



**WELCOME** to this December edition of Churchdown u3a's newsletter.

There is some exciting news about the web-site from our Webmaster, Gavin on p.2. He's been working hard to get everything transferred across to the new provider (SiteWorks) before the old Site Builder is cut off on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Please read his advice carefully as some of us will need to take action! It looks like the new year will be getting off to a busy start for the web-site. We owe a massive thanks to Gavin for all his work on this, it's certainly not something for us amateurs to think about tackling! There's also news of possible future coach trips and it's all change in the Walking Group. Unfortunately, the Cinema Group has ceased due to lack of support. As always, thank you to everyone who's contributed and taken the time to connect with the wider group, which is so important.

## From the Chair: Gary Murden

Dear Members



I'm not sure if any of you are fans of the BBC2 quiz show Only Connect hosted by Victoria Coren Mitchell? Well, on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of October a team called the Third Agers competed against a team of whisky lovers called Uisge Beathas, "the Water of Life". Victoria commented that it was good to see that the Agers were still curious about knowledge acquisition at their age, a little bit ageist perhaps, but I think sums up our organisation, as we continue to thirst for knowledge.

As group we have a cornucopia of acquired knowledge. I joined the u3a about three years ago and immediately, with my engineering background, joined the Industrial Heritage group. Even after 48 plus years practicing my trade, I have been intrigued to learn about a

broad number of subjects from brick making in Gloucester to how railway tracks are maintained, without disrupting the rail services.

I am pleased that we have had such a variety of speakers at our Monthly Meetings, thereby enhancing our knowledge even further.

As a footnote to this article the Third Agers lost to the whisky drinkers, 43 to 22 - maybe we should consider a whisky appreciation group? **By the way** we still have a couple of empty slots on the committee please consider volunteering.

## Membership: Kate Methven

Welcome to my first report of our new membership year. Thank you to the 250 members who have so far joined Churchdown u3a for this year.

If you haven't yet rejoined and received your green membership card this will be your last edition of the Update as you will shortly be removed from our mailing list, if you would still like to rejoin please feel free to contact me.

A special mention goes to: Arthur and Helen Barry, Tom Dennish, Pauline Horton, Derek Hughes, Audrey Meredith, Chris Organ, Margaret Schenk, and Marion Walsh who have all joined us since our last issue. We all wish them a warm welcome.

## Web-site news from Gavin Laubscher (Webmaster)

1. SiteWorks will look, feel, and work differently and users will most likely have a lot of comments/questions. All comments/questions should be directed to Gavin using the Webmaster e-mail link on the Welcome page of the web-site. He then aims to address the issues and correct everything during December to make sure it is bedded in and fully functional.
2. **It will be up to all content owners (group leaders, committee members, anyone with editing rights) to check the accuracy of the content and to let him know of all changes that are needed.**
3. He is working to get our site up to date with legal and regulatory requirements and, to start with, all pages will be in a “raw” state and could in some instances look like the old ones.
4. Hopefully, there will be photos of committee members, and perhaps group leaders on the appropriate pages, so that we all recognise them and so help to make our u3a community more open, inclusive, and friendly.
5. Gavin plans to arrange mentoring sessions for all interested group leaders on how to maintain their pages. This is necessary as maintenance and creation of pages in SiteWorks is totally different to that in the old Site Builder.

Let's make sure we all cooperate fully with Gavin, any of us who've had any experience of dealing with new web-site providers will know it's very unlikely to be plain sailing! We can look on it as another opportunity for learning and we all have a part to play – an exciting and interesting start to 2025!

## Potential Coach Trips – 2025 – Paul Grierson

It is hoped to run coach trips during 2025, although as we are all aware costs keep going up. Experience proves that the 56-seater coach offers best value and we are fortunate in using the services of KB coaches who not only provide a first-class service but give us a favourable rate. I always divide the cost of the coach by 48 as we rarely fill it and I have to confirm and pay the coach company 6 weeks prior to the date which unfortunately, means I have rarely been in a position to refund late cancellations. I appreciate the understanding from a number of you caught up with medical/family reasons who have found themselves in that position.

The trips suggested for 2025 are: Oxford, Exmouth, Bradford-on-Avon (walk included), Hereford, Hay-on-Wye/Monmouth if time permits. I would welcome any suggestions that would appeal to fill a coach. Sheets will be available to book places from January onwards at our monthly meetings. I look forward to seeing you all on the coach.

### **LEARN SOMETHING NEW FOR THE NEW YEAR**

Try out Mini-Bridge on Thursday  
December 5<sup>th</sup> 2-4pm

The learning Programme Starts on  
Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> from 2 – 4pm

Held at The Methodist Church Hall

### **MOTO (Members on their Own)**

This group meets on the last  
Saturday of the month  
At 11am

Contact Michael: 07392595970

## CRAFTS – Wendy Martin

Pictures of completed projects along with comments from members:

“I look forward to U3A craft because we have done lots of different crafts such as beading, silk painting, tatting etc”



“The U3A group is a joy. We share a variety of ideas and try different crafts each month.”



“Small friendly group. Everyone happy to share ideas and help each other.”

“The U3A craft group has encouraged me to try new things and restart old ones.”

