Cirencester. Although they liaise with the RNLI, their area of operation does not overlap. The two small lifeboats and the large inshore boat are launched from Sharpness, while the smaller boats can be taken by road to where they are needed. The volunteers were sorry to say that a

lot of their callouts from Sharpness were for jumpers from the bridges, but they also provided rescue boats for the floods in Gloucester, Tewksbury and Worcester.



The volunteers are called out by pager at the request of the police, ambulance service fire brigade and coastguard. Crews can be at the station within 10 minutes of the callout. Seeing the boats, how the station operations room is run and the professionalism of the volunteers was very impressive. They have to maintain the boats and equipment to a very high standard and be always ready to launch in all weather.

Altogether, the visit gave us all a feeling of confidence on how a voluntary rescue operation is organised and run.

Many thanks to the 12 or so volunteers from both charities who gave up their time to share with us their expertise and knowledge.

### **Messing About In Boats – Stroud u3a Paddlers Group Jane Harvey**

*“Believe me my young friend, there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.” So says Ratty to Mole in Kenneth Grahame’s classic novel The Wind in the Willows.*

The Paddlers, a Stroud u3a group, have embraced the sentiment and go messing about in kayaks, canoes and on paddleboards; we would welcome new members.

We are an informal group, there is no requirement to come along to every meeting, though it is hoped that all members will come up with ideas of trips we could take, and do the necessary research for the trip. The group started last year, 2023, and our outings were mostly on the Stroudwater and Gloucester/Sharpness canals. A couple of us tried out one of the South Cerney lakes, and the group had a trip on the Thames from Lechlade planned, but it was rained off.

We meet approximately every three weeks, on different days of the week so that everyone, whatever their other regular commitments, has the opportunity to take part. We have fixed our dates for this year, starting on Wednesday 20 March on the Stroudwater Navigation starting from Stonehouse Court Hotel/St CyrChurch.

If you would like to join us, you will need a boat or board and buoyancy aid and must be able to swim. There is more information on the Stroud u3s website where there is also a link to email me directly. Or you can call me on 07919 920034.

### New Fun Quiz Group

John Walton will be leading this group which will take place in the Lister Hall in the Chantry Centre. The group meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month starting on 19<sup>th</sup> March. Doors will open at 9.30 for a 10am start. There will be a charge of hall hire.

The quiz is for everyone. You don't need to be Brain of Britain! Neither do you need to come in a pre-formed team. It is anticipated that teams will be of between 3 and 5 people, but size is variable (within limits!) There will be a wide variety of questions of varying levels of difficulty. The aim is to have fun. There will be a short half-time comfort break, but if you want refreshments, bring your own. All welcome.

### Garden Visits Group – Job-share

We are approaching Spring and the Garden Visits Group with lots of members, does not yet have a leader. We have **one** volunteer who is happy to **share** the job with another person. It is anticipated that visits will be limited to **3 a year**. So, we are searching for another volunteer to help with the organization. Could you help? If so, please contact Elinor Padfield, Groups Coordinator, [elinorpadfield@gmail.com](mailto:elinorpadfield@gmail.com). It would be a great shame if this group were to close for lack of someone to job-share.

### Help with starting a New Group

Are you particularly interested in something but feel you don't have the necessary knowledge to be a group leader or feel that the group you lead has reached a certain point and you don't know where to go from here? The u3a has over 80 Subject Advisers who can help you. They are people who are really passionate about their subject and can help you set up shared leadership groups or even leaderless groups (you will still need somebody to do the admin). They offer advice on material to both get you started and to keep you going.

Do have a look at their website – <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects> . They offer advice on everything from Pétanque to Philosophy.

### Calling all Writers

#### Judith van Dijkhuizen

An opportunity to enter your writing for Gloucestershire Writers' Network Competition 2024

Here is a link with the details  
<https://gloswriters.org.uk/>



## Forthcoming Events

### Need help with your IT?

Our u3a Information Technology Help Team are planning to run an IT Help session on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April from 1:30pm until 4:30pm at the Chantry Centre in Dursley. See below for more details and to sign up for help.

