

CLEEVE CLARION

Bishop's Cleeve u3a

No. 114

12 May 2026 to 13 July 2026



9th June: "Me and Agatha
(Christie)" - Colin Wade

14th July: "Russia - Ukraine
- Two sides to a story - a
historical approach"

George Ellis

Science & Tech—Visit to the A417
Missing Link Visitor Centre

Phone: 0300 102 4559

Member-led learning groups and activities for those retired
from full-time work

Chair's Clarion Call

Mike Pritchard

Attendance at the March Open Meeting was excellent, continuing a promising pattern. Chris Evans gave a talk on 'The Butterfly Garden,' a local charity that has evolved from gardening to include educational and therapeutic programs. The organization supports people of all ages and abilities in a welcoming and inclusive setting. Members reacted enthusiastically, with several asking where they could donate. Going forward, we'll ask charities presenting at our meetings to bring and display a donation box in the hall.

Several upcoming events are gaining interest; visit our website for details.

- The Cotswold Link Special Interest Day will take place on Tuesday, 2nd June, at The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane from 10:30 to 15:30. The topic for the day is 'From Pen to Reader: The journey of a book.'

- u3a is holding their annual festival from Wednesday, 1st July to Friday, 3rd July, at the University of York.

Last year's attendees gave excellent feedback about these u3a events; check the details and book your place soon.

Discover new interests and boost your knowledge—join u3a's free online talks, workshops, and courses featured in the Bishops Cleeve website's Events section. Whether led by members or guest speakers, these engaging sessions are open for you. Don't wait—sign up now and start learning!

All Bishops Cleeve u3a committee positions are currently filled, but we have no backup volunteers. We urgently need individuals ready to develop new skills and support our committee's future. Several members are stepping down in November after three years service, so your support is essential. Step forward now—contact a committee member today if you're ready to make a difference!

We encourage all members to join group activities and consider leading a group. Support is available, and new groups are ready for interested members. The committee values innovative ideas for starting groups or promoting our u3a in Bishops Cleeve and nearby villages. Volunteers are welcome to help manage the groups.

We're looking for a few more helpers at events like the Open Meeting.

Tasks include setting up and clearing chairs, as well as preparing and handing out refreshments. If you're interested in helping, please get in touch with the RUMS Co-ordinator, Chris Larkin, at 0300 102 4559 (Option 5), or speak directly to Chris at any of the meetings. (RUMS stands for Really Useful Members)

It is great to see so many of you taking the opportunity to book the outings, holidays, and events available. Travel, exploration, and learning are lifelong pursuits. Stay curious, and on behalf of myself and the Bishops Cleeve u3a Committee, I wish you all a great year.

Learn, laugh, live.

Open Meetings

March

The Butterfly Garden

Is it possible that there are, within our u3a membership, people who don't realise what a magician we have in our ranks, a wise and beneficent being who, each month conjures up delights for our pleasure, edification and enlightenment? The marvellous spell-weaver is, of course, Joan Hall whose skill in programming our Open Meeting talks is formidable; month by month we are treated to speakers with stories to tell, causes to promote, ideas to share. They come with power point, with graphics, pictures, music, sometimes with human or animal sidekicks, rarely do they simply speak, and if they stand up, as did Chris Evans on March 10th, to address a packed Tithe Barn, WITHOUT A SINGLE NOTE, this writer's heart sinks. But in Chris we encountered a man with passion, vision, dedication and charisma – he didn't need cue cards, it was all written on his heart and for 80 minutes, we were enthralled and moved.

Chris is the third-generation owner of Dundry Nurseries on Bamfurlong Lane where, over the last 24 years, a wonderful therapeutic project has evolved bringing joy and purpose to so many. In the summer of 2002, six autistic students visited the nurseries, seeking gardening advice and were invited to return to tackle, under kindly supervision, the cultivation of an unused patch of ground. By November, a quarter of an acre of derelict land was being tended. A development plan was drawn up and the unloved space was gradually transformed. Now the garden extends across more than four acres, weaving and entwining with "the original business"

that is still in operation. Students learn by emulating and sharing daily tasks, working at their own pace, developing skills and an awareness of their own worth.

