

Coventry Cathedral - Phil Hawthorn

u3a

Winchcombe Area

Newsletter

May 2023

Editorial - Technology and lateral thinking

Many of you will have noticed that the links to websites and email addresses in the newsletter have worked only erratically - if at all. This is because the links were not embedded but relied on the ability of a browser or pdf reader to recognise the links and act on them. This was fine if you were using Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome (with security settings allowing links to be made) but generally hard luck if you were using Apple devices with Safari.

This became a matter of concern to the executive, and in response I downloaded a host of different free pdf editors to see which if any of them allowed me to insert the links. Sadly this always seemed to be an at cost add on and we were considering purchasing appropriate software to allow it to be done. A chance remark at a meeting prompted the simple solution which had been staring us all in the face. Nationally u3a recommends use of the free office suite Libre Office and that can read pdfs - but also insert links. A quick trial showed that a pdf originating in my design software could have links inserted and saved back as a readable pdf. My enduring gratitude to Jenny Mackelworth who has saved us a few pounds.

This raises an interesting question about our thought processes. I have used computers as part of my work for the last 40 years and consider myself a reasonably fluent user of MacOs, Windows and RISC OS operating systems. Furthermore problem solving and finding lateral solutions has always been a big part of my paid and voluntary work. Yet I had let myself fixate on a particular solution and had disappeared down a particular rabbit hole taking others with me. We had all (but one) overlooked the obvious lateral solution.

It is entirely possible that the flexibility of our cognitive processes declines as we get older. Such decline can be at least held at bay by engaging in those activities which stimulate thinking skills as Edward De Bono argued in his book "The Age Heresy". And that surely is one of the real purposes of being part of u3a. For a short explanation of Edward De Bono's ideas on lateral thinking please follow this link.

www.instructionaldesign.org/theories/lateral-thinking/

I hope that works for you. If not please let me know newsletter@winchcombe.u3a.org.uk

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM – Tuesday the 9th May 2pm, at Abbey Fields Centre, Back Lane, Winchcombe.

You will have received the notification of our AGM from Paul McDonald, our Secretary. We have had nominations for all positions except Assistant Treasurer and Speaker Secretary, which we can do on the day. Both of these positions do not have to attend Committee meetings, if that helps your decision making

John Mackelworth, our outgoing Speaker Secretary has produced an updated job role outline, if you would like to know more. John has also made the transition a little easier as he has managed to secure speakers until the end of this year already, and he is willing and able to help you if you decide to offer your services. We thank John for all his work. Ian Tucker as our Treasurer is equally happy to brief you and help you should you want to offer to be the Assistant Treasurer. This mainly involves someone being available to expedite any payments should they become urgent and Ian is away, and countersigning payments via the banks electronic banking page

All members are reminded that they should bring their membership cards, or suitable identification, to verify their membership at this meeting, and to take part in any votes that may be required at the meeting. Looking forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Phil Hawthorn

Annual General Meeting. Agenda

Apologies for absence.

Approval of the Minutes for the 2022 AGM.

Chairman's report (to be circulated in advance)

Treasurer's Report together with details of the annual income, annual expenditure, year-end balance and details of assets and liabilities. (to be circulated in advance)

Approval of the examined accounts.

Approval of the appointment/continued appointment of an Examiner for the accounts.

Election of the committee for the forthcoming year.

Consideration of motions or resolutions as notified in accordance with the constitution.

Any other business.

Executive Committee Nominations

	Proposer.	Seconder.
Chairman: Phil Hawthorn	Paul McDonald	John Mackelworth
Secretary: Paul McDonald	Paul Clarke	Paul Wonnacott
Groups convener: Jane Hawthorn	Janet Bidwell	Ian Tucker
Trips Sec: Diana Smith	Lyn Tolley	Jane Flynn
Webmaster: Gary Search	Phil Hawthorn	Jenny Mackelworth
Treasurer: Ian Tucker	Camilla Beesley	Sarah McDonald
Vice Chairman: Jean Jones	Paul McDonald	Phil Hawthorn
Membership Sec: Maggie Tucker	Camilla Beesley	Sarah McDonald
Beacon Admin: Lynne Smith	Nick Hoskins	John Hurley
Newsletter Editor: John Hurley	Paul McDonald	Phil Hawthorn
Asst Treasurer:	Vacant.	
Speaker Sec:	Vacant.	

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 09 May 2023 AGM** Jenny Scampion Origins of the u3a
- Tuesday 13 June 2023** Gillian White “The Most Disolute man in London”
- Tuesday 11 July 2023** Bob King Bubbles cabaret style presentation & science
- 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**

Coronation Picnic and Music Event Sunday 7th May



King Charles III will have been crowned by the time we have our Picnic and Music celebration at Toddington Village Hall on Sunday 7th May.

