

## YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU!



This is an URGENT request for our members to step up and help in order to ensure the continued publication of this, YOUR NEWSLETTER!

I have been your Newsletter Editor since October 2017 (77 editions!) and it is now the time for me to finally resign (I have been threatening to do this for a few years) and hand over to new blood. Currently, my final edition will be the June 2024 issue. Similarly, Cathy Sargent, my very able assistant over the past few years will also leave our team in June.

The clear message is that unless we can recruit a member (or members – as a team) to take on this task there will not be a July 2024 issue or

any subsequent issues.

This requirement for a new editor has been raised by Melanie at recent Monthly Meetings as well as in several emails to members but without any success or even a single enquiry about the role.

**NOW IT IS CRUNCH TIME: IF THERE IS NO VOLUNTEER(S) FOR EDITOR THE NEWSLETTER WILL CEASE PUBLICATION IN THREE MONTH'S TIME!**

Please contact: [newsletter@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@kingshillu3a.org.uk) or [chair@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@kingshillu3a.org.uk) (or speak to any Committee Member)

Please do not allow this important asset of our u3a to just disappear! Thank you for your continued support.

**Don Bone, Newsletter Editor**

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### Chair's Report

**T**he u3a organisation is quite unique in the way it is run **BY** the members **FOR** the members.....whether at local or national level.

It's all about giving something back to our u3a and this month has highlighted several great examples.....I thank you for your support in these ways.....

Firstly, 123 of us enjoyed the March Monthly Meeting presentation by our own member, Tricia Francis; sharing her knowledge and photos of the

marvellous Street Art on display in London. What a great way of supporting our branch!

Secondly, we held a Conveners Spring Get-together which gave us opportunities to thank Conveners for their contributions to our u3a, and for them to show their support of Kathy, in her role as our new Groups Coordinator.

Thirdly, our Committee met to share our progress this year and discuss our plans for moving forward. And three of us.....myself, Kathy and David (Treasurer) attended the Kent Network Study Day at Aylesford Priory where we had opportunities to share ideas, good practice, and network with

committee members from other local branches of u3a.

And....not forgetting the Events Team.....they organised a most enjoyable day out to Cadbury



World and visit to Bournville village.....such a treat for a chocoholic like me!!!

SO....the message is....HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTE TO OUR U3A?

Can you step forward and produce our newsletters?

Can you help to run a group?

Can you join our Committee?

Get in touch and show that you wish to contribute in some way.....

Also.....Supporting and Sharing with other local u3as.

Tonbridge u3a is running a Study Day on Friday 26th April at The Angel Centre, Tonbridge from 11.00-4.00pm. The theme is...*The changing roles and status of women*.....All are welcome (men and women!)...check out their website for further details and booking is via email: [support@tonbridgeu3a.uk](mailto:support@tonbridgeu3a.uk)

Sevenoaks u3a is running its Annual Science Seminar on Wednesday 5th June. The theme is ....*Artificial Intelligence*....further details and booking forms will be available from them later.

South East u3a Forum have planned this year's Summer School at the University of Chichester from 2nd to 5th September 2024. Lots of information about available subjects and courses, residential offers etc can be found on .....South East u3a Forum website and click on Summer School 2024. Booking forms are available from Thursday 11th April at 10.00am.

And.....if you wish to travel further afield, there is a National u3a Festival 2024 to be held in York from 18th to 20th July.....link: [u3a.org.uk/festival](http://u3a.org.uk/festival).....

GOSH.....so many ways of keeping ourselves active with our own and other u3as.....Enjoy. 😊

Best wishes.....and I hope to hear from you soon!

**Melanie Blewer**

## Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 4th April 2024 at 2pm

ADAM TAYLOR

ISLANDS OF THE MEDWAY ESTUARY

Using historical sources, photos, personal experience, and maps from the 1500s to the present day Adam will show you the once-inhabited islands of the Medway Estuary, the shipwreck of a First World War German submarine, inside the abandoned forts which once defended Chatham Dockyard and some of the stunning natural beauty.

## May Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 9th May 2024 at 2pm

SASHA TAYLOR

KENT RESILIENCE FORUM

Sasha Taylor of Kent Resilience Team will present an overview about the Kent Resilience Forum – what it is and what it does. What community resilience is and about their roles as Kent Resilience Team community resilience officers. What residents can all do to help themselves become better prepared to cope with local emergencies and risks.

## Groups Coordinator

Two of our groups are facing change, and we offer our sincere thanks to both convenors for all the work they have done throughout many years.

