



**WELCOME** to Autumn. Were you visited by these amazing creatures during the summer? We have been fascinated to see these Hummingbird Hawkmoths, mainly on our Salvias and Verbenas - the hot weather had its compensations.

You might be thinking that September is a good time to start something new, and in this edition, there are opportunities from Bridge for All, Family History, Singing Together, Lunch and Wine groups. The GL3 Hub is looking for volunteers too – see below for further information.

**NEXT MONTHLY MEETING: Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> September**  
***The History of the Magic Lantern by Patrick Furley***

## From the Chair - Gary Murden

### Dear Members

Welcome back! I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful, relaxing summer and managed to make the most of the hot weather. Although the rain of recent days has been most welcome, for a change!

As we step into autumn, it is always a pleasure to see the Churchdown u3a community come alive again. Our monthly meetings and group activities are gearing up for a vibrant season ahead, offering plenty of opportunities to reconnect with old friends, welcome new faces, and dive into fresh interests.

A huge thank you to all our group leaders and committee members who have been busy behind the scenes preparing the upcoming program. Whether you are eager to pick up a favourite interest, try something completely new, or simply pop in for a friendly chat, there is much to look forward to over the coming months.

## Membership – Kate Methven

### Current membership expires September 30<sup>th</sup> 2026.

As membership secretary it's currently my busiest time of the u3a year as I process subscription payments. I would like to thank everyone who has already paid their subscriptions for 2026-2027 but if you haven't, completed forms and payment can be taken at the meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup>. However, Bank Transfer is preferred to avoid charges, in which case no form is necessary, just follow the instructions sent by email on the 27<sup>th</sup> July.

For everyone who paid by the end of August, cards not already received will be available for collection at the next meeting. I will not be there as I will be travelling home after completing (I hope) the Hadrian's Wall Walk and Jane Moore will be handing out the envelopes.

I thank everyone for their patience during these busy weeks. Finally, I would like to welcome our new members since the last newsletter, Sue Duncan and Anne Baldwin

## Coach Trips – Paul Grierson

Some great days out were had by all who went on the various outings between April and August this year. A highlight had to be the Sidmouth trip on one of the hottest days of the year but the breeze off the sea was very welcome, along with a good choice of shops and a lovely set of gardens to stroll around. RHS Badminton was lovely but a lot of us found it just too hot to enjoy unfortunately.

**A hat** was left on the coach after the Waddesdon Manor trip which can be collected at the next monthly meeting.

I'm planning for 2027 now and have already had some suggestions which can be found by following the link: [suggested trips for 2027](#) If you have any ideas of where we could go, please email me with your suggestions:



[pgrierson24@gmail.com](mailto:pgrierson24@gmail.com)

## \*\*\*\*\*NEWS from the GROUPS\*\*\*\*\*

### Lunch Group – Tom Arnot

We meet on the second Thursday of each month (except August), and have lunched at local hosteleries such as Gupshill Manor, The Norwood Arms Cheltenham, The House in the Tree, The Wheatstone Inn and The Cheeserollers this year but those selected are all within fairly easy travelling distance of Churchdown.

We look for a reasonably priced menu which has light or smaller options. Most members have either a 1 or 2 course lunch and we aim to start the meal at 1 pm (or 12.30 if the venue prefers it).

Although not all premises can accommodate our 22 active Lunch Group Members, there are sometimes fewer numbers attending so any U3A members who wish to join the group for convivial company (and a change from home cooking) should contact me on 01452 498934. At present we have a limited number of drivers so cannot offer lifts to the lunches.

### Wine Appreciation – Louise Keeling

The wine group has continued to have a very enjoyable programme through the year. It has included meetings where we learnt about “Wine Labels”, English Wine, had a game of Call my Bluff on wine and another visit from Vic, a wine tasting master. We are very much a collaborative group, with different members coming up with ideas, sourcing the wines and leading a meeting.

We had our regular Christmas party and in July we had a 60s to 80s evening based on wines from those decades. We couldn't find any Liebfraumilch, but we tasted a very passable Lambrusco.

Following the fire at Churchdown Club our July meeting was held at the Manor. We raised a toast to celebrate Bill Black's 90th birthday; amazingly, he came in an outfit from the 60s. Churchdown Club has been very supportive over the last few years, so hopefully the meeting room will be available again sometime next year.

