



Cogges Manor Farm Barns - John Hurley

u3a

Winchcombe Area

Newsletter

August 2023

Editorial - Its a matter of policy

Winchcombe u3a like many other organisations has a range of policies which are designed to protect members, and lay out the procedures to be followed to ensure their wellbeing while participating in u3a. Of course, such policies, if followed, also protect the organisation from litigation should something untoward occur.

Our policies can be found [here](https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/page/96475): <https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/page/96475>

Our secretary Paul McDonald (who has a legal background) is conducting a review of policy. We have found that the suggested policies from u3a nationally do not quite fit the needs of our local organisation in all cases and this has led to some debate in the executive committee.

We have to balance the needs of an older age group which may include some potentially vulnerable members with the need to ensure that policies are clear, workable and appropriate to the aims of our local organisation.

If anyone with particular expertise in any of these areas wishes to contribute to the discussion please contact Paul or the editor.

Technology update

Well for the last edition I thought I had finally cracked the issue of links failing to work as they should. Hours were spent using PDF editing tools in various packages to insert them. The result has been puzzling. A range of testers have reported that almost all work bar the odd one. Sadly a different odd one ... and one or two people still find difficulty with more. I suspect we are back to browsers and settings over which I have no control. So in general I am directing you to the website through which you can access most material. You can reach that [here](https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/home) or on: <https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/home> One or the other should work - even both. Happy browsing.

Next issue

The deadline for submissions for the **November** issue is **9th October 2023** but send your entries before then whenever you wish to this address: newsletter@winchcombeu3a.org.uk

Annual General Meeting Report

Our AGM took place on Tuesday the 9th May 2pm, at Abbey Fields Centre, Back Lane, Winchcombe, chaired by Phil Hawthorn. The principal business was the election of the new committee, with several new members joining as our founding members have served their full six year term. Our thanks to them and a welcome to your new executive committee. Please note we are still looking for members to step forward and fill vacant posts particularly speaker secretary.

The Chairman's report to the AGM

In writing this report, I suddenly realised I have only been in the Chairman post for one year. It feels longer, probably because so much has happened.

It seems hard to believe that the 2022 report had references to our monthly meetings and interest group activities were now meeting in person again. It seems like we had learned to live with it, and now have come out the other side. At its simplest, we are a very active u3a, with 318 members now – the highest we have been – and 45 Interest Groups, which are still being added to.

I would like to thank all my fellow committee members for their collective and individual management and volunteering efforts to make sure we remain open minded to new ideas as well as keeping the pot simmering nicely. As we are 6 years old now, and some of our committee members have been there since the beginning, it is not surprising to see a few have decided to step down. I have really enjoyed working alongside Jenny Mackelworth, Janet Bidwell and John Mackelworth. We wouldn't be in such a positive place without their inputs in many and various roles since the initial concept of a Winchcombe Area u3a emerged in 2017. Thank you all, once again.

Just going through the diary for the last 12 months, such a lot has happened. I notice a lot of places visited through the excellent trips organised by Di Smith. I also saw the 40th anniversary of the u3a concert last June. Then the Queens Platinum Jubilee, with many a street party. Such a joyous occasion, to be followed only a couple of months later by her sad passing.

I am sure if you look back through your diary the highlights will not be "take car in for MOT". I hope it is far more likely that you will note many entries of u3a activities that you have attended. There are plenty more things you could get involved with – perhaps joining with us on the committee, or just offering a helping hand at our many events. It is a lot of fun to stay active in both mind and body with a group of like-minded people.

Finally, I'd like to thank all our members for your involvement and input into our u3a. It cannot exist without you. I hope that you are all looking forward to our 23/24 u3a year.

Phil Hawthorn

Contact details for the new committee

Our Committee

Chair:	Phil Hawthorn	07976 257512
Secretary:	Paul McDonald	01242 604944
Treasurer:	Ian Tucker	01242 609127
Vice-Chair:	Jean Jones	07597 225704

Other Committee Members

Groups Coordinator:	Jane Hawthorn
Beacon Administrator:	Lynne Smith
Newsletter Editor:	John Hurley
Membership Secretary:	Maggie Tucker
Website Admin:	Gary Search
Trips Coordinator:	Di Smith

You can also contact committee members through the form on the contact page of the website [here: https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/contact](https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/contact) or through the email link on the Beacon website page.

