

CHAIR'S BULLETIN No. 29 – Thursday 11 June 2026

Hello again everyone and welcome to the 29th edition of the Chair's Bulletin. It's summer so there's a lot going on in Witney in the coming weeks. Be sure to read to the end to find out more!

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 25 June 2026**

Important Notices

- **Anyone interested in Walking Cricket?** The convenor for Chalfonts u3a mixed walking cricket is offering coaching and support to other u3as who would like to establish a group. The aim is to build up a number of relatively local groups that can play against each other in the summer months. At the moment Chalfont plays against Holyport and Purley on Thames Cricket Club ground. *Please contact me or our Groups Coordinator for more information.*
- **This year's u3a Essay Competition is now Live!** *It's time to get writing!* This year you're invited to take the judges on a remarkable real-life journey – of discovery, adventure or transformation – and bring the story to life in fewer than 1000 words. Free entry. Open to all u3a members. Deadline: 31 July 2026. Prize: book bundles for the winner and two runners-up, kindly donated by *HX Expeditions*. More guidance on the topic and how to apply is available on the u3a website under 'Learning Activities'.
- **Wood Green School** is looking for people interested in the possibility of establishing a collaborative partnership between their school library and a community group. Inspired by shared reading projects elsewhere in the country, they believe a joint project could create valuable opportunities for connection, learning and community building. If you or perhaps any of our book groups are interested in knowing more, *please let me know and I'll send you the details.*
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- **Save the date:** *u3a Week 2026, 19–27 September:* this year's theme is 'expanding horizons'. The Trust is planning a brilliant line-up of online talks and events for everyone to enjoy. Across its social channels, it will be asking people to expand their horizons and try something new just for fun. Local u3as are invited to participate and offer their members the

opportunity to expand their horizons. ***Any fun ideas for how Witney u3a can get involved will be gratefully received.***

- **NEW!! Explore the UK with u3a getaways:** u3a Trust is excited to invite you to the first u3a getaways trip – The Agatha Christie Story – from 14–18 September 2026. You'll 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. Find out more on the [u3a getaways website](#).
- **Don't forget that our AGM has Moved to 16 July!** Due to an art display in the Worship Area from 2nd to 14 July, we are unable to hold our AGM on 2 July as planned. Instead, we have moved it to **16 July at 2.00 pm**. Like last year, it will be followed by a quiz and free refreshments. **This means there will be no speaker meeting in July.**

Group News

- **Very Short Walking Group:** Is anyone interested in a walking group that just does a mile or so starting and ending in Witney town centre? If you are, please contact the Groups Coordinator so that she can gauge numbers.

Members' Notices

- Lesley Lockard has sent me this lovely review of the hospitality her short walk group received in North Leigh last week:

'U3A Short Walk Update Wednesday 3rd June 2026'

Due to torrential rain the walk around North Leigh was cancelled. Instead seven of the group went to the North Leigh Memorial Community Hall Cafe which is held every Wednesday morning 10–12. What an enjoyable experience we all had. A very warm welcome, tea, coffee, tea cakes served at the table there were sausage and cheese and onion rolls served hot. The volunteers were wonderful.



We took part in the cricket themed quiz and won some very nice fudge. On leaving we all received a very nice pen .
So, a pleasant experience on a very wet and windy day."
Lesley Lockard (group member)

Next Outing

- **Will be to Berkeley Castle on 15th July. Cost £30.00 (£15.00 for Historic Houses Members)**

What makes Berkeley Castle truly extraordinary is that, for nine centuries, the building, the Berkeley family, the archives (dating back to the 12th century), the contents, the estate, and the town have all endured and are there for you to explore .

Witney u3a Next Speaker Meeting

- **The next speaker meeting will take place on Thursday 18 June at the usual time of 2.00 pm, when the topic and speaker will be:**

‘Estate Planning’ by Brian Rutter

Brian’s talk is completely free of charge with a strict no-sales agenda. It will cover a range of estate planning topics, including making a will, setting up a trust, the importance of lasting powers of attorney, and more.

Given the average age of our members, many of you may already be totally organised with this, but I’m sure there will be some/many who will benefit, hear something new, or just be assured they have taken the correct action.

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)

- **Tuesday 16 June at 11.00 am: ‘Of Mice and Men: How experience shapes the ageing brain.’** Professor Sarah King tours us through her research into how experience influences brain development and ways of keeping our brains healthy.
- **Friday 19 June: ‘A History of Britain’s Roads: why we should feel proud’:** Discover the surprising stories behind Britain’s roads, from radical legislation to quirky inventors, with Diana Laffin.
- **Thursday 25 June at 2.00 pm: ‘Wessex versus the Vikings’:** Charles Boundy gives a gripping exploration of how Alfred the Great and the kingdom of Wessex resisted the Great Viking Army, leading to the establishment of the Danelaw and the emergence of a new England under Alfred’s successors.

