



**Welcome** to the 8<sup>th</sup> Christmas edition of our newsletter. In a break with tradition, the photo on the left shows the Cookery Group celebrating Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights. We all need some brightness at this time of year which seems to get gloomier the older I get! I hope you're able to find your own brightness and are able to make the most of the festive period. Thank you to the contributors for this edition and please look out for a number of opportunities via the walking group and the Chair.

**From the Chair:** I am aware that some of our members, like me, are hard of hearing and there are also others who have problems with their sight. To this effect, please be aware that, in future for our monthly Group Meetings at the Community Centre, the front row of chairs will be specifically reserved for those with hearing and sight difficulties.

The majority of our 26 Groups that we are currently running are going from strength to strength, but there is always room for more so if anyone wishes to start a new Group and needs assistance, please contact me. Speaking of which, one of our members approached me recently with regard to starting a '**Weekend Social Group**' to meet, possibly twice a month either Saturday or Sunday, just for a chat over a tea or coffee and of course a piece of cake. If you find there are things going on during the week but very little at the weekend and this group appeals to you, please contact me on: email: [Janetterobbie@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Janetterobbie@blueyonder.co.uk) Tel: 01452 715033. I will then arrange a first meeting to get it started.

Mary White and Paul Grierson, leaders of The Walking Group, plan to arrange walks next year to a variety of destinations with the coach being filled jointly with walkers and those wanting a day out. See separate advert on Page 6 for details.

Dave Bebbington is trying to start a musical group but currently they have a mish mash of

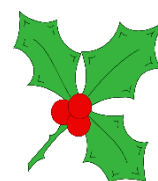
instruments and could really do with an ex-music teacher or the like to help them out.

Joyce Winwood continues to select a variety of theatre outings, mainly to matinees at The Everyman. She has sold all the tickets for Noises Off by Michael Frayn on Valentine's Day, a hilarious comedy, but would try and get some more if there was a demand. However, she has now snuck in a visit to the Pantomime, Mother Goose at the Everyman on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. Please contact her for tickets [Joyce Winwood](#)

I had an email recently from BBC Radio Gloucestershire asking for audio or video stories of about 500 words for one of their programmes. Although this is aimed primarily at the Creative Writing Group any of our members can take part. The full details are contained in the Groups' section on the website or follow this link: [Stories for Local Radio](#)

Very best wishes for Christmas and please join me in looking forward to a full programme of activities in 2024.

**Robbie Philip**  
Chair, Churchdown u3a



## Membership: Kate Methven

I have now come to the end of the renewal period, although if you are reading this and would like to rejoin we would love to see you back.

With renewals and new members, we now number 250 with about 30% attending our monthly meetings. I so enjoy meeting you all and am slowly learning more names to put to faces.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the 18 new members who have joined since the last UPDATE in September:

Brenda Baker

Penny Barrow

Penelope Coles

Richard Colley

Maureen Frayne

Robert Frayne

Helen Gamble

Pearl McGeorge

Barbara Moran

Jennifer McNulty-

Ahern

Rachel Norton

Michael Potter

Susan Russell

Hilary Staples

Hilary Taylor

Carol Wheeler

Rita Whiles

Carole Winnett

*Talking about Creative Writing this was written by Jane Diaco of the Creative Writing Group*

### Bess the Landlord's black-eyed daughter



Based on a poem by Alfred Noyes called The Highwayman written in 1906

“Bess, Bess,” called the landlord. Come over here and serve these men they don’t want to see my ugly face.”

The group of men called out to her. “Come over here pull y’self away from that man of yourn, and fetch us some drinks” Bess rose slowly reluctant to leave her man, and lent in for a kiss. “I’ll wait for you tonight. If it’s safe to return, you’ll see me by the light of my lamp. Ride over the crossroads away from the Inn if I’m not there.” A knarled old traveller was sitting close behind them, half hidden by his dark hat. His eyes gleamed as he caught every word. Soon his masters would know their secret and the highwayman would surely hang.

Later on when all was quiet the lovers embraced in the courtyard. Bess didn’t want him to go, but he assured her that they would soon have an Inn of their own. She saw him off with her large black eyes shining.

“Be safe my love,” she breathed.

