

Chair's Chat



Welcome to our final newsletter of the year, covering both December and January, which gives our hardworking newsletter editor, Helen, a very well-deserved break.

When John, our Groups Coordinator, and I, in my role as Speaker Coordinator, step down at the AGM in January, Pershore & District u3a will face significant changes. Without new volunteers, talks at Number 8 and support for group activities may end. Please see page 3 for role outlines and consider how you can help us continue to thrive. We're available to discuss how you can help over coffee so we can keep enriching our u3a together.

I'm pleased to share we have a nomination for a new Treasurer which is excellent news and they will hopefully be elected at the AGM with your support. We need a minimum attendance so please put the date of Tuesday 20th January 2026 at 2pm in

your diary. Your attendance will be greatly appreciated.

It has been a pleasure to be your Chair during 2025, and I have really enjoyed meeting so many of you. I look forward to seeing you at our December and January events as below.

In closing, I would like to extend my best wishes to you and your families for a joyful Christmas and a successful year in 2026. Thank you for your valuable contributions to our u3a.

Best wishes

Sally



Festive bollard toppers by u3a Pershore and District Crochet groups, 2025

Sally Whyte

Chair, Pershore and District u3a u3apershorechair@gmail.com

Dates for your diary in December - January

Fri	Dec 3 rd	Festive CAMEO	<i>Riverside centre</i>	<i>2-4pm</i>
Tue	Dec 16 th	Monthly Meeting – “Music, Musicals and Merry Christmas” with Westenders star Frances Fry	<i>Number 8</i>	<i>2pm</i>
Until	Jan 5 th	Christmas Wreath Festival	<i>Pershore Abbey</i>	
		Festive Bollard toppers featuring work from our crochet groups	<i>Broad Street and High Street</i>	
Tue	Jan 20 th	AGM & Monthly Meeting with presentation from Midland Air Ambulance	<i>Number 8</i>	<i>2pm</i>

Interest Groups' Latest News from John



This time last year we had 94 groups, aiming for 100. Well, it didn't quite happen - despite some new ones in 2025, there have also been a few closures so we now stand at 95 groups.

This will be my last article as Group's Coordinator as I have to stand down after four years in the role come January; however I will stay on the committee. By the way, we are still looking for my successor!

I have some updates from the groups for you:

- The **Aviation Interest** group would love to welcome more people. It is not just for those with a history of being involved with flight but also those who would like to contribute their interest.
- **Badminton** Wednesday has room for more players.
- **Racketball** would love to see more lady players take part.
- Any interest in a proposed **Motorcycle interest** group?
- The ever popular **Ballet**, and **Bend, Stretch and Balance** groups are full and have now opened waiting lists.
- **MOTO 1** is seeking a new leader.
- The **Sewing Bee** group is closing after Christmas - thank you to Auriol Ainley. Would you like to start a similar group to take its place - maybe with a friend helping out?
- We have three **Skittles** groups. There is scope for a fourth, maybe on a Tuesday, to be set up.
- A new **Spanish Beginners** group would go down well if we can find someone to set up a new session.
- The **Sunday Lunch** group is now full, anyone with an appetite for another?
- **Theatre visits** have been difficult to organise this year. Does anyone out there have a passion to take this group forward? (see page 3)
- **Country Dancing** is now back at Wulstan Hall.
- I will carry on organising the **Day Trip group** next year with trips every two months.
- The **Medieval Churches** group is now fully active again.
- And there are two new possibilities: a **Beginners German** group and a **Public Speaking/Voice Training** group.

Finally, the **Wine Appreciation** group, which Marian Hughes has led for the last sixteen years, (thank you so much to her - imagine how much wine has been "tasted" over the years!) is now relaunching with a new leader, Lindsay Arie:

The Wine Appreciation Group is now open to any members wishing to join. We are planning to meet in St Andrews Hall in Pershore on the third Tuesday of the month from 19.00 to 21.00. The group explores various wines, regions, grape varieties and production methods as well as, of course, tasting the wines. We hope to include at least one vineyard visit in our first year's program, as well as the fabled Summer Garden Party and Christmas party. The group number is limited to 14 people maximum.