Caroline has handed over the reins of one of our book groups after leading it for eight years. She continues to convene two other successful groups but can now look forward to enjoying reading within the group rather than leading it. She is very grateful to Jill, a group member, who will take on that leadership role and enable the group to continue.

Suzanne has led two French Groups for many years but is now moving area to live closer to her son. Unfortunately, a new convenor has yet to be found, but we do wish her well as she embarks on a new and very exciting phase in her life.

Unfortunately, our Pop Music Group has folded. I'm sure that many hours of music have been enjoyed over time and the group will be missed. If you could offer to revive this group by leading it, please do contact me.

Reading plays can provide hours of entertainment for those with a character or two hidden within, so

why not have fun getting into role. More members would be welcomed.

Another group that would welcome your interest is 'Baking with a Twist'. Such a tasty opportunity is bound to spark interest and spaces are available

I know London Walks Groups are very popular and some are oversubscribed. There is an urgent need for someone to lead another group - this need only involves communicating with group members once a month and perhaps planning leaders for the walks throughout the year. It is extremely satisfying to lead such a successful group so if you can offer a little time it would be most appreciated.

That's quite a few changes to share with you this month and in addition, I must sincerely thank convenors for giving even more of their time to meet together recently to secure plans for future months.

Very best wishes to you all.

**Kathy Booyen**

## Grandparents Science

The next "science for grandparents" session is on April 11 at Phil's house in Birling. It is for anyone interested in some simple experiments you can do at home as well as for grandparents.

John Williams from Malling u3a will demonstrate some of the experiments he has done with his granddaughter. For example, which two out of a grape, cherry, apple and orange will float in water?

There will be one or two magic experiments. Water from the Medway is poured into a can of stew reinforced by extra carrots and accompanied by the chant of "magic stew, magic stew, turn the Medway into blue". The water does indeed come out blue. If you learn how to do this you can change your holiday from Malaga to Aylesford. Some magnetism experiments will be included.

Last month I raised a team of grandparents to attend a quiz. We were disappointed that there was not a single question on science or maths. If you are running a quiz, here are some interesting questions you could ask:

- A. If you could descend a mile into the earth without being burnt alive, would you weigh more, less or the same?
- B. What class of animals does a woodlouse belong to?
- C. When you throw a ball into the air, is the acceleration greater at the start, at the top or on the way down
- D. Does a British centipede have 100 legs?

E. What is the lowest score you cannot get with one throw of a dart?

F. We all know that 10 squared is 100 but what is 10 to the power of 0?

G. If Pep, the Manchester City Manager, had only 15 players, how many different teams could he put out – 100,550 or 1365?

H. If you combine in order the chemical symbols for tungsten, arsenic and phosphorus, which insect do you get?

I. Which is the lowest number which is a square number and a cube number?

Answers: A Less - B Crustaceans - C All the same - D No - E 23 - F 1 - G 1365 - H Wasp – I 64

**Phil Pretty**

## Upcoming Events 2024

We are planning a trip to visit the amazing Beth Chatto Gardens near Colchester. The coach will stop in Colchester en route for an optional historic guided walk - £7pp. Or you may prefer to explore at your own pace and have a spot of lunch or a picnic.

Then onward travel to Beth Chatto a few miles away. Here we can also have a guided tour by one of the official guides (£6pp) or spend the afternoon enjoying the gardens with the maps and helpful information provided by the visitor information team.

There is a tearoom at the gardens but no picnics are allowed there. Chatto's serves tea/coffee, sweet and savoury pastries, soups and sandwiches, salads and cakes. Please note this is a cashless site.

The cost without the optional guided tours is £39.50 to include coach and entry to the gardens.

To book a place please reply by email [trips@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:trips@kingshillu3a.org.uk) If you are interested in any of the guided tours please register your interest at this time too.

**Jeanne Couch**

## Lunch Club

Lunch Club will meet on Friday, 19th April at 12 noon for 12.30pm at The Greedy Goose, Kings Hill, Kent. It has been open for about 6 months and I thought we should make an effort and patronise it at least once. It is near Asda I believe.

Please let June Rose know as usual if you will be joining us by phoning 01634 240655 or by email to [junerose43@btinternet.com](mailto:junerose43@btinternet.com).

Looking forward to hearing from you.

**June Rose**

## News from our Groups

### Contract Whist

This month saw particularly high scores across all five tables but yet again the plaudits go to John Philbrick with 192 - congratulations to him.

The best successful declaration was Leslie with 7 but several managed 6 including Debbie (twice) helping her attain a personal best of 134.

Everybody enjoys playing in the more cosy atmosphere of the Wine Cellar and I've let Chris & Jodie know this.

Our average attendance is 18 - 20 so there is room for a couple more if you'd like to give it a try - details are on our u3a website.