The doors will open at 6pm for talking, drinking, and eating. With any luck, it will be a warm sunny day and we could eat outside. It is a bring your own picnic and drinks event – the ticket costs are for our Band, The Apple Mashers and hire of the hall.

Tickets are £10 a head. Payment by BACS (Bank Transfer) is preferred. I sent out payment details by email on 6th April at 12.35 pm if you need to find out those details again.

In the meantime, please enjoy all the extra bank holidays and the Coronation itself. There are still some tickets available, so now is the time to get yours.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Phil Hawthorn

u3a Websites update

Currently over 700 u3as use SiteBuilder as the website tool to publish and publicise their activities. This easy-to-use versatile system was built and maintained by a very small number of dedicated u3a volunteers for over 10 years.

However a decision was taken, a few months ago, to seek an alternative and the WordPress system software was selected as the basis for the SiteBuilder replacement. It is more versatile and flexible with the potential to provide additional 'plug-ins' for added functionality in future. The new system is called Siteworks. A huge team of 60+ are replacing the two volunteers who have been supporting the current system for the past 10 years!

Originally we were advised that the migration to the new server would be completed by the end of 2022, but now they are estimating that it could take up to 2 years to move all U3A's onto this. However there are already lots of resources already for those U3A's who are planning to use this new system which can be found here:

<https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk/resources/>

In future I think it would be very helpful if more Group Leaders and Post Holders could be encouraged to keep their area/page of the website up-to-date. Access can be granted to as many individuals as necessary and it is mostly just Word Processing to make any changes on individual Group Pages. Please let the [Webmaster](#) know if you would like to be added or if you need a reminder of your password.

Having been involved with our u3a since its inception and having served as Secretary for 4 years and Webmaster for 2 more, I will be stepping down from the committee at the next AGM. However I am pleased to announce that Gary Search has been nominated to take up this position, so wish him well.

Jenny Mackelworth

Visit programme

A few spaces remain on our next two planned visit coaches.

There are 5 spaces on the National Memorial Arboretum
June 22nd at £23 departing 0900hrs.

Places are available on the Space Centre visit with Probus on the
29th June at £25 departing 0900hrs.

Cheques to Winchcombe Area U3a post or deliver to 5 The Halt Close Becketts Lane Greet
GL54 5RN.

A Holiday Group has been started and if you are interested we have 12 signed up already. Please let Di Smith know [here](#). The idea is that members of the U3a may go on holiday as a group. It is still in its infancy and at the experimental stage, we can but try.

Di Smith

News from the groups

This edition we are highlighting new and updated groups and spotlighting those groups whose aim is to visit interesting places and events.

Groups Update

I am delighted to announce that 4 new groups have started since the beginning of the year – with 3 as a result of the annual Groups Showcase which was held on 14th March. Every Lead Contact attended the showcase in person, nominated someone in their group or left a short synopsis to be read out by our Chairman. Thank you to all our Lead Contacts for their input.

The afternoon was a success with many groups reporting new sign ups. We already have two book groups lead by Jo Rees and Lynette Hurley but both are full. Lyn and Jo did a splendid job in encouraging new recruits and a new lead came forward – Jenny Scampion. Many thanks to all three of you. The new group - Book Group 3 will have an initial meeting in the White Hart at 11.00am on Thursday 11th May.

There is also interest in starting a Cribbage group. This was initiated by Sally, the new owner of The Old Bakehouse tea room. She told me her dad (David), who recently moved to Winchcombe, lead a cribbage group at u3a Thornbury. A note to our members elicited good interest and the new group will be lead by Ingrid Lethbridge. First meeting to be held on Thursday 27th April in the White Hart.

Finally, Nigel and Dot Sharp approached me regarding a Mah-Jong group. They were looking for experienced players but are also happy to coach new recruits. The group is now up and running and new members are very welcome. Please contact Nigel via groupscoordinator@winchcombeu3a.org.uk for more information.

The Badminton Group started in January with Lynne Smith as Lead Contact. To say this has been a success would be an understatement. Congratulation to Lynne for getting this going and filling what was an obvious need in our u3a. Players meet weekly in the Winchcombe Sports Hall – Thursdays 4pm-6pm.

Many thanks to all new Group Leaders for taking on their roles.

Jane Hawthorn

Cannot find a group you want to join - why not start one?

Winchcombe area u3a offers an amazing array of groups, to be found on the website, but maybe you cannot find your interests amongst them, or the group you want to join is full. So why not start a group?