If you are interested in learning more about your favourite wines and sharing your choices with the group, please contact John, u3apershorejohn@gmail.com

Finally, I want to wish you all a lovely Christmas and thank you for your support in my Groups Coordinator role.

Thank you too to my fellow committee members over the last four years. It has been great to work with you all.

100 groups are within touching distance.....

John Wright, Groups Coordinator u3apershorejohn@gmail.com

The Theatre Group is looking for a new leader.



There are over 50 members in the group, and in the past we have enjoyed trips to Malvern and Cheltenham to see comedies, ballets and Shakespeare. Our current leader is stepping down, so we're looking for someone new to step forward to plan our visits and keep our shared love of live performance thriving.

If you are good at organising and have a passion for theatre, our outgoing leader is more than happy to explain how things have been arranged in the past, so you won't be on your own.

Coordinating our theatre trips is a rewarding way to bring people together and ensure we continue enjoying great performances as a community. If you feel a spark of interest—or would simply like to know more—please get in touch.

Jackie Jolley u3apershorejackie@gmail.com

Celebrating a Double Achievement: U3A Cycling Group's Remarkable Journey

The u3a **Monday Cycling Group** in Pershore, Worcestershire, promotes physical fitness and fostering friendships. The group meets weekly every Monday for cycling adventures, experiencing the beauty of the Worcestershire countryside and surrounding areas.

Since its formation in 2022, the Group now celebrates a double milestone: completing 4,000 miles and undertaking over 150 rides. Reaching the 4,000-mile mark is a significant accomplishment that displays the riders' consistent efforts and love for cycling.

Every Monday morning, around six to eight enthusiastic riders gather in Pershore or an alternative starting point for their weekly adventure, usually covering a 30-mile route. The chosen routes maximize the enjoyment of the ride, traversing villages through rural lanes and the scenic countryside.

A highlight of the rides is the stop for refreshments towards the end of the journey. These breaks are more than just a chance to refuel; they are moments of bonding and camaraderie. Over a cup of tea or coffee, the riders share stories, laughter, and experiences, reinforcing the sense of community within the group.

The Group welcomes new members to join their weekly rides and become part of their journey. For further information, see the Group page on the Pershore U3A website. A test ride can be arranged to assess if it is the right Group for you!

Earlier this year, the Group stopped off at Birlingham Church to view the display of snowdrops in the churchyard.

Jeff Clayton



ENVIRONMENTAL DISCUSSION GROUP

Severn Trent Sewage Treatment Plant Visit

Do you know how long it takes for a wet-wipe containing plastic to degrade?

The answer is 130 years – shocking!



This is just one of the interesting things we learned on the **Environmental Discussion Group** visit to the Severn Trent sewage treatment works near Gloucester, on a chilly November morning.

We were greeted by Rob, a ST Education Officer, and started the tour at the highest point of the site where water enters from Cheltenham and surrounding villages before flowing through the site, driven by gravity. The treatment plant can deal with up to 900 litres of water a second, mostly from household wastewater and storm drains. Only 3% of the volume comes from toilets.



We saw the huge metal screens that take out any solid matter, such as wet wipes and nappies, before compressing it into “rag”, which goes to landfill. This is the only waste that the site produces. Stone and grit, separated out at a later stage, is recycled into construction material, and organic materials such as fats and human waste are treated in huge anaerobic digesters, which not only produce useful methane, but also use heat

Rag—wet wipes, nappies, sanitary products ... the only ‘waste’ that goes to landfill

exchangers to generate electricity, which is used to power the site – ST call it “poo power”. The remaining solid matter is then used as fertilizer.

Microorganisms play a big part in the cleaning process and Sludge Scientists (a real job title) ensure that the mix of microbes at the plant is kept at optimum levels. From start to finish, water spends just 24 hours travelling through the cleaning process before being released into the River Chelt.



