

u3a learn, laugh, live

25th Anniversary

Evesham & District



Vinyl Chapter at Fladbury Walkabout

Newsletter Issue 97 – September 2026

Registered Charity Number 1101530

Committee Members

Chair	Diane Nicholls	email from website
Vice Chair	Catherine Cox	
Treasurer	Claire Henderson	email from website
Secretary	Lorna Slaughter	email from website
Membership Secretary	Helen Hutt	
Groups Coordinator	Ian Brown	email from website
Programme Coordinator	Peter Telford	email from website
Safeguarding	Ros Gowers	
Accessibility Officer	David Daniels	email from website
Charity Commission	Diane Nicholls	email from website
Liaison & Publicity		
Committee Member	Sue Rogerson	email from website

Non-Committee Volunteers

Minute Secretary	Graham Smith	email from website
Website Manager,	Alun Edwards	
Beacon Administrator & Third Age Trust Volunteer		
Website Team	Frances Kilburn	email from website
Technical Support	David Williams, Alun Edwards, A Chambers	
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Shared Learning Project	Chris Wolstencroft	
Welfare Officer	Joyce Davey	
Group Mentors & all Group Coordinators		
	see the Group List for contact details	

The above can be reached by email from the website Contact page

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/contact>

Welcome...



...to the September 2026 Newsletter. We have experienced a brilliant summer and are hoping for more rainfall in autumn to refresh the parched landscape. In the meantime, your new committee has been established, see pages 4–6.

Alongside 'business as usual', groups have been busy celebrating our 25th Anniversary with events of their own. However, you will have to be patient to read about these until the Silver Jubilee Edition, scheduled for the middle of December. That issue will concentrate on 25 Years of Evesham u3a, so the information of Open Meetings until March 2027 has been included in this issue, see pages 12–15.

Short Stories and Photography – two great Anniversary competitions laid on by members for members! Check out the updates on pages 7–9. And remember – anybody can enter! A further bonus during our Anniversary year is the free technical and digital support available through AbilityNet, see pages 9–10.

Last not least a date for your diaries: the deadline for contributions to the Silver Jubilee Edition will be on **Saturday 14 November 2026**.

Bärbel Wolstencroft

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Photo on the front cover by B Wolstencroft. See page 18 for the full story.

Hello from the New Committee of 2026/27!



I am very pleased (and relieved) to announce we are now a committee of ten! Ian Brown and Peter Telford, having observed one of the monthly committee meetings, decided to put themselves forward to be Trustees and were duly elected at the AGM. Not only that, they wanted to help immediately, with Ian now as Groups Coordinator and Peter as Programme Secretary. At the July meeting Sue Rogerson came along to observe how

we operate and we co-opted her as a Trustee at the August meeting. A huge welcome and thank you to them all!

The other seven Trustees were re-elected, giving us a good mix of experience and new blood. My thanks as the new Chair go to Claire Henderson for stepping up from Assistant Treasurer to Treasurer, Lorna Slaughter for taking over as Secretary and to Cath Cox for remaining as Vice Chair. The experience of Helen Hutt as Membership Secretary adds to the blend of this year's committee, rounded off by Ros Gowers as previous chair, having provided such a good example, and David Daniels.

This year, we believe, will be an exciting one, with further events in September and November to celebrate our 25th Anniversary – all details are in this Newsletter and on the website. The committee will be continuing with its vision as a mutual support organisation by providing bi-annual meetings for Group Leaders and engaging with new members through welcome meetings held at three-monthly intervals. There remains an open invitation to the public to attend an Open Meeting to see what goes on, without the requirement to sign up straight afterwards! As a reminder, for anybody interested, the Minutes of our committee meetings can be seen on the Website.

Having said all that, whilst Trustees are necessary to comply with Charity Law and the requirements of the Third Age Trust, many smaller roles or one-off tasks do not require a Trustee to carry them out. In the spirit of mutual support, I would urge you to think about volunteering for these jobs by joining the Voluntary Support Group, named by the Third Age Trust as TRUG – **The Really Useful Group!** I can really vouch how invaluable this type of help is, allowing more regular and ad hoc events to run successfully.

Finally, thank you for reading my 'Hello'. Please contact me or any other member of the committee with any general or more specific questions. **Here's to a great year!**

Diane Nicholls, Chair Evesham u3a

Meet your new Committee Members

A Good Choice

I retired last year and joined Evesham u3a at the same time. In my last year at work I, probably like a lot of people, wondered how I would fill my time with the same purpose, inter-action and stimulation.

I am now a member of Mahjong, Military History and Photography, as well as attending a number of monthly Open Meetings and national workshops. All have been very welcoming with a sense of fun and learning that have helped my successful transition from the workplace.



As a Trustee, I hope to make a contribution and build on the excellent work of the current Committee.

Peter Telford

Hi, fellow Evesham u3a'rs



I am Ian Brown and have been a member of Evesham & District u3a for around five years. Prior to that, I was a member of Oundle u3a (Northamptonshire). I currently belong to Military History, Mahjong and Badminton groups, but also attend some other local u3a group meetings on an occasional basis.