Word spread, numbers grew and so did the activities offered. Early on, it was realised that a shed was needed and around the same time, an anonymous benefactor delivered an envelope with £10,000. (Chris has many accounts of such happenstance.) The Butterfly Garden has grown via the generosity and loving kindness of so many, people have just turned up offering help and services and today there's a broad range of activities from arts and craft, music, woodwork, catering, as well as gardening, and new opportunities are constantly being added. Ruby's on-site café is popular with both visitors and workers. Intriguingly, the project offers the only facility in the country where video tapes are recycled. The Butterfly Garden is open free of charge, to anyone of any age, with any form of disability, offering somewhere safe to go - whether people are seeking respite, preparing to re-engage with the world, or perhaps still working out what they can do. The doors are open to everyone, without obligation or restriction and over 150 students now visit the project every week. As Chris commented, "Some don't want to garden, they just want to be." A measure of the respect which the project generates is seen in the links which are held with Milestones, Betteridge and Alderman Knight Schools and with GLOSCOL, Stroud College and Star College. People are referred through Social Services and the NHS, groups visit from Care Homes and Day Centres and others are guided there by friends and family.

The project flourishes, it is a registered charity and is now a trust, independent of the nursery which was its godparent. The Rainbow Garden's website has some excellent pictures and further details, including how to donate time, knowledge, physical gifts or money:

<https://thebutterflygarden.org/aboutus.asp>

Chris told us all this in such a relaxed fashion, but his passion for the project shone out as he interwove statistics with remarkable tales and examples of gentle kindnesses. His self-effacing manner and utter commitment to the charity were so engaging. We are grateful to him for bringing us the story of The Rainbow Garden and to JH for finding such a captivating speaker.

Staying connected with u3a Friends

The u3a Friends newsletter brings the best of u3a straight to your inbox.

The scheme includes

Regular and special issues of the online national u3a Friends Newsletter, filled with news from u3as across the country, plus fantastic offers and services.

Information about nationwide u3a events and national initiatives.

Access to learning opportunities via Interest Groups Online for a low fee.

Exclusive access to our u3a Friends Extra benefits program, featuring discounts, offers, and additional services across a range of areas.

Sign up at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/u3a-friends>

u3a Festival Fringe

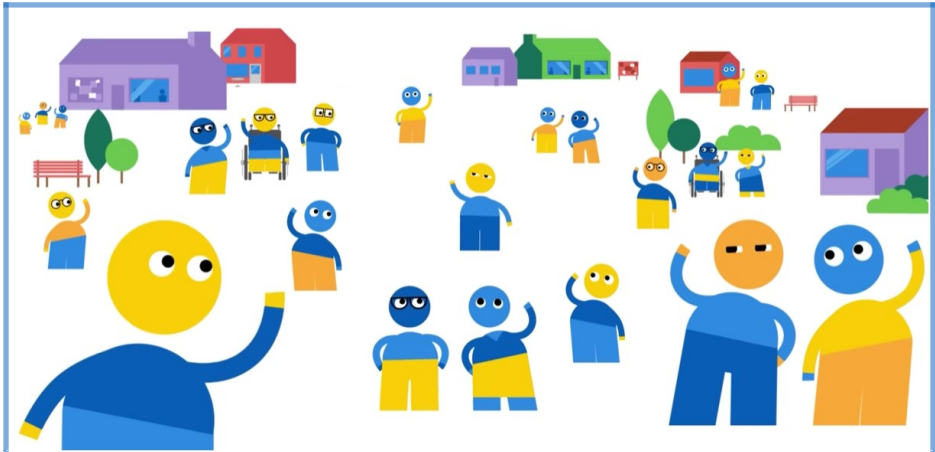
take part in the fun from home

If you aren't able to attend u3a Festival 26, we're delighted to share u3a Festival Fringe. This is an online events programme specifically curated to complement the Festival activities.

