



Weston Turville u3a Newsletter

March 2026

Learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn, laugh, live, learn.

General Meetings We have another welcome visit from Tom Way at our next general meeting on **Thursday 26th March**. Tom is a wildlife photographer and his presentation is entitled “Wildlife on Your Doorstep.” This will show us the images he has taken of creatures there are to be seen locally from deer to hedgehogs and from owls to foxes and will also give us some of the stories behind these pictures.

Also during the afternoon there will be teas and coffees (bring your own cups), the final book swap table (please note the Chairman’s remarks below) and a few group leaders who will be letting us know what their groups are doing. It all starts at 2.30pm. The following meeting is on **Thursday 23rd April**.

Chairman’s Report My apologies to all those who attended the monthly meeting in February for the hiatus at the start with non-working hardware. We were saved in the nick of time by John Beer (our thanks to him). Fingers crossed that all will be well in future. However, this did not prevent us enjoying Melanie King’s talk on the history of coffee, tea and chocolate, which told us many things we did not previously know and was very interesting. This month we are looking forward to welcoming Tom Way, a superb wild life photographer who has been several times before and who will be talking on **Wildlife on your doorstep**.

It is good to be able to report that Lindsey Beer (our new Membership Secretary) has signed on a number of new members recently. On **Tuesday 22nd September** we are having an **Open Day** in the Village Hall, when we will be showcasing many if not all of the currently 35 groups actively in operation. We hope that you will want to attend then and particularly bring friends who are not members but who might be interested in joining. More details will be circulated nearer the time, but **please make a note of the date now**.

We recently held a successful **Group leaders meeting** when the Open Day was discussed, together with a number of other ideas. One of these is that we will be asking all members to provide details of an emergency contact when you next renew your membership. Although this will not be mandatory, we feel this is a sensible thing to do, for all the obvious reasons.

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We are also looking at the use of hand-held terminals at monthly meetings so that you will be able to pay in for membership or for trips etc. directly with your credit or debit card rather than by cheque or in cash. One other avenue we are exploring is putting our monthly meetings on ZOOM so that they can be viewed at home by those of you who are unable to come to them in person. We are looking for someone who has the necessary technical ability to help with this – anybody interested? Please let me know if so.

On a similar subject I came across this notification recently: *Interest Groups Online (abbreviated as IGO) is an online u3a community that gives you the opportunity to join groups, talks and much else. In the same way as an ordinary u3a, the activities are run by members and are a great way to meet people from all across the u3a movement. See this website: www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups*

Finally the bad news. Sadly **we will not be providing the book swap facility at monthly meetings in future** – unless someone willing to co-ordinate it steps up NOW. The books at present in the store will be donated to the OXFAM bookshop in Aylesbury, where I work occasionally.

Simon Evers chairman@wtu3a.org.uk.

General Meeting date change. Due to circumstances beyond our control, the June meeting will be held a week earlier than scheduled so put **Thursday 18th June** in your diaries.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Have a Go Group The inaugural meeting of the Have A Go Group was recently held at which a plan for how the group would operate was agreed. Members will propose and research activities they would like to “have a go” at with information on numbers, costing, location etc. From those suggestions a programme of the most popular activities will be agreed. The proposer of the activity will be the lead organiser for that activity so the organisation is shared amongst the group. We are hoping to have a go at a range of activities - art, craft, sport or skill so there should be something for everyone.

If you are interested in joining us in ‘having a go’ please email haveago@wtu3a.org.uk or come along to our planning meeting 1.45pm **Thursday 26th March**, at the Rugby Club (before the start of our next General Meeting).

“Our life is March weather, savage and serene in one hour.”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Latin for Beginners The group first met in November. The first part of course we use is set around the lives of real people who lived in Pompeii just before the famous eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD. The course asks for some work but at the same time is very interesting in two ways: as well as learning the language, we discover how Latin is part of our heritage and is used practically everywhere - and we also see how the Romans lived and how advanced they were.