Michael Martin

### Craft

Spring has sprung.....we hope. The craft group spent a very entertaining afternoon making spring wreaths.



Hopefully, we managed to create our own circle of life!

Janet Chittenden

### Digital Photography 1

Our first theme for March was 'Windows'. We viewed them from around the world and also closer to home. Church windows were very popular.



'Things that make you happy' encompassed many things ranging from watching Chelsea score a goal to family members and beloved pets. Food also featured as did Flowers.



Our third theme was 'Beginning with F'. It included Frogs, Fun Fairs, Feet, Forts, Fruit and Fish & Chips.

Cathy Sargent

### Digital Photography 2

There were some interesting submissions this month, the first being a bubble blown by a person in a park in Tenerife. It floated around the area for



some time followed by a group of children. The next shape was also taken in Tenerife and looks like a pair of

spanners.

The Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth was chosen as the next submission. It reflects Portsmouth's maritime history and is named after a type of sail that balloons outwards and was opened on 18th October 2005.



It has been sponsored by Dubai-based Emirates Airlines and Macmillan Cancer Support. There have been many controversies over the years including finance and the outside lift which has now been replaced by an evacuation chair which staff have been trained to use.

The tower represents sails billowing in the wind, accomplished by using two large, white, sweeping metal arcs, which give it's spinnaker design. In 2009 permission was given for a freefall ride to be attached and in 2018 it opened to the public and featured a bungee jump freefall into a crash net.



Lastly, we have the Ladies Room in Burghley House where ladies withdrew while the men lingered with port to talk politics and other things not suitable or

interesting to the ladies. Oh, to have been a fly on the wall.

**Brenda Powell**

## Easy Singing

**W**hat would you think if I sang out of tune, well at Easy Singing, we would not stand up and walk out on you.

Most of us come along to sing regardless of whether we can hit the right key or not.

It was discovered during lockdown that singing helps with your well-being and at Easy Singing we just enjoy a sing-along to all the songs we know well from the '50s, '60s '70s and more.

We meet on the first Friday of the month at Nettlestead Village Hall from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Cost £3.00 includes tea/coffee & biscuits (please bring your own cup)

For more information contact Gaynor Trevett at [sing@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:sing@kingshillu3a.org.uk)

**Sally Russell**

## Flower Arranging

**S**pring was in the air for our meeting in March and we took advantage of the lovely spring flowers to make our arrangements.



Daffodils give the promise of warmer days to come and provide a lovely burst of sunshine for us too.

**Silvie Knowles**

## Half Day Walks

**T**en of us met at the Bush Blackbird and Thrush pub in East Peckham on a cold and foggy morning and set off for a five-mile walk in very muddy conditions, it was a case of three steps forward and sliding one back.



The terrain was very flat so that helped a little bit. The sun did come out and larks sang, which made for better morale. This photograph is of us standing in front of a small reservoir en route. You can see the Hadlow Tower in the background.

After ringing out our wet socks most of us returned to the pub for a very nice meal.

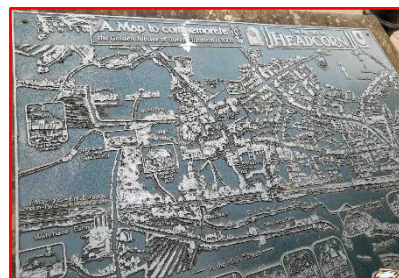
**Peter Marshall**

## Journey Challenges

**W**e went to Headcorn for our latest visit. We met in Maidstone and then got a bus straight to Lashenden (Headcorn) Aerodrome, the last grass wartime airfield left in Kent, which offers people the opportunity to see and experience the iconic British aircraft of World War II.

Its location in the heart of Kent allows passengers to travel through the same airspace in which the Battle of Britain was fought so furiously 80 years ago.

We then took the bus back to Headcorn taking just six minutes. We took in the history of the village, once an important place for the wool industry.



We had an enjoyable lunch in the Village Tea Room, which rounded off a lovely day. We got back to Maidstone on the bus, again running to time.

**Pat Bell**

## London Walks 1

**O**n 21st March, I led our little group of eight around Marylebone – which owes its name to the River Tyburn (originally Tybourne); Marylebone being formerly St. Mary-by-the-Bourne, as the High Street and Lane developed alongside the winding River Tyburn.

We got the bus to Edgware Road station and had our coffee stop in a lovely café called the Maison du Sultan, then we started our walk



which passed many beautiful Squares and their gardens (sadly only for the use of residents).