Jackie asked about water quality in the River Avon, and specifically about the heightened levels of phosphates and nitrates that have been recorded in our testing around the Pershore area. She had figures showing 29 spills, for over 75 hours in 2024 from the sewage plant in Lower Moor, going in to the Piddle Brook and on to the Avon. While ST were responsible for 35% of river pollution, Rob said that agricultural runoff was the major contributor in our river systems. He also said that ST had found that some of their monitors were falsely recording spills when there were none.

Education is important to ST and the lessons Rob wanted us to take away were: use less water; do not put cooking fat (or gravy!), nappies or (especially) wet wipes down the toilet, as even non-plastic ones cause huge problems.

Jackie Jolley u3apershorejackie@gmail.com



Hearing about the two anaerobic digesters

Sally Stops By In November

It was a pleasure to join the Day Trips group to Cardiff recently. **John**, the organiser, and Elgar Coaches did a great job of keeping the large party on two coaches together and making the most of our time there. First, we stopped at the Cardiff Bay area where I took a quick stroll in the rain to view some of the statues and sculptures along the water's edge, then popped into the beautiful Senedd building (home of the Welsh Parliament). Others visited the Norwegian church, where Roald Dahl was baptised, or sheltered in cafes!



After an hour or so it was back on the coaches and into Cardiff city centre for lunch, shopping or a visit to the castle. The medieval keep, built on a Roman fort, stands side by side with a Victorian gothic revival castle.

And finally, back on the coach for a comfortable journey back to Pershore. I'm sure those who went will agree it was an excellent day out and many are looking forward to Bath Christmas market in December.

More recently nearly 30 Group Leaders met at the Riverside centre for an opportunity to chat over refreshments and talk about their groups from Art Appreciation to Walking. We have 95 groups with 111 leaders, so many thanks to all who give their time and energy to enrich our u3a.

We then had an interesting and thought provoking presentation from **Rosie our EDI lead** on Accessibility Awareness, covering topics of Hearing and Sight loss, Mobility issues, Cognitive difficulties, Neurodiversity, discrimination on Race and Ethnicity grounds, and welcoming LGBTQIA+ individuals. It was good to reflect on how well we might be addressing these issues and what we can do in the future to "value all members as individuals....encouraging inclusion of needs and diversity in everything we do."

Sally Whyte Chair, Pershore and District u3a

HOT PRESS

Mark Hartshorne, our September speaker, aka Postmark, had his Times back pager published on 27th of November. Congratulations Mark!

The Crossword setting group will be starting shortly- contact him through the website if you would like to join.



COME AND MEET EACH OTHER

You are all warmly invited to our **Christmas CAMEO meeting**
Friday, December 5th
The Riverside Centre
2.00 - 4.00pm
*Christmas nibbles
and entertainment*

Thank you to everyone who has supported our social events this year and a special thank you to all my amazing helpers.

Next year is our 25th anniversary so look out for a celebratory event in the summer.

Ingrid Fox, Social Secretary

Monthly Meeting Report November

Fiona Gibson : Apis Mellifera – where would we ‘bee’ without you?

Fiona revisited us following her 2024 pollinator plants talk, to share insights from fifteen years as a beekeeper. She encouraged us to reflect on beekeeping attitudes. Fiona’s current thinking is that over-farming of bees is perhaps wrong if we don’t try to address the damage already done to habitats for all pollinators.

Beekeeping dates back thousands of years, with bees used to symbolise power, industry, unity, and strength - appearing in Egyptian art, on Napoleon’s robes and Tate & Lyle’s golden syrup branding. The bee logo in Manchester represents the city’s industrial heritage as a hive of activity and it became a mark of resilience after the 2017 terrorist attack on the Manchester Arena.

We also learned about the structure of the bee’s eyes and the honeycomb theory, replicated in engineering as the hexagonal shape of the honeycomb because it is the most efficient way to divide a plane into regions of equal area using minimum total perimeter: the bees’ honeycomb maximises storage while minimising wax.

Fiona showed how in a positive way bees are being used as elephant deterrents on farmland in Kenya, reducing human-elephant conflict and providing a income stream for farmers. On the other side we learned how millions of hives are transported to California to pollinate almond trees, which is very stressful to the bees and exploitative. An American pollination specialist, Samantha Alger compared this commercial venture thus: “Keeping honeybees to save bees, is like raising chickens to save birds” as endangered native species and other pollinators may be threatened by the limited amount of forage available.