Readership Survey

When I took over editorship of the newsletter in February 2022 I distributed it directly to members and received many notes of thanks as a result. Subsequently I have notified people that it is available on the website, to avoid spamming your inbox, but wonder if there is a diminishing readership in consequence? If you are looking at this could you just confirm readership by mailing a "yes" to newsletter@winchcombeu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meetings

The meeting talks programme for the remainder of the year provides a wide range of topics. As always tea and biscuits are available after the event.

Tuesday 8th August 2023	Alan Benjamin Royal Visits
Tuesday 12 September 2023	NO MEETING
Tuesday 10 October 2023	Katy Bellamy Fun Facts about the Brain
Tuesday 14 November 2023	Mike Sumner Media
Tuesday 12 December 2023	Social

Winchcombe Country Show - Bank Holiday Monday 28 August 2023

We are planning to have a stand again at the Winchcombe Country Show with the aim of advertising and raising the profile of our very popular organisation within the community.

Group Leaders are encouraged to send in a brief synopsis of their group, with pictures if possible and these can be displayed on the stand. You will be contacted by email closer to the event and we would welcome help on the day from any of you who would like to promote your group and the benefits of the u3a movement. Please let us know if you are available and willing to help on the stall for an hour or so. This year we have an indoor stand!

Once again we are asking for contributions of books and plants to be sold on our stall. This is a great way of drawing people in – and proved popular and profitable in the past. Further details of where to drop off these will be circulated to all members but start looking out any unwanted books and perhaps potting up a few perennials to share!

Last year we signed up over 20 new members and it was good to have this opportunity to promote our very worthy cause!

Jenny Mackelworth & Jean Jones

News from the groups

Joining Groups

While summer is the peak activity time for some groups others are primarily winter activities. We do not have so many reports from the groups in this issue, but details of all our groups are available on the website and on Beacon. There is a natural turnover of group members, people decide to try new things after a while, move away or simply become less active. Even if groups are full it is worth contacting leaders to see if a place becomes available.

The best way to get in touch with group leaders is through the website [here](https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/groups) and at <https://u3asites.org.uk/winchcombe/groups>

Full information on joining groups is provided on that page of the website.

Visit programme

Tickets may still be available for the following visits. The price includes coach travel and entrance. If you are interested please let Di Smith know [here](#).

Berkley Castle -	11th September	£23
RAF Cosford -	19th October	£23
Waddesdon Manor -	22nd November	price TBA
Coventry Guildhall - (Dickensian Christmas)	6th December	£26

Di Smith

Group Reports

Book Group 1

This month (July) our Book Group is celebrating 6 years of meeting every month on a Thursday afternoon at 2pm at the White Hart in Winchcombe. We began with 16 of us and over the years we have lost a few members and for a while have been a comfortable 11 which suits our current accommodation in the White Hart and ensures we all get a chance to have our say!

The variety of books that we have read in those years is quite staggering from Dickens and Trollope to Antonia Fraser and many currently acclaimed authors. We have travelled on coastal paths, canoed on Canadian lakes, been amongst the first Australian settlers, discovered Nigeria and travelled to the American Deep South and also solved several crimes. our latest being Murder before Evensong by The Reverend Richard Coles.

Our discussions have been wide and varied and its great that sometimes the discussion helps us view a book anew. One of our members has moved away and we could accommodate one or two new people now - of any gender. You will get a warm welcome - Lynette Hurley

Book group 3

We meet on Thursday afternoon once at the beginning of the month at the White Hart.

We are currently 5 members and would welcome others but suggest they join for October meeting as we are few in number for August and September. Please email me (see website) and I will send book choice for October meeting.

The date is set for 5th October. - contact Jenny Scampion

Writing for fun

Most of us haven't written creatively (fact or fiction) since leaving school. You may well be surprised to see how the words flow put of you once you have an idea. We write a piece of about 1000 words on a given theme once a month and then get together to read them out to other members of the group. We don't go in for literary criticism but we do enjoy the different takes on each topic.