I have volunteered to join the Committee for two reasons: i) I would like to support the organisation and contribute to its ongoing successful development; ii) I have finally retired (well almost) and, having completed the renovation of our home in Mickleton, I have some spare time that I would like to put to a good cause! I look forward to being a successful contributor to Evesham & District u3a's future.

Ian Brown

A Quick Hello from your new Trustee

After joining Evesham & District u3a in February, I soon discovered what a friendly and welcoming organisation it is. Following a long career in senior NHS leadership, I recently established my own consultancy and wanted to use some of my governance and board experience to give something back to the local community, so I was delighted to join the Committee as a Trustee.



Away from work, I enjoy films, travelling, reading and the occasional quiz. I also share my home with three Maine Coon cats, who generally think they're in charge. I look forward to meeting many more members and supporting the continued success of our u3a.

Sue Rogerson

News from u3a National

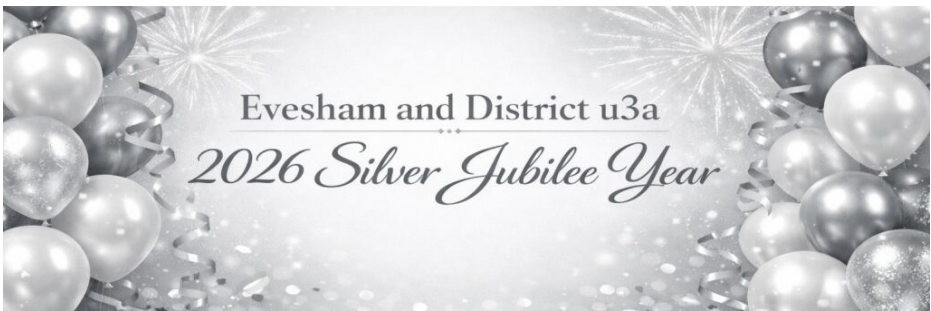
Explore the UK with 'u3a getaways'

We are excited to invite you to the first **u3a getaways** trip: **The Agatha Christie Story** from 14–18 September 2026. You will join other u3a members from across the country to explore the beautiful houses and coastlines that inspired her famous mysteries.

u3a getaways is a new programme of bespoke holidays exclusively for u3a members and friends. Please share this news and find out more at <https://www.justforgroups.com/u3a-getaways>

Silver Jubilee Celebrations

What's On?



Short Story Competition

Many thanks to those who have submitted an entry so far!

If you are still thinking about putting pen to paper, you have until **Friday 18 September**. Please send your story as an email attachment to sue.r.johnson@outlook.com You can submit more than one entry.

The theme is: Silver
The word count is: 250

The story can be real or imaginary. If you are stuck for a starting point, try drawing a mind map with 'Silver' as the central word – or make a list of all the silver things you can think of.



A small prize will be awarded to the first three winning entries at the u3a Open Meeting on Wednesday 4 November. The top three stories will also be published in the December Newsletter which will be the special Jubilee Edition.

Sue Johnson

Image: Dove in the Quaker Garden

Photography Competition

Great Prizes, but no entries – yet!

Do you have a photographer's eye when observing your u3a friends having fun? We are running a photography competition, **NOT** a competition for photographers! Why not capture the learning, laughing and living experience for our 25th Anniversary Photography Competition?

Sadly, entries have yet to be received. To give you more time to spot that perfect motif, **the deadline for submissions has been extended to Wednesday 30 September 2026**. If you keep out a sharp eye, there are plenty of opportunities to catch 'that moment' on camera or smartphone during group activities and upcoming anniversary events. You can even consider submitting striking portrait photos. Find out the full details and judging criteria here:

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/25-years/photography-competition-the-u3a-in-evesham/>

Prizes will be awarded for photos which challenge the negative and stereotypical ways in which retired people are often represented. And here is an example, so you know what you need to look out for. This sort of image could win the Photography Competition!



I am looking forward to receiving your entries!

Ally Edwards

Image: Cricketers from Evesham and the Chalfonts u3a sheltering from the sun at a national Walking Cricket Festival, New Road, Worcester, July 2026 by Ally Edwards.

Free Tech Support – update

For our 25th Anniversary year, Evesham and District u3a has partnered with the AbilityNet charity, to help you find free technology support and information, and training on specific digital skills. Full details can be found on the website:

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk/members-info/abilitynet-and-u3a/>.

Free 1:1 support by phone and in-person

Please ring AbilityNet's helpline to get independent advice from a technology expert: 0300 180 0028. **You can request free technology support at home from one of their friendly, expert technology volunteers based in Worcestershire.**

Free digital training

In addition, we have planned four AbilityNet training sessions. These will be restricted in numbers to ensure that the u3a members attending get the most out of this training.

I have a new smartphone! Now, how do I use it?

Our first session in September was oversubscribed. We are going to run it again, so if you are interested, please ring Helen Hutt, membership secretary, on 07935698137 to add your name to the list.

The second session will cover the same subject areas:

1. Touching the screen e.g. swipe, scroll, tap, zoom, pinch, drag, drop, hold.
2. Clearing the clutter, to make useful stuff obvious, e.g. organise your Home screen and storage.
3. Checking performance e.g, restart your phone, close or uninstall apps that misbehave, and turn off Bluetooth, etc, when not needed.

