

u3a

The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

Committee News

Your Committee has now been made complete by Chris Hastier and Elaine Woollhead – Chris has joined us as Secretary and will be the one sending you out information and Elaine as our Minutes Secretary. They are both very welcome additions to our team.

Dates For Your Diary In December

Wednesday 13th December – Dursley Rotary Club will be holding their annual Carol Service at St George's Church in Cam (7.00 for 7.30pm) and have invited our u3a Members to join them. There will also be Mulled Wine and Mince Pies. Please could you let me know if you would like to go so that I can pass on the expected numbers to help them with the catering. (moretoncoxm@gmail.com)

Thursday 21st December – Our own Monthly Meeting which will take the form of a Christmas Mental Challenge – in other words a Christmas Quiz.

Jane Ball will, once again, be our Question Master and John Walton our Score Keeper. There will be the usual excellent Mulled Wine organised by Mary Ewens and her team of Elves together with Mince Pies. As they will be taking over the kitchen there won't be hot drinks available on that day but a choice of non-alcoholic cold drinks will be available for those not wishing to imbibe. There will also be gluten free mince pies.

Due to limited space, we will need to know how many of you are planning to come along to join us so please could you let us know by Tuesday 12th December – together with the name of your team if possible – if you intend to join us. Teams of 4 would be ideal as the prizes for the top and bottom scoring teams will be limited to 4 per team. It is likely that we will be able to accommodate 110 – due to the restriction on numbers this will be a Members Only Meeting. If you can't make up a team of four don't worry as there has always been others in the same boat to join up with. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

16th December at 7.30 pm at The Chantry Centre Dursley Male Voice Choir Concerts which raise money for local Charities on Friday 15th and Saturday.

Myrtle Moreton-Cox, Chair (moretoncoxm@gmail.com)



Group News

Historic Places Group visit to Tewksbury 3rd November – Sally Beynon

U3A members from the Historic Places group went to Tewkesbury for a guided tour of the town and a visit to the John Moore Museum complex. The tour guide explained that Tewkesbury developed because goods brought down from the Midlands and Shropshire via the River Avon could continue onwards to Bristol and beyond via the river Severn. The Saxon Lord of the area, Bertric, had his lands confiscated by William the Conqueror's wife, Matilda, as revenge for having rejected her hand in marriage, when he had visited Normandy previously. Bertric was banished to Winchester, where he died in prison. Matilda granted Tewkesbury the status of a Market Town. Later, King John resided in Tewkesbury for a time and the turnpike crossing is named after him.

Tewkesbury was known for cotton weaving and knitting stockings. The canal was built to make the River Avon more easily navigated to bring coal to Tewkesbury from the Midland coalfields. When the railways took over from water transport, the mainline bypassed Tewkesbury with only a branch line servicing the town, until it closed in 1961. The motorway also bypasses Tewkesbury. Hence, Tewkesbury went bust and the town saw the first stage of demolition of old buildings. This was stopped by protesting locals and Tewkesbury became a conservation area. During our tour, we were shown: the closed tannery by the river; the original post office; the place where coal was brought in on the Avon via canal and where the Avon runs parallel close to the Severn. Between the rivers Avon and Severn there is The Ham, which is 200 acres of flooded plain and hay meadows, where 110 burgers were allowed to grow hay and then graze their cattle. Today sealed auctions are held to determine who should have the rights to harvest hay and graze cattle.

Inside the original town all main thoroughfares were called 'streets', whereas outside the town, they are 'roads'. In the town there were numerous alleys between buildings and, because they were all paved with blue bricks, they can still be seen today even when buildings have been demolished. The alleys were always named after the family that lived in the house on the main streets, hence there were often changes to alley names. Hence, in the 1800s it was decided to officially name all the alleys permanently with the names of the 'then current owners'. Our guide pointed out where houses had been altered or demolished; what work individuals did in buildings; where original coaching inns were situated; and how the 'Shakespeare' surname is common in Tewkesbury due to the families being descended from William Shakespeare's sister.