### U3a meetings

Mon 26 <sup>th</sup> February	Family History	Meeting in Dursley Methodist Church back room at 2.30pm. Topic: Topic: David will talk about 'missing from the census'..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).
Fri 1 <sup>st</sup> March	Science and Engineering And Historic Places	<b>Visit to Bletchley Park, Sherwood Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 6EB.</b> Joint visit with the Historic Places group. Once the top-secret home of the World War Two Codebreakers, Bletchley Park is now a vibrant heritage attraction. Immersive films, interactive displays, museum collections and faithfully recreated WW2 rooms will guide you on a journey to discover the past at Bletchley Park. Exhibitions, set within beautifully restored historic buildings, tell the story of this once top-secret operation. Find out more about the brilliant minds and complex machines that made this vital work possible, and discover the global impact Bletchley Park had on the outcome of WW2. <b>Carol Tipper</b> can be contacted via the blue bird. Note the coach for this visit is full.
Thursday March 7 <sup>th</sup>	Floristry	We'll be making an arrangement in yellow - just perfect for Easter. Flowers will be provided at cost. Full details will be sent nearer the time. Meetings £3 pp to include room hire and refreshments. This group is currently full, please contact Danielle via the BlueBird if you'd like to go on the waiting list.
Saturday March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Family History	<b>The Family History Show, Severn Hall, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW.</b> 10am-4pm. Put your research questions to an expert, watch a free talk, speak to a local society, archive or genealogical supplier. Free Parking.
Thursday March 21 <sup>st</sup>	Monthly Meeting	<b>Monthly branch meeting to be held in the Dursley Methodist Church. Doors open 10.00 a.m. meeting starts 10.30 a.m.</b> Paul Barnett will talk about "Easter Island".
Monday March 25 <sup>th</sup>	Family History	Meeting in Dursley Methodist Church back room at 2.30pm. Topic: Sue will talk about her visit to the Family History Show in Malvern. 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).
Monday March 28 <sup>th</sup>	Science and Engineering	<b>Visit to Nicholson Organs, Lower Interfields, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 1UU. 11am.</b> Following last November's fascinating talk by Andrew Moyes, the former Managing Director of Nicholson & Co. - one of only two pipe organ manufacturers left in the UK, Andrew has agreed to conduct a tour of the Nicholson Workshop. The tour will start at 11am and take approximately an

		<p>hour and a half. Most of the workshop is at ground level, with the exception of the CAD design facility (which we only visit if the draughtsman is in). Following the tour, lunch will be available at the Swan at Newland.</p> <p>There is no charge for the tour, but a donation to a charity would be appreciated. Numbers are limited to 25 and car-sharing is a must as parking is restricted. The Swan will ask us to pre-order, but we can pay on the day. If you would like to come, please contact <b>Elinor Padfield</b> via the Bluebird link.</p>
17 <sup>th</sup> April	Information Technology	<p>Our u3a Information Technology Help Team are planning to run an IT Help session on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April from 1:30pm until 4:30pm at the Chantry Centre in Dursley. I know it's two months away but at least you have a definite time. The drop-in sessions are for 1-1 help with a member of the team, you should bring your phone, tablet or laptop with you. If you are interested in coming along to the drop-in sessions please contact us at:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:u3aitdropin@gmail.com">u3aitdropin@gmail.com</a></p> <p>On the note, please outline the type of issue/problem you would like to address as well as the device you will be bringing, eg iPhone 10, iPad 9<sup>th</sup> generation etc. This will help us in determining the tutor's skill required.</p> <p>Printer problems are more difficult to determine because they are difficult to move around and the new environment at the Chantry does not necessarily match yours, but we can discuss and if necessary meet you on your premises.</p> <p>Luke Wilson, Joint Team Leader Information Technology Help</p>

For later activities see the website. <https://u3asites.org.uk/cam-dursley/events>. or just click here :-[U3A Events](#)