Date: to be confirmed

Christmas shopping

Date: Wednesday, 7 October

Time: 12.30–1.30 pm

Venue: Evesham Methodist Church.

To register your interest in this session, which will explain about sales like 'Black Friday', and how to stay safe when shopping, please ring Helen Hutt, membership secretary on 07935698137.

Training for u3a group leaders

The final session on Wednesday 2 December will help group leaders use technology. Please contact Ally to register your interest.

Outdoor training for one u3a group

AbilityNet explored how to coach members of the Walks Over 4 Miles group and agreed that, although the experience was positive, it would not work for them. Therefore, if your group could benefit from learning how to use some of the digital resources available for outdoor activities, please email me on

beacon.eveshamu3a@gmail.com

Ally Edwards

Silver Jubilee Events

Due to the heatwave in June, the Archaeology Discovery Walk in Evesham and the Walking Jamboree were postponed. See below for the updated event information.

Exploring Evesham's Archaeology

All available places for the morning and afternoon Evesham Heritage Walks on Tuesday 15 September 2026 have now been filled.

Chris Wolstencroft

A Walking Jamboree – open to all members

As part of the Evesham u3a Silver Jubilee celebrations, an afternoon **Walking Jamboree** will be organized, open to all Evesham u3a members. This walk has been re-scheduled for **Wednesday 23 September 2026**. The 1.5 miles walk will start from **Oat Street car park at 2.15 pm**. The route leads along the east side of Vine Street, around Merstow Green, down Boat Lane and along the river bank to Abbey Park, where the event will finish. We are planning to identify walkers with rosettes or ribbons and are hoping for publicity in the local press.

If you are a member of a walking group, please tell your group leader that you wish to attend. Any other members please email me via the 'Walks over 4 Miles' webpage so I know to expect you.

John Alexander-Head

Evesham u3a Groups Showcase on 4 November 2026

For full details please see 'Open Meetings'.

Open Meetings

The venue for Open Meetings is Evesham Methodist Church on the first Wednesday of the month, starting at 2 pm.

2 September 2026

Mark Jackson – My first and last tours in Northern Ireland, 1972/1994 – a comparison



Mark Jackson is a member of Evesham & District u3a. He spent more than four years on short and long tours of Northern Ireland in the 70s, 80s and 90s. He will compare the differences between arriving in Londonderry shortly after Bloody Sunday in 1972 and being in South Armagh in 1994 when peace finally came to the province. He will explain the way that the Army operated and how professional it became in supporting the police and setting the scene for the political solution that eventually was reached.

Image supplied by Mark Jackson

Refreshments – Patchwork, Quilting and other handicrafts

7 October 2026

Bill Cowley – We are Talking Scams!

Bill Cowley is Communities Manager at 'Home Instead' and a 35 year veteran in IT security. Join us as Bill gives us an essential presentation on how to identify, avoid and report scams. Bill will give us practical advice to ensure



you and yours do not fall victim to financial fraud and those online scams. Learn how to spot scams and what to do if you are targeted.
Image supplied by Bill Cowley

Refreshments – Patchwork & Quilting 2

4 November 2026

Evesham u3a Groups Showcase

Our November Open Meeting marks the 25th Anniversary of our u3a in Evesham

We will be entertained by some of our own groups: Singing for Pleasure, Country Dancing, Poetry and Jam Session. Take the challenge of Neil Berry's quiz about u3a and Evesham over the last 25 years and see a presentation of photos from the past and our celebrations throughout the year. We will also have the results of our creative writing and photography competitions. Then enjoy a slice of birthday cake with your tea or coffee.

Places will be limited, so ensure you sign up at the September or October Open Meetings.

Refreshments – Pétanque

2 December 2026

Andrew Robson, Chiropractor
How to live a pain free life!

Andrew Robson, MChiro, grew up in Pershore and Worcester. After beginning his career in financial services, he opted to retrain as a Chiropractor and graduated from the Welsh Institute of Chiropractic in 2013. He founded



Droitwich Back & Neck Clinic in 2016, which has recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. Andrew enjoys helping people of all ages improve their quality of life. He specialises also in helping golfers optimise their game and lower their scoring. Andrew is a former Board Member of the United Chiropractic Association and coaches other Chiropractors in the UK, US and Australia, particularly in practical treatment techniques.

Refreshments – Philosophy

There will be no Open Meeting in January

3 February 2027

Ashleigh Jayes - The History and Restoration of the Almonry

Ashleigh Jayes, Manager of the Almonry Museum in Evesham, will be talking about the history of the building, including new discoveries made during the building works, and will give us an up-to-date progress report on the Lottery Funded project.

This 14th century former monastic building is undergoing its biggest transformation in centuries. Thanks to a grant of £2.1m from Arts Council England to repair and restore the fabric of the building and a further Development Phase grant of £393,219 for the re-interpretation of the collection and building, the Almonry is undergoing a transformational change.



Refreshments – Photography 1

3 March 2027

Paul Lillie – The King of Rock: The life and career of Elvis Presley through music and art

Paul Lillie is an artist and musician who studied at Wimbledon School of art. He has worked as a musical tribute artist on the QM2 and appeared on a number of BBC programmes, such as the Simon Mayo Radio 5 Show, discussing popular culture.