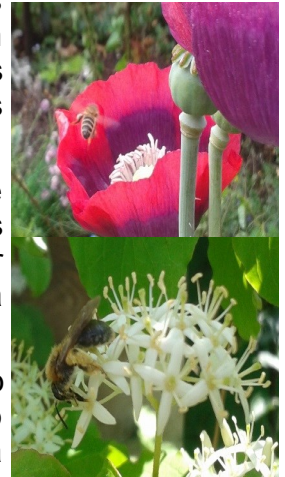
Fiona and Ed from Cotswold Garden Flowers <https://cotswoldgardenflowers.co.uk> then took questions from the floor, ranging from beekeeping queries to planting suggestions.

Members left ‘buzzing’ with ideas and thoughts.

Sally Whyte Speaker Coordinator u3apershoresally@gmail.com

Editor: After attending Fiona’s thought provoking talk, I came across this article on the effect of beekeeping on other pollinators

<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/animal-facts/insects-invertebrates/rise-of-urban-beekeeping>



DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING



Frances Fry
(Westenders star)
presents
Music, Musicals
and a Merry
Christmas

Fun and festive entertainment with
some of our most enduring and loved
Christmas songs.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 16th, 2pm

JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING

following the AGM
**The lifesaving work of
Midland Air Ambulance**
(with retiring collection)



TUESDAY, JANUARY 20th, 2pm

All monthly meetings are held at Number 8, High Street, Pershore, starting at 2 pm
Open to all. Non-members and Cotswold link members are welcome

Sally Whyte Speaker Coordinator u3apershoresally@gmail.com <https://pershore.u3asite.uk>

SUPPORTING OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

20 JANUARY 2026

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday 20 January 2026 will take place immediately before our January Monthly Meeting at Number 8 and will be followed by a guest speaker from the Midlands Air Ambulance talking about the work of the charity.

AGMs are essential to ensure we (your U3A committee) are operating within the rules, set out in our Charity Commission approved constitution, and that we have our finances in order.

Please join us on 20 January to show your support, use your vote and ask us any questions. The AGM usually only takes approx. 20 minutes out of our time. The annual report, accounts and agenda will be sent out by email before Christmas to give you plenty of time to read them in advance of the meeting.

We have around 25 members without email. To save postage and printing costs, the reports, accounts and agenda are posted out only when they are specifically requested. All you need to do is to contact me and I will happily send you all the paperwork. My contact details are below.

We have space on our committee if you might be interested in joining us. We offer a warm welcome and a chance to provide practical support in a variety of roles and would love to hear from you.

Helen Barrett u3apershoresecretary@gmail.com
Business Secretary



We are keen to recruit committee members to help our u3a at the AGM on 20 January 2026



Joining the committee is a great way to connect with others and make a real difference.

Roles where your skills could be of real benefit include:

Speaker Coordinator: to organise guest speakers for the Monthly Meetings.

Sally, the current Speaker Coordinator, would help with transition and handover

Vice-Chair: to support our Chair during the year

Groups Coordinator: this role includes encouraging the formation of new groups, providing help for new group leaders and keeping the “wish list” updated.

John, the current Groups Coordinator, will provide ongoing support and continue to organise the Day Trips group

Alternatively, just come and chat to anyone on the committee without having a role in mind, and lend a hand when it’s needed.

If you’re interested, please contact Sally Whyte, our Chair.

You can contact Sally by emailing u3apershorechair@gmail.com

Membership

Membership renewals coming in March 2026

Hello everyone

This is just a quick heads-up that membership subscription renewals will be due on 1st of March. Keep an eye on your email inbox for an email from me in mid-February. For those members not on email, a letter will be dropping through your letter box towards the end of February.

If you have not already done so, it would be helpful if you could register with the members' portal through our website, before the renewals are due. You will need your email address, membership number and postcode to register. You will be asked to set a password for future access.