It does not have to take a lot of time and many groups share responsibilities in a truly democratic style. Just advertise your interest here and place an invitation on the website. An email can also be sent to all members inviting them. Our local u3a is continually evolving, and you can help to keep it fresh.

Groups spotlight - Visiting groups

As summer draws on we are 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 why not see if others share it?

Coach visits

Winchcombe U3A trip to Oxford on 22nd March

The Winchcombe U3A trip to Oxford on 22nd March, organised as efficiently as ever by Di Smith, offered the members a wide range of choices on how they might spend 4 hours in the city after a sunny journey across the springtime Cotswolds. They could explore the historic centre with its many colleges, visit a choice of museums, make a beeline for the shops or even walk into a real bank ! However, since John the driver of our Cresswell coach dropped us outside the Ashmolean Museum, a number of the party chose to spend the precious time there.

The Ashmolean contains a very wide range of artefacts and documents reflecting the history and artistic works of many diverse cultures. You may view items from the Anglo-Saxon era, including the real Odda's stone from Deerhurst Chapel, inspect a collection of beautiful violins in a different gallery or wander through galleries of paintings, sculptures and ethnological items from a wide span of time and place.

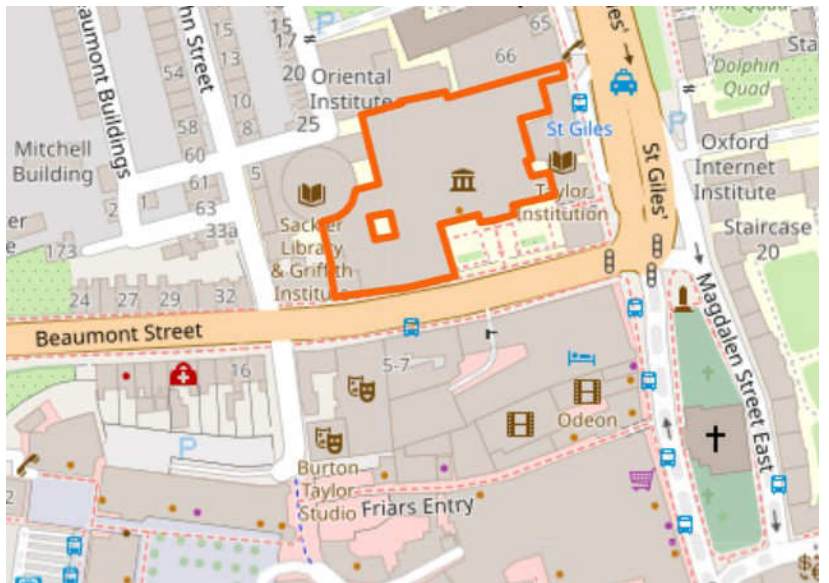


Image courtesy of open streetmap

Currently, until 30th July, there is a major temporary exhibition 'Labyrinth' exploring the Bronze Age Minoan civilisation of Crete around 1600BCE. Many of the items on display are on loan from the museum at Heraklion, including recent discoveries, but there are also items from the Ashmolean's own collection. These include the notebooks and other items from the former Keeper of the Ashmolean, Sir Arthur Evans, the celebrated excavator and restorer in the early 20th century of the key Minoan site of Knossos. On display were intricate gold items, beautifully crafted and decorated pottery and also items relating to the Minotaur, the mythical half man, half bull monster slain by Theseus in the Labyrinth. But to bring you back to the 21st century there were film extracts from a video game vividly set in the ruins of Knossos with a frightening, roaring Minotaur confronting Theseus.

Thank you Di.

Neil Herapath

Coventry Cathedral Trip 8th February

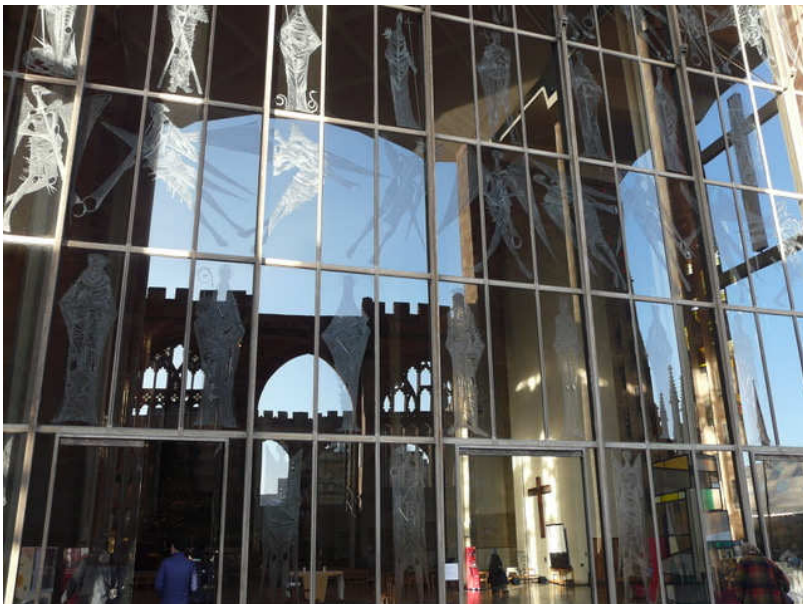
Another fine day out organised and run by Di Smith. And what a fascinating Cathedral. The history is there for all to see and feel.