Paul now concentrates on delivering art and music therapy to palliative care patients at Nottingham City Hospital. In his presentation about Elvis Presley, he will combine story telling with



singing and painting as he charts the career of the 'King of Rock'. This unique approach has proved very popular with u3a audiences throughout the UK who have particularly enjoyed his interactive approach encouraging audience participation. The writer and broadcaster David Hepworth described Paul as an 'Elvis Educator'.

Refreshments – Photography 2

For your Attention

Unfortunately, Short Mat Bowls 1 & 2 have temporarily had to suspend their group activities due to a problem with the venue.

Group Timetable

To join any group you must be a member of u3a

	First Week	Second Week	Third Week
Mon am	Architecture Welsh Language	Art Appreciation Questions of Belief Welsh Language	Welsh Language
Mon pm	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Shakespeare Singing for Pleasure	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Spanish-Elementary	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Shakespeare Singing for Pleasure
Tue am	Creative Writing 2 Cycling for Pleasure Latin 1 Spanish Intermediate Urban Sketchers	Golf for Fun Listening to Music 2 Social Saunters Village Strolls 1	Bookends Photography 2 Spanish Intermediate Urban Sketchers Walks over 4 m
Tue pm	Card Games Creative Writing 1 Latin Reading Model Railways	Exploring Language Jam Session Patchwork/Quilting etc Pétanque	Archaeology Card Games Latin Reading Model Railways
Wed am	Pickleball 3 Skittles 1, Oct-May Table Tennis Tai Chi	Pickleball 3, Tai Chi 2 French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Skittles 2, Oct-May Skittles 3, June-Sept	Pickleball 3 Skittles 1, Oct-May Table Tennis Tai Chi Village Ambles Camera
Wed pm	Open Meeting @2 Methodist Church Yoga 3 (term time)	Latin 3 Sea Shanties Yoga 3 (term time)	Philosophy Yoga 3 (term time)
Thu am	Pickleball 1 Yoga 2 (term time)	Aspects of Modern History; German Needlecraft Pickleball 1 Short Mat Bowls 1 Walks under 4 miles 1 Yoga 2 (term time)	Pickleball 1 Village Strolls 3 Yoga 2 (term time)
Thu pm	Modern Greek 1 Dressmaking	China: The Country Latin 2 Modern Greek 1 Needlecraft Short Mat Bowls 2	Modern Greek 1 Dressmaking
Fri am	Classic Cinema Country Dancing Modern Greek 2 Pickleball 2 Welsh Language	Computers & Digital Italian; Modern Greek2 Pickleball 2, Play Reading, Welsh	Book Friends Classic Cinema Country Dancing Modern Greek 2 Pickleball 2 / Welsh
Fri pm	Badminton 2 Bridge; Board Games Family Research	Badminton 2 Bridge	Badminton 2 Bridge; Board Games Family Research
Sun am	Brunch Bunch		Brunch Bunch

Group Timetable <i>To join any group you must be a member of u3a</i>			
Fourth Week	Final Week	Ad-Hoc	
Questions of Belief Welsh Language	Welsh Language	Patchwork and Quilting 2 alternate Wednesdays – Linda Dunbar Concert Group – David Daniels Website Editors – meet as required – Alun Edwards Group leaders can be contacted by email from the group's webpage.	Mon am
Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub Spanish-Elementary	Badminton 1 Concert Band Mah-jong/Rummikub		Mon pm
Golf for Fun Photography 1 Village Strolls 2	Urban Sketchers Spanish Intermediate		Tue am
Jam Session Patchwork/Quilting etc Pétanque Quiz Group			Tue pm
French Conversation Painting for Pleasure Pickleball 3, Tai Chi 2 Skittles 2, Oct-May Skittles 3, June-Sept	Military History Pickleball 3 Table Tennis		Wed am
Latin 3 Sea Shanties Yoga 3 (term time)	Poetry Yoga 3 (term time)		Wed pm
Aspects of Modern History; German Needlecraft Pickleball 1 Short Mat Bowls 1 Walks under 4 miles 2 Yoga 2 (term time)	Pickleball 1 Yoga 2 (term time)		Thu am
Book Club; German Modern Greek 1 Needlecraft Short Mat Bowls 2 Wine Tasting	Modern Greek 1		Thu pm
Birdwatching Italian Post-Beginners Modern Greek 2 Pickleball 2 / Welsh	Modern Greek 2 Pickleball 2 Science & Engineering Welsh Language		Fri am
Badminton 2 Bridge	Badminton 2 Bridge		Fri pm
	Brunch Bunch		Sun am

Group News

● Jam Session

Fladbury Walkabout – July 2026

Vinyl Chapter, who are all members of the Jam Session group, performed for just under two hours at this year's Fladbury Walkabout. With the sun shining and temperatures rising, there was a large crowd outside the Anchor Inn, either sipping their beer, queuing for ice cream or just quietly listening to us perform. On the playlist were a few gentle numbers such as *Take It Easy* (The Eagles) and *My Girl* (The Temptations), some well-known big hits including *A Hard Day's Night* (The Beatles) and *Maggie May* (Rod Stewart) and the opportunity to join in the chorus of songs such as *Wagon Wheel* (Darius Rucker) and *Whiskey in the Jar* (Thin Lizzy). We are delighted to have found drummer Ian Jones to join us and provide the drive needed to help us perform at our best.