As the sound of galloping hooves faded away Bess was grabbed roughly by two strong men. They tied her up in a chair facing the window and put on the lamp so she was visible from the road, ready for her lover to return. Finally, they tied a musket so that if she struggled it would kill her instantly. They all sat soundlessly waiting for the highwayman to return. Bess’ frantic mind raced; how could she warn him. She made a plan and struggled to get a finger free.

Eventually they heard a distant galloping. The highwayman longed to get back to Bess and there was the light silhouetting her. Then, when he was level with the crossroads a loud gun shot rang out and Bess’ head fell forward, lifeless. His heart missed a beat. “No not my Bess, no, no. I’m coming my love we will be together tonight,” His heart broken, he rode onwards towards the Inn.

## The Craft Group has been busy – Wendy Martin

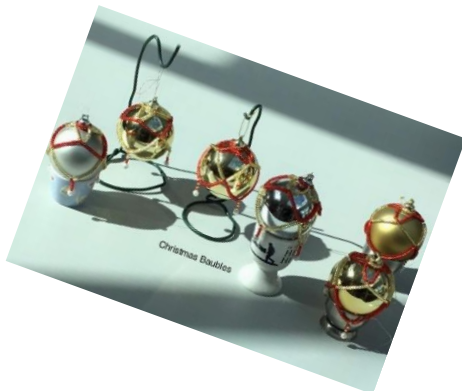
The aim of U3A has definitely been observed with a number of the members sharing their skills by leading our meetings.



Members learnt how to crochet a necklace



Cross Stitch used to make an Easter Card. This was worked with embroidery thread on Aida Fabric



We enjoyed decorating a bauble



Suffolk Puffs. Circles of fabric Gathered round the edge and decorated with a button

These are examples of stitched cards, where a pattern of holes is transferred onto card then joined up using decorative thread.

The finished piece is then mounted on a card.



Members also had the opportunity to experience Paper Marbling, Kumihimo, Lace and Teabag folding





## Photography – John Pinder

Our keen group of a dozen or so members has explored quite a few photographic 'themes' in the course of a year's meetings up to the end of October 2023.

We started and ended appropriately enough with 'Sunset' and we saw many stunning sunset pictures from the autumns of 2022 and 2023, and from a few other years. Sunsets can be tricky to photograph because of the extreme contrast of light levels between the setting sun and maybe, dark clouds, but we have learned a few tricks to (generally!) overcome that.



Other themes have included: Doorways and Arches; Spring; Water; Memories; Monochrome; Boats; Industrial Heritage but not necessarily factories, for example canals, docks, a former pub in Cheltenham had a showing and that 'country house' in Chipping Norton which has a large factory chimney sticking up out of its roof!

As well as viewing the several dozen photos projected at every meeting, we can discuss various artistic and compositional notions, and generally some ideas on how best to use our cameras, which might be digital compact cameras, DSLRs, or cameras in mobile phones – there's no denying that phone cameras can yield excellent photos these days.

We meet in the Methodist Youth Hall at 2:15pm on the fourth Friday of every month except August and December, please do come along with some photos on a USB stick and join the group. Note that we are non-competitive, we just like to see what photo ideas we all come up with. We are a very friendly group and we do have a lot of laughs together.

## The Wine Group



has had another very interesting year, with a varied programme. We have tasted wines from Luxembourg, New Zealand and Bordeaux whilst finding out more about the countries and areas. The coronation was marked with wines from the Highgrove shop. There have been quizzes and wine bingo accompanied by tastings, of course.

The visit to the Litte Oaks Vineyard was very enjoyable, especially as they were very generous with their samples. It is a small vineyard producing some lovely wine, including a sparkling one. Vic Martindale, who has a Diploma in tasting from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust and is a local wine tasting master gave us a talk on comparing similar wines from different outlets. He has offered to come back again in 2024.

We finish the year in December with a wine and food evening. The group is, for the time being, full but I'm happy to take names of members who might be interested in joining the group. **Louise Keeling**

Stillness is the  
flower of winter;  
all hope waits  
beneath a  
blanket of white.  
Winter reminds  
us that everyone  
and everything  
needs some quiet  
time.