## Singing Together - Bob Frayne

Except when I was in the Junior School Choir, I have never really thought that I was able to sing. My experience of trying to sing after that was mainly in church. This was not a good experience, as I always thought that the hymns were pitched too low, and my renditions ended up as an extremely poor version of Barry White, so I tended to avoid it.

All this changed when I attended a Phoenix Group karaoke evening at the Churchdown Club about ten years ago. The organiser sang three or four songs, and then said those dreaded words, "Anyone like to come on stage and give us a song?" Silence. After a few seconds when it appeared that nobody was going to be the first to volunteer, I decided to take the plunge and get up. I don't remember exactly what song it was, but I had a microphone and belted it out. It went down quite well, and Margaret Black, who many of you will remember, was sitting next to my wife. She said to her "I didn't know Bob could sing". Maureen replied, "Neither did I". Luckily the ice had been broken, and then more people decided to give it a go. I did a further duet of an Elvis song with Joan Adam later on which also went down well.

I never did a lot of singing after that, but I happened to bump into Alan Winwood around Christmas time in 2023 and we talked about the singing group, which I joined in January 2024. Currently I am one of only two men in the Group, but I always look forward to our twice monthly get together. I feel so much better after the hours' session, as it releases a "Feel Good" factor. It is good for the vocal cords and helps with breathing. We also do concerts during the year at various venues, which is good as it gives you the experience of singing before an audience. The concerts raise money for local good causes, and we sometimes even get fed!

As they say, "Anyone can sing." Alan makes the session interesting and amusing, and he does actually have a good sense of humour! So why not give it a go? If you decide it is not for you then fine. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

As an added bonus, on the last session before Christmas, Alan brings along his homemade mince pies, which are superb, but as with all prima donna chefs, he refuses to share the recipe!

## Monthly Meetings to December 2026

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September** – *Patrick Furley*  
*The History of the Magic Lantern*

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October** - *Paul Murphy*  
*The Von Trapp Family*

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November** – *Angela Dunsby*  
*Unusual Cures and Blood Galore*

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December** – *Festive Cheer*  
*Churchdown u3a Singing Together Group*

All meetings are held at Churchdown Community Centre. Please arrive in time for a prompt 2pm start.

If you are able to help with refreshments, the registration table or setting up the hall please contact me on: [suegrierson@gmail.com](mailto:suegrierson@gmail.com) It's an easy way to contribute to the running of the u3a and an excellent way to get to know people, especially if you're new to the u3a or the area. We are always looking out for more help.



## Bridge for All – Dave Bebbington

We now have two flourishing bridge groups in our u3a that meet on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Both groups run between 2 and 4 o'clock at the Methodist Church Hall, Chapel Hay Lane. Cost about £3 per session and the emphasis is on a gentle and social style of play. We try to make it a friendly environment where you can come to learn, practice and improve your Bridge without being afraid to ask for (or give) advice if needed. If you wish, you can always discuss the play afterwards, we learn from our mistakes, (I try to, I make enough of them!) Both groups have players of mixed ability from beginners to very competent club players, so, there's always someone you can ask.

As we've said before, the idea that *"it's never too late to learn"* or, if you prefer, *"proving that you can teach an old dog new tricks"* lies at the heart of the u3a movement. That's why we are always keen to encourage beginners and learners into both of our Bridge Groups. Here's news of a couple of opportunities for you to explore the great game of Bridge this autumn.

Firstly, on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September** Churchdown Bridge Club is running a drop-in bridge taster session, from **10 am to 12 noon**, at the **Churchdown Community Centre** - do drop in and see the fun of bridge. Following that, there is going to be a course of **Beginner lessons** (jointly run by Churchdown and Gloucester Bridge Clubs). They will run **at Churchdown Community Centre** on **Saturdays** during October: 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> November all from 10am-4pm. These are not u3a run events, but we are more than happy to support them. In fact, Louise and other u3a members will be there helping, so you should see some familiar faces. Details on the left.