- **Friday 26 June at 2.00pm: Islands of the Venetian Lagoon:** This engaging talk with pictures will guide you around twelve islands that can each be reached by public transport (vaporetto or water bus).
- **Thames Valley Network Event**
 - **Friday 19 June at 2.30 pm. A new Summer Quiz** for TVN Members (that's us) with Quizmaster Avis Furness. No need to bring a team, individual players will be randomly allocated one. Please book your place via Ticket Source on u3atvnetwork.org.uk. Closing date 17 June.

What's on in and around Witney

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

Events in June

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

12th to 13th Witney Music Festival. A programme of entertainment throughout the town. The Festival ends with a two day event on The Leys. For information on the programme and build-up events starting from 22nd May, see witneymusicfestival.com

13th Ramsden Summer Fete and Dog Show. 12.00 noon to 4.00pm at Ramsden Playing Fields. Entry £3. Dog show, dozens of craft and food stalls, live music, bar, donkey rides and more.

13th Witney Photo Group exhibition at the Corn Exchange. 10am to 4pm. Free entry.

13th Every Song A Story. French and English verse set by Finzi, Debussy, Poulenc, McDowell, performed by North Cotswold Chamber Choir. St Mary's Church, Witney at 7.30pm. Tickets £15 available from ne3.org.uk/tickets and on the door.

13th and 14th As part of Burford Festival, an opportunity to view around 20 rarely seen private gardens of all sizes and styles. For details see burfordfestival.org

14th As part of the National Open Gardens Scheme, ten Brize Norton gardens will be open from 1pm to 6pm. Combined admission £7.50. Tea, coffee and cake in Elderbank Village Hall. Tickets and maps available from Elderbank Hall and each garden

14th Kidlington Concert Brass presents Women in Brass. A celebration of music by and for women. 2pm Exeter Hall, Kidlington. Tickets £15 available from kidlingtonconcertbrass.org

15th The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford offer a free, relaxed tour for older visitors, followed by tea and coffee. Morning session 11am – 12.30pm (meet in the Randolph Sculpture Gallery, left of the front door at 11am). Afternoon session 2.00pm– 3.30pm (meet as for the morning session but at 2.00pm. These sessions will be taking a close look at the wonderful collections from China and Japan.

15th As part of Burford Festival, A Woman in Science – a talk by Judith Hann, the first female to present Tomorrow's World. 2.30pm in Burford church. Tickets £10. For details see burfordfestival.org

16th Daytime Cinema at the Corn Exchange, Witney, is screening Finding Your Feet. Doors open 12.45pm, show starts 1pm. Tickets £4

17th As part of Burford Festival, Tales from the Antiques Roadshow. A talk by Paul Atterbury, a member of the Roadshow's team of experts for thirty six years. 6pm in Warwick Hall. Tickets £10 For details see burfordfestival.org

17th Cine Seniors at Cineworld Witney is screening The Bride! At 11.30am. Tickets £4.50 includes a hot drink.

18th The Arts Society West Oxfordshire presents a lecture by Dr James Taylor , Grace Darling and the Fine Art of Saving Lives at Sea. Corn Exchange, Witney. Hall opens 6.45pm, lecture begins at 7.30pm. Visitors £8.

19th Witney and District Museum invite you to join a guided tour of St Mary's Church . Bringing the building's rich past to life, uncovering everything from ancient carvings and stained glass windows to curious local legends and surprising secrets tucked away in the architecture. 11am to 12.30pm. Meeting at St Mary's Church. £10. Limited spaces so booking essential. Contact sedelaney2@gmail.com

20th As part of Burford Festival, Voices from the Valleys – a concert by The Pendyrus Male Voice Choir. Having performed at the White House, the Kremlin and Glastonbury, now it's Burford's turn. 7pm in Burford Church. Tickets £20. For details see burfordfestival.org

21st Combe Mill, Blenheim Palace Sawmills, Combe, is hosting an in steam classic wheels event. Tea room open and market stalls to browse. Dogs on leads welcome. 10.30am to 4.30pm. Entry £9.50pp, £8.50 seniors on streaming days. For more information see combemill.co.uk

21st The Burford Singers will be performing music by Benjamin Britten, Charles Wood and Samuel Wesley in Burford Parish Church at 7.30pm. Tickets £12 – £29. For details see burfordfestival.org

24th Cine Seniors at Cineworld Witney is screening Reminders Of Him at 11.30am. Tickets £4.50 includes a hot drink.

25th Cineworld Witney is screening NT Live: Les Liaisons Dangereuses at 7.30pm.

27th Fine Food and Craft Market, Marriotts Walk, Witney. 10am to 5pm.

27th Lower Windrush Choral Society present a concert at St Mary's Church, Witney. Coronation Anthems – Handel. Mass in D Minor by Antonio Caldara and Jan Dismas Zelenka , Doors/bar open at 5.30pm, concert begins 6.00pm. No entry charge, but donations invited to cover the Society's concert costs. Bar proceeds to St Mary's Church

27th and 28th Open days at North Leigh Roman Villa. An opportunity to see the mosaics and speak to the expert volunteers. 11am to 5pm. For more information see english-heritage.org.uk

30th Daytime Cinema at the Corn Exchange Witney, is screening Notting Hill. Doors open 12.45pm, show starts 1pm. Tickets £4