The events will take place in the lead up to, and following on from, the Festival in York on 1-3 July, making a full two weeks of learning and fun.

The programme will feature online workshops and talks from Festival speakers with highlights including How to watercolour, The role of women in ancient Egypt, and The role of wind energy in the UK's electricity system. Look out for more information on the u3a website at

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026>



U3a have published a new video to youtube! It's called "Retirement is just the beginning"

See it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E110sPW1WY>

The u3a have other videos at <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheU3a>

They also do a monthly podcast at the above address. This month they meet Phyllida Scrivens who tells us the story of a young Jewish boy who walked alone across Europe to escape the Hitler regime. They also chat with two quarter century group leaders, Margaret and Robert, on their u3a experiences over 25 years and explore 'decluttering' with Eileen Mahoney.

The Adventures of Clovis and Vi Clovis learns history of Life on Earth by GLF



AbilityNet

AbilityNet offer free technical support to anyone over 55 and are happy to support the u3a movement. They provide seminars and courses but will also visit people in their homes.

AbilityNet's friendly technology volunteers provide free IT (information technology) support to older people and disabled people of any age, anywhere in the UK.

Every volunteer is disclosure-checked and can help with all sorts of IT challenges, from setting up new equipment, fixing technical issues, showing you how to stay connected to family, using online services and much more.

Contact details

Website : AbilityNet.org.uk

IT Helpline for over 55s: **0300 180 0028**, 9-5pm, Monday to Friday – solves technical issues and IT queries.

Please note: Calls to this helpline number cost no more than a national rate call to a 01 or 02 number and count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls, and AbilityNet does not receive any money from these calls.

Photographs are taken at Bishop's Cleeve u3a activities for use on our website and other publicity.

At general u3a events such as Open Days, Open Meetings, visits, celebrations etc, you should tell the photographer or organiser if you do not wish to be included and move away whilst photographs are being taken.

Tell the Beacon Administrator and Group Leader if you do not wish to be included in your group's photographs.

Badges at Open Meetings

The 'New Member' badges available when you enter our Open Meetings are not only for those attending for the first time, but also for anyone fairly new who doesn't yet know many people or much about us and would be happy for people to talk to them.

Open Meetings

We meet at 2:30 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Tithe Barn, Bishop's Cleeve. Free refreshments follow the talk. Prospective u3a members may attend one meeting before joining.

Upcoming talks:

12th May: "A Policeman's Lot" - Alan Rogers

9th June: "Me and Agatha (Christie)" - Colin Wade

14th July: "Russia - Ukraine - Two sides to a story - a historical approach" George Ellis

We collect birthday, anniversary, new home, get well, and sympathy cards (no Christmas cards) for Cobalt to recycle. These efforts help fund diagnostic equipment, research, and specialist nurses.

Learn more at www.cobalthhealth.co.uk

We would like to welcome the following new members:

Deirdre Taylor
Chris Wiggin
Colin Nolan
Glenda Green
Jeffrey Green
Sue Reeves

Bridget
Membership Secretary

Groups News

Groups Co-ordinator **Richard Gaul 07790 735154**

New groups -

Current Affairs - coffee and chat with slight emphasis on current events (news)

French Conversation

Meditation and Mindfulness.

If you have an interest in joining one of these groups, please email Richard on groups@cleve-u3a.org.uk.

RUMs (Really Useful Members) Spaces

Chris Larkin mobile 07736807511 (prefer SMS / text)

When : Monthly at Open Meeting plus Ad Hoc when required

RUMs carry out several varying tasks behind the scenes, when required to enable the club functions or special interest group activities function smoothly. The most frequent event is the preparation of Tithe Barn for Open Meetings. This is by no means the only manner RUMs are required with the lists of opportunities vary from providing lifts for less mobile members, to assisting the kitchen time or manning the u3a Gazebo at events.

