

u3a The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

Committee News

These three photos are of the most recent additions to your committee and are included in the Bulletin as we thought it would help you to identify them:



Debbie Sirett, who responded so promptly to my appeal for a **Treasurer** and was elected into the role by Committee Members at a Special Committee Meeting held in August.

David Edwards, who was elected as **Vice Chair** at our EGM in July.



Elinor Padfield, who shadowed Pam Davis for several months before being elected as **Groups Co-ordinator** at our July EGM.

Elinor is pictured here helping her granddaughter to use a sewing machine.

The remainder of the Committee comprises:

Karen Morris, our hard-working **Secretary**, who most of you will know as she is on the door at Monthly Meetings and keeps you up to date on the latest news

John Hobson, **Assistant Treasurer**, who works hard behind the scenes assisting the High Cash turnover Group Leaders and helping the Committee with technical and other problems.

Luke Wilson, **Membership Secretary**, who is usually your first point of contact when you enrol as a member and when you renew annually.

Mike Hadley, our **Beacon Guru**, and problem solver who gives training on the system to anyone in need of it.

Alan Keith, **Speaker Secretary**, who finds most of our speakers and organises a variety of talks at our Monthly meetings.

Your Committee is now complete and I look forward to working together with them all as a Team. Most of you will know me due to my length of time as an active Member of our u3a.

Myrtle Moreton-Cox, **Chair**.

Leslie D Gale Awards

The Leslie D Gale Award was instituted in 1994, as a tribute to the late Mr Gale, who was the last Chairman of Dursley Parish Council and the first Mayor of Dursley, and who served the community in so many ways. The Leslie D Gale Award not only recognises longevity of service to the community but also impact.

Terry received the Leslie D Gale award 2023 for service to the community, and the citation is as follows:

Nominated by Cllr Mandy Woodward and Caroline Marrow.

Terry grew up on Dartmoor and moved to Dursley to be the Headteacher at Cam House School, now known as the Peak Academy. He has been very involved in the Dursley community over the years. A Rotary member of long standing and has been President of Dursley Rotary. He has done much in supporting charities and local groups. Including being a well-known figure and a great MC at annual Festive event and Male Voice Choir events. Terry has also been known to read Halloween stories to the young children at the Market Place. Terry is a larger-than-life character we will all miss as he moves out of the Dursley area to be closer to his family.

Note from the Chair:

Terry was our most recent past Chair who was popular with our members and will be remembered with affection. He served one full term from June 2021 while his second from June '22 was curtailed when he moved to Devon in the Spring of this year. A very well-deserved citation for all his work in the Community.

BSL Speaker wanted

Following the recent very successful talk by Vanessa Sprague on hearing problems, quite a number of u3a members have expressed an interest in learning sign language. Vanessa herself does not feel she knows enough to be able to teach it. So, do we have in our membership a competent BSL speaker who would be prepared to run a group?

If so, please will you contact me either via the Bluebird or on 07714 193053 and I shall be delighted to give you any assistance I can.

Elinor Padfield (Groups Coordinator)

The following information was sent to Groups Coordinators to be shared with all members. The link contains lots of information about learning opportunities on the website.

<https://mailchi.mp/u3a/u3a-mailing-08-09-23-movement-wide-learning-opportunities?e=6dd81781dd>

U3A Play Reading group – Lisa Randell

Who feels the flamboyant actor inside them needs to be let out? Why not join the U3A Play Reading group? We have a great time, tackling as wide a variety of plays as Gloucester Library can loan us. We've had a good laugh with farce, delved deep into the angst of twentieth century classics, and found surprising enjoyment in restoration comedy. My favourite memory is of how we cast off our middle-class reserve and really went for the horridness of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; you should have heard us ripping into each other! We meet in the morning of the second Tuesday of every month, in the Chantry; come and join us.

