

u3a The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

COMMITTEE NEWS

Meet Your Committee Members: Vice Chair/Assistant Treasurer – John Hobson



I first took up the role of Assistant Treasurer and joined the Committee at the AGM in October 2020 which, for those that remember was held late and remotely due to Covid. Like, I suspect, many Committee Members I grew into the role with time and the confidence to make the position my own.

Before retiring, I only worked for two organisations, firstly joining Rolls-Royce Aero Engines in Filton as an undergraduate apprentice. My experience with Rolls-Royce took me into computing and I finished, before retiring, with my last employer as an Analyst/Programmer looking after a payroll and accounting

system.

As Assistant Treasurer, I manage what we call the High Cash Turnover groups, i.e. those that organise garden visits, theatre trips, historic places etc and require payments to be made to the event location and normally the coach company getting them there. I take pride in supporting the Group Leaders but as some will testify I don't always get it right!

Outside of u3a, I've been a Parish Councillor on and off for over 25 years, I'm a Trustee of my village hall and for relaxation I spend Friday mornings volunteering with Wild Hogs hedgehog rescue based in Frampton upon Severn.

Family-wise, I have three children (two boys and a girl) who have given me between them, four grandchildren - three boys and a girl.

Christmas Quiz - 2025



Our Annual Christmas Quiz 2025 will be held on Thursday 18th December at the Dursley Methodist Church. To enable tables to be spread out more, we'll set up tables in the room used for refreshments at our normal monthly meetings, as well as in the main Church Room. This will enable us to set up 25 small tables each of which will accommodate a team of four people – a couple of the tables in the smaller room will be able to take an extra person if necessary but there will only be 4 prizes for the top team and 4 for the bottom team so please try to limit your team to 4. Using the smaller room as well will mean that anyone who objects to seeing the table of teams and positions screened will be able to hear the questions, answers and announcements without having to view the positions on screen!

PLEASE REMEMBER THIS EVENT IS RESTRICTED TO OUR u3a MEMBERS ONLY

As usual, Mulled Wine (a soft drink or water can be provided for those not wishing to partake in the mulled wine) and Mince Pies will be served but won't be able to provide teas and coffees on this occasion (you can of course, bring your own if you need a caffeine fix).

Please can you let me know as soon as possible if you wish to enter a team this year together with the name of your team and the number of players in your team. All entries need to be with me by

Monday 8th December please. However, if I've received entries for 25 teams before that date I'll need to close the list earlier.

If you'd like to play but don't have a team; please do let me know and I'll try to incorporate you into a team which is short of a person.

The Quiz Master will, as usual, be Jane Ball who will organise a good mix of topics and questions including the Christmas round. Our Treasurer, Debbie Sirett, will record the team scores and screen them.

Mary Ewens and her team of Elves will, once again, provide the Mulled Wine and Mince Pies. As Mary and her team have provided the goodies for the last 10 years, this will be her last year. Consequently, we will need a new volunteer to organise and lead the catering team for next year's quiz please.



Message sent to all u3as in the South West Region Elections by Marian Luck

One of our Council Reps, Susan Parker (formally the Trustee for the SW), will be standing down as she has served the maximum time allowed as Trustee and Council Rep. We are asking for people to volunteer to take her place so that our region has 2 representatives.

We are a large geographical region and trying to cover all of it by myself would greatly diminish the service. I am asking Committees to urge their Members to think about whether they could come forward to engage with u3as and networks in the region, representatives from other Regions/Nations and the Trust. Members do not have to be Committee Members to come forward.

Anyone who would like more information can contact either me at marian.luck@u3a.org.uk or phone me on 07480 643775, or Susan on susan.parker@u3a.org.uk. We would be very happy to answer any questions. It seems likely that the election process will begin in January 2026 so this is the time for people to come forward if they think they can fulfil this role.

Third Age Matters On-line Magazine

You can read the latest issues at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/u3a-matters/screen-reader-editions>.

However, if you no longer wish to receive your magazine through the post and are happy to read the latest issues online, please let our Treasurer Debbie Sirett know by emailing her on cam.u3a.treasurer@gmail.com.