As ever, we always welcome new members into both of our groups at any time. So, whatever your level of play you can join in. Why not come along to either session, or both, and have a look? Please feel free to contact either, Louise Keeling (Tuesday Group) or Dave Bebbington (Thursday Group), via the links on the Churchdown u3a website or by emails [louise.keeling1@icloud.com](mailto:louise.keeling1@icloud.com) and [davebebbington@outlook.com](mailto:davebebbington@outlook.com) If you want to know more.



**Free Bridge Taster**  
Come along and find out about bridge!

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September**      **Time: 10am-12noon (drop in)**

**Bridge is a mindsport for all!**  
Stimulating, fun and sociable  
**No experience needed**  
Drop in and give it a go!

**Beginner Lessons start on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October**

**Contact:** Alan Stanfield  
07906 849640  
[thestanfields@outlook.com](mailto:thestanfields@outlook.com)

**Churchdown Community Centre GL3 2JH**      **Website: <https://www.bridgewebs.com/churchdown/>**

**CHURCHDOWN BRIDGE CLUB**

The poster features a circular inset photograph of a woman in a pink top sitting at a table, playing bridge. The background is white with green and yellow accents.

## Family History – Di Medland

### Open to new members

#### Meeting:

- Second Friday of every month
- 2pm to 4pm
- GFHS Family History Centre,  
Heritage Hub, Alvin Street,  
Gloucester GL1 3AH

We have moved from Churchdown Library to the Heritage Hub because the reduced number of computers at the library made it difficult for the group to meet comfortably. This means that we are now open to more Churchdown U3A members

Come along to do research, get help with brick walls or just to meet others who are interested in Family History. Our new venue gives members better access to family history research facilities and support. Including at least six computers for research, access to Ancestry, Find My Past, The Genealogist, FamilySearch, and the British Newspaper Archive, support from two GFHS volunteers and much more.

There is no charge to use the facilities, apart from printing at 30p per copy. As GFHS is a charity, occasional donations are welcome. The Hub offers all-day parking for £4 and is easy to reach by bus from Gloucester. If you would like to come to and join us, please email me at least two days before the meeting:

[dmedland74@gmail.com](mailto:dmedland74@gmail.com)



## A message from the chairman of the GL3 Community Hub Trustees

I am Syd Leuillette, the group leader of the Churchdown u3a Table Tennis group that spends four hours a week at the GL3 Community Hub. I am, also, the new chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Hub.

Our trustees want to strengthen and broaden the Board for the next stage of GL3's development. We are interested both in specific professional skills and in people who bring strong local knowledge, lived experience and perspectives that complement the existing Board. You, the members of Churchdown u3a, tick all of those boxes and are very much at the heart of Churchdown.

So, if you would like to consider becoming a GL3 Hub Trustee please contact me on 07862 744630 or [syd.l17@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:syd.l17@blueyonder.co.uk) and I'll send you a copy of our "Trustee Recruitment Pack" and answer any questions you may have.

I look forward to hearing from you.



"As the board, we can't be bored."

## Current Group List

Please contact the Group Convenor if you wish to join a group, or for more information follow this link to the web-site: [Churchdown u3a Website](#)

**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: Mike Peak: 01452 492159 [mikepeak39@gmail.com](mailto:mikepeak39@gmail.com)

| 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         |
| Chat & Screen                | Michael Potter  | 07392595970          |
| Cookery                      | Eve Anstis      | 01242 235833         |
| Crafts                       | Wendy Martin    | 01452 714049         |
| Creative Writing             | John Hawkswell  | 01452 730528         |
| Cribbage                     | Diana Sinden    | 01452 698713         |
| Current Affairs              | 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 |
| Gentle Bridge                | Louise Keeling  | 01452 712753         |
| Industrial Heritage          | Paul Methven    | 07377 706992         |
| Italian Appreciation         | John Hawkswell  | 01452 730528         |
| Ladybirds                    | Sue Grierson    | 07783 061063         |
| Lunch Club                   | Tom Arnot       | 01452 498934         |
| Meditation                   | Sue Grierson    | 07783 061063         |
| 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                      | Jacqui Ellis    | 07969 765893         |
| Wine Appreciation            | Louise Keeling  | 01452 712753         |
| Yoga                         | Sue Grierson    | 07783 061063         |

**PLEASE RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**