



WELCOME to another Spring issue of our newsletter. It's a full edition again, thanks to all of our members who have contributed. Bearing in mind the better weather is coming, you might like to go to Page 3 if you fancy a shorter, slower walk than the Walking Group offers - Kate Methven is offering to start up an Ambling Group. Or to Page 4 for news from the National Garden Scheme. Thanks also to Colin and Verena Olle who share the story of their new build garden on Page 5, under Members' News. Details of the current coach trips on offer are on Page 2 and Walking Group and Speaker programmes are on Page 6, before the Current Group List on the last page. Please send any contributions for the June issue by Friday, May 27th to the email address below.

From the Chair – Paul Grierson

It has been pleasing to see so many new faces joining us in the past few months and I do hope that you have all found groups that interest you.

I would ask all Group Convenors to take the time to update their information on the website. Gavin, our Webmaster, is happy to assist and it would help our new members to read about the activities offered as well as tempting potential members.

The walking group have formed a walk sharing programme with the Chipping Sodbury and Yate u3a and have enjoyed meeting with like-minded members and sharing new walks. This may be something that some of our groups may wish to look at, just make contact with a similar group in a nearby u3a and ask if they are interested in occasionally meeting to share interests.

Finally, please support Liz and Di with their planned coach outings and do offer ideas to them. I am grateful that they have taken on the role and, at the time of writing, spaces are available on all trips.

CHANGE TO APRIL (only)

Monthly Meeting

TUESDAY 18th April at 2pm

Next meeting: Wednesday, 15th March

May onwards: Every 3rd Wednesday as usual

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Kate Methven

As we move forward in to the new year our membership continues to grow. We now have 246 enrolled members, the highest number since Churchdown u3a started.

We would like to welcome:

Susan Bee	James Skinner
Vivien Chadwick	Linda Skinner
Malcolm Greening	William Black
Graham Hale	Nevis Oakes
Sheila Hale	Sheila Oakes
Susan Potter	

We hope to meet you all at some of our groups or meetings in the future.

Coach Trips 2023

The following trips have been organised by Liz Burley and Di Medland:

Tuesday 16th May	Day in Lichfield and/or visit to the National Arboretum	£18
Monday 5th June	Visit to David Austin Rose Centre and RAF Cosford Museum	£18
Wednesday 6th September	Visit to The National Archive at Kew, and Kew Gardens	£22

Follow this link for details: [Coach Trip Information](#)

Please note that unfortunately, the trip to Worcester on 12th April is not going ahead due to lack of interest

Tuesday 11th July	A Day at the Seaside: Weymouth, a Walking Group Trip	£16
	All Welcome. Contact: Paul Grierson 01452 857831	
	Mary White 07817 007706	

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

BRIDGE FOR ALL Have you ever wondered what the game of Bridge is all about? Have you ever thought you would like to give it a try but really don't know where to start? Do you want to learn something new? Well, if the answer to any of these questions is yes (or indeed, if you've never thought about it at all) then this could be for you!

We are looking for new beginner/novice players. We want to encourage beginners and learners into our group; surely learning something new is what the u3a is all about after all.

We're lucky enough to include a number of very competent club players who are happy to mentor beginners and improvers in a sympathetic and patient manner - well, mostly anyway. 😊😊 We currently have one specific teaching table and would welcome more so please give it some thought, probably the worst that can happen is that you'll get hooked! But we're not just about beginners, whatever your level of play, you would be welcome.

We are a friendly, welcoming group and play in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. We

encourage players not to be afraid of making mistakes and to be open to discussion into ways of improving their game, that way we can all improve. Any good bridge player will tell you that you will never stop learning this game.

Bridge is a great game, which can be played at different levels from social to professional. It will get the old grey cells working, it's absorbing, at times frustrating, it can become addictive, but it is also fun. So come, you've no excuse, give it a go!

We meet every Thursday afternoon (4.00 to 6.00) at the Methodist Church Hall on Chapel Hay Lane. Contact me, Dave Bebbington, at davebebbington@outlook.com. Or, failing that, just come along on Thursday afternoon.

The **FAMILY HISTORY** group now meets once a month at the Churchdown Library. We are able to use their computers for our research using the internet and the Ancestry website at no cost. There is always much discussion and we help each other with any 'brick walls' that we come across. Believe me there are quite a few and not all have been solved! We're off on a trip to The National

Archives in September. Unfortunately, as there are only five computers at the library we are limited to this number in the group but, if you are interested, please contact me to join the waiting list or perhaps you would like to start up a second group. [Di Medland](#)

GARDEN INTERESTS We are a small group of like-minded people who meet in either my home and garden or the homes of other members.