# CHURCHDOWN u3a SPEAKER PROGRAMME

December 2023 – April 2024

Meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 2pm

At Churchdown Community Centre, Parton Road, GL3 2JH

Date	Subject	Speaker
December 20 <sup>th</sup> 2023	A Gloucestershire Christmas	John Putley
January 17 <sup>th</sup> 2024	Restoration of Cotswold Canals	Barney Bruce
February 21 <sup>st</sup> 2024	A Career in Antique Furniture	Philip Duckworth
March 20 <sup>th</sup> 2024	Woodchester Mansion	Liz Davenport
April 17 <sup>th</sup> 2024	My Life as a Micro Artist	Graham Short

## Walking Group Programme to March 2024

JAN 9 <sup>TH</sup>	BUS PASS WALK Starting from GLOUCESTER BUS STATION at 10.15 Flat walk	MaryWhite
JAN 30 <sup>TH</sup>	BUS PASS WALK Starting 10.15 Montpelier Gardens Cheltenham Flat walk	Mary White
FEB 13 <sup>TH</sup>	Leckhampton Starting from Severn Springs	Paul Grierson
FEB 20 <sup>TH</sup>	Frampton on Severn / Framilode	Mary White
MARCH 12 <sup>TH</sup>	Huntley	Mary White
MARCH 19 <sup>th</sup>	The Malverns	Paul Grierson



**THE WALKING GROUP** continues to be very well supported. New members have joined over the past year which is always good to see. There is no limit on numbers as not everyone can make each walk.

We are a very friendly group and aim to provide exercise and good companionship for all.

Our average numbers are 15 to 20 with higher numbers on the shorter, flatter options. We are so blessed to have such wonderful countryside within close proximity and walks have taken us to many parts of the Cotswolds this year.



We haven't needed to cancel any walks due to bad weather. However, there have been occasions when rain has arrived during the walk but when you are in a group you just keep walking and it's okay!


Walks are normally between four and six miles and a description of the terrain is given in advance of each walk so people can decide if it is suitable for them. Paul or myself generally lead but we have been led by members on a couple of occasions over the past year and we always welcome offers to lead.

Our coach trip walk this year was a linear section of the southwest coastal path at Weymouth with time afterwards to enjoy an ice cream on the beach. Looking ahead, we will continue to have two walks per month always the 2nd Tuesday and then usually on either another Tuesday or a Thursday.

**Mary White - Group Convenor**



We are planning to arrange coach trips as part of our program to enable us to walk further afield and also give the opportunity of a day out for others. We welcome suggestions from all members who might be interested in visiting a particular town, city or attraction and we will then investigate walking possibilities in that area so that walkers and day-trippers are both catered for. Places within 90 minutes to 2 hours maximum coach journey will be considered. We have some ideas but welcome your suggestions.

Contact:  Mary 07817 007706 or Paul 07341 57290



[mjwhite@live.co.uk](mailto:mjwhite@live.co.uk) [pgrierson24@gmail.com](mailto:pgrierson24@gmail.com)

## Current Group List

Please contact the Group Convenor if you wish to join a group, or for more information go to our web-site: <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchdown>

**Note:** If you do not have the means to contact a convenor via the web page, please phone the Chair in the first instance

Group Coordinator: **VACANCY**

Contact: Robbie Philip (Chair) on 01452 715033 in the interim

Group	Convenor	Contact Details
Ambling	Kate Methven	07814 933531
Art History/Appreciation	Martin Bowden	01452 854007
Book Club/Literature	Joyce Winwood	01452 715099
Bridge for All	Dave Bebbington	07587 151191
Cookery	Eve Anstis	01242 235833
Crafts	Wendy Martin	01452 714049
Creative Writing	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Cribbage	Diana Sinden	01452 698713
<i>Exploring Churchdown</i>	<i>Temporarily suspended</i>	
Current Affairs (previously Politics)	Robbie Philip	01452 715033
Family History	Di Medland	Contact via web page
Film and Cinema	Norman Davies	07957 994390
Gardening	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Garden Visits	Jane Moore	Contact via web-page
Industrial Heritage	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Italian Appreciation	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Lunch Club	Tom Arnot	01452 498934
Meditation	Sue Grierson	07783 061063
Petanque	Ann Stollery	Contact via web-page
Photography	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Singing Together	Alan Winwood	01452 715099
Spanish (Language & Culture)	Maggie Thomas	01452 676751
Table Tennis	Syd Leuillette	01452 857039
Walking	Mary White	07817 007706
Wine Appreciation	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Yoga	Sue Grierson	07783 061063

**PLEASE RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**