The Jam Session group is flourishing with new members joining regularly. If you are interested in playing, singing or just listening to the type of music mentioned above, please contact the group leader, Bob Davies, via the website.

If you are holding an event which would benefit from some live music and would like us to play, please contact either me on 07860 872448 or Graham Farrell on 07870 234913. We are happy to adapt the set to suit your needs, provided we are given sufficient notice.



Grahame Percival

Image: Vinyl Chapter at Fladbury Walkabout by Maggie Percival

● Military History

The Military History group continues to thrive, offering a varied programme that explores conflicts, campaigns and personalities from across the centuries. We will round off the year with two fascinating presentations: one on the Battle of Kohima, the pivotal turning point of the Second World War in the Far East, and another on the Battle of Jutland, the First World War's largest naval engagement.



Earlier this year, we were delighted to welcome the acclaimed author Phil Craig, who gave a fascinating and thought-provoking presentation based on his trilogy of books about the Second World War. We hope to welcome him back in the future to speak about his book on the Battle of Trafalgar. A number of

our members will also be enjoying a special guided tour of RAF Cosford, providing an opportunity to explore one of Britain's finest collections of military aircraft and aviation history.

Planning is already well underway for next year's programme, which promises another excellent series of presentations, ranging from the Battle of Crécy to the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

We meet on the last Wednesday morning of every month at Cropthorne Village Hall. If you have an interest in military history and would like to join our friendly and welcoming group, we would be delighted to hear from you. While places are limited, we will do our best to accommodate new members whenever possible.

Neil Hoy

Image: Phil Craig during his presentation, by Neil Hoy

● Quiz

The September quiz theme is 'Ditloids'

A ditloid is a word puzzle where you must deduce a common phrase, quote, date, or fact using only the numbers and the first letters of the remaining words.

e.g. 7 D of the W = 7 Days of the Week

Questions

1. D is 40 all in T
2. 2 W D M a R
3. A S in T S 9
4. G and the 3 B
5. 11 P in a FT
6. 7 D S
7. 3 F in a Y
8. The 6 W of H the E
9. 1815 The B of W
10. S W and the 7 D

Neil Berry

Please see page 27 for the answers.

● Archaeology & Heritage

Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 May was the date of the Evesham Medieval market. This has become an annual event. The market, along with the encampment, is an excellent example of medieval re-enactment and experimental archaeology – an event providing examples of how medieval life influenced our current way of life.



On 3 June we took part in the Picnic in the Park. Yes, we did have rain, but that did not put us off having a great time with our u3a friends. We had a medieval theme for our picnic and received some publicity, thanks to the excellent Evesham Observer photographer.

Thanks to the South Worcestershire Archaeology Group, we attended a talk on 6 June about River Crossings along the River Severn, presenting their known history. This talk covered not just the use of various methods of ferry, boat and fords, but also described the characters, industry and agriculture associated with them.

On 15 July, courtesy of Alcester Centurions, we attended an excellent talk by Dr Emma Nicholls from Oxford University, doing a quick change from archaeology to palaeontology. Why not – it is an ology! Emma works at Oxford University, responsible for the vertebrate palaeontology collections at the Oxford Natural History Museum. She has considerable museum experience, including working at the British and Horniman museums. In 2021, she was involved in the excavation of the Rutland ichthyosaur, thought to be the largest near-complete reptile skeleton found in Britain. More recently, she co-led the excavation of the largest dinosaur trackway site in the UK, in an Oxfordshire quarry. It was something we couldn't afford to miss! The giant footsteps uncovered in the quarry featured on Digging for Britain and on various TV news bulletins. Emma described what her team found and what conclusions they reached. It was a fascinating story about the prehistory of our part of the Midlands.

Chris Wolstencroft

Image on page 20: a selection of medieval surgical instruments by B Wolstencroft

Concert Group

As Maria said in the Sound of Music, 'As the Lord closes one door, He opens another' – and that's just how it is with the Concert Group seasons.

I think those of our members who were there would agree that we ended our 2025/2026 season in fine style! In fact, judging from the comments we have received, the not-very-19th Century word 'WOW!'

springs to mind. The 27 June concert performance of Puccini's Tosca, presented very cleverly on the Symphony Hall stage, and featuring the great Bryn Terfel, is what inspired us all – and indeed inspired the enthusiastic response from our folks. We had never 'done' a complete opera before, so it was a bit of a 'step of faith' – but it was just wonderful.

And now, of course, we are looking forward – quite impatiently – to our new season, beginning on 4 September with a concert featuring the legendary pianist Martha Argerich, accompanied by the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra. The absolute sell-out in Symphony Hall is reflected in our own level of support. Bookings have closed, but we are running a waiting list, so please get in touch if you are interested. It **may** not be too late!