We are currently seeking a few more physically able members male or female (PS “He Man” not required), to assist monthly with Open Meeting “Set Up” or “Take Down” of tables, chairs or even the projection screen.

Art Appreciation Waiting List

Paul Workman 07816470267

The March Art Appreciation group meeting was well attended even though the weather was exceptionally beautiful for the season. Our talk was given by Sally Ferrers on the lives of three renaissance artists - Donatello, Leonardo da Vinci and Carravagio. Due to her mastery of tech, Sally has a wizardly way of delivering her accompanying slides, her talks are always informative and entertaining. The talk went a long way to bely the notion that you may think you know about familiar artists but there is always something new to learn about them. The interest in the group continues to be strong.

Arts and Crafts 1 Waiting List
Pamela Levermore 01242 678276



Arts and Crafts 2 Waiting List

Sue Brisk 01242 674006

A selection of crafts made at our craft group. Easter egg baskets, quilling cards, decorative balls.



Book Circle 2 Waiting List

Stella Caney 01242 676143

In February we read *Diary of an Ordinary Woman* by Margaret Forster. We enjoyed the book and thought it well-written. However, it transpired that the book was not quite what we had believed! It would be a “spoiler” to say any more!

March's book was *My name is Leon* by Kit de Waal. This we found a well-written book written by someone experienced in the field of Social Services. It was well received, giving rise to a lot of varied strands of discussion. It was based on the issues with children taken into care, alongside the Birmingham riots of the early eighties.

Book Circle 5 Waiting List

Alan Hazell 01242 461371

We don't often provide news on the goings-on in our Book Club as – well – what can you say? Our particular group is full & particularly lively, theoretically a democratic group choosing which books it should read or avoid. They are usually volumes of fiction, but not always. We also run an occasional

series of so-called classics i.e. books that we know we should have read but haven't had the courage or inclination to tackle. An example of this was a P G Wodehouse novel, reputedly one of the finest comedy writers of all time, which most readers in the group found rather tedious! Another example is *1984*, the ultimate dystopian novel. Fortunately, these have been interspersed with joyful novels & very joyful discussions within the group, often about the actual books!

The photo shows some of the group deep in discussion.



Cinema Spaces

Ann King 01242 698497 **Mary Moore** 07980 685655

Another fairly quiet time on the film front with not a great deal of interest in recent cinema showings. However, perhaps as an antidote to the world outside, it has been two “feel good” films which have attracted members' attention.

A few people went to see “*Kangaroo*” which is based on a true story about

the unlikely friendship between a Weatherman and a young girl he meets on his Australian travels. The film about their attempts to rehabilitate young, injured kangaroos elicited comments such as “heart-warming”, “funny” and “easy to watch”. Similar phrases were used by members about “Mother’s Pride” which is the story of a family struggling to save their pub and their success in producing their own Real Ale. Both films provided relaxing and enjoyable evenings.

In complete contrast was “Wuthering Heights” which members found disappointing and depressing with speculation as to whether it was ever going to stop raining! Some people wanted to leave before the end, but the film did evoke a discussion about the merits or otherwise of adapting books for the screen.

We always welcome fellow film buffs who want to join us in trips to the Cinema.

Book Circle 1 Space

Sue Silverthorne 07740 289795

I’ve commented previously how there have been inadvertent links and/or contrasts in the books we have been reading. Once again this has happened – both books, one a novel, the other a biography, are concerned with the lives of women and are based on true events. The novel, *The Silence in Between* by Josie Ferguson, follows the lives of three women, grandmother, mother, daughter, living through the grim period of the Russian invasion of Berlin in WW2 and the construction of the Berlin Wall during the Cold War. It’s a powerful and gripping story, while being very readable, of lives torn apart emotionally and seeking a way to reunite. It was a memorable read, and we found our other book to be just as page-turning. This was the autobiography, *The Necessary Aptitude* by Pam Ayres. It begins with her earliest memories of living in Stanford in the Vale and follows the ups and downs of her life in her humorous, honest, self-deprecating way up to the time when she appeared on *Opportunity Knocks*. She was ‘knocked into shape’ by her four older brothers and strict father, but it took many years to find what she was good at because, as employers commented, she lacked the necessary aptitude. We enjoyed her childhood reminiscences which we could relate to as we are more or less the same generation, and the book made us laugh.