Here is the link: *(This link is also on our website on the Members page.)*

<https://u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?u3a=316&sc=DLNK>

Fees for the coming year will be slightly lower than last year :

1. Single full Membership: **£12.00**
2. Joint Full Membership: **£20.00** two members residing at the same address
3. Single Associate Membership: **£ 8.00** for those members who pay full membership to another u3a and wish to join more than one of our groups
4. Joint Associate Membership: **£16.00** for two members residing at the same address who pay full membership to another u3a.

Cotswold Link Membership will remain free of charge for those members who pay full fees to another local u3a and wish to join one of our groups.

Thanks in advance.

Daina Gromadzki, Membership Secretary u3apershore@gmail.com

Notices

Support Pershore & District u3a Through Your Travel

The u3a is pleased to collaborate with Riviera Travel, a leading UK-based river cruise and tour provider. When booking any holiday or cruise, please mention your affiliation with our u3a to ensure that 10% of the basic cost is donated to the Third Age Trust, directly benefitting Pershore & District u3a.



Recently, one of our members participated in this scheme; the resulting donation will be allocated to support our Speaker programme.

Please note, we do not recommend Riviera Travel over other travel companies, but we appreciate your continued support. Wishing you enjoyable travels in 2026.

To book with Riviera Travel, visit www.rivieratravel.co.uk or call 01283 901 085, and inform them that you are a member of Pershore & District u3a.

Upon payment, Riviera Travel will request our bank details. Please contact our Treasurer for secure provision of these details.



Further information is available at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/our-partners/riviera-travel>

Notices

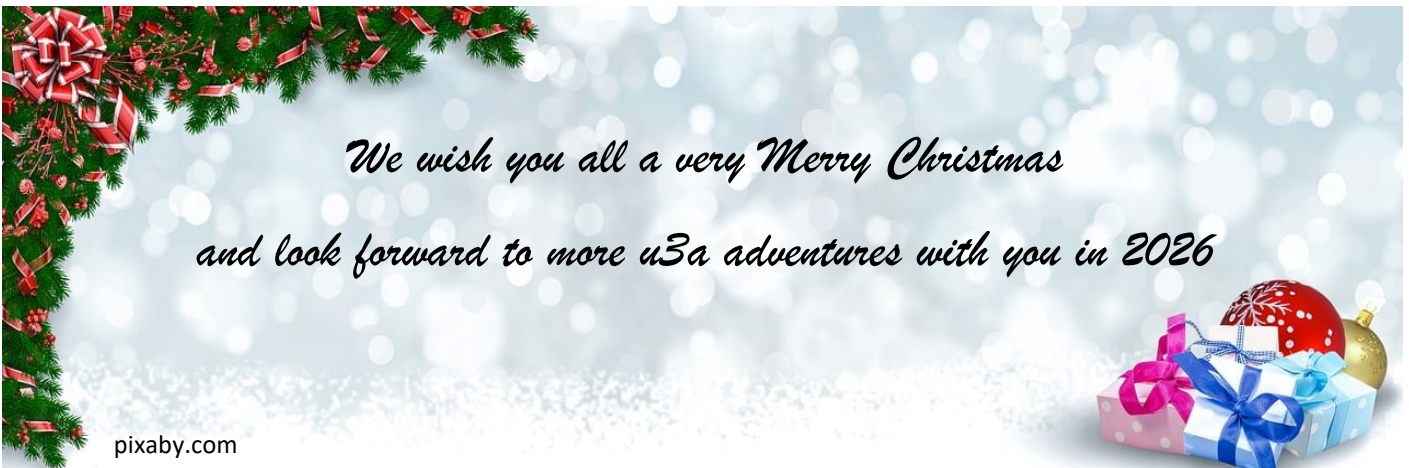
Get a trusted second opinion on your driving



Mature drivers are able to book onto an innovative course that helps increase confidence and sharpen skills. The one hour review is carried out by an Approved Driving Instructor in the motorist's own car - from their home address, on roads familiar to them, and with a relative or friend if they prefer - offering a trusted, impartial appraisal of driving skills.

Delivered by IAM RoadSmart, the Mature Driver Review which normally costs £86.50, has been reduced to £20 for a limited time, following funding through the Police and Crime Commissions latest road safety grant.