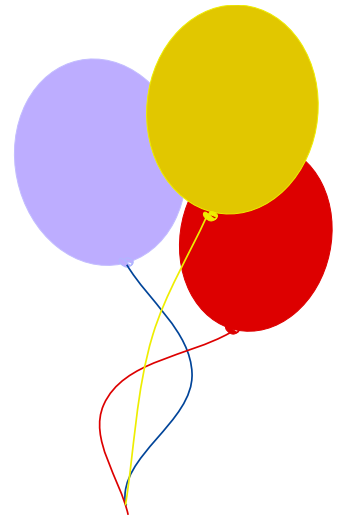
We are a very informal group and would welcome new members even if you are only passing through to see what we get up to.

Contact Martin Blackwell for more information.

Table Tennis

The table tennis group continues to play from 11 until 1 on Mondays in the Winchcombe Sports Hall. We mainly play doubles and players of all standards are welcome, so if you have never played or last played many years ago this is a good opportunity to start.

Contact Martin Blackwell for more information.



Mah jong

The Mah jong group has vacancies for more members. Mah jong, is a tile based game of skill, strategy and luck which originated in China. Played by small groups of players (typically four) it is a lot of fun to play.

Those interested should contact Nigel Sharp via the website group page.

Groups spotlight - Visiting groups

As summer draws on we are again highlighting groups who go places to see things. Many of these groups are particularly active in summer, though some operate all year round. We have a such a wide selection that most interests are catered for.

Or are they - if you spot a gap around your interests on the website why not see if others share it?

Ornithology & Ecology

The Ornithology and Ecology group fulfilled it's wider remit this month with a trip to Daneway Banks near Cirencester to look at the butterflies. The weather was not particularly auspicious being cloudy (Butterflies like sunshine) but at least it was dry and mild.

Our main objective was to find the very rare Large Blue Butterfly. For those who don't know, this particular species went extinct in the UK towards the end of the 20th century, but has been the subject of a major re-introduction programme at Daneway and other locations in Gloucestershire and the South West.



This has been successful to the extent that Daneway now is believed to home to the largest concentration of these butterflies in Europe.

They are only on the wing from Late May to mid-July, so there is only a small window in which to see them. Thankfully, despite the weather not being overly helpful, we were successful and managed to see at least 3 of these butterflies. In spite of the name, they are not particularly large, but they are very beautiful. We also saw several other species, including the delightful Marbled White.

After the mornings activities, we repaired to the Daneway Inn for a very welcome lunch.

David Ayres

Historic Buildings and Churches

Our visit to Chipping Campden was well supported by a dozen regular and new members. After a short time looking at the exhibits in the Barn Museum we were given an interesting guided tour of the high street pointing out buildings of note, many of which were associated with the Guild of Handicrafts whose story was revealed through the tour. Our tour concluded at the Silk Mill where Harts Jewellers and Robert Welch designs are still headquartered. On a chilly day with spotting rain starting we headed gratefully to the cafe in the Mill and took in the gallery which also occupies the ground floor. The visit ended at the large and impressive wool church, a somewhat subdued visit due to the tragic accident which had recently involved pupils at the Campden school.

Next visit - Cogges Manor Farm



I had hoped to be able to report on our visit to Cogges Manor Farm Museum on July 14th but the heavy rain that day forced a postponement to the 29th July when we hope the weather is kinder. The visit includes an ancient Manor house, with an interesting history, Georgian and Victorian farm buildings, a stunning garden and a small working farm, all run by volunteers of a conservation trust. In the afternoon we will go to Minster Lovell, to visit the Minster (an historic ruined country house) and the quirky St Kenelm's Church which was a pilgrim Church on the way to Winchcombe. We will also note the Chartist bungalows built to enfranchise 40 shilling freeholders built by the Chartist Land Co in the 1840s.

We meet irregularly through the warmer months of the year and of our 30 current members about a dozen will join us for any given visit. Members car share so you have to be willing to act as driver or passenger over the run of visits. We respond to members initiatives which results in a very wide range of historic buildings being visited, from castles and Churches to industrial buildings and 20th century architecture. To join our summer programme please contact me through the groups page [here](#).