We currently have a vacancy and would welcome a new member, we meet the first Wednesday in the month at 2pm.

Gardening Waiting List

Janet Davis 01242 674068

A real mixture of weather this Spring, an improvement on last year with some lovely warm days interspersed with colder blustery spells, luckily not too much frost. The blossom has burst forth but is being short lived due to cold winds. A busy time for gardeners but beware of sudden cold snaps so need to protect those early seedlings or be patient and wait awhile. Our planter has looked delightful with a splendid show of daffodils and tulips. New volunteers will be taking over in early summer, so we wish them well and with great reluctance say farewell to 6/7 years.



Happy times in the garden this Spring.

German Chat Spaces

Chris O'Connor 07547 924216

We have been meeting each month in the Quiet Room, St Michael's Centre in School Road/ Churchfields. We chat about our activities since the previous meeting, and discuss a topic agreed in advance. Our spoken German is at various levels and we support and encourage each other. With only 4 members we have room for 2 more, but not beginners. Probably O-level or GCSE equivalent, maybe online tourist courses or Duolingo.

Willkommen!

Christine O'Connor

Group Leader

Local History Spaces

Barbara Day Brian Paterson 01242 673917

- May 4 Visit to the John Moore Museum, Tewkesbury
- June 1 Visit to the church of St Peter and St Paul and the village of Northleach
- July 6 Visit to The Soldiers of Gloucester Museum, Gloucester Quays

Our March Meeting - Sir George Dowty and the Dowty group



Sir George Dowty was born in Pershore in 1901. His father was a chemist and he was one of nine children. George was educated at the Worcester Royal Grammar School, which he was obliged to leave at the age of fourteen because his older brothers had been conscripted into the army and he had to help in running the various family businesses. He lost an eye at the age of 12 after

an accident with a chemistry set.

After a year helping in the family business George took an apprenticeship with Heenen & Froude, a Worcester engineering business. After completion of his apprenticeship, he eventually took a position as a draughtsman at Gloster Aircraft. George had an idea for a revolutionary undercarriage component and set up a company, Aircraft components to manufacture it. This was based in a garage in Cheltenham. He had cash flow difficulties and approached A W Martyn for a loan. They both went to a bank in Cheltenham to receive £2,000. In 1935, Dowty founded a new business to manufacture this aircraft equipment under the name Dowty Aviation. The company was floated on the stock exchange in 1936. A W Martyn later become chairman of the Dowty group. Orders were received from Gloster Aircraft for undercarriage components for use in



the Gauntlet and Gladiator aircraft. Rearmament before the second world war resulted in significant orders.

During the second World War, twenty-eight different types of aircraft were fitted with Dowty equipment, which included 12,900 sets for the Hurricane, over 90,000 other undercarriage units, and more than a million hydraulic units. Plants were set up throughout Britain and in Canada and the USA.

After the second world war with the prospect of reduced orders from the aircraft industry, Dowty diversified into manufacturing mining supports for the coal mining industry with a factory at Ashchurch. In 1958 Dowty took over the Rotol propeller business, from the company's original joint owners, the Bristol Aeroplane Company and Rolls-Royce. The Dowty company now employed 15,000 directly with a further 45,000 employed by subcontractors.

Sir George Dowty retired to the isle of Man and died in 1975. He is commemorated by a large statue near Malmesbury. Another statue will soon be erected at the Bomber Command memorial at Lincoln.