To book your Mature Driver Review, call **0300 303 1134** and quote code 'WMP' To receive the subsidised rate, courses must be booked over the phone. This is a limited offer, and bookings are available on a first-come-first-served basis.



Pershire & District u3a Committee Members and Key Contacts Jan 2026

Chair	Sally Whyte	u3apershorechair@gmail.com
Vice-Chair	To be filled	
Treasurer	Ian Smith	u3apershoretreasurer@gmail.com
Business Secretary	Helen Barrett	u3apershoresecretary@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Daina Gromadzki	u3apershore@gmail.com
Groups' Coordinator	John Wright	u3apershorejohn@gmail.com
Beacon Administrator	Ian Smith	u3apershoreian@gmail.com
Speaker Coordinator	Sally Whyte	u3apershoresally@gmail.com
Website Admin	Mary Greer	u3apershoreweb@gmail.com
Social Secretary	Ingrid Fox	u3apershoreingrid@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Helen Baldwin	u3apershorenews24@gmail.com
Accessibility Officer	Rosie Chandler	u3apershoreaccess2@gmail.com
Social Media Coordinator	Sandra Chapman	u3apershorefacebook@gmail.com

Pershire & District u3a <https://pershore.u3asite.uk/>
 Facebook: [Keep Connected – Pershire & District u3a](#) Registered Charity no. 1093328
 Please send photographs and any articles for publication in the February 2026 newsletter
 to: u3apershorenews24@gmail.com by 20th January
 Clipart as attributed or courtesy of openclipart.org Photographs courtesy of the contributors

Looking for a Happy Home for a a collection of DVDs from the Great Courses Organization

The Great Courses DVDs originated in the USA and are available to citizens of the UK. Over the years I have acquired a large number of these courses. The time has now come to pass them on to others to enjoy.

The Courses are given by lecturers, experts in their particular field, and keen to share their knowledge with the students. The presentation is of a high standard and very professional. Each course contains a number of lectures, usually 12, 24 or 36, each half a hour long. There is also a guide book supplied summarising the contents of each lecture.

A few titles of the courses:

Mathematics-Queen of the Sciences, Persian Empire, Great Musical Compositions, Genius of Michelangelo, Myths of Nutrition and Fitness

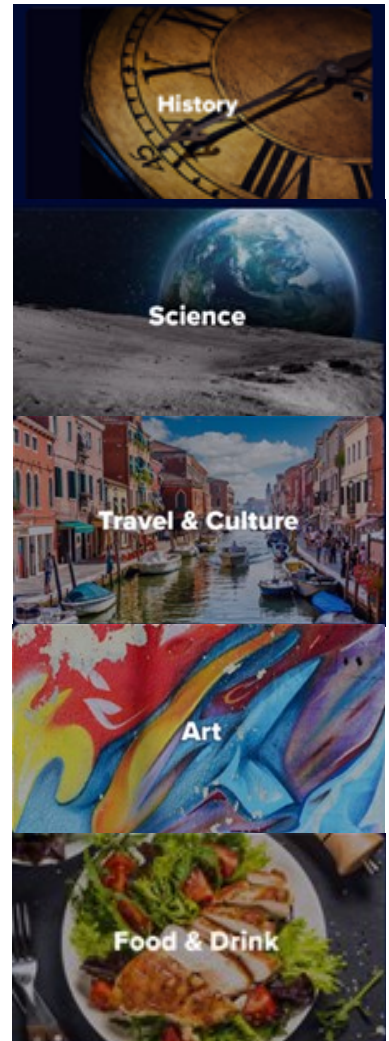
The DVDs can be stored on book shelves. To view a large screen TV is required and the appropriate DVD equipment, a few comfy chairs and the scene is set.

From experience we found, view one lecture , have a few minutes discussion then more on to the next one.

I do sincerely hope that they can bring as much pleasure to other members of the U3A as they have to me.

Yours,

Sheila Hunt
28 Masons Ryde
Pershore
WR10 1JG



<https://www.thegreatcoursesplus.com>