

u3a

The Bulletin Cam, Dursley & District

COMMITTEE NEWS

July Update for u3as

The u3a Committee have recently sent us a copy of their document "July Update for u3as". The document is too big and complex to reproduce here, but you can access a copy using this link:

[u3a News and Updates](#)

u3a South West Region Webmaster

Simon Thomson has been appointed as the new National u3a South West Region Webmaster. He has a vision for the Region which includes working on a new, more colourful and hopefully attractive design. He will be adding regular updates to the site on the basis that a static website is a quiet site. The Region currently receives only about 30 visits a day when it could be doing so much more to draw people into the u3a community. Simon is also a SiteWorks volunteer and will be creating training videos for SiteWorks.

Simon has asked Bulletin editors across the Region for help in fulfilling his vision and taking this project forward. To this end, John Walton will be sending him articles from, or even an electronic copy of, our Bulletin. Simon will then extract information from this to create a 'news from the Region' section. Our group leaders have been asked to ensure that all members appearing in group photographs have given their prior permission for subsequent use by Simon so that we don't fall foul of GDPR requirements.

I have already contacted Simon with my details and asked him to use me as a Point of Contact for any dealings with our u3a. If anyone does have a need to contact Simon, I would appreciate it if you did so through me, John Walton, Bulletin Editor on john.walton@outlook.com. Many thanks.

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

Choir Group

Many of our u3a members would like to form a Choir. Unfortunately, at the moment, we don't have anyone to lead it.

As we have 500+ members, surely somewhere out there is a hidden talent for organising a Choir. It wouldn't need to be of a professional standard, just as long as the members could enjoy themselves singing. If you think you could help out please, please contact the Groups Co-ordinator via the link on our website.

Theatre Group – “Yes, Prime Minister” – Bath Theatre Royal

There are still a few places available for the Theatre Group trip to Bath on 7th October 2026. The total cost for coach and good stalls tickets is £57 and, with an arrival planned for 11am, there will be time in Bath for lunch/shopping before the performance at 2.30pm.

If you are interested, please contact Judy Dawson via the Theatre Group website, or reply to the Groups Co-ordinator via the link on our website.

Group Reports

Play Reading Group – Notice by Lisa Randall

I'd like to tell you all about the Play Reading group, and how much fun we have.

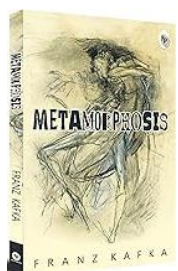
Over the last 8 years we've read quite a range of plays, for example Noel Coward, Alan Bennett, Alan Ayckbourne - comedies are always popular. Terence Rattigan and Agatha Christie, for example, go down very well, but we've also thoroughly enjoyed tearing each other to shreds in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf", tackling absurdist plays like "Six Characters in Search of an Author", even getting quite a bit out of "Waiting for Godot".

There is a loyal core of about half a dozen of us and we do our best to see that we all have roughly the same amount to read; no one gets a lead role throughout the whole play. We are actually quite proud with how we cope with cast lists of a dozen or more; we have become adept at picking up roles whilst keeping the momentum going.

However, it would be great if our numbers grew a little. Why not come and try it to see if it's for you? We meet on the second Tuesday of each month, in The Chantry Centre in Dursley (lifts always available from Wotton-Under-Edge), from 10am to 12 noon and the fee of £4.50 covers the venue, a cuppa and the play script hire.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact me (Lisa Randall) through the u3a website

Bookworms – The Metamorphosis - A Novella by Frank Kafka – Review by Sue Dunn



This very thought-provoking novella was written in 1915 and is rich in allegory.

Gregor was a young travelling salesman, working hard to support his parents and their debts and his sister. It seems that he had been trapped in an exhausting and dehumanising job and the family relied on him.

At the beginning of the story, Gregor finds he is changing into an insect, over which he has no control. This causes upheaval in the family.

The story illustrates how society, even family, judges value by economic utility.

Once he loses his job, he loses his identity. Sudden disability, such as this, can turn a capable provider into a burden.

Gregor's sudden transformation - metaphor for sudden disability, causes a huge shift in family dynamics from love, to duty, to aversion, and eventual relief.

It is a sad story, and many people have written wise analytical words about it. But it's weird - or "Kafkaesque".

A u3a Floristry Group Visit to Chippy Flower Farm – Report by Danielle Ellis

The u3a Floristry Group always enjoy a visit to a flower farm. Each one we visit is a little different and we always learn so much! We've found the flower farms are always ready to share tips and techniques for growing.

The day of our visit was a beautiful sunny day. The Chippy Flower Farm is located at Little Tew, not far from Chipping Norton. The farm was set up in 2020 and focusses on growing flowers for DIY weddings and events, bouquets and for home arranging.

In the summer, you can pick your own flowers and attend creative workshops and events throughout the year. They are members of Flowers from the Farm and contributed to the flowers sent to the King's coronation.

Tif showed us round. Everything is grown without peat or chemicals. Their focus is on growing perennials rather than annuals and also produce plenty of foliage.

Their polytunnel gives the opportunity to extend the growing season with chrysanthemums being picked into December and to produce a succession of plants. Some plants were suspended from the ceiling to avoid the mice munching them.