The Dowty group was taken over by Tube Investments in 1992 for £500 million. Following the takeover the business underwent heavy restructuring, making 1,500 former Dowty employees redundant and quickly disposing of seven ex-Dowty Group companies via a management buyout that resulted in the creation of Ultra Electronics. The undercarriage business is now owned by a French company - Safran.

Our February Meeting - A talk by Ian Boskett A trip down memory lane

This talk covered many slides with pictures showing Tewkesbury, Railways, Cars, Buses and Architecture.

The start of the talk showed pictures of Tewkesbury Abbey and the view in different directions from the top of the tower. Ian Boskett was a Tower guide when before Covid people were allowed to climb to the top of the tower.

The next picture was of the original railway station in the centre of Tewkesbury which opened in 1840. It was closed in 1864 when the branch line from Ashchurch was extended through Upton on Severn to Malvern Wells and a new Railway station was opened just to the north of the present day Morrisons supermarket. The original branch line continued through the town to carry goods traffic to Healing's mill. There was also a small engine shed close to the original station that remained open until

September 1962. The junction signal box at Tewkesbury was 'manned' by a Signal Lady Mrs Swift.

The branch line to Malvern Wells was cut back to Upton on Severn in 1952 and closed completely to passengers in August 1961.

There were pictures of bath tub races in the river Avon and other activities that would upset today's Health & Safety people. Bill Shakespeare's boat yard was also shown.

The talk then moved on from Tewkesbury with pictures of nearby Railway stations such as Ashchurch, Cheltenham Lansdowne and the demolished Gloucester Eastgate with the wooden footbridge that connected it to the Great Western Gloucester Central. A picture of the transporter bridge at Newport was followed by pictures of some buses and cars in London.

Finally, there were several pictures of Buildings in Birmingham such as New Street station, the Town Hall and Snow hill station that has been demolished. A steam tram at King Heath was followed by a return to Ashchurch where the 4- story building next to the station that was occupied by Dowty's was shown on fire. Ian Boskett's elder brother was a fireman at the time and was called out to help.

A fascinating talk with some real insight into local history.

Luncheons Spaces

Mary Moore 07970 685655 **Monica Wragg** 0777 7612613

Thursday 28th May, Settabello, Belgrave House, Imperial Square, Cheltenham, GL50 1QB, 01242 781881.

Thursday 25th June, The Red Lion, Wainlode Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9LW, 01452 930882.

Thursday 30th July, Thai Legend Restaurant, 62 High Street, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 1DU, 01386 554604.

[Meditation](#) Waiting list

Joan Hall 01242 680575

Members are finding regular practice very beneficial, as it can lower blood pressure, aid relaxation and sleep, and boost the immune system. Six sessions of one-to-one training are given initially by arrangement, then group meetings are held monthly on the first Thursday at 2pm. We sit comfortably, not cross-legged on the floor! If you are interested, please contact Joan to join the waiting list.

[Music Appreciation](#) Waiting list

Stella Caney 01242 676143

The March meeting was focused on the wide-ranging music of Amadeus Mozart. Frequently described as a genius, it is everybody's loss that he died in his thirties. However, recently there have been various TV series based on his life, particularly on Sky Atlantic.

For the April meeting, we listened to works by Aram Khachaturian. He was Armenian, from a fairly humble family, but benefitted from the Russian revolution, where young musicians with genius were able to attend music colleges, previously only available to the elite. He was one of the few Russian musicians who was generally in favour with the government. However, in 1947, he did briefly fall foul of the Department for Agitation and Propaganda (better known as Agitprop)! Tracks included those from Spartacus and Masquerade.