Eight members are now well into things and looking forward to a trip to see parts of Verulamium (St Albans) in April. Might we go to Pompeii itself one day? Who knows! Meanwhile, I have the names of several members who would be interested in joining a new beginners group. If there are enough takers, I will probably run another group, but not before the beginning of 2027. If you are interested in this, please let me know and I will add your name to the list.

Simon Evers - chairman@wtu3a.org.uk

Card making There is still some room for new cardmakers (meetings are on the second Thursday of each month – 10am to 12.00 in the Chapel Hall – so if you are interested let Lindsey Beer know at: cardmaking@wtu3a.org.uk The next meeting is on **9th April**.

Scrapbook and Memory Book Lindsey Beer is looking to get the new group going. With everyone having plenty of pictures, holiday bits and pieces and would like to display them in a book, this could be the group for you. Lindsey has all the equipment to make these items into actual books. Anyone interested should contact her at cardmaking@wtu3a.org.uk or speak to her at the next general meeting. There has already been some interest but plenty more members are welcome out find out about this exciting new group.

Trips Sarah Gunn and Sharon Pennery, the new joint leaders, have planned two trips for the year. The first is on **Friday 26th June** which is a coach trip and visit to Windsor Castle with a likely cost of £45. Anyone not wanting to visit the castle but merely go shopping in Windsor can have a place on the coach for £20. If you are wanting to go to the castle or shops, a deposit of £20 is required as soon as possible. Secondly on **Thursday 3rd December** there is a coach trip planned to Bath Christmas Market and the cost will be about £21. Only indications of interest are required at this stage. Contact them at trips@wtu3a.org.uk if you are not at the next general meeting.

“Indoors or out, no one relaxes in March, that month of wind and taxes; the wind will presently disappear, the taxes last us all the year.”
– Ogden Nash

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Mahjong Group At the end of last month's general meeting I asked Simon Evers if he would kindly contact the other local U3A chairpersons to see if any of their members would like to join our Mah Jong group because we didn't have enough members to pay for the chapel funds.

As Mah Jong is a bit of a marginal game I didn't expect to have much interest but hoped that maybe three or four people might show interest. Well, that didn't happen. Instead 15 people emailed me, mostly, I think from Wendover U3A. Of those people only three had distant experience of the game. All the rest had never seen it or played it before!!

At that point I went from absolute glee to absolute panic as I realised that our group had only four of us who have played long enough to teach others the game and also we had only three Mah Jong sets between us in the group.

Over the following days we all begged anybody who had a set, they were not using, to lend it to us and again I was amazed at people's generosity, because Mah Jong sets are expensive, when five people lent us their sets. One lady even lent us two sets!

A day or so later I just happened to look in my spam mail and found another five people had emailed me asking to join us. That made a total of 20 possible new members!!

We all met yesterday and of those possible 20 people, 11 actually came to our meeting. Four have already signed up and paid the chapel fees and we are hopeful that more will do so at our next meeting, next month.

I now feel very positive about our ability to pay for the chapel hall for this coming year.

So, thank you to Simon and all the people who have helped by lending us their Mah Jong sets. Our next meeting is on the afternoon of **Thursday 9th April**.

Joy Williamson at mahjong@wtu3a.org.uk

Handbell ringing The group is currently practising for a handbell festival but you don't need any expertise to take part as handbell ringing is done by numbers. The group meets every Friday morning at John Beer's house so contact him at handbells@wtu3a.org.uk if you fancy trying it.

Quiz Group The next afternoon quiz will be on **Friday 27th March** at 2.30pm in the Chapel Room. You can come on your own or as a group for this enjoyable afternoon's entertainment. More details from Joy Mantell on quizzing@wtu3a.org.uk

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Joint Coffee morning with ACu3a Thursday 19th March is the date for our next coffee morning at the Five Bells starting at 10.30am. You can either just turn up, or Marie Jones on coffee@wtu3a.org.uk will let you have further details. The following one will be on **Thursday 16th April**.

