

u3a The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

COMMITTEE NEWS

Meet Your Committee – John Walton – Bulletin Editor



Two weeks after I left school, after my A-Levels, I joined the RAF (as an Aircraft Technician and later as an Aircraft Engineering Officer) and I stayed there for 33 years, retiring as a Squadron Leader. During my time, I served in the West Midlands, Germany, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, MOD London, Oxon, South Wales, Northern Scotland, Bucks and Notts. I was also lucky enough to visit the US, Canada, Australia, France and Italy.

After I left the RAF, I joined a Company called AirTanker which made and operates the Voyager aircraft at RAF Brize Norton, Oxon in the Air-to-Air Refuelling and Strategic Air Transport roles (replacing the VC-10 and Tristar aircraft). For my last job, I worked for a data management company, predominantly as a Technical Author.

After retiring from full-time work in December 2019, I joined the u3a 3 months before Covid-19 struck. After we came out of the pandemic, I became Treasurer for 2 years and eventually I did a year as Chair. I still run the Fun Quiz Group and I am your Bulletin Editor.

The Chantry Centre, Dursley Celebrates 100 Years



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

Teas and Coffees for Monthly Meetings

Fiona Keith has been organising the teas and coffees at our monthly meetings for a very long time and we owe her a very big thank you.

Lynette Magnone will be taking over the responsibility from the June meeting and she would really appreciate some help. On June 18th she does not have any help at all at the moment. If you think you can assist with the teas and coffees and you do not mind Lynette having your up to date phone number and email address, please let the Groups Co-ordinator (Elinor Padfield) know at cam.u3a.groups@gmail.com or via the link on our website.

Your help is much appreciated.

Groups! Groups! Groups!

Our u3a has a wide variety of groups – but there is always room for more. What interests you? Have you got a particular interest or expertise in an area that is not yet covered? How would you feel about a group in one of the following areas:

Geology	Philosophy
Foreign Languages	Singing
Yoga	Line Dancing
Music Appreciation	Railways and Transport
Architecture	Films

These are just a few suggestions, but the possibilities are endless. I would really like to hear your views and interests, particularly if you feel you have something to contribute to one of these groups or indeed a group on any other topic.

Please do contact the Groups Co-ordinator (Elinor Padfield) at cam.u3a.groups@gmail.com or via the link on our website.

Group Reports

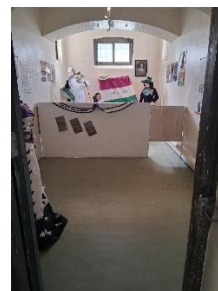
Historic Place Group Trip to Shepton Mallet – Report by Graham Powell

The May trip was to Shepton Mallet prison - the oldest prison in the world.

We arrived to be confronted by a 75 foot wall and an imposing doorway to a prison built in 1625. After tea/coffee and cake, our guide started on a brilliant tour of what started as a house of correction for men, women and children - life expectancy was very low. The prison was rebuilt in 1700 for 190 prisoners. To segregate the women and children, a separate wing was built in 1848.

From 1942 to 1945, it was converted to a military prison by the USA, where 18 service men were executed. In addition, one of those in the firing squad was killed by a ricocheting bullet. It was then a British military prison until 1959, when it closed following a riot. It was reopened 1966 as a category C prison for lifers and was also the “hanging” prison for Somerset. We were shown the gallows for the hangings - before this people were executed in public. Punishment for men was breaking stone or the treadmill whilst women and children picked oakum or did laundry. We were also shown a variety of weapons (made by sharpening toothbrushes, combs, razors etc) as well as tunnels leading nowhere. The treadmill was eventually removed and an infirmary built in its place but not very many survived illness. Prisoners had to collect food to eat in their cells, as no canteen was available. Toilets were fitted for the first time in 1998 and until then you slopped out the liquid every morning into a drains. Solids were done onto newspaper and the “poo parcels” then thrown out of the windows! We were surprised when told that the Kray twins were once housed there. Suffragettes (who were also inmates) were force fed there and Angela Dyer, who murdered over 400 illegitimate babies, was hanged there. Many prisoners were transported to

Australia rather than executed, for you could be hanged just for stealing a handkerchief. The prison was closed 2013 as it was deemed too expensive to install heating.



Views of Shepton Mallet Prison

Science and Engineering Group Visit to The Science and Innovation Park, Wroughton, near Swindon – Notice from Brian Gornall

The Science and Engineering Group is visiting the Science and Innovation Park on Thursday, 26th June 2026 at 10 am prompt.

Due to a cancellation, there is one place available for the visit. The first to reply will get this place.

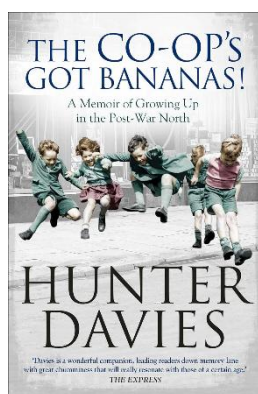
The cost, £25 per person, was payable in advance. I will put the successful applicant in touch with the person who has cancelled to arrange direct reimbursement.