My London guidebook mentioned the decorative coal-

hole covers in Wyndham Place, which then became the highlight for me lol! We checked out a few of the lovely Mews and all the grand-looking houses around the squares, some designed by Robert Adam in the 1700's.

We popped into the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square – mainly to pick up the sunglasses I left in the loo on my earlier Recce. This would be a great visit for a wet day, but too vast for adding to our walk!



Most of this area was part of the Portman Estate (now called the Howard de Walden Estate, having been acquired via marriage in 1879). Only two of the original properties remain today, one being No 21 where the Royal Institute of Architects houses all its drawings. As well as all the squares, we covered the former slums behind Oxford Street, now the trendy St Christophers Place.



Then we walked along Wimpole and Harley Streets before walking along Marylebone High Street with its many independent shops.

After a late lunch in Cote Brasserie, off Marylebone High Street, we completed



our walk in Baker Street passing Madame Tussauds and the Planetarium before taking the bus back to Victoria.

**Eve Hilditch**

## London Walks 2

**“Let’s all go down the Strand”**

**O**ur walk took us along this old thoroughfare connecting the City of London with the City of Westminster.

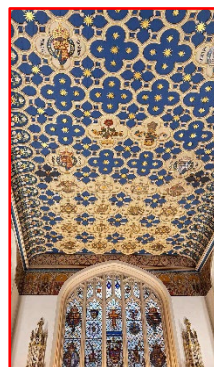
At the start, we learnt about the Eleanor Cross outside Charing Cross station, St Martin’s in the Fields lampposts and the planting of the Great Storm Tree.

Along the way, we noted the statues that scandalised the press adorning the walls of Zimbabwe House and



couldn’t resist the photo opportunity outside 10 Adam Street (looking like 10 Downing Street!).

We popped into the Savoy Hotel to find out more about Kasper the Cat and later heard about Chuneer the Elephant and the menagerie that was once kept in Strand Palace Hotel.



Our jaws dropped open at the beauty of the spectacular ceiling in The King’s Chapel of the Savoy and we were treated to an extremely interesting talk by the Chapel Steward.

Other points of interest included the Nelson Stair at Somerset House and the world’s oldest logo outside Twinings shop.

After lunch at the Old Bank of England, we walked back along the Embankment, passing Waterloo Bridge, Cleopatra’s Needle, York Watergate and Gordon’s Wine Bar.

Some of us couldn’t resist larking about under the Sewer Lamp outside the back of the Savoy!!



Many thanks to Margaret for her thorough research of the area and we hope she can join us again soon.

**Melanie Blewer**

## London Walks 4

**B**anged up in Bow Street Nick! This is what it has come to for some u3a members. We ended up there as part of a tour led by Jan and Linda entitled ‘In the footsteps of Queen Eleanor, Oscar Wilde and Claude du Val’.

Fourteen of us emerged from Charing Cross station into pouring rain to admire the Queen Eleanor Cross, a replica of one of several erected by Edward I to mark the overnight resting places of his beloved wife’s body on her journey to burial in Westminster Abbey.

From there we ventured into Trafalgar Square to see the statue of Charles I on horseback and the original site of the Cross, from where all distances in London are now measured.



Into Covent Garden, we visited St Paul's, the so-called 'actors' church', adorned with plaques honouring acting royalty. Frankenstein actor Boris



Karloff was born Bill Pratt in Peckham Rye. Who knew?

A visit to the terrace of the Royal Opera House afforded us

wonderful views over the rooftops of Covent Garden.

The Bow Street police museum tells the history of law enforcement in the West End from the night watchmen and Bow Street Runners to more recent times. It houses the dock where everyone from the Pankhurst sisters and Kray twins, Oscar Wilde and Dr Crippen once stood.

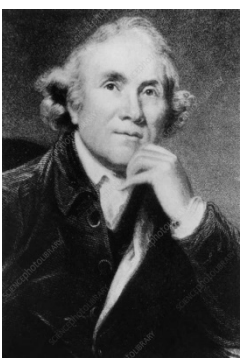
After that, we were free to choose our own poison at the 18th-century Sun Tavern. Fortunately, there was no re-admission to the drunk tank at the police museum.

**Maurice Chittenden**

## Makers of History

**O**ur subject this month was John Hunter, often referred to as 'the Father of Scientific Surgery.'

Born in 1728 at a farm in Long Calderwood, south of Glasgow, he was the youngest of 10 children and grew to be a headstrong boy, who loathed books and learning. He often skipped school to wander about the countryside where he could indulge his curiosity.



Having left formal education when he was only 13, he left Scotland, aged 20, to work at his brother William's successful anatomy school in Covent Garden. After demonstrating exceptional ability at dissection, William left all the specimen preparation to John but he was also tasked with obtaining fresh

corpses for the students.