The original St Michaels Church was constructed in the late 14th and early 15th century. It was bombed almost to destruction during the Coventry Blitz of 14th October 1940. The city's engineering prowess was the target of the raids.

The city held a competition to design the new cathedral. Only one of the 291 submissions planned to keep the ruins as a memorial to those who had perished and as a potent reminder of the futility and horror of war. It was designed by Basil Spence and Arup. The two buildings do feel very interlocked and moving to me. The new is very modernist, but it reflects (quite literally) the old and constant reminder of what happened – lest we forget. Provost Richard Howard had the two words “Father Forgive” engraved on the wall behind the altar in the ruined building. We heard these words at the mid-day “litany of reconciliation”. The reduction to just those two words somehow gave the message far more power.



There are many excitements here: The huge tapestry of Christ was designed by Graham Sutherland. You will love it or hate it – but no-one remained neutral.



The windows and etched panels at the entrance offer continuously changing light. In fact, there is an overwhelming amount of light in the place. It is a very different space – even to the way it is situated, the entrance to Nave was North/South, not the standard East/West.

The cathedral site certainly divided us visitors. Some were overwhelmed. Some were not whelmed at all! We will return with so much more to explore. And the pubs and cafes certainly were worth exploring too.

Phil Hawthorn

Garden visiting

Looking at gardens is a popular passtime in our age group, but add to the pleasure in the company of other enthusiasts. The group is small and varied but growing and we try to vary the timings of the visits, about one a month during the summer months, so that members with other commitments should be able to manage some dates. Some members are more knowledgeable, while for others it is just a nice trip out.

Each very different in style and scale but within a reasonable distance from Winchcombe for an afternoon trip. Some have been National Garden Scheme openings while others have opened specially for us and we have had guided tours. Many offer tea and cake.

For further details contact Natalie Stone through the groups page [here](#)

Historic Buildings and Churches

When you read this a group of ten of us will have enjoyed an interesting morning considering the impact the Guild of Handicrafts had on the economy and architecture of Chipping Campden. Our visit includes a visit to the Court Barn Museum of Craft and Design which details the impact of the Arts and Craft movement on the Town and a guided tour of the high street with a focus on its architecture. The tour concludes at the Silk Mill where Harts the jewellers and Robert Welch have their design offices. After a lunch in the Town a visit to the fine wool church will conclude the visit.

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. We respond to members initiatives which results in a very wide range of historic buildings being visited, from castles to industrial buildings. To join our summer programme please contact John Hurley Through the groups page [here](#).



Ornithology & Ecology

We have moved to meeting on the last Wednesday of the month as meeting on Tuesday did not suit all our number.

So far this year we have visited Slimbridge, Kemerton Lakes, where the highlight was seeing an otter swim leisurely before us , and then in March to Frampton on Severn where we managed to get very wet indeed, but were rewarded for our durability be seeing a pair of rare Marsh Harriers.

April's trip is planned to be a little nearer to home as we intend to visit Cleeve Common to look for the elusive Ring Ouzel, which is much like a Blackbird, but with a white front.

David Ayres

Theatre Group

In early March a small group of us went to see 'The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel'. At the same time, the Everyman offered me a Group Theatre Tour on the same day at half price. I felt this was too good to miss and, eventually, 12 members signed up.

The performance was excellent with a great cast, a straightforward story and all very warm and colourful – just the right play for a cold winters day. The whole audience joined in the Indian-style dancing at the end!

The highlight, however, was the theatre tour lead by two excellent guides. We learned so much about the history of the Everyman from its opening in 1891 to the busy working theatre it is today. We saw all the backstage 'workings', dressing rooms and green room as well as the stage itself to see the theatre from the actor's viewpoint. The theatre was under threat of closure in the 1950s and was nearly sold to Cavendish House to become a carpet warehouse. Luckily it escaped this fate and was extensively restored in 2011.

Jane Hawthorn



Next issue

The deadline for submissions for the next **August** issue is **10th July 2023** but send your entries before then whenever you wish to this address: newsletter@winchcombeu3a.org.uk