The 2026/2027 Symphony Hall season is focussed on the bi-centenary of the death of Beethoven, and the Martha Argerich concert – and several of our later ones – includes works by him. But as usual, we are offering a mix of music in our season of six concerts, featuring the CBSO and visiting orchestras, as well as a variety of afternoon and evening concerts.

If you love great music (and who doesn't?) and you like the idea of hassle-free 'door to door' (almost!) transport to get you to one of the greatest concert venues in the country to hear it – well, you know where we are! Do get in touch, and we'll happily send you details of our programme and how our concert day arrangements work. Go on – you know you want to!

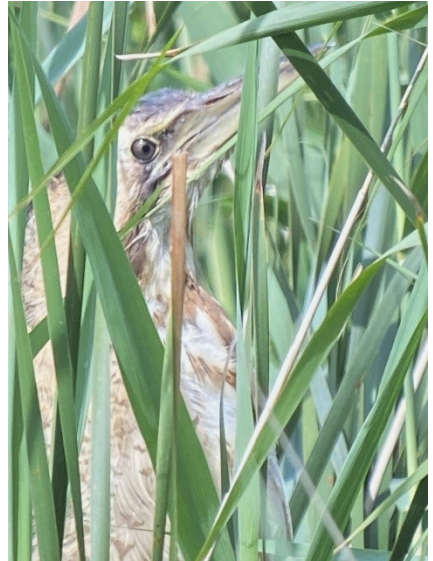
David Daniels

● Birdwatching

Our May trip took us to Ham Wall and Shapwick Heath in Somerset. We were hoping for bitterns and hobbies and we had fantastic views of both. A bittern was initially heard booming and then seen flying across the reeds at the first view point, but another one then flew and sat on the edge of the reeds. Its camouflage didn't work as well

as it intended, as it sat in fresh green reeds, which enabled us to have great views. We saw the occasional further flights and heard booming throughout the day. From this view point we also got to see a rare male garganey in breeding plumage as well as dunlin, redshank and black-tailed godwit.

We moved on to the Avalon hide where there was much excitement about the barn owl showing well on top of its nest box. Marsh harriers were regularly seen quartering the reed beds. Surprisingly, we didn't hear many sedge or reed warblers, but there were plenty of garden warblers, blackcaps and Cetti's warblers in the hedgerows. Many dragonflies and damselflies were emerging and we saw a number of four-spot chasers and some scarce chasers in their fresh golden colours.



Heading back to the car park and picnic site we had a glimpse of a hobby. As we waited, three appeared and one came so close that we could see them taking insects in the air with their talons and passing them to their mouth. As we crossed a bridge over a drainage ditch, we spotted a grass snake entwined in the wire gabions.



After lunch we ventured onto the adjacent Shapwick Heath National Nature Reserve and were treated to great views of more hobbies, one perching for a while in a tree. In the pool in front, we had delightful views of a pair of great crested grebes with two 'mint humbug like' young as they took turns

to let the chicks ride on their backs. A successful day's birding and we managed to miss the forecast rain showers.



In June, we had a night-time trip to Plump Hill in the Forest of Dean. It was a warm and still evening, so hopes were high of seeing nightjars. We had met at 20.30 and the nightjars were not expected to start calling for at least another hour, so we were hoping for some other birds to keep us interested. The sunset above the trees and the

glow of the waxing gibbous moon provided a beautiful backdrop. A bird of prey was spotted silhouetted against the sunlit sky. It was difficult to discern any colour or features other than its outline. The consensus of opinion was that size, shape and bill size ruled out common buzzard and it was most likely to be a goshawk, but we will never know for sure.

The previous week, the nightjars had started churring at 21.53, but the plantation was still quiet at that time. At 22.01 the faintest churring started and a woodcock flew over close by. The churring increased with at least two birds calling and then we started to see them flying. At first, it was difficult to pick them out against the backdrop of the woods; they were only visible if they broke the skyline. But as we waited, sightings became more numerous, with three birds together at one point and the male showing clearly with its white wing spots. I decided to try the handkerchief waving trick. I had a vague memory of seeing this on TV – a Bill Oddie programme of about 30 years ago, I think. So, with a white hankie in each hand, I waved my arms up and down and sure enough, a nightjar came to investigate and helped the group get good views of the bird. The birds would rest on tree branches and continue to call between flights, but they never picked a tree where we could see them until we walked back towards our cars, when one was seen in its archetypal horizontal pose on a distant bough, silhouetted against the moonlit sky.

For our July trip we returned to Slimbridge, having been there in January, this time hoping to catch a few of the early autumn migrants. Things got off to a great start at the Rushy Pen with a spoonbill occasionally showing its bill, avocet with young, ruff in many different colours and phases of plumage and black-tailed godwits, many of which still resplendent in summer plumage. Two redshanks gave us an identification challenge, but the more we studied them, the more sure we became that they were indeed spotted redshanks in between summer and winter plumage and at different stages of moult. After such a good start, we wondered what would turn up next and we were not disappointed. From the Robbie Garnett Hide, we had distant but clear views of a wood sandpiper and closer views of many green sandpipers. A juvenile yellow wagtail was briefly seen. From the Estuary Tower we had very good views of a common sandpiper and a green sandpiper for comparison. Two adult yellow wagtails made up for the fleeting glimpses of the juvenile earlier.