As the title infers, we all share an interest in gardening. All aspects of it from dealing with weeds, making compost, planting and growing seeds and growing and tending to plants. We are all amateurs willing to learn from each other.

Between us we run a 'free' table at meetings where we put surplus seeds and plants, gardening magazines and anything else that may interest other members.

Our intention this coming year is to make sure our gardens are wildlife friendly. Most of them are but we know there is always something more we can do.

Unfortunately, we unable to accept new members as we need to have access to the host's garden when meeting which limits our numbers. However, I would be very pleased to coordinate the setting up of a second group if there is enough interest and someone willing to lead it. Please contact me, Ann Knight, via the web-page: [Gardening Interests](#)

SPANISH INTERESTS – Maggie Thomas

We are a small group of eight enthusiastic members, who meet in the Methodist Church Hall on the first Monday afternoon of the month. Recently, we learnt more about Christmas in Spain, and members brought in some children's poems to share. 'La Navidad' is celebrated on January 6th, *El Dia de los Reyes* and is more special for children than December 25th. Youngsters leave their shoes at their

doors, and the Three Wise Men (*Los Reyes Magos*) leave presents there. Since last summer, we've been busy singing a couple of songs in Spanish: *Noelia*, and *Noche de Paz*, a gentle Spanish carol, sung by the whole group in December to the tune of Silent Night. We've also been reading Spanish stories as a fun way to extend our learning. Some members love *Duolingo*, a free-access online language-learning app, which brings a Latin American Spanish dimension.

One member writes: *...I hoped to put some of my new skills to the test in La Gomera in the Canary Islands and I now feel fairly confident when asking for the menu and the bill, 'pedir el menu y la cuenta' but I still need to have more practice to hold a conversation. We have fun sessions and practice our accents and conversations with each other.*



Folk Festival – La Gomera held each January

For much more news, go to the Spanish Group web-page here: [Spanish Group News](#)

NEW GROUP OPPORTUNITY: AMBLING

Kate Methven would like to know if you would be interested in an Ambling Group? These walks would be shorter and slower than those of the Walking Group. If you would like to discuss this, please contact Kate on kate.methven@gmail.com and she will arrange an initial meeting.

The **ITALIAN APPRECIATION** group continues to meet at the *Caffe e Vino* in Tewkesbury. As we walk through the door of the restaurant we're transported to an Italian bar even when the sky outside is overcast. We are usually greeted in Italian by the staff, who of course know us all very well now and always make us welcome. The staff work hard to source as many products as possible from Italy, with authentic Italian cheeses and wines on the menu. Where this is not possible, as in the case of bread, then artisan sources are found locally. Each region in Italy is famous for specialist dishes.



The Kitchen staff come from different parts of Italy; Puglia and Ostuni from the South and Trieste from the North. This allows a wide variety of authentic dishes to be prepared for those willing to try them.

It will, therefore, come as no surprise that after our regular sessions we sometimes stay on for lunch. The menu itself is a source of delight because apart from the great food some of the dishes are named after Italian cultural icons such as Paolo Rossi the legendary footballer.

The influential Italian film industry is recognized with various dish titles such as: De Sica's "Bicycle Thieves", Troisi's comedy "Sorry for the delay" and Fellini's "Eight and a half". Roll on summer for *al fresco* dining again!



I received this from Simone Seward which might give some ideas for a number of groups to ring the changes:



My name is Simone Seward and this year I have been asked to promote gardens open By Arrangement for the National Garden Scheme, Gloucestershire.

We offer your members the opportunity to visit a wide range of gardens with a wealth of garden experiences in some truly wonderful settings.

By Arrangement gardens open for a more personalised visit on a pre-arranged date giving groups the option to select the most convenient time for them. The idea of visits is proving popular with u3a Gardening, Photography and Painting groups as well as Walking groups and those visiting rural churches and historic sites who might like to combine a garden visit with their specialist interest day out. To add to the visit, some garden owners also offer refreshments so that groups might enjoy a garden venue for their summer social. Follow this link for more information:

[NGS Gardens by Arrangement Gloucestershire](#)

MEMBERS' NEWS

We have our very own Alan Titchmarsh/Charlie Dimmock in our midst it seems. Here's Colin and Verena Olle's account of their new garden design.

We downsized and moved to a new property in Cotswold Chase, Brockworth in mid-2017. In June 2022 we were visited by a journalist and photographer for preparation of an article that was featured in the December 2022 edition of the Amateur Gardening magazine.

The house is excellent, apart from the mandatory snagging list, and set in a well landscaped development with lots of open space and mature trees. However, the garden is very small, and this was a particular challenge for us as we had a 1-acre plot in Leicestershire.



The front garden has a formal feel with colourful shrubbery, low yew hedges, parallel rows of potted Hostas and standard Ligustrum trees. Wisteria and blue leaved Hostas soften the edges of the Cotswold stone coloured house, while the placing of white metal seats create places to sit and watch the world go by.