John Hurley

Coach visits

Winterbourne House and garden and the Barber Institute, 20th April

On a really glorious, early spring day, with blue sky, bright sunshine and hedgerows opening their first fresh green leaves, we set off by coach to visit Winterbourne House and Gardens and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, two properties on Birmingham University's campus at Edgbaston. Both had been gifted to the University by generous benefactors and, as only a short walk separated them, both were easily accessible.

When our coach arrived at Winterbourne House we were welcomed, given tickets and told that the Head Gardener would talk to us at 2.00 and that Winterbourne had the only tea room. How we spent the rest of our time depended on own individual choices and interests. Several of us decided first to visit the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, a magnificent building founded by Lady Martha Barber in memory of her husband Sir Henry Barber.



Birmingham-born Henry Barber was a highly successful property developer who made his fortune in expanding its suburbs. He was also involved in founding its University and was knighted for his services to Birmingham. The couple had discussed making a permanent contribution to the city and in 1932, after his death, Lady Barber founded the Barber Institute in his memory. At her death she left the entire Barber fortune to the Trustees of the Institute, thus enabling them to erect a new building, develop an art collection and fund public concerts.

The building, opened by Queen Mary in 1939, was designed by Robert Atkinson, a contemporary leading architect. It is a fine example of Art Deco (from "Arts Decoratifs") which emphasised sleekness and style. Most Art Deco buildings were made of reinforced concrete so had less need for heavy reinforcing pillars and columns.

The building is laid out around a central music auditorium. A magnificent staircase leads up to the first floor galleries which cover a coin collection, prints, temporary exhibitions and art from pre-1600 to modern, all collected to meet Lady Barber's criterion that everything should be of the highest standard.

In the four galleries we could see works ranging from Botticelli to Gainsborough, Monet to Magritte. The Barber is renowned for its collection of French 19th-century paintings. With such a vast selection before us, we made our own choices of which areas to visit in the short time available to us.



Winterbourne House had a lovely, sunny, tea-room terrace for sitting in the sun, as well as tables inside, and many of us enjoyed a break there at some time in our visit. The house was built in 1903 for John and Margaret Nettlefold as their private home. Following the fashionable style of the Arts and Crafts movement, they used local craftsmanship throughout the house. The Arts and Crafts movement (influenced by William Morris) attempted to counteract the effects of industrialisation and mass-production by using individual skill and craftsmanship.

John Sutton Nettlefold, a member of the family who started the firm of Guest Keen and Nettlefold, unlike his industrial forebears, was a town planner who fought long and hard to improve housing for the poor and remove slums. He incorporated ideas tried in his own home into plans for poorer areas of the city.

Upstairs in Winterbourne House we could see an inventive, artistic display from the archives of Guest, Keen and Nettlefold. The firm had established a monopoly in wood screws, which were an essential item for the vast range of Birmingham industries.

John's wife Margaret, much influenced by the writings of garden-designer Gertrude Jekyll, planned the attractive and varied gardens.

An unusual feature of the house is its wavy roof line, designed to make the house look older than it actually was. Most of the original features, including fireplaces and plasterwork, are intact, enabling the house to be restored to something close to its original form. The light, bright rooms have been decorated in Arts and Crafts style using William Morris wallpapers and period furnishings.

Eventually the Nettlefolds sold the house, which later became the home of local businessman John Nicolson. A passionate gardener, he introduced some new features, including a pergola and a "Japanese bridge and tea house". The University inherited both house and garden on his death in 1944. It was then used as a hall of residence for female undergraduates. Later the garden was adapted as a botanic garden and used as a research garden for the Department of Botany. Winterbourne also has a working collection of historic printing presses regularly operated by skilled volunteers and the press is open daily.

At 2.00 the Head Gardener gave us a very comprehensive history of the house and garden and the changes made when it had been used to accommodate female students. Although it was too early in the year to see the flower beds at their best, he took us on a quick tour of garden and greenhouses, pointing out interesting tender plants in flower in the greenhouse and other features. We finished near the "Japanese tea house", avoiding the heavy machinery hard at work making more changes and installing new features.

We had a most enjoyable, busy and varied day and a memorable visit and all of us offer our most grateful thanks to Di Smith for, as usual, organising it so well.

