

## **Speakers for Weston Turville u3a General Meetings February – June 2026**

### **26 February 2026 – Rugby Club**

#### ***Tea, Coffee and Chocolate: How the British first fell in love with Caffeine – Melanie King***

Tea, coffee and chocolate play an important part in the modern British diet. Most people may not know that tea originated in China, coffee was allegedly discovered by a goat herder in Yemen and chocolate plantations were cultivated in 4000 BC by the Olmecs in South America. These exotic beverages arrived in London around 1650 causing immense anxiety and debate. This talk explains why Europeans were so terrified of these drinks and explores some of the ingenious ways they were consumed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### **26 March 2026 – Rugby Club**

#### ***Wildlife on your doorstep – Tom Way***

This talk emphasises all the fantastic wildlife there is to see and photograph on or doorstep, from deer and hedgehogs to owls and foxes. Tom will not only be showing his wildlife images from our local area, but also describing all the stories behind how he took the pictures. This talk also branches out to talk about our coastline and northern areas of the UK, showing photographs of the very charismatic puffins and red squirrels.

### **23 April 2026 – Rugby Club**

#### ***Where do Novelists get their ideas from – A Beginning, a Muddle; and an End – Bobbie Darbyshire***

In an entertaining, informative talk, Bobbie Darbyshire will explain how the complex world of character, location, plot and subplot arrives in a writer's mind. Winner of the 2008 fiction prize at the National Academy of Writing and the New Delta Review Creative Non-fiction Prize 2010, Bobbie is author of five novels. She has also worked as a barmaid, mushroom picker, film extra, maths coach, cabinet minister's private secretary, care assistant and volunteer adult-literacy teach, as well as in social research and government policy.

**28 May 2026 – Rugby Club**

***Royal Jubilees–George III, Victoria, George V and Elizabeth II – Sarah Slater***

A lecture about the origins of celebrating the Royal Jubilee, the pomp and pageantry but also the role that Hampton Court Palace played within the celebrations of the four monarchs.

**18 June 2026 (moved from 25 June) – Rugby Club**

***Andrew Carnegie – The World’s Richest Man – Rags to riches to giving it all away – Jeremy Holmes***

Andrew Carnegie came from a slum in Dunfermline, Scotland, made his fortune in America as a ruthless steel magnate, then at the start of the 20th century gave it all away by setting up philanthropic foundations all over the world. In his day he was worth more than Bill Gates and earned so much that he couldn't give it away fast enough. This talk illustrates his rise, his motivations and his unique personal story, in the context of the dramatic industrialisation of America. The speaker was a trustee of the Carnegie UK Trust for many years.

**23 July 2026 – Rugby Club**

***Summer lunch and entertainment (No Speaker)***

**27 August 2026 – Rugby Club**

***AGM + Blessed are the cheesemakers – with tasting! – John Pearson***

TBC.

**24 September 2026 – Rugby Club**

***TBC***

TBC

**22 October 2026 – Rugby Club**

***TBC***

**26 November 2026 – Rugby Club**

***TBC***

TBC.

**24 December 2026– NO MEETING**