[Petanque 1 and 2](#) Spaces

Doreen Chapman 07503 165947 **Val Hayward** 07850 375641

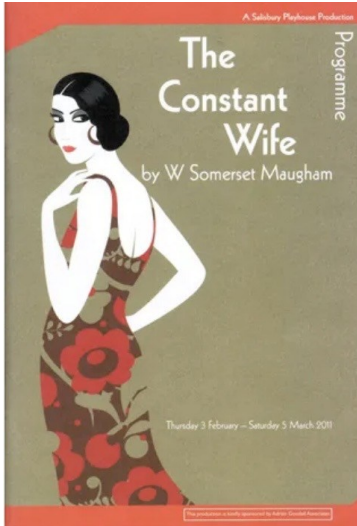
We have missed a few games of petanque due to bad weather but despite this, membership of both groups continues to grow. The groups play alternate weeks on a Friday morning on the piste by Woodmancote village hall. Petanque is an easy game to learn so if you would like to join us in the fresh air, we still have spaces in both groups.

[Play Reading](#) Waiting list

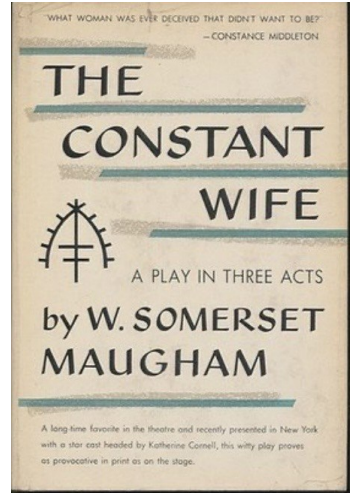
Vivien Paxford 07517 680909

In February we read 'The Constant Wife' by Somerset Maugham.

Written in 1926 it's a comedy with an amusing take on marriage and infidelity giving a quick-witted alternative view of how to deal with an extra marital affair. The group enjoyed reading it, and all agreed it was very much a 'period' piece. It is rarely performed these days, but the

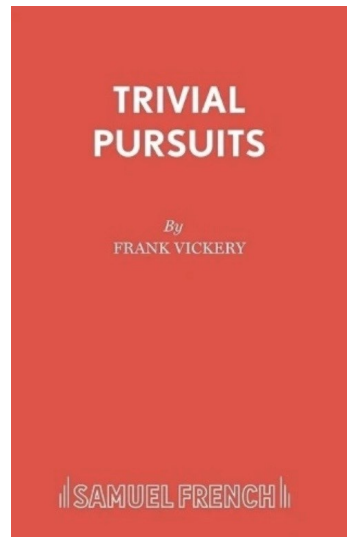


RSC clearly believe it is time for a revival as it is currently presenting a countrywide tour of this updated production in provincial theatres including the Everyman Cheltenham. This current version stars Kara Tointon as Constance, who turns the tables on her unfaithful husband.



In March we read 'Trivial Pursuits' by Frank Vickery.

A summer barbeque is the setting for a meeting of the Trealaw and District Operatic Society. Next season's production is about to be announced, but things are not straightforward! The assorted differing and complicated relationships between members emerge as slapstick and farce alternate with real drama and pathos. Although a very 'visual' play we nevertheless enjoyed the dialogue and laughed out loud almost all the way through the entire script. Now - does anyone know how to light the barbeque?



Poetry 1 Waiting list

Kay Duck 01242 672474

In March, our topic was Gloucestershire Poets, where we looked at : F.W. Harvey, Leonard Clark, and Ivor Gurney. They wrote of their 1st World War experiences and of their love of home and their beloved county. There will be other times to explore more local poets like Laurie Lee and Edward Thomas.

Isn't our Gloucestershire a marvellous place to be? After travel, and coming home on those motorways:

“My hills again!
Cotswold or Malvern, sun or rain!
My hills again!”.

Ivor Gurney

In April, for a complete contrast, our group enjoyed dipping in to 21st century poets — Liz Berry, Brian Bilston, Mahmoud Darwish, Mary Oliver, Raymond Antrobus and a locally based poet, Duncan Forbes. They were all either profound or amusing, and all thought provoking.

Our next meeting will be in the merry month of May.