GROUP NEWS

From the Groups Co-ordinator

The Poppy Appeal



The Poppy Appeal gives support to service personnel (past and present) and their families for life, so all donations make a difference. We need more volunteers to do 2 hours stints at the Poppy table in Sainsbury's, Dursley and Tesco, Cam. This is a very sociable role, nothing complicated! Please do check your diaries and if you have a couple of hours to spare, please contact Julie Campbell on 07763 495156.

Group Reports

Textile and Handicraft Group

Ten members of the Textile and Handicraft Group met on Fri, 3rd October 2025.



Last month, the Group tried cardboard loom weaving using knitting yarn and wool tops and Members brought their finished work for everyone to see.

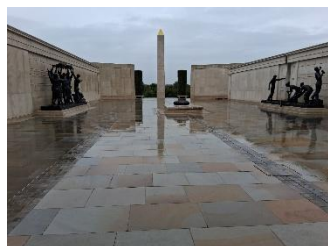
This month, the Group made paper folded gift boxes.



The session ended with a cup of tea and a slice of lemon drizzle cake.

Historic Places Group – Visit to the National Memorial Arboretum

The Historic Places trip this month was to the National Memorial Arboretum on a very grey day. With well over 400 memorials, 25,000 trees and over 300,000 visitors each year, this is a site of international importance. The guided walk and the land train enhanced the enjoyment with the countless stories of the horrors of war. One of the largest and most impressive memorials (opened in 2007), is dedicated to all who have lost their lives in the service of this country since the end of World War 2.



It stands like a Stonehenge with classic forms of ancient Rome - mystical and melancholy. To the one end there is a replica of an Egyptian needle pointing skywards with a golden top as if pointing to heaven. There is a carved door set into a walled circle. The door is carved slightly open which allows a shaft of light at sunrise on the eleventh day of the eleventh month to shine through onto a central bronze wreath - a true tribute to all the fallen.

Another memorial that stirs the soul is the Evacuation memorial which on closer inspection reveals that some of the hands and clothing are back to front to illustrate the confusion felt by the children being torn from their parents. The whole place is a fascinating tour through a sad history of fear and heroes. Every one had a memory of someone connected to one or more of the memorials.



Bookworms - The List of Suspicious Things By Jennie Godfrey, reviewed by Sue Dunn



This book is set somewhere between 1975 and 1980 in Yorkshire, when Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister. The main characters are Miv and her best friend Sharon, early teenagers who are inseparable.

They know something is going on in the wider world that they don't fully understand, but they know people are fearful and angry and it involves a man who murders women. So they decide to see if they can catch this man and make lists of suspicious things about people they know, or have come into contact with.

It is driven by Miv, but Sharon is the talkative one. The two girls begin to mature and their understanding increases. As the book progresses, more characters are introduced and many secrets are revealed – the story deals with many issues.

There was much discussion about the way things were seen and dealt with then and, although we were seeing it through the prism of thinking today, it's amazing how much has changed. Towards the end, we all felt that everything was being sorted in the community in order to finish the story tidily, which didn't feel quite right.

Most of the group enjoyed the book, but, then again, some did not. Nevertheless, it's worth a try.

Natural History Group – “Autumn Foray” at Breakheart Quarry

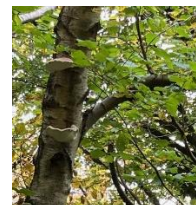
14 members of the Natural History Group met at Breakheart Quarry for an "Autumn Foray", on a warm, dry and cloudy afternoon.

Armed with binoculars, notebook and pen, identification books and phone apps, we set off in small groups to see what we could find. After an hour we all got together to share all we had discovered.

There were a great variety of trees and shrubs, some with berries and colourful leaves: Guelder Rose, Wayfaring Tree, Wild Privet, Silver Birch, Ash, Beech, Oak, Whitebeam, Sycamore, Wall Cotoneaster, Pyracantha and Box.



There were many fungi to identify with the help of one very knowledgeable member: Brittle Gill, Tough Shank, Dryad's Saddle, Honey Fungus, King Alfred's Cakes, Common Funnel, Poison Pie, Birch Milkcap, Butter Waxcap, Beechwood Sickener and Birch Polypore.