You can join our small party and experience a guided tour of the Hawking Building at the Science and Innovation Park. The building houses hundreds of remarkable items from the Science Museum's vast collection stored around the former RAF station. This 90 minute behind-the-scenes walking tour (stairs involved) will take you from objects that explored the stratosphere to machines that plumbed the depths of our oceans.

Travel will be by self drive/car share. The Science and Innovation Park is at Red Barn Lane, Wroughton, SN4 9LT, six miles from M4 J16, through the village of Wroughton. The site is large, and it is a 10-minute drive from the main entrance to the Hawking Building. You must check in at the building before 10.00 am.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bookworms - The Co op's Got Bananas by Hunter Davies – Review by Sue Dunn



Hunter Davies was brought up partly in Scotland and Carlisle amid immense damage from the Second World War.

This book takes a nostalgic look at the 1940s and 1950s and beyond that. It was a window into a world that has long gone.

There was the dreariness of rationing and very little money, but children such as Hunter made the best of it mainly as they knew of nothing else and everyone was in the same boat.

Hunter's mother was a quiet character but seemed to be able to cope with the poverty and dreariness. He had younger sisters, twins and an even younger brother. They feature little in the book.

He had a lot of fun playing football in the street. He saved up to go to the cinema on Saturdays and was awestruck by listening to Dick Barton on the radio.

The Co-op really did have bananas one day but they didn't really know what to do with them. Some ate them immediately, whilst others saved some for another day and were disappointed to find that they had turned into a mush.

Hunter eventually grew up, went to Durham University and married Margaret. As far as we could tell, it was a happy marriage.

Most of the group enjoyed the book and it provoked much discussion, as usual. I wouldn't call it a great work of literature but it was quite interesting.

Garden Visits Group Visit to Waterperry Gardens – Report by Carol Wilson



On this visit, there was plenty to see and do. Tuesday 19th May was not the brightest nor the warmest day we could remember out of our many visits, but it was nevertheless one of our best events. After being greeted at the gates and given some helpful pointers of what to see and where to go, we were off to have a quick coffee (cakes recommended!) and then out into the extensive gardens.

It was hard to decide where to start, but by the time we stopped for lunch (also recommended), we had found the long 200 foot herbaceous border, already blooming with roses and lupins but promising lots more to come in the buzzing Wisteria tunnel, the riverside walk, the orchards, the Banksia rose scrambling over a huge yew tree and the charming Alpine Garden.

On our return walk we went through the walled garden, full of surprises including the delightful National Collection of Saxifrages. Although the afternoon turned increasingly damp, we still had plenty of things to do and places to go under shelter. The church was a gem with medieval brasses and stained glass; the collection of old tools in the museum was more enthralling than it sounds, with over 400 items of horticultural uses, including a grape preserver bottle, a glove stretcher, lawnmowers and a variety of shears using multiple blades for only two handles!



Finally, there was plenty to tempt us to buy, in than garden shop, gift shop and craft display. The plant sales displayed a beautiful selection of blooms worthy of Chelsea, and a last cup of tea prepared me for the return trip. I noticed that other customers had ordered delicious cream teas, and one group was sharing the full afternoon tea with cake stands full of sandwiches, scones and cakes. This was certainly a place to come back to again at some time in the future!

Craft and Textile Group Meeting – Report by Gail Oliver



The Craft and Textile Group met again on the 6th May. We used 6" square double-sided paper to make origami swans. We found this fairly easy and collectively we were able to make a bevy of swans. Cherry yogurt cake was enjoyed with a cuppa.



Climate and Nature Group – May Meeting – Report by Carol Mew

Our main topics in May were natural flood management and the Stinchcombe Hill restoration project. We discussed the visit to FarmEd, installing swift, bat and bird boxes, the upcoming sunset bat survey and how we might intervene regarding the destructive cutting of verges and the scraping of ditches.

Natural Flood Management

The principal purpose of Natural Flood Management (NFM) is to reduce and slow peaks of surface and river water which follow storm and other intense rainfall events, 'slowing the flow' from the source down so that damaging flooding is reduced. NFM can also improve water quality and create new habitats. Key methods used include:

- Installing leaky dams which hold back flows temporarily and slow the overall rate at which water reaches urban areas.
- Strategically planting trees to intercept flow, increase soil infiltration, and create roughness on the landscape.
- Fencing off watercourses to prevent soil compaction and riverbank erosion caused by cattle, keeping sediment out of the water.
- Building natural water-holding features that store run off during extreme rain.

A local demonstration project led by Gloucester City Council and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust on the river Twyver focuses on slowing and attenuating water flows from its steep headwaters to protect parts of Gloucester from downstream flooding. NFM is also being implemented in the Severn catchment by the Severn Vale Catchment Partnership - a multi agency body which includes the WWT and community members.