In the afternoon, most of us visited the John Moore Museum, which consisted of three buildings: the Old Baptist Chapel; the Merchant's House; and a museum. The Old Baptist Chapel was originally a three-bay merchants house built in 1458, with a mezzanine balcony, cattle living at one end and a fire pit in the middle with no hole for the smoke in the roof. In 1623 the Baptists formed in Tewkesbury, but as they were classed as dissenters, they still paid a tithe to the Abbey, met secretly and corresponded using a secret code. In 1689 the building was changed into a chapel with a barrel ceiling and metal bars at the windows to hold the

aging building together. In 1720, full immersion baptisms were held secretly at night in the River Avon. Later, a baptism pool was built inside the church, which was last used in 1985. Then the chapel was converted into two cottages and a small chapel. The building was restored to a chapel in 2012, when it became part of the museum with historical items and information boards on display.

The Merchant's House is one of a row of houses built by the monks at the Abbey in 1408 and leased out to merchants. The cottages were renovated in the 1960s, and the Merchant's House depicts a cloth-maker's house around 1480. The house comprises of a workshop facing south for natural light, a bedroom, a living room and a shop fronting onto the street. The workshop contained: an authentic kitchen cupboard (ombre); cutlery and crockery; a longbow as all men had to learn archery by law; a club for a 'hue and cry' posse; and a knife or dagger. The bedroom had: linen dosed with linseed oil instead of glass in the windows; a bed with curtains around to keep in the heat; a truckle bed for children; linen sheets; and feather pillows. The living room had an open fire with soot on the roof as there were no chimneys or smoke holes; flint and steel to light the fire; pots and spit to cook the pottage consisting of peas, beans barley and, sometimes, a little meat; a 'curfew' to put over the fire at night; square platters, hence 'a square meal'; salt; a napkin; and a spoon which was always kept in the person's pocket. The shop had a shutter, which rotated on a counter-balance system to make a serving hatch onto the street. It would have sold leather, material, quills, and ink from hawthorn or nut dyes. The shop had stone foundations and an earthen floor which would have been covered with reeds and herbs. The museum is in the house next to the Merchant's House and displays information: on John Moore and the book he wrote (*The Countryman*); stuffed mammals, bird and reptiles; tools used for thatching, ditching, hedging and scything; and information on the decline of, wild life, nest sites, habitat and weed seeds.

Bookworms 15th November – Sue Dunn

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver. Wow, this is some book! Barbara Kingsolver won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction this year, 2023. It is a powerful reimagining of Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, and follows one boy's struggle to survive. It is set in the Appalachian area of USA, and Damon Fields, which is the protagonist's real name, was born into poverty in America's opioid crisis. The book is told in the first person, which brings home to the reader the struggles and poverty that he had to endure.

It starts in the trailer park where he was born, and we are introduced to various characters who influence Damon's life, some good, and some damaging. He develops into a character who can make good relationships as he has a good friend in the next trailer with whom he spends hours playing and exploring as a child should. But more difficult people take part in his development, bringing misery, change and damage.

The book is long, and written with many beautiful turns of phrase. It is moving, haunting, and often sad. The character development is wonderful, as it moves through time. People grow up, or fall by the wayside. It is a fascinating glimpse into what, to most of us, is another world. A book worth reading.

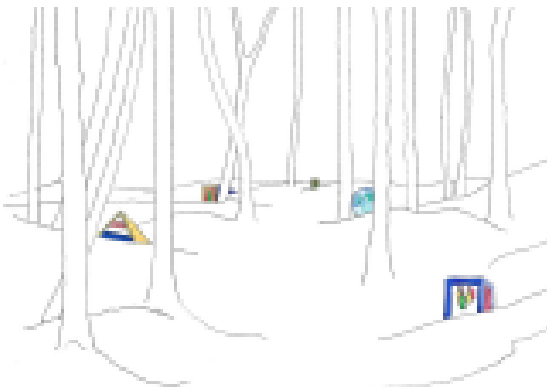
Craft and Textiles Group November Meeting – Coming up Roses

At the November meeting of the Craft and Textiles group some of the members tried out something completely different from anything the group had done before. Lead by Gail Oliver, with help from her friend Jennifer, they made sugarcraft roses. The concentration was total and the results were beautiful. Everyone was really pleased with what they achieved and the rest of us were so impressed. We're looking forward to another opportunity next year. Special thanks to Gail for her excellent tuition and planning.



Sculpture Group – Twinberrow Woods Sculpture and Play Trail Project

The U3A Sculpture Group proposes a multi-piece installation to be added to the Sculpture and Play Trail at Twinberrow Woods. The aim is to provide a range of interactive, sensory experience stations for all age groups, abilities and needs, with support from U3A members and the local community.



We are proposing 5 permanent, full-size, coloured geometric structures. These will provide separate steel frameworks for a range of interactive panels and experiences sympathetic with the natural environment. These can be viewed as individual installations and as part of a collective sculpture, which will reveal itself as you move through the woods. The stations will include re-purposed materials used in innovative ways.

We see this as an opportunity for U3A members to share their relevant skills, knowledge and expertise, as well as securing community involvement through including local businesses and educational institutions.

This will provide an opportunity to develop Science Technology Engineering Maths (STEM) skills for students and apprentices etc. to design and construct some of the additions to the structures. We propose the following:

Pyramid Sensory Station

An example of a panel attachment to develop hand/eye co-ordination, problem solving, fine and gross motor skills by providing different materials and textures to see and touch.



Cube Sounds Station



Examples of sound and music making opportunities.

Cuboid Movement Station

Examples of things to touch, spine, open close, turn, etc.



Cylinder Station



Examples of drums using pipes of different lengths with caps. Also to include natural log stepping stones and totem pole.

Sphere Station



Example of shape concept to be constructed using recycled bicycle wheels with shapes on exterior



How you can help

We are initially contacting U3A members to see if there are any individuals or members with personal or family links to businesses or possible funding streams, who might be interested in being involved in the project. At this stage we are looking for the following:-

Skills, knowledge and expertise: 3D graphic draughting, Construction / groundworks / landscaping etc., Steel fabrication, Signage.

Contacts for: Educational groups, Individuals or organisations interested in sharing with expenses by providing funding **such as** Renishaw, Lions, Rotary, Grant awarding organisations.

We also require a farm building or shed / workshop for assembly and storage prior to installation.

If you require further information, are able to give support, or provide relevant contacts, please message us at twinberrowsculpture@icloud.com

We look forward to hearing from you to help us progress this exciting U3A project.

Forthcoming Events

U3a meetings

Thursday November 23 rd	Science and Engineering	<p>The Science and Engineering Group hold an annual members' meeting in November. This is especially for Group members but all members of Cam and Dursley u3a are welcome to attend. The meeting is at 10.30 am at Dursley Methodist Church. Please bring £3 to cover costs. No need to book.</p> <p>There will be a TALK by Andrew Moyes - former MD of Nicholson Organs' in Malvern. The Pipe Organ - art, science, craft and technology: He will look inside 'the King of Instruments' from an engineer's point of view, revealing some of the fascinating facts and its inner workings. This will include manufacturing pipes in metal and wood for sound production, the challenge of making purely mechanical linkages to transmit the organist's finger-tip movement to the pipes, and the use of power assistance for the largest organs. Following the talk there will be free refreshments (Volunteers required please). The leadership team will be available to discuss ideas for the group.</p> <p>The meeting is being organised by Graham Ellis who may be contacted via the blue bird.</p>
Monday 27 th November	Family History	<p>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).</p>
Tue Jan 9th	Science and Engineering	<p>Visit No 10 (and definitely the last) to the <u>Javelin Park Incinerator, Javelin Park, Bath Road, Haresfield, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3ET.</u> Javelin Park Incinerator (the "correct" term is "The Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility") 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 organised by Graham Ellis. This tour is limited to 20 people. There will be a presentation, then half the group go on a guided tour, while the</p>

		other half have refreshments. Then the second half of the group will do the tour. Part of the visit includes a walking tour. . 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 10.30 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. There will be no charge for the tours, but as they are charities, a donation to each would be appropriate. Note this visit is FULL , but to be put on the waiting list for another visit, please contact Bob Atack via the blue bird.

For later activities see the website:- <https://u3asites.org.uk/cam-dursley/events>.

Please send contributions to the Bulletin to mag.u3a@gmail.com