There were few wildflowers: Common Thyme, Wild Basil, Golden Rod, Hemp Agrimony, Carlina Thistle, Eyebright and Lady's Mantle.

All the birds were hiding, but their songs and calls could be identified on phone apps. However, with a lack of sunshine, there were no butterflies to be seen.

Science and Engineering Group – Visit to the Royal Mint, Llantrisant



Mini Car covered in old 1d pieces in the foyer

53 of our members (49 by coach and 4 by car) visited the visit Royal Mint at Llantrisant. The visit was very interesting, informative, mysterious, secretive but not very interactive. The Royal Mint has a long history. The first coins were minted in London in about 650 AD, with the Mint formally established in the reign of Alfred the Great in 886 AD. In 1270 AD minting was consolidated in the Tower of London. In 1696 AD, Sir Isaac Newton took control of the Mint. By 1805, the cramped site was moved to a specially designed site on Tower Hill.

However, to cope with the demand for new coinage for decimalisation, in 1971, a new site was found in Jim

Callaghan's (the then PM) constituency, at Llantrisant. The Royal Mint now only makes UK coins, medals, bullion coins and jewelry. Bank notes are printed by De La Rue plc.

When asked who owns The Royal Mint, we were told that it is a private limited company, but we were not told the name of the owners. Surprisingly, the amount of coinage created is under the control of HMRC, not the Bank of England. This is because the Government is in control of HMRC, whereas the Bank is supposedly independent.

The Mint once made coins for over 30 overseas countries, in addition to those for the UK, but this is now uneconomic and the Mint now only makes coins for the UK.

The guided tour started with an introduction on how to make money or how money (coins) are made. A coil of sheet metal (a secret formula alloy) is stamped out to make blanks. The blanks were then put between the "Heads and Tails" dies under high pressure, up to 600 tonnes, to create the coin. The next process, again under high pressure was to put on the rim and rim wording. On the factory floor these processes are all done automatically, with very few personnel involved.

After having had the process demonstrated to us, we then proceeded to the factory floor. Being behind high fences, (so we couldn't get near the money), we could not see the process as demonstrated, but only the coins pouring out. The factory is only working at $\frac{1}{3}$ capacity as the demand for coinage has decreased. An interesting point was that during the Covid pandemic, the demand for 2p coins soared. The reason why - people played the slot machines more!

The next point of call was the personal coin making press. Several of our group pressed their own coin, again under a 600 tonnes press.



Gold Bullion bar in the Display and History Exhibition – extremely heavy!

The final part of the tour was in the Display and History exhibition. Here were many old coins, including a silver penny, minted in about 800 AD as well as bullion gold sovereigns, Britannia and double sovereigns.

Science and Engineering Group – Potential Visits for 2026

The Science and Engineering are busy putting together its schedule of visits for next year. The Group has a great list of potential visits, some of which are shown below and the Group is looking for volunteers to help organise each visit. If you would like to organise a visit, pick the one that most interests you and contact the Group Leader – Graham Ellis (me@grahamellis.me.uk) – there is plenty of guidance available.

Britwind, Stroud https://www.britwind.co.uk	Small wind generator production
Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham https://www.everymantheatre.org.uk	Theatre Tour
Tyrells Crisps, Leominster https://www.tyrellscrips.co.uk	Tour of the Facility
Lucozade Ribena Suntory Ltd, Coleford https://suntorybeverageandfood-europe.com	Tour of the Facility
Warminster Maltings https://www.warminster-malt.co.uk/tours-of-the-maltings/	Tour of the Maltings
Waterworks Museum https://www.waterworksmuseum.org.uk/	Hereford – machines and a water park
Amazon Fulfilment Centre, Swindon https://events.amazontours.com/uk/onsite/BRS2	Tour of the Centre
English Braids https://www.englishbraids.com/	Rope Manufacturer, Swindon
Forge Mill Needle Museum, Redditch https://www.forgemill.org.uk	Visit to the Museum
BBC Studios, Cardiff https://www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/tours/bbc-cymru-wales-central-square-cardiff	Studio Tour

Please help the Science and Engineering Group thrive by stepping forward to organise an event.