“We meet in a bright airy room at St Andrews Church Hall on the 4th Wednesday of the month except for December. Tea/coffee is provided and lots of chatter whilst having the opportunity to try out a variety of crafts”



These projects cover Easter cards and a couple of wonderful knitted chicks! Decoupage glass and cards. Contact Wendy to find out more and possibly start a new hobby in 2025.

## WALKING GROUP (Past, Present & Future) – MARY WHITE AND JACQUI ELLIS

**Past & Present: Mary** - I have been coordinating the walking group since Churchdown u3a first started and have seen it grow into a thriving friendly group of people who appreciate walking in our local area as well as venturing further into Gloucestershire Worcestershire and Herefordshire. Each year new people join and there is a dedicated group who walk regularly. It is a role that I have enjoyed very much but at the beginning of this year I felt that it would be time to hand over to someone else in 2025.

This year we have enjoyed a full program of two walks each month, along with featuring as part of the four coach trips this year.

Unfortunately, the much-anticipated challenge of walking up Pen y Fan on the Brecon trip couldn't take place as the weather conditions at the top were not good, so for health and safety reasons we didn't even start this walk. The day was still very enjoyable with an impromptu walk in Brecon led by one of our members who had done some research beforehand and brought an historical town route with her.

Over the last eight years we will have offered walks which, if someone had walked them all, would amount to getting on for a thousand miles! Despite all we say about the British weather I can only recall having to cancel 2 or 3 walks because the forecast has been so bad!

I am very grateful to members who have led walks and in particular to Paul Grierson who has, with me, shared leading the majority of the walks. I am delighted that Jacqui Ellis has agreed to take on the role of coordinator. She has been a most enthusiastic and supportive member since joining, so I know the group is in good hands and will continue to grow. Both Paul and I will give Jacqui all the support we can and both of us will continue to lead walks.

Mary White

**Present & Future: Jacqui** - I thought I would take this opportunity to say a few words before taking up the reins in the New Year. I must start by saying a big thank you to Mary (and Paul) for all their hard work to mould the walking group into the group that it is today. And I look forward to working with them in the future to ensure a varied walking programme for all.

With that said, if anyone has a favourite walk that they would like to revisit or have a walk they'd like to introduce to the wider group, please let me know as I am currently developing the walking list for next year. The dates for the walks in the first half of the year are:

**January, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, February 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, March 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, April 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, May 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.** This information is available on the Churchdown u3a website and walk details will be uploaded soon.

All that is left to say is that I hope you have a peaceful Christmas, however you chose to spend it and I'll see you in 2025 for more walking.



*Walking is man's best medicine* Hippocrates

## Wine Appreciation – Louise Keeling

The wine group has continued to live up to the u3a motto of Live Laugh and Learn, thanks to the contributions of its members. We have grown from the original small group to 20 of us now. We have visited New Zealand, revisited France and Spain and discovered English wines. We had a very interesting tour of Poulton Vineyard and Vic, a wine expert, introduced us to different wines from South Africa.

One meeting was a quiz on Spain and its wines and another involved matching wines to cheeses. At our Christmas meeting members will bring a wine and a plate of food for the group to share, along with frog racing and a quiz. We are starting to plan for next year beginning with wine to match spicy food. Cheers!



## CHURCHDOWN U3A MONTHLY MEETINGS

Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 2pm at Churchdown Community Centre

Date	Subject	Speaker
18 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	Festive Cheer & collection in aid of the CCA 'Chatty Café'	Churchdown u3a Singing Group
15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	A Darker Side of Nursery Rhymes	Angela Dunsby
19 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	The Art of Composting (Trapnell)	Carol Shayle
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Purton Ships Graveyard	Paul Barnett

## The wider u3a Movement

It's worth remembering that as a Churchdown u3a member we are also members of the national u3a organisation. At this time of year, it may well be worth looking on the [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk) web-site as they have a number of on-line events listed. From Herbal Medicines to Bridge by way of Illuminating Hope – The Transformative Power of Christmas. Follow this link to investigate further [On-line National Events](#) You can also sign up to the Events Mailing list on this page.

It just remains for me to send you my very best wishes for Christmas and 2025. The next newsletter will be winging its way to you in March so if you have anything you'd like included please email it to me by the end of February.



## 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 Group Coordinator who will contact them for you

Group Coordinator: **Gary Murden**

Contact: [murdeng71@gmail.com](mailto:murdeng71@gmail.com) 07340 965083

Group	Convenor	Contact Details
Art History/Appreciation	Martin Bowden	01452 854007
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
Current Affairs (previously Politics)	Robbie Philip	01452 715033
Family History	Di Medland	Contact via web page
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	07783 061063
MOTO (Members on their own)	Michael Potter	07392595970
Petanque	Ann Stollery	Contact via web-page
Photography	Ann Knight	Contact via web-page
Singing Together	Alan Winwood	01452 715099
Spanish (Language & Culture)	Maggie Thomas	01452 676751
Table Tennis	Syd Leuillette	01452 857039
Walking	Mary White	07817 007706
Wine Appreciation	Louise Keeling	01452 712753
Yoga	Sue Grierson	07783 061063

**PLEASE RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**