U3A French Conversation – Lisa Randell

This present incarnation of the French Conversation group has flourished since its formation this spring. My phrase for it, "gossiping in bad French", doesn't really do it justice, but certainly it is very relaxed. It's a friendly group and everyone is able to have a say; our standards of French vary but we help each other, and only rarely have to resort to English--which we do with no shame! We meet in each other's homes and are really starting to get to know each other.

During the summer months there's usually been half a dozen of us; as autumn starts and people return from holiday, numbers may increase. If so, then we will split into 2 groups, a Dursley one and a Wotton one, as everyone gets a chance to speak in a smaller group. We meet twice a month, in the morning of the second and fourth Monday; venez nous rejoindre!

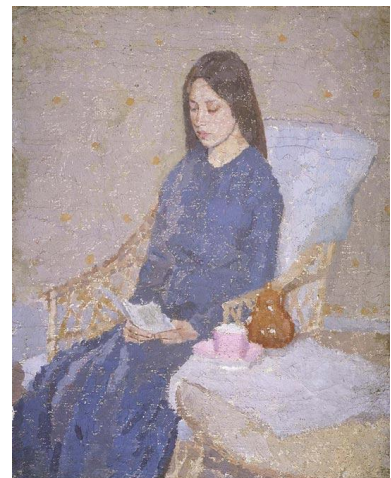
Art Appreciation – Rita Dee

Our group is resuming meetings after a break for the summer, starting on September 13th showing paintings of the British coast in a range of styles. We meet at 10am in the Methodist Church, usually on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. This autumn we can look forward to a talk by visiting speaker Brian Etheridge on artist siblings Gwen and Augustus John, and the second part of Tricia Norton's presentation on Picasso. We hope to fit in a visit to a local art exhibition as well. New members are always welcome to join at any time.

None of us are experts, just a group of people who enjoy looking at and learning about art.



The painting on the left is by Augustus John and the one on the right by his sister Gwen.



Engineering Group – Coventry & Transport Museum – 27th July 2023 –David Tweats

The focus of the trip was a visit to the Coventry Transport Museum but as the museum is in the city centre, the nearby Cathedral, gallery, and other attractions were also a draw.

The museum itself is very large, with many exhibits ranging from the earliest bicycles (including one that originally had 14 seats!), to cars, motorcycles, trucks, buses and military vehicles. There is also a special exhibition of land speed record-breaking vehicles, including the world's two fastest cars, either of which would rapidly lead to the loss of your driving licence!

The museum provided us with a large room where we were served tea, coffee and biscuits, and we were then free to wander at leisure. The large number of exhibits are very well and imaginatively presented and labelled and there is a lot of social and war history alongside the vehicles. The common factor of the exhibits is that they have some connection with the city of Coventry, so the makes on display included Jaguar, Daimler, Triumph, Hillman, Sunbeam, etc, and there were several royal vehicles including two large Daimlers used by George VI and Queen Mary, and Lady Diana Spencer's Mini Metro. We were also able to see inside a hall containing cars which are not normally on display – this room contained what was perhaps my favourite exhibit, a 1912 Crouch Carette. This was a very jolly looking little car which looked like it belonged in a cartoon, but unfortunately it was both difficult to control and to stop, so it must have been quite an exciting drive!



Of course, Coventry is also famous for its Cathedral, or should I say Cathedrals plural, since there are two. The 14th Century one was destroyed in a bombing raid in 1940. It is now a preserved shell, although the spire still stands and is the third tallest in England. A modern Cathedral was built next to it and was consecrated in 1962. I'm not a great fan of modern Cathedrals but

this one is quite impressive, with beautiful stained and engraved glass, and a tapestry of Christ in Glory that is reputedly the largest made in one single piece.



All in all, a very enjoyable and interesting day and if you have never been there, I would recommend a visit to Coventry and especially to the Cathedral and the Transport Museum.

Wotton Wine Appreciation Group – Claire Haines

When it's my turn to host our monthly wine appreciation evenings, I start planning the theme well in advance (last time I chose wines recommended by Will Lyons of the Sunday Times), I make sure I have (sort of) cleaned the house, have sufficient cutlery and plates, and importantly bought an interesting selection of cheese, olives, bread etc. But the one thing none of us can prepare for are the topics of conversation. This month was no exception; I feel that no one could have foreseen that the conversation ranged from cockerels, bonking pigeons, French knickers and chocolate. If anyone would like to join in with this sort of intellectual evening, we do have space for one more person.

On to the wine: we started off with Romeo & Juliet Prosecco Rosé. Absolutely delicious and well worth the £9.99 price tag. This was followed by a Pinot Grigio at £5.99. We sat outside to sip our apéritif, but the chilly evening and next door's trampoline drove us inside to sample the red wine selection.

We started with Bardolino DOC Cant'Garda at £9.99 which we felt was not particularly good having a rather flat finish. We then moved to Domodo Negroamaro which everybody agreed was very tasty, priced at £7.99. Peter's 5th choice was a Chianti Classico at £12.99 which was well worth the increased price as it had all the complexities of cherries, flowers and vanilla. A true Chianti should have a cockerel on the label – hence the discussion of poultry, aided by appropriate sounds.

Our final wine was a Corallo Nero D'Avola Oranic wine, priced at £7.99. We were slightly dubious about the organic label as sometimes they fail to deliver but we all agreed this was a good choice and went well with the dark chocolate which was passed round.

Thanks Pete for a good wine selection from Majestic Wines in Stroud – and very good chocolate selection.

Historic Places Group visit to Hartlebury Castle and Bewdley – Sally Benyon

Hartlebury was first a manor house, given to Bishop Aelhun in 855. It only became a castle when Bishop Giffard was allowed to fortify the site in 1268. The fortifications lasted until 1648, when the defences were destroyed at the end of the Civil War. Bishop Fleetwood restored the castle in 1675 into current mansion and was known as the Bishop's Palace. It ceased to be occupied by the bishops in 2007. The tour of the Castle explains the lives and history of the bishops and shows: the chapel; the grand staterooms including the long gallery and dining room; the Hurd library; study; and the bedrooms. Portraits of many bishops were on display. Maria, daughter of Bishop Henry Pepys, kept a diary during her teens. The relationship between Maria and her parents was cleverly re-enacted in videos that, at first glance, appeared to be family portraits on the walls of the several rooms.

Over the centuries many members of the Royal family stayed at the castle, including: Edward I en route to suppress the Welsh; Mary I, on a tour of Wales as a child, was supposed to stay in Ludlow but it was full of plague; Elizabeth I when on tour; George III and Queen Charlotte, friends of Bishop Hurd, on a visit to the baths in Cheltenham; Prince of Wales (George IV), a pupil of Bishop Hurd; and Princess Helena, granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Several Bishops became entwined with the nation's history including: the princes in the tower; refusing Henry the VIII his divorce and one later became the Pope; attending the execution of Mary Queen of Scots; the Civil War; chaplain to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; and providing a convalescence home for WW1 wounded soldiers. Three Bishops became saints and two were burned at the stake for their faith.

The Worcestershire County Museum collection is also in the castle, and includes toys; costumes through three centuries, from the Georgians to the miniskirts of the 1960s; archaeology; agriculture; a Victorian schoolroom; and a scullery.

Outside is: a walled garden built in 1759-74 by Bishop Johnson, containing fruit trees including the Black Worcester Pear; a travel and transport museum (closed); a workman's caravan for repairing roads; a cider mill; a 280-year-old mulberry tree; and a nature trail. The afternoon in Bewdley gave a choice of walking by the river, visiting the steam railway station, wandering around town and visiting the museums.

French Intermediate Group

The French Intermediate Group is re-launching. It is not a beginners' course, more of an Intermediate Start Again course. We would like to welcome those of you who want to brush up on rusty skills that you have not used for some time, maybe not since your school days. However, it's not like school - there are no tests! We encourage working in small groups and self-marking of any exercises we do to help with our learning. Our aim is to gradually develop confidence in the spoken and written word in a relaxed and friendly environment and to have fun doing so.