In another area, vulnerable plants are shaded from the sun. There are also specific cutting patches - the tulip beds had just finished.

They use the no dig method that avoids turning or tilling the soil. Instead, they build soil health by layering organic matter, such as compost and well-rotted manure, directly on the surface

As you can imagine, we asked plenty of questions, noting down the recommended plant varieties as we walked round.

Another inspiring day for the Group! The Group is now open for a couple of new members. Members should be able to commit to regular attendance, usually the first Thursday morning of the month.



Pictures from the Visit

Return to the Missing Link: A Front-Row Seat to Major Engineering – Science and Engineering Group Visit Report by Danielle Ellis

Following our fascinating visit to the A417 Missing Link Visitor Centre last August, the Science and Engineering Group was eager for a return visit. We recently got our wish, enjoying what must be one of the most unusual and dramatic insights into a live infrastructure project our group has ever seen. Tucked away to one side of the vast site, right near the formidable "Crusher Compound", we got a first-hand look at a landscape in rapid transition.

The scale of the engineering is immense. The ultimate goal of the National Highways scheme is to replace the notoriously congested, three-mile (4.8km) single carriageway between Gloucester and Cirencester with a modern dual carriageway. Standing on the viewing platform, we could see that the end really is in sight.

Engineering Highlights from the Site

Work is ramping up rapidly across multiple areas simultaneously as the project pushes toward its Spring 2027 completion date. Key developments we observed and learned about include:

- Paving the Way - unlike our last visit, much of the area near the planned environmental bridge is now paved and ready for the next phase of construction. We even had the novelty of driving on a section of the brand-new road layout to reach the viewing area!
- About 1 million cubic metres of earth has been moved.
- 120,000 person hours spent uncovering archaeological findings.
- Shab Hill Junction - the new underpass here is now fully covered and is actively being prepared to carry an impressive five lanes of traffic.

- The Gloucestershire Way Crossing - this major green bridge is rapidly taking shape. The foundations are firmly in place and teams are preparing for the final surfacing on the bridge deck.
- The New B4070 - this local link is nearing completion, with sections already being utilised by site traffic. It will fully open to the public once works at Barrow Wake conclude.

Critical Travel Notice for Members - because this massive engineering puzzle requires moving live traffic out of the way, National Highways has announced imminent, significant disruptions that all members should note that from 6 am on Monday 29 June 2026, all traffic between Gloucester and Cirencester will switch to a temporary route running from the A46 Brockworth interchange to the former Cowley roundabout. This will remain in place for at least five weeks while the main road construction continues.

Seeing the sheer logistical precision required to build bridges, pave multi-lane junctions, and re-route thousands of cars overnight was an incredible testament to modern civil engineering. Our thanks to the project hosts for giving the Group such fantastic, safe access to the changing local landscape.

If you missed the group visit, the A417 Missing Link Customer Hub (Visitor Centre) is open every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. No appointment is needed to drop in and speak with the project team or learn about the scheme. The address is: A417 Project Office/Kier Crusher Plant, Birdlip, Gloucester, GL4 8JX.



Pictures from the Visit

Science and Engineering Group Visit to Warminster Maltings

The Science and Engineering Group are pleased to announce that Mary Wright has organised a coach visit to Warminster Maltings. Details are on our website, as well as a link to contact Mary.

The cost is £48, which includes the cost of the guided tour, coach, and a buffet lunch.

Note that this is an old building, with steps, wet floors, low ceilings and medieval machinery crowding viewing spaces.

There are a couple of other visits planned so keep an eye on the Science and Engineering area of our website.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

Date/Time	Group	Meeting
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. Monthly Branch Meeting
27 th July 2026 Car Share Outing	Science and Engineering Group	Visit to the Amazon Fulfilment Centre, Swindon BRS2: Amazon Fulfilment Centre Unit 2, Symmetry Park, Laines Way, Swindon, SN3 4DB. The tours last approximately 60-90 minutes depending on the number of questions that are asked. Note that this is taking place on a Monday morning and will be a car share event. Please arrive early to ensure you have a parking space. <u>Please read the detailed instructions given on our website.</u> This event is being organised by Di Caesar. Bookings will not be taken until July.
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
7 th August 2026 Coach Outing	Historic Places Group	Somerset Museum and Taunton Castle Booking Required
20 th August 2026 10:30 am	Monthly Meeting	Whatever Happened to the Great Enlightenment? Talk by Dr Justin Newland Monthly meeting. Doors open at 10.00am. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church
20 th August 2026 Group Meeting 2:30 pm	Sustainable Floristry Group	Summer Show Time (Note Change of Date) We'll be creating arrangements for the Slimbridge Gardening Club Summer Show on 22nd August. Note change of date and time. View the Schedule. Venue: Dursley Methodist Church Cost: TBC Booking Required

Date/Time	Group	Meeting
27 th August 2026 Coach Outing	Science and Engineering Group	Warminster Maltings Tour A tour of Warminster Maltings, 39 Pound Street, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NN Cost: £48 to include fee for guided tour, coach and buffet lunch Booking Required
4 th September 2026 Coach Outing	Historic Places Group	Boscobel House and Gardens Booking Required

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