

CHAIR'S BULLETIN No. 31 – Thursday 9 July 2026

Hello again everyone and welcome to the 31st 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 23 July 2026**

Important Notices

- **Last Bulletin as Chair:** I'm not sure whether it counts as an important notice or not, but this is my last Bulletin as Chair of Witney u3a. The Bulletin was started 15 months ago as a way of keeping in touch with ALL our members, not just those of you who come to speaker meetings. I hope it's serving its purpose, that you've found the information it contains interesting and useful and that you'll go on reading it when my successor takes over later in the month!
- **Meet the Committee:** the committee is looking forward to meeting many of you at the **AGM on 16 July**. Every AGM, members present are asked to elect the people who will serve on the committee for the coming year. This year you will be asked to elect 8 members who are standing for re-election and 4 new candidates who are standing for the first time. Updated details of the 4 new candidates are being sent to all members today.
- **Request from the Trust:** One of the u3a Trust's key objectives is to raise national membership over the 500,000 mark. To help them do so, they would like short comments from existing members about 'why they joined u3a' and 'how they have benefited from their membership'. With 868 members, Witney u3a is a shining example of a successful local u3a, so if any of you have any comments you think would help the Trust, please send them to chair.witneyu3a@gmail.com and I will pass them on.
- **Final Reminder – There's still time to enter this year's u3a Essay Competition!** The competition closes on 31 July, so if you have a remarkable real-life journey that you would like to share, it's *time to get writing!* More guidance on the topic and how to apply is available on the u3a website under 'Learning Activities'.

Group News

- **Short Walks and online Quiz groups:** both are now at the proper planning stage so look out for more information coming to your inbox soon or check out our website for more up to date information.

Members' Notices

Nothing this time.

Next Outing

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

Don't miss out on this fabulous day out to an interesting venue at a very reasonable price! As I write there are still a few places left on the coach, so please make your payments of £30 (or £15) to University of the third age, using your name as reference before 5.00pm on Friday 10 July:

Sort code: 60-24-60; Account Number: 15511642

Witney u3a Next Speaker Meeting

- **The next speaker meeting will take place on Thursday 6 August at the usual time of 2.00 pm, when the topic and speaker will be:**

'Bletchley Park' by Gareth Morris

More information about what promises to be a fascinating talk about what became the centre of allied code-breaking efforts in the second world war, will be available shortly on our website and in the next Bulletin.

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 July at 2.00pm: 'A few small nips:' Frida Kahlo and the art of pain:** One of the most celebrated artists of the 20th Century, Frida was famous for her self-portraits. What is less well-known is that she endured

severe physical, emotional and psychological traumas, yet her art transcended her life of pain and disability.

- **Thursday 30 July at 10.00am:** 'The Climate Crisis and the National Emergency Briefing: Learn how you can help make a change with u3a Climate Matters.
- **Thames Valley Network Event**

Wednesday 15 July at 10.30 on Zoom

“Think Britian doesn’t make anything anymore?”

A Talk by Dr Richard Marks

This talk takes you behind the headlines to explore what Britain is really producing in 2026— from precision aerospace components and cutting-edge pharmaceuticals to artisan textiles, advanced robotics, and sustainable energy systems. You’ll discover how British manufacturers are thriving through innovation, resilience, and global reach, often in places the media overlooks. With insights drawn from factory floors, boardrooms, and historical context, Richard reveals how today’s makers are building on centuries of industrial heritage while shaping the future. Whether you’re a sceptic, a supporter, or simply curious, prepare to be surprised by the scale, diversity, and ingenuity of modern British manufacturing.

The fee for this talk is £2.00 per device and you can book your place through Thames Valley Network website www.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 in July

Running until 3rd January 2027, Wonder of Birds. An exhibition inspired by The Book of Birds by Jackie Morris and Robert Macfarlane, at The Weston Library, Oxford. For more information visit go.glam.ox.ac.uk/birds Admission free.

Running until 13th September, Lee Miller: A Woman At War. An exhibition at The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock. The famous photographer, surrealist and war correspondent's wartime images return to Oxfordshire, including photos from her first article in Vogue – US nurses in Oxford's Churchill Hospital. Open Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm and Sunday 2pm to 5pm. For more information visit sofo.org.uk

From 5th July to 30th August a cream tea will be served every Sunday afternoon 2.30pm to 5pm in the garden of the Reading Room in Combe village. Proceeds to village organisations.

9th and 10th Truth Told Theatre presents Twelfth Night. Manor House lawn, Cogges Manor Farm. 6.30pm to 8.30pm. Tickets £15. Discount for annual ticket holders. Please bring a low back chair or blanket to sit on and dress for the weather.

10th & 11th Woodstock Music Society Choir & Chamber Orchestra Spring Concert. St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock at 7.30pm. Music by Karl Jenkins, John Rutter and Edward Elgar. Tickets £15 in advance, £16 on the door. Email concerts@woodstockmusic.info or book online www.bookwhen.com/woodstock For programme details see woodstockmusic.info

11th Witney Carnival begins at 11am with a procession through the town, followed by an afternoon of entertainment, food stalls and funfair on The Leys Recreation Ground. This year's theme is musical heroes.

11th Sunshine and Song on a Summer Evening. A concert by VoiceBox Choir, raising funds for Freeland Community Hub. 7.30pm at Freeland Village Hall. Tickets £10 in advance, £12 at the door. Available from jane.duff17@gmx.com or from Freeland Garden Centre. Doors and bar open from 7pm.

12th Combe Mill at Blenheim Palace Sawmill is holding an 'in steam' Wildlife by the Evenlode event, plus tea room, bbq and gift shop. 10.30am to 4.30pm (last admission 3.30pm. Admission £9.50, over 65s £8.50.

12th July to 27th September Life Through A Royal Lens. An exhibition at Blenheim Palace brings over 100 iconic royal photographs into the Long Library. Showcasing the royal family's enduring relationship with the camera, from Queen Victoria to the present day. Entrance included with Annual Pass. For details see blenheimpalace.com

16th Witney Eco Forum and MP Watch Witney invite you to a free screening of the People's Emergency Briefing. Hear experts speak on climate, weather extremes, national security, food security, economics, energy supply and costs, tipping points, health, nature and getting to a renewable future. Open discussion

afterwards with Charlie Maynard MP. St Mary's Church at 7pm. Bar opens 6.30pm. Please book nebwitney.eventbrite.com

17th and 18th Bampton Classical Opera's new production, Zemira e Azor. Beauty and the Beast, a fairytale opera from 1771 by Andre Gretry (semi-staged and sung in English). Performances at Cokethorpe School at 7pm. Tickets £45 available at www.bamptonopera.org or by telephone 07968 801047

20th 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 seeing how leaders and leadership has been portrayed in history.

23rd 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

23rd Music Box Events presents Julia Titus' Speakeasy Band at the Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets, including booking fee, £19.51 to £21.68. For more information see cornexchangewitney.org.uk

24th 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