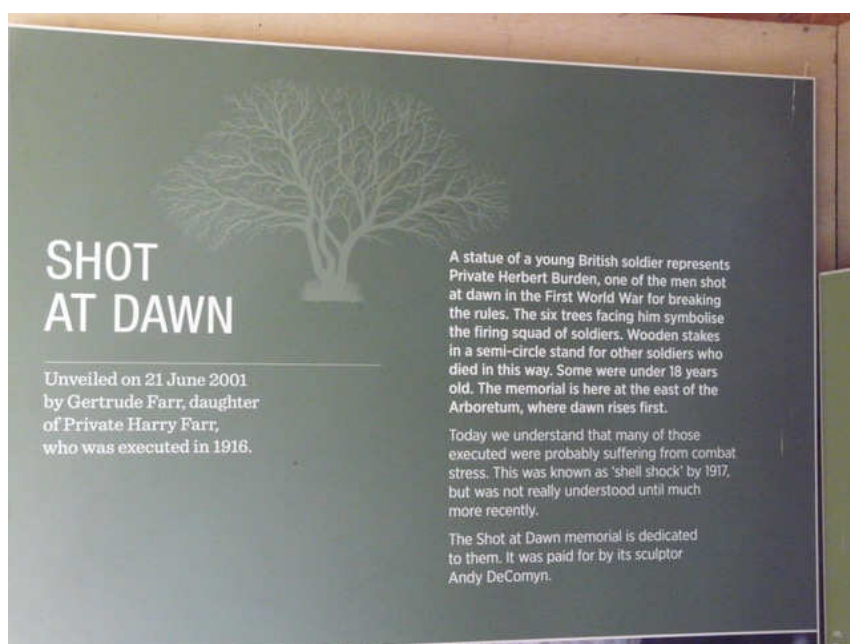
Barbara Edward

National Memorial Arboretum - June 22nd

The National Memorial Arboretum honours the fallen, recognises service and sacrifice and fosters pride in our country. It is a spiritually uplifting place and is emerging as a world-renowned centre for remembrance."

That is the summary just from the map directions. It is a very moving place to visit, which we did in June. It is, being near Lichfield a bit near the centre of England. That feels fitting in many ways. At the heart, so to speak. And it really is shocking and humbling.

Highlights also feel like low lights. The Shot at Dawn exhibit shows the blindfolded prisoner surrounded by his six colleagues who were ordered to be the firing squad. I cannot imagine a more heart-rending task. The prisoner is hit by the rising sun on 11th November.



That is the sort of attention to detail evidenced all over the 150-acre site. 25 000 trees. 400 memorials.

We did start with tea and biscuits (naturally), but then had a road train around the whole site. This was a great way of helping us each to plan our itinerary - you cannot see everything in one day. The volunteers told us you needed about 3 and a half days to do the memorial justice. It does speak to your soul.

My other highlights? Seeing a lot of school visits there. They were 100% engaged and involved. The poetry from a very young boy. But I think seeing the stonemason there putting up yet more names onto the extra walls that are still blank just stopped me in my tracks. We will visit again. It was quiet on the bus when we returned to it. We will remember them.

And if you weren't able to go, or want a great reminder of the day, the [website](https://www.thenma.org.uk) is worth a visit. <https://www.thenma.org.uk>

The National Space Centre - June 29th

I confess I didn't know we had a National Space Centre. It is based in Leicester and is quite spectacular.

We decided to start in "the UK's largest planetarium". It certainly gave you some perspective. Then it was off to get fully immersed in the interactive displays. And of course, you really did have to stand inside a space suit to have your photo taken. Unless you're Elon Musk, this is the closest I am likely to get to the real thing.

The story of British space exploration is well illustrated on a timeline, linking important events (Twiggy's first catwalk, the Beatles first gold disc – important stuff!), to the big events in space. We all thought we remembered something – like the moon landings and the accidents. But there was a lot more than just these milestones.



There is a lot to read and explore. The main building has four floors of totally at the edge of possible science and engineering. And its height means they can exhibit some real rockets.

A [website](https://www.spacecentre.co.uk) visit will remind those who went on the trip what they saw and what they missed. And if you didn't go – it gives you a good overview of the centre – even if you didn't know it existed. <https://www.spacecentre.co.uk>

Phil Hawthorn