The back garden was re-designed on two levels with space for a small greenhouse and a “space age” pod, which fulfils the same function as the summerhouse we left behind, without taking up

too much space. Well, it is a modern house, so why not go for a pod!

Grey slate pavers and contrasting stone chippings compliment the colour of the house.

Pleached Quercus Ilex help to screen the area from neighbouring homes, while a trio of white stemmed Silver Birch brighten a far corner. The central area has an unusual water feature – a large stainless-steel sphere, which looks even more stunning after dark.



We wanted to cover the walls and fencing with green to “move the boundaries out” and it was important not to see everything at once. Planting is of year-round interest with a mix of evergreen foliage and summer flowers. We use pots to ring in the changing seasons; Tulips in spring and vibrant Verbena for the summer months. Although we have “retired” from a

formal role with the National Gardens Scheme (NGS) we plan to open a group of small gardens again on the Chase, probably in 2024. Watch this space! We're happy to answer any questions – we look after the book swap. Colin and Verena Olle. For more pictures go to:

[Colin and Verena's New Garden Story](#)

Now for the **Walking Group Programme** until July 2023. The dates are fixed but individual walks may change. All are welcome but if you haven't walked with us before or you would like further information, please contact Mary White.

- Thursday, March 23rd** The Windrush at Guiting Power and Naunton - 6 miles
Dogs welcome. Led by Paul Grierson
- Tuesday, April 11th** Cowley and Coberley. Dogs welcome. Led by Kate and Paul Methven
- Tuesday, April 18th** Arlingham Loop. Led by Paul Grierson
- Tuesday, May 9th** Withington – 5 miles. Dogs welcome. Led by Mary White
- Tuesday, May 30th** Arboretum walk starting in Leighterton GL8 8UN - 5 miles.
Led by Paul Grierson
- Tuesday, June 13th** Elmley Castle – 6.2 miles. Led by Paul Grierson
- Tuesday, June 20th** Beechenhurst Trail - 8 miles. Led by Kate and Paul Methven
- Tuesday, July 11th** Coach Trip for a walk in Weymouth
- Thursday, July 20th** Hanley Swan led by Paul Grierson

Monthly Meetings Speaker Information

held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except April 2023)
The CCA Parton Road 2pm

Wednesday, March 15th	Ambling Images	Mark Wardle
TUESDAY, April 18th	Producing the BBC Antiques Roadshow	Robert Arley
Wednesday, May 17th	The Criminal Justice System	Andrew Walters

To finish, a poem from Linda Laubscher and one from her grandson, which may remind us of how we received our Christmas cards last year – or not!

INHERITED

She made him
clever Mother,
stuffed and sewed him.
Chubby ears, glassy eyes,
growler,
frantic fur.
He sits on my bed
Inherited.

I walked to the postbox in my best walking
socks
To post your Christmas card
Well.....
It became incredibly hard.
As I turned a sharp corner
A man passed by saying 'I just want to warn
yer'
As I hit the floor
I heard him say - there's a banana skin on
the floor

Current Group List

Please contact the Group Convenor if you wish to join a group, or for more information go to our web-site: <https://u3asites.org.uk/churchdown>

Note: If you do not have the means to contact a convenor via the web page, please phone the Chair who will contact them for you.

Group Coordinator: **VACANCY**

Contact: Paul Grierson (Chair) 01452 857831 in the interim

Group	Convenor	Contact Details
Art History/Appreciation	Martin Bowden	01452 854007
Badminton	Eamonn Doherty	07946 341270
Book Club/Literature	Joyce Winwood	01452 715099
Bridge for All	Dave Bebbington	07587 151191
Cookery	Eve Anstis	01242 235833
Crafts	Wendy Martin	01452 714049
Creative Writing	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Cribbage	Diana Sinden	01452 698713
Exploring Churchdown	Pam Bryant	01452 532124
Family History	Di Medland	Contact via web page
Film and Cinema	Norman Davies	07957 994390
Gardening	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Garden Visits	Jane Moore	Contact via web-page
Industrial Heritage	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Italian Appreciation	John Hawkswell	01452 730528
Lunch Club	Tom Arnot	01452 498934
Meditation	Sue Grierson	01452 857831
Petanque	Ann Stollery	Contact via web-page
Photography	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Politics	Roger Streatfield	01452 713498
Singing Together	Alan Winwood	01452 715099
Spanish (Language & Culture)	Maggie Thomas	01452 676751
Table Tennis	Syd Leuillet	01452 857039
Walking	Mary White	07817 007706
Wine Appreciation	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Yoga	Sue Grierson	01452 857831

PLEASE RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE