

CHAIR'S BULLETIN No. 24 – Thursday 26 March 2026

Hello again everyone and welcome to the 24th edition of the Chair's Bulletin

Don't forget, **your** contributions are always welcome. Please send them to chair.witneyu3a@gmail.com by the Tuesday before publication. Next one is **due on Thursday 9 April 2026**

Important Notices

- **URGENT MESSAGE TO THOSE OF YOU RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE!!** Please, please don't forget to use your surname as your payment reference. Our hard-working membership secretary is tearing her hair out over some payments that have been received with no way of identifying the person making the payment. If you think you may be one of them, it would help if you could let the Membership Secretary know the details and timing of your payment so she can match them up. All the other information you need about renewing your membership is available on our website, just follow the link on the home page to '**Membership Renewal Time**'
- **Hearty congratulations** are due to Sarah Parish and Michael Hopkins from Bridge Group 2 who won the u3a Bridge Competition for the 5th year running. Well done both of you! If other members are interested in finding out more about this absorbing game, there is plenty of information on the dedicated u3a Bridge Website. Like a lot of useful information on the u3a website, it's not that easy to find, but if you go to the home page, click on Menu and enter [bridge](#) into the search box, you should see a link to u3a Bridge Groups website., where you will find everything that u3a has to offer on the subject.

Group News

- **Croquet Group:** Good news! After a long gap in playing due to the state of the courts after all the rain, the group hopes to start playing again on Tuesday 31 March at 2.00pm and then on the usual days: Thursday, Saturday and Tuesday at 2.00pm. If the weather is uncertain, please contact valerieu3a@btinternet.com to check that play is going ahead. *Members of Witney u3a are also invited to a Croquet Open Day Taster Session on Saturday 18 April from 11.00am – 4.00pm at Eynsham Cricket Field, Cassington Road, Eynsham. No need to book. Please wear flat soled shoes to protect courts.*

Members' Notices

- It's coming up to that time of year again, and member Lynne Patrick has a dozen jam jars going spare for any keen jam/chutney/pickle makers among you. Please contact Lynne on 01993 704575

Witney u3a Next Speaker Meeting

- **The next speaker meeting will take place on Thursday 2 April at the usual time of 2.00 pm, when the topic and speaker will be:**

'The Amazing Mr Cotton' with Brian Fearnley:

'Mr Cotton' was the name by which Ian Fleming referred to Sidney Cotton when they worked together in military intelligence during the Second World War. The story of Sidney Cotton is quite remarkable from his early days in Australia, learning to fly in the Great War and hunting for seals in Newfoundland. From there he went on to spy for the secret service and develop aerial photography beyond what the RAF was capable of at the start of the Second World War. In the post war period, he was involved in gun running for what he believed was a noble cause (in addition to being profitable!) Sydney Cotton was a remarkable man who made and lost fortunes many times over and lived a life few of us can imagine!

Brian Fearnley spent most of his working life in the telecommunications industry, starting as an apprentice and then moving into design. From there he joined the training department eventually becoming the UK Technical Training Manager for Siemens Communications. He has always been interested in aviation history and, as well as having written an interactive guide for Newark Air Museum, Brian has been involved with aviation archaeology.

A Selection of upcoming Trust u3a Online Learning Events - NB a full list can be found on www.u3a.org.uk/online learning events

(Free to all members on zoom via: www.u3a.org.uk/events)

- Thursday 16 April at 2.00pm: **'Richard Nixon – a truly complex man.'** Paul Carter looks at Nixon's political life travels across the landscape of post-war US and the world.'

- Friday 17 April at 2.00pm: 'The Magic of Magic Squares'. In this talk, Alison Eves reveals an intriguing link between a 16th Century Durer etching and a 20th Century carving on the Sagrada Familia.

Thames Valley Network Events

- **Pandemics!** Monday 13 April at 10.30 on Zoom: Dr Jeffrey Almond is retired Professor of Microbiology at the University of Reading with a specific interest in virology. His groundbreaking research included identifying the detailed structure of avian and human influenza virus and poliovirus. Jeffrey has also led research into new bacterial and viral vaccines with Sanofi Pasteur. Fee for this event is £2.00 per device and places can be booked through the Thames Valley Network u3atvnetwork.org.uk.

What's on in and around Witney

(With grateful thanks to Wendy for gathering all the information)

Please note screenings at Cineworld Witney are subject to change of date and time. Please check.

EVENTS MARCH 2026

26th Quiz Night at Cogges Kitchen Café, 6pm to 10pm. A £20 ticket includes a curry with sides, quiz and prizes for the winning team. Bar available (paid for separately). For more information and booking see cogges.org.uk

27th & 28th Woodstock Music Society Choir & Chamber Orchestra Spring Concert. St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock at 7.30pm. Programme – Brahms: romantic choral works including Song of Destiny and Sibelius: The Captive Queen and Finlandia. Tickets £15 in advance or £16 on the door. Email concerts@woodstockmusic.info

28th Burford Orchestra presents a spring concert at St Mary's Church, Witney at 7.30pm. Programme includes music by Beethoven, Borodin, Khachaturian and Brahms. Tickets £10. For further information see burfordorchestra.org.uk

29th The Burford Singers will perform Handel's Judas Maccabaeus at 7.30pm in Burford Parish Church. Tickets reserved at £29, £23, £17, unreserved £15, £12 For more information see burfordsingers.org.uk

31st Cineworld Witney is screening RBO: Siegfried at 5.15pm

31st Daytime cinema at the Corn Exchange, Witney presents Operation Mincemeat . Tickets £4. Doors open 12.45pm, show starts 1.00pm.

EVENTS APRIL

4th Witney Jazz presents Bossa Gringos. Pure Brazilian rhythmic joy from this much-loved quintet. Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Row seat £20, table seat £22. For tickets and more information see witneyjazz.co.uk

9th The Arts Society West Oxfordshire presents Kandinsky, Expressionism and the Blue Rider. 7.30pm in The Corn Exchange, Witney. Visitors £8

10th Quiz Night at the Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7.30pm, starts 8.00pm. £5 per person, maximum team size six.

11th Corn Exchange. What You Will presents The Importance of Being Earnest at the Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets £15. For tickets and more information see cornexchangewitney.org.uk

11th Bridgerton Inspired Concert at St Mary's Church, Witney. A candlelit, flower-filled concert where modern chart music is transformed into live string performances. Two performances, one at 3pm-4pm and one at 7pm-8pm. Doors open 30 minutes prior to performance. Seating unreserved. Tickets £29.99. For further information and ticket purchases see candelabraconcerts.com

14th Daytime cinema at the Corn Exchange, Witney presents Fisherman's Friends. Tickets £4. Doors open 12.45pm, show starts 1.00pm.

14th There is a talk by Andrew Hopper, Professor of Social History, University of Oxford, at a meeting of the Burford and District society at 7pm in the Warwick Hall, Burford. Burford was the setting for the most famous mutiny of the New Model Army in 1649. Admission £5 to non-members.

16th Cineworld Witney is screening NT Live: All My Sons at 7.30pm. Also on 17th April at 7.30pm and 19th April at 2pm.