

CHAIR'S BULLETIN No. 33 – 13 August 2026

Your Team: at the last meeting of your Committee the following roles were confirmed for people serving their next term:

Cathy Bajpai as Groups Co-ordinator;

Mike Collier overseeing Membership, the Beacon system and Audio-visual Services

Marion Crocker as Programme Organiser;

Marian Hannaford as Excursions Co-ordinator;

Judith Hawkins as Social Treasurer;

Michael Hopkins as Webmaster;

Terry McCabe as Business Treasurer.

The four new members of your Committee are now confirmed in the following roles:

Jill Calvert: Business Secretary;

Ted Cassidy: 'Meeters and greeters' co-ordinator and Committee representative for the coffee and tea bar staff and the bookstall staff;

Edward Pearson: Publicity and Public Relations;

Jacky Wood will continue in her important role of welcoming new members.

Most of these people will be present on Speaker Meeting days to answer any queries you might have about Witney u3a activities.

Important Notices

After the Speaker Meeting on 20th August there will be an opportunity to meet our local MP Charlie Maynard. He will be visiting us to find out what we do. This is part of his programme of visiting local organisations. As well as meeting members of your Committee, I'm sure he would value

speaking to you if you are around in the coffee area after the talk on that day.

Via our Virtual Office

As you may know, for some time we have had a 'Virtual Office' ably managed by Doreen Kennard at office.witneyu3a@gmail.com. Recently, an interesting request came through from Shannon Edwards, a Trainee Clinical Psychologist at the University of Leicester. She is currently conducting doctoral research into the experiences of people who have been affected by fraud or deception. Participation in this research would entail a confidential interview either in person or via Microsoft Teams. I'm assured that anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed and I assume the focus of this research also extends to being scammed. Have you been scammed? I came within a whisker of it once and it was a nasty experience! If you wish to contact her, send her an email to se220@leicester.ac.uk or phone: 07875 229713. If anything good can come out of our bad experiences then I'm all for it!

Group News

None at the moment.

Members' Notices

This has come in from one of our members:

"Lower Windrush Choral Society, is keen to welcome new members. The choir does not hold auditions but members are expected to be able to sing in tune and be comfortable singing in four-part harmony. Much of the repertoire is drawn from the Christian choral tradition, but we welcome members of all faiths and none. For more details, see: <https://www.lowerwindrush.org/>; if you're interested, use the page: <https://www.lowerwindrush.org/contact-us>,

"We rehearse in term time in the Congregational Church Witney on a Monday evening at 7.45 pm. Term restarts after the summer break on Monday 7 September.

"Contact us and come and try us out for a couple of sessions for free."

I'm all for encouraging England to become a second 'Land of Song'!

Next Outing

Many of us are looking forward to the outing to Brighton on August 19th. The next one after that will be to the Royal Hospital Chelsea, home of the famous Chelsea Pensioners. The date for this is Wednesday 30th September.

Witney u3a Next Speaker Meeting

On Thursday 20th August we have a return visit from someone who has thrilled us twice before with her talks. Her topic this time will be:

'Shadows in Space and the Stories they tell'

Shadows are everywhere; here on Earth, on the surface of moons and out in space causing eclipses. Our understanding of solar system bodies has been transformed by studying the shadows visible in images taken by cameras or space probes. This talk takes us on a shadowy quest across the Earth and the rest of the Solar System.

Mary is an Oxfordshire based amateur astronomer, Astro-photographer, speaker, author and podcast co-host who has had a long interest in Astronomy. She moved to Oxfordshire in 2011 where she and her husband have a garden observatory. She is passionate about astronomy

outreach and gives talks to a mix of clubs and also runs workshops.

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)

Instead of listing here the many learning opportunities available on the above website, I'm going to invite you to do two things: first, sign up to the 'Online Events Notification' available on the site. I just have. Second, if you have participated in any of the events listed in the immediate past, let me know about them: what you thought of them and what you learnt. I'm interested to know how much this resource is used by our members and what you think of it.

Incidentally, when I signed up for the 'Online Events Notification' the system asked me to prove I'm not a robot by means of the reCAPTCHA method. As we learnt from Gareth Morris at our (extremely well-attended) 6th August Speaker Meeting, this is a legacy of the genius of Alan Turing – code breaker at Bletchley Park during the Second World War.

Thames Valley Network Event

There is no event scheduled for this month but on 16th September there will be a talk – 'China' – by Andrew Baker. More information on this in my next Bulletin.

What's on in and around Witney

(With grateful thanks to Wendy for gathering all the information. Wendy comments that this is the shortest list she's provided for some time. Is Witney shutting down for the summer, French-style?)

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

22nd and 23rd As part of the National Open Gardens Scheme, the six stunning borders set around Aston Pottery, Aston OX18 2BT will be open. A 72metre border full of riotous perennials, an 80- metre long hot bank, a quadruple dahlia border, a tropical garden and finally, 80 metres of 120 different annuals planted in four giant successive waves of over 6,000 plants. Please note the paths consist of a mixture of paving, tarmac and grass. Open 9.30am to 5.00pm on Saturday and 10.30am to 5.00pm on Sunday. Admission £5.

23rd Witney and District Museum Heritage Walking Tour – Sold out.

27th Open Air Theatre – As You Like It. Performed by the Illyria Theatre Group at Cogges Manor Farm. Open at 6pm for a 6.30pm start. Please bring a low back chair or blanket to sit on and dress for the weather. Tickets £20 adults. Concessions for annual ticket holders.

30th 1.30pm to 3pm. St Mary's Church, Bell History Tour, visiting the ringing room, with a history of bells, bell ringing, peal boards and the opportunity to chime a bell. Organised in conjunction with Witney Museum. Tickets £10 available from sedelaney2@gmail.com Limited spaces so booking essential.

Rhys Williams

13th August 2026

(Contact with me can now be made via chair.witneyu3a@gmail.com)