After lunch we decided to go to the Decoy Hide, not one I visit very often, but there was talk of the kingfisher feeding young. We struck lucky and had great views of the adult, perching, fishing and returning to the nest. Could the day get any better? Well, it did, and from Zeiss Hide a bittern was clearly visible in the reeds in front of the hide. A quick visit to South Lake only added a cormorant and a lone eclipse male pochard to our list before we set off home, hoping to miss the Friday traffic.

Alan Chambers

Images: page 23 – Bittern in reeds by Alan Chambers; Four-spot Chaser by Steve Cockbill; page 24 – Great crested grebe with young by Steve Cockbill.

Poetry

The Poetry Group continues to sweat it out on the last Wednesday of the month, upstairs at Wallace House. July's theme was a derivative package 'Sins of the Father/Regret/Hidden Depths' and a quorum of seven gathered round the table and covered the ground with Sylvia Plath rubbing shoulders with Christina Rossetti, Robert Lowell mixing it with John Betjeman (on local ground, Pershore to Oxford by train)

and some home-brewed efforts, trying not to feel daunted by Yeats and his Wild Swans at Coole (could almost have been on the Avon).

In this sound bite age, poetry does Snapchat only, and better – when it works. Speaking for myself, I try to baffle AI with the all too human, laced with the surreal – ever seen a machine laugh or a robot cry? I thought not. Next month sees us exploring Liverpool of the sixties and seventies, with a guest appearance from Tony Henry, late poet Adrian Henry's brother, setting the scene. We still have room for one or two new faces, should one or two wish to give us a try. Whether you write and read or just read, there is a place waiting for you at the table!

Richard Taylor

● Sea Shanties



The group singing at Cavendish Park Care home on Offenham Road on Wednesday 22 July 2026. The residents joined in and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Image by Neil Berry

● Welsh Language

We have continued to try out new ideas during our Monday morning Zoom meetings. The latest idea was to speak about a topic of our choice for a minute in Welsh and then in English. We allowed time for any questions and then moved on to the next person. All participants enjoyed it very much and we will be repeating this activity once a month, along with our other events like 'book club', solving quizzes and translating videos together.

June was exam season and one of our members sat his entry level (Mynediad) exam in South Wales. I sat a similar exam last year and it was a remarkably positive experience after a gap of 46 years since the previous one in 1979!

One of the great things about learning Welsh is that you don't have to travel very far to be able to put it into practice. Some of us have been out and about in Wales on holiday or visiting family. Welsh speakers have been pleased to discover that we are learning the language and very pleased to hold a conversation with us.

We also continue to meet in person over coffee at Clive's of Crophorne at 10.00 am every Friday morning. There is space on our table for new members. Anyone thinking about learning Welsh, or already learning Welsh, is welcome to join us. Alternatively, you can get in touch with me via the link on the website.

Steve Bate

Answers to the Quiz on page 20

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Deuce is 40 all in Tennis | 2. 2 Wrongs Don't Make a Right |
| 3. A Stitch in Time Saves 9 | 4. Goldilocks and the 3 Bears |
| 5. 11 Players in a Football Team | 6. 7 Deadly Sins |
| 7. 3 Feet in a Yard | 8. The 6 Wives of Henry the Eighth |
| 9. 1815 The Battle of Waterloo | 10. Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs |

● Classic Cinema

Classic Cinema continues to celebrate the u3a's 25th anniversary with films from 2001 as well as films chosen by Nick, the original leader of the group from its beginnings about 20 years ago.

On Friday 2 October at 10.00 am, we are screening **Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain**, known better in the UK as **Amélie**. The photo is of the Collignon's house from the movie, actual address 56 rue des Trois Frères, Montmartre, Paris. In this, quirky waitress Amélie daydreams about helping people find happiness in this whimsical depiction of contemporary Parisian life, set in Montmartre; Director Jean-Pierre Jeunet.

For film lovers and Francophiles, Classic Cinema has two very different French screenings this term. As well as **Amélie**, we will see a movie created by one of Nick's favourite directors, Jean Renoir: **La Grande Illusion**, a drama from 1937 about French POWs during the First World War. All screenings can be found on our webpage or contact me. https://evesham.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/classic-cinema/



Ally Edwards

Image credit: Claudio Lobos, licensed as CC BY-NC 2.0, via Flickr.

● Painting for Pleasure

During July, the group met out of doors, and, although grateful for the dry weather, we were keen to find some shade. By the river at Hampton Ferry was an ideal spot, cool under the huge old willows with a perfect view up the river. We also took advantage of Raphael's very good tea and coffee.

Later in July, when we met in Mary's garden, it was the shade of the apple trees that kept us cool. After a morning sketching, the group enjoyed a bring-and-share lunch, followed by a relaxed afternoon.



The open-air theme continued with a 'Painter's Picnic' at Middle Littleton Tithe Barn on 12 August. We have used this venue several times before and there is always a different angle or aspect to draw. Another bonus is the beautiful interior where we can shelter from the hot sun.