We meet on the first and third Monday morning of each month from 10:30 to 12:30 in Dursley Methodist Church, and we will begin our twice monthly meetings on 2nd October, there will be a small charge of £3 per person to help cover the cost of room

hire and materials. The group leaders, Carol and Rhona, would love to hear from you.

Short Walks – Ann Lacey

We welcome a new member
Lesley is her name
Good to get to know her
We hope she'll come again
We walk across the golf course
Then keep to the edge
Look out for any golf balls
They hit them with a wedge
At Drakestone Point
There is a lot to see
Nibley Monument
The Severn and Forest of Dean
We head back across the grass
And return along the track
We're heading for the car park
I think we must be back
We started off with seven
And lost one on the way
We should be more careful
Now we're in the U3A!



Poetry 2 Group –Carol Wilson

Our group meets on the 2nd Friday afternoon of the month in members' homes, and what makes us different from many other poetry groups is that we not only share a love of poetry, but also an interest in learning about the poets themselves.

At our last meeting, members present added their poet suggestions for the coming year to the now famous "poet's bag" and in October those of us who are happy to do a presentation will each in turn draw out one of those names.

The main focus of our afternoons, after a general chat and tea and biscuits, is about the poet themselves – their background and relationships with parents, siblings, spouse, children, lovers, friends. Were they depressives (so many were), were they of loose morals (so many were), who were their contemporaries and what was their educational background. We have discovered so much about the poets so far covered (including John Keats; Christina Rossetti; R.S. Thomas; Dylan Thomas; Alfred Noyes; D. H. Lawrence; W.H. Auden; Lord George Byron; John Clare).

During the poet presentation and afterwards the other members join in, and the afternoon turns into a general discussion about the poet and the interesting and often very surprising facts that have been discovered of their life. Afterwards we have a read around of poems by the poet of the month. One or two members write poetry and if they have one they would like to read out this is usually read at the end of the afternoon.

Members who have homes large enough to accommodate the group will host perhaps once or twice a year, but we have other members with smaller homes, or perhaps different circumstances, who are unable to host, and this is not a problem.

Whilst we do mostly take it in turns to present a poet this isn't a requisite of joining our group. We currently have members who prefer to listen and join in with the discussion rather than make a presentation themselves. A love of poetry is all that is called for and we currently have room for 2 or 3 more members.

Please do get in touch if you would like to come along to one of our afternoons to see if it is the kind of thing you are looking for. You will be very welcome.

Craft and Textile Group – Pauline Chidlaw



The Craft and Textile Group have had a break from the usual during July and August. Some of us went to see Sabine Kaner's exhibition at the Goods Shed in Tetbury.

Her Stories in Stitches were beautifully worked using simple stitches and reused materials. But they were also evocative, poignant and thought provoking, exploring what it was like to grow up in England as the daughter of one parent from the Windrush generation and one a German.

In August we enjoyed a sunny afternoon in the lovely garden of one of our members experimenting with natural Indigo Dyeing. We had a wonderful time and were amazed and pleased with the results and managed to avoid getting blue hands.



We're back to normal in September with a 'Bring your own work' session with some silk painting for those who would like to have a go.

Upcoming events

Monthly meetings are back held in the Dursley Methodist Church GL11 4BS on Thursday 21st of September. Doors open 10am and the meeting starts 10.30am. Presentation on the Stroudwater Canal by Robert Toseland. Tea and Coffee will be served afterwards.

For a list of upcoming events click here:- <https://u3asites.org.uk/cam-dursley/events>

Contributions for future editions should be sent as Word documents or in the body of an email to mag.u3a@gmail.com. Please keep contributions as short as possible, target around 300 words. One or two photos per item welcome.

Compiled by Sue Sacker