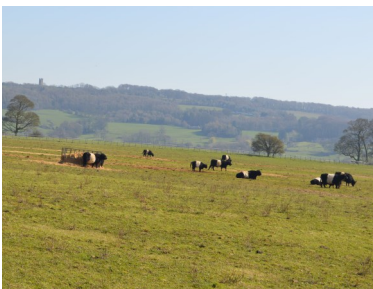
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Ramblers Waiting list

Liz Neeves 07759 477750 **Nick Barker** 07894 117656



We have temporarily closed the Ramblers Group to new members.





Science and Technology Spaces

Alan Green 07714 329861

We normally meet on the first Thursday of each month in the large hall at the Stoke Orchard Community Centre. We range across the full spectrum of science, technology, and engineering, including the economic and social impact. As well as talks and discussions we have occasional visits and take time to have a chat and refreshments.

In April we went out to Birdlip to the Visitors Centre for the A417 Missing Link project to hear about the civil engineering challenges of that massive project. It is truly impressive, both



as a set of civil engineering works and as an ecological project. The project management challenges are equally impressive, with over 500 people on site and some specialised equipment in use in ever-changing ways as the project unfolds. And they are on time and on budget (people only usually talk about that when it falls apart). We have a couple of photos for you, some of the site and some of us having a good time.



On a very different theme, in May our speaker is Dr Jim Simons. Jim is a mathematician, retired after a career at GCHQ. He now teaches mathematics. His current interests include the history of mathematics and

of astronomy. His talk is entitled 'How Far Away Is the Sun?' He says:-
For the ancients, the main driver of mathematics beyond arithmetic, and of science generally, was astronomy. Most of the mathematicians and scientists you have heard of, until modern times, were also astronomers. In this talk we explore the mathematics and science they needed, created and used, by following the story of how we found an accurate answer to the question in the title. We start with the ancient Greeks finding a reasonably good estimate of the distance to the Moon. We finish with the heroism and tragedy of one of the biggest international scientific projects ever, in which explorers sailed all round the world to observe the transits of Venus in the 1760s, nailing down the distance to the Sun to within about 1%. Along the way we explore the demonstration by Kepler that the planets move in elliptical orbits – you may know THAT he did that, but do you know HOW he did it? It is one of the finest achievements of the human intellect. We also see how this pure science ran in parallel with the practical matter of finding longitude on land, before accurate chronometers enabled it to be done even at sea.

I'm still working on June's talk, but I have some promising balls in the air – watch this space!

Although we are quite a large group we still welcome new members, whether bubbling with ideas or just full of curiosity about all this Science & Technology stuff.

[Walking for Health](#) Spaces

Doreen Chapman 07503 165947

This relatively new Group has got off to a real good start.

We have enjoyed the delights of Pittville Park and all it has to offer.

Amazingly the weather has been lovely, no umbrellas needed.

Following the walk we have enjoyed coffee by the lake, time to chat & put the world to rights.

We even had the boatman offering to take us out in his canoe, maybe we will save that for another day.

I think we all agree that it is such a lovely way to spend a morning, keeping fit & healthy & enjoying each other's company.

Do come along & join us.

Please email your news and photos **by 17th June** for the next Clarion:
clarion@cleeve-u3a.org.uk, or use the website:
bishops-cleeve.u3asite.uk/contact/

Committee 2025/2026

Chair	Mike Pritchard	0300 102 4559 Option 2
Vice-Chair	Gillian Thompson	01242 690186
Business Secretary	Lynne Craig	0300 102 4559 Option 7
Treasurer	Simon Waller	0300 102 4559 Option 3
Groups Co-ordinator	Richard Gaul	0300 102 4559 Option 4
Membership Secretary	Bridget Stuckey	0300 102 4559 Option 1
RUMS Group Leader	Chris Larkin	07736 807511
Beacon Administrator	Philip Watson	0300 102 4559 Option 6
Speaker Secretary	Joan Hall	07740 902231
Committee Member	Valerie Hayward	07850 375641

Other contacts

Webmaster	Jenny Waller	
Welcomer	Monica Wragg	07777 612613
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