Concert Group - Eugene Tzikindelean plays Mozart

Mozart's magnificent Jupiter Symphony, up close and personal in Birmingham's Town Hall - there is only one Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart! Whether he's weaving timeless melodies or simply having a bit of a laugh, music doesn't get better or more beautiful than this, in the elegant surroundings of the Town Hall.

The City of Birmingham's Symphony Orchestra Leader Eugene Tzikindelean, directs the majestic Jupiter Symphony and plays and conducts the sparkly Fifth Violin Concerto just as Mozart himself would have done.

The concert will be held on Sunday, 16th November 2025 at 3pm, but I can't give you prices until I know the numbers. However, they are not expensive, coming in at around £17 per person if we get the full 40 which are ordered. I have 13 people at the moment who have expressed a wish to go, so I need some more to make it viable and the coach too. If you wish to attend, please contact Rosemary Canning at rjcanning53@gmail.com.

I have seen this Conductor before and he is very clever playing the violin and conducting at the same time - quite amusing.

I do understand that times are hard and we have to choose which events we intend to go to so, from Christmas onwards, I'll only put a few concerts on per year.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Cam, Dursley and District u3a Events in the next 2 months

Date/Time	Group	Meeting
21 Oct 25 10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Sustainable Floristry	Workshop - Sustainable Church Flowers - Beth Bruce Gardener Are you interested in learning new ways to create floral displays? We invite you to a special event at Dursley Methodist Church, to explore sustainable flower arranging. Cost: £5 payable on the day Booking Required
6 Nov 25 10:00 am - 11:30 am Group Meeting	Sustainable Floristry	November Meeting (Group Meeting) The group will create a seasonal arrangement. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church Cost: TBC Booking Required
18 Nov 25 10:00 am	Fun Quiz Group	Monthly Quiz – November 2025 The Fun Quiz group meets in the Bar Area, Chantry Centre, Dursley and is presented by the Group Leader and Quizmaster John Walton. Please come along and give it a go – you don't have to be Brain of Britain and this is not an audition for University Challenge! You don't need to notify me in advance – just turn up. Doors open at 9:30 am for a 10am start; we aim to finish by 12:00 pm. The cost is £2 pp which goes directly to the Chantry Centre for use of their facility
20 Nov 25 10:30 am	Monthly Meeting	"Dickens at Christmas" - A talk by Keith Hooper Monthly meeting. Doors open at 10.00am. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church
27 Nov 25 10:30 am Group Meeting	Science and Engineering	"An Emerging Prehistoric and Roman Landscape at Slimbridge" A talk by Tony Roberts of Archeoscan who are managing the dig which is ongoing in Slimbridge. The talk will cover the recent extensive excavations at Slimbridge and the possible emergence of an Iron Age coastal settlement that was subsequently occupied by the Romans and possibly used as a port. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church Cost: £3.00 - Cash please to cover room hire, speaker fees and refreshments.
4 Dec 25 10:00 am - 11:30 am Group Meeting	Sustainable Floristry	December Meeting (Group Meeting) We'll be creating a Christmas themed arrangement. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church Cost: TBC

		Booking Required
16 Dec 25 10:00 am	Fun Quiz Group	<p>Monthly Quiz – December 2025 (Christmas Quiz)</p> <p>The Fun Quiz group meets in the Bar Area, Chantry Centre, Dursley and is presented by the Group Leader and Quizmaster John Walton. Please come along and give it a go – you don't have to be Brain of Britain and this is not an audition for University Challenge! You don't need to notify me in advance – just turn up.</p> <p>Doors open at 9:30 am for a 10am start; we aim to finish by 12:00 pm.</p> <p>The cost is £2 pp which goes directly to the Chantry Centre for use of their facility</p>
18 Dec 25 10:30 am	Monthly Meeting	<p>A Christmas Quiz</p> <p>A Christmas quiz. Doors open 10.00 am, quiz starts 10.30 a.m. Jane Ball will be the Quizmaster, Mary Ewens and her team are providing mulled wine and mince pies.</p> <p>Venue: Dursley Methodist Church</p> <p>Organiser: Myrtle Moreton-Cox</p> <p>Booking Required. Numbers are limited so please reserve a space with Myrtle on cam.u3a.welfare@gmail.com</p>

For more detail and later activities see the website: . <https://cam-dursley.u3asite.uk/events>