Theatre visits The classic all-singing, all-juggling musical “Barnum” is on **Wednesday 25th March** – 2.30pm at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury with tickets being £42. This show features Lee Mead as Barnum and includes the famous tightrope walk across the stage. Onto **Tuesday 19th May** and we have an evening of “That’ll be the Day” which celebrates timeless hits from the 1950s until the 1980s. This has a 7.30pm start and costs £33.50. Finally, for now, there is on **Thursday 3rd September** a performance of “Choir of Man”. This is an evening of foot-stomping entertainment featuring bar songs, folk classics, Broadway hits as well as classic rock and pop anthems.

If you are interested in any of these let Melanie Evans know as soon as possible at theatre@wtu3a.org.uk

Science and Technology The recent trip to the Space Museum was enjoyed by some 40 members and as so many people went it was possible to return some of the cost to each attendee.

Those who weren’t able to go to Matthews Brickworks last year have another opportunity on **Thursday 30th April**. Although it is full there is a reserve list open. The visit starts at 10.30am and there is no charge although a donation would be appreciated.

The following week (**Thursday 7th May**) we visit Frogmore Paper Mills near Hemel Hempstead. This is a unique heritage site, where paper has been made since 1774 and the first paper machine was placed in 1803. During the visit you will also get the chance to make and take home some paper. There will be morning and afternoon visits and the cost is £15. At present there are a few places available.

As there has been a lot of interest in the tour of the Elizabeth Line on **Thursday 4th June**, a second trip is planned for **Thursday 2nd July**. The coach will leave Weston Turville at 8.45am (cost is £18) for the journey to Taplow to meet the guide. We travel on the line to Paddington then Westbourne Park before going to Canary Wharf for lunch and a talk. Apart from the coach cost, the rest of the trip is free.

Let John Beer at: science@wtu3a.org.uk know if you are interested in any of these visits.

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Discussion Group There will be no meeting on Friday 3rd April as it is Good Friday, so the next meeting will be at the Five Bells on **Friday 10th April** at 10.30 am. Any interested members can call Terry Jones on 07884 121657 or just come to the Five Bells

Recently we have discussed these topics:-Are we having too many funeral adverts? Should old people be forced to go into care homes against their will? Can the Prime Minister remain in office? Lots of patients in the NHS are put on beds in corridors as there is no room in the wards. If you ran the NHS, how would you solve this problem?

The group leader is Terry Jones on discussion@wtu3a.org.uk

Chess The chess group meets regularly on the second and fourth Fridays of each month (and often on other Fridays as well) for lunch, chat, companionship and the odd game of chess - sometimes very odd, but always fun and sociable. Come and join us! We meet at 12.30 pm at the Chandos Arms on **Fridays 27th March, 10th and 24th April** (to be confirmed). If you would like to join us or simply want to find out more, email Geoffrey Howell on chess@wtu3a.org.uk.

Crafts The group meets on the second Wednesday of each month, from 10am to midday in the Chapel Hall, so the next ones are on **8th April** and **13th May**. Tea and biscuits are available. Our current members continue to support and share their skills — and together we enjoy a creative, friendly morning full of ideas and laughter. If you'd like to try something new or learn new craft skills, come along and see what we do! If you are interested have a chat with Sandra Crannage or email her at crafts@wtu3a.org.uk

Writing Group The new Writing group has got off to a good start with a lot of ideas. Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 7th April** at 2pm at Joy Mantell's house so contact her at: groups@wtu3a.org.uk for further details. Group members will be welcome to choose their topics – either serious or trivial.

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Network News The Thames Valley u3a Network have a couple of Zoom presentations coming up shortly. On **Monday 13th April** there is a talk on Pandemics by Dr Jeffrey Almond who is a retired Professor of Microbiology at the University of Reading with a specific interest in Virology. On **Tuesday 5th May** at 2pm Helen Fry gives a talk on Women in Intelligence.

The usual booking arrangements apply and details are on their website: www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk or you can link from our site.

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