The Stinchcombe Hill Restoration Project - Update.

This project is a community-driven phased initiative aimed at conserving the biodiversity, rare calcareous grasslands and landscapes of Stinchcombe Hill. The governing body that manages the land is the Stinchcombe Hill Trust made up of foundation trustees, local authority representatives, landowners, the golf club, a hill resident and the conservation manager. A key aim of the project is returning conservation grazing to the Hill to restore a vanishing habitat. Grant funding has been raised and is now supporting the production of a long-term management plan. Volunteers are involved in a range of conservation tasks including botanical surveys, specialist knowledge is not a requirement - why not take part and support this important local project.

Project Outline

- The project is tackling the degradation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), past reduced grazing having allowed scrub and woodland to encroach on the rare Jurassic limestone grasslands.
- A small herd of 6 cattle (overseen by the Stinchcombe Park Estate) is being introduced to graze specific areas a method that suppresses overgrown scrub and boosts local flora and biodiversity.
- To support the grazing animals, new fencing, water supplies and troughs have been installed, across the Hill.
- Footpath gates and bridge reinstatements have been undertaken to facilitate public access.
- The Stinchcombe Park Estate are providing and managing the cattle for the conservation grazing phase.

For more details on the project's background, management plan, and ongoing progress, check out the Discover Dursley Stinchcombe Hill Project Page or the Cam Parish Council Trust Statement.

Fun Quiz Group – May Quiz – Report by John Walton

The twenty-fifth Fun Quiz Group Quiz was held in the Chantry Centre Garden Room, Dursley on 19th May 2026. The subjects this time were:

Round	Subject	Round	Subject
1	Currencies of the World	4	George, Alexander and Louis
2	London	5	Tennis
3	Cathedrals	6	General Knowledge
Open Round: Well-Known British Actresses			

Once again, this turned out to be a close game with the “O” Team eventually running out to be overall winners. What a game, which everyone enjoyed! The final scores were:

Team Name	Final Score	Final Position
The “O” Team	74.5	1
The Wotsits	73.5	2
The Silver Spoons	72	3
The Whatknots	66	4
The Ducks	65.5	5

As an aside, if anyone wants any of the question/answer sheets that I use, please let me know – there is no copyright and they’ll never be used again (for a u3a Quiz).

Please note that the Quiz scheduled for 16th June 2026 has had to be cancelled but we’d love to see you at the next quiz on 21st July 2026.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

Date/Time	Group	Meeting
8th June 2026 10:30 am Group Meeting	French Intermediate Group	Monthly Meeting As Monday, 25th May 2026 was a Bank Holiday, the next meeting of the Intermediate French Group will be on Monday 8th June at 10:30 am in Dursley Methodist Church. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church Cost: £3 to cover room hire Booking Required
16 th June 2026 Coach Outing	Garden Visits Group	East Lambrook Garden and Kilver Court near Shepton Mallet Booking Required
18 th June 2026 10:30 am	Monthly Meeting	The Chantry Centre: 100 Years Talk by Adrian Judge Monthly meeting. Doors open at 10.00am. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church

Date/Time	Group	Meeting
25 th June 2026 Theatre	Theatre Group	I'm Sorry, Prime Minister From the co-creator of Yes, Minister and Yes, Prime Minister, Jonathan Lynn, this production is described as "the final chapter of the classic British political satire". Venue: Everyman theatre, Cheltenham Cost: The cost for the coach and a group rate for good stalls ticket is £57 (subject to minimum numbers.) Booking Required
26 th June 2026 Car Share Outing	Science and Engineering Group	Visit to the Science and Innovation Park, near Swindon The Science and Innovation Park is at Red Barn Lane, Wroughton, SN4 9LT. The Park is six miles from Junction 16 of the M4 Junction, through the village of Wroughton. Cost: £25 Booking Required
3 rd July 2026 9 am – 4 pm Coach Outing	Historic Places Group	TBD The Boat Trip that I wanted to organise is in dry dock! Cost: TBD Booking Required
14 th July 2026 Coach Outing	Garden Visits Group	Westonbury Mill Water Gardens near Leominster Booking Required
16 th July 2026 10 am	AGM, Monthly Meeting	AGM, followed by talk: "The Gift of Reading" AGM at 10 am (doors open at 9:30 am) Followed by a talk by Linda Cohen
27 th July 2026 Car Share Outing	Science and Engineering Group	Visit to the Amazon Fulfilment Centre, Swindon Revised date again. 27th April 2026 had been promised, but was unavailable! BRS2: Amazon Fulfilment Centre Unit 2, Symmetry Park, Laines Way, Swindon, SN3 4DB. Note that this is taking place on a Monday morning and will be a car share event. This event is being organised by Di Caesar. Bookings will not be taken until July.

Date/Time	Group	Meeting
27 th July 2026 11 am Coach Outing	Members On Their Own Group	Gifford's Circus A carnival of fun, silliness and breath-taking skill and enchantment. Cost: £26 Booking Required

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