Continuing the theme of ancient buildings, the group gathered on 26 August to sketch St Andrew's Church in Hampton, a medieval building with 12th century origins, featuring a core structure from the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Mary Simpson

Image by Mary Simpson

● German

The German Group celebrated the 25th Anniversary with a garden party on 9 July 2026. A full report will be included in the Jubilee Edition of the Newsletter in December.

Four groups meet twice a month which is only possible thanks to Reg Pritchard's help and dedication, teaching the Beginners Group. We have had a summer break and will be re-starting our classes on 10 September. If anybody would like to join us to learn or resurrect their knowledge of the German language, please get in touch with me by email from our webpage.

Sophie Dodds

Group Name	Coordinator	Fee
Archaeology & Heritage	Chris Wolstencroft	Varies
Architecture	Caroline Bagshaw	Varies
Art Appreciation	Caroline Bagshaw	£2.00
Aspects of Modern History	Sheila Himsworth	£1.00
Badminton 1	Cefn Blundell	£3-£4
Badminton 2	Teresa Green	£4.00
Birdwatching	Alan Chambers	Free
Board Games	Peter Aggett	Free
Book Club	Sue Griffiths	Varies
Bookends	Penny Hanes	Buy drink
Book Friends	Chris Spriggs	Varies
Bridge	Liz Rodway	£2.00
Brunch Bunch	Alun Edwards	Brunch
Card Games	Victoria Nelson	Buy drink
China: The Country	David Ralph	£3.00
Classic Cinema	Ally Edwards	£4.00
Computers & Digital Media	John Scotland	£1.00
Concert Band (playing)	Denise Tandy	£2.00
Concert Group	David Daniels	Varies
Country Dancing	P Morton/J Law	£4.00
Creative Writing 1 & 2	Sue Johnson	Buy drink
Cycling for Pleasure	Chris Davis	Free
Dressmaking	Denise Bailey	Varies
Exploring Language	Caroline Bagshaw	£5.00
Family Research	Diane Nicholls	£2.50
French Conversation	Lorna Slaughter	Free
German (3 groups)	Sophie Dodds	£2.00
Golf for Fun	Rob Davis	Green fee
Italian (post-beginners)	Sue Jerrard	Varies
Jam Session	Bob Davies	£2.00
Latin 1	Caroline Bagshaw	£5.00
Latin 2	Caroline Bagshaw	50 p
Latin 3, Beginners	David Battin	Buy drink
Latin Reading	David Battin	Free
Listening to Music	Frances Platman	£1.00

Mahjong/Rummikub	Carla Auger	£3.00
Military History	Neil Hoy	£3.00
Model Railways	John Gowers	Varies
Modern Greek 1	Mike Fraser	50 p
Modern Greek 2	Mike Fraser	50 p
Needlecraft	Helen Barlow	Free
Painting for Pleasure	Marjorie Arthurs	£3.00
Patchwork, Quilting and other handicrafts	Fran Battin	£2.00
Patchwork & Quilting 2	Linda Dunbar	£2.00
Pétanque	Bob Lewington	Varies
Philosophy	Mike Bagshaw	£4.00
Photography 1	Mike Tittensor	£3.00
Photography 2	Sandra Woodfield	£2.00
Pickleball 1	Mark Round	£5.00
Pickleball 2	Andrew Rowles	£5.00
Pickleball 3	Lesley Roberts	£6.00
Play Reading	Margaret Fuller	£3.00
Poetry	Richard Taylor	£4.00
Questions of Belief&Doubt Quiz	Jane Couper	Free
	Neil Berry	£2.00
Rummikub/Mah-jong	Carla Auger	£3.00
Science & Engineering	Robert Hale	£2.00
Sea Shanties	Neil Berry	Buy drink
Shakespeare	Nicky Neill	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 1	Jan Higgitt	£3.00
Short Mat Bowls 2	Pat Stephens	£3.00
Singing for Pleasure	Cath Cox	£2.00
Skittles 1, Oct - May	Olga Allen	Buy drink
Skittles 2, Oct - May	Jenny Anderson	Buy drink
Skittles 3, June to Sept	Richard Hunt	Buy drink
Social Saunters	Richard Hunt	Free
Spanish-Elementary	Millie Chadwick	Buy drink
Spanish Intermediate	TBC	Varies
Table Tennis	Gary Hewitt	£3.00
Tai Chi	Derek Arnold	£5.00
Tai Chi 2	Derek Arnold	Varies

Urban Sketchers	Mike Bagshaw	Free
Village Ambles & Camera	Christine Harvey	£1.00
Village Strolls 1	Terry Woodfield	£1.00
Village Strolls 2	Sandra Woodfield	£1.00
Village Strolls 3	G & J Cutter	£1.00
Walks Over 4 Miles	J Alexander-Head	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 1	Ruth Webb	£1.00
Walks Under 4 Miles 2	Hazel Marshall	£1.00
Website Editors	Alun Edwards	Free
Welsh Language	Steve Bate	Varies
Wine Tasting	Grahame Percival	£7.50
Yoga 2	Lyn Heaney	Varies
Yoga 3	Alison Williams	Varies

Website

<https://evesham.u3asite.uk>

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