This led to a close association with the infamous body snatchers as there was limited opportunity to obtain corpses legally. When the school closed during the warmer months, he studied surgery under the most revered surgeons of the day and in 1760 he enlisted as an army surgeon, going on to serve in

campaigns in France and Portugal for three years. On his return to England, he worked with London's most famous dentist and developed an interest in the transplantation of teeth which he was convinced was achievable.

His approach to surgery was unlike any of his peers. His philosophy was, "begin with a thorough understanding of anatomy and physiology, meticulously observe the symptoms of disease in a living patient and post-mortem findings of those that died of it, then, on the basis of the comparison, propose an improvement in treatment, test it in animal experiments, and try the procedure on humans".

He eventually became a member of the Royal Society and, as his reputation grew, he was appointed as a surgeon at St George's Hospital and later as Surgeon Extraordinary to King George III.

However, his disregard for the surgical conventions of the day and his popularity made him many enemies among his peers. During an argument with his colleagues at St George's in 1793, who were refusing to open a medical school where students could have structured training, John died of a heart attack.

He married, had four children, and his large house in Leicester Square also housed his museum where he kept his specimens and items of interest that he had collected during his life.

In 1799, his collection was bought by the government and given to the Company of Surgeons, which later became the Royal College of Surgeons of England and where the Hunterian Museum remains to this day.

**Mary Rayner**

## MOTO

**O**n Thursday 21st March several MOTO members enjoyed a talk at Bradbourne House about 'Plants, Foods and Traditions' of the Easter Season. Eggs, chocolate, chicks and bunnies featured strongly as did Easter Sunday Roast Lamb! It was fascinating to find out the reasons behind traditions and how Easter is celebrated in different parts of the world.

After the talk, the group made their way to East Malling Research Station for an introduction to the amazing facilities there. It is incredible that we have a leading world centre for research into fruit production and marketing just down the road and most people know so little about it!

On Thursday 28th March, ten members met for afternoon tea at the Holiday Inn, Wrotham. It was a pleasant way to spend a very wet afternoon!! However, as we were seated in the garden room, it actually wasn't too gloomy.

Despite some staff confusion over Prosecco and Asti Spumante, and the lack of the former, we all seemed to enjoy ourselves.

Thanks to Linda and Uli for this information.

**Vivienne Lindridge**

## Pickleball

**F**ifteen of us played on Good Friday at Larkfield Leisure Centre. We play fortnightly between 10.00 and 11.00.

If this is of interest to you or you would like more information, I can be contacted at 07305-926811 or [roycsimpson@hotmail.com](mailto:roycsimpson@hotmail.com)

**Roy Simpson**

## Play Reading 2

**T**his month 6 of us met to read "A Month of Sundays" by Bob Larby, who began his career writing for radio. With his partner John Esmond, he has written many series for television, including "Please Sir", "The Good Life" and "Ever Decreasing Circles". His first solo adventure for television was "A Fine Romance" starring Judi Dench and Michael Williams, which won a Broadcasting Press Guild award for the best comedy of 1982.

A "Month of Sundays" is Bob Larby's first play for the stage. It is a rather black comedy about the difficulties inherent in growing old. Cooper, who has gone into a nursing home rather than become a burden on his family, flirts with the female staff, banter with the other old folk and keeps a close check on his "record of physical deteriorations".

At the time of the play's debut, Milton Shulman of the London Standard described it as "a quiet, perceptive, surprisingly enchanting play". Some of our members found it a little too close to home for comfort. Personally, I found it poignant, pertinent and pleasing.

**Esme Streatfield**

## Pubs, Pies and Pints

**T**he pies have it ...all 25 of them on the menu. Not to mention the desserts.

We tore up the rule book when one of our members, Joy, tipped us that The Chequers at

[Kings Hill and District u3a](#)

[Newsletter 138](#)

Laddingford was hosting a pints, pies and puds festival to celebrate British Pie Week. So we merged the February and March outings to book some tables at the



15th-century inn.

It was the headquarters of a burial club in Victorian times. When we heard that in 20 years the club had only eight burials, we wondered whether the u3a should start its own!

**Maurice Chittenden**

## Ten Pin Bowling

**T**here is no bowling booked during School Holidays.

The next meeting is at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone on 1st May. The cost is just under £10 for three games. Please arrive by 10.45 in time for 11.00 start.

If this is of interest to you or would like more information, I can be contacted at 07305-926811 or [roycsimpson@hotmail.com](mailto:roycsimpson@hotmail.com) 📞

**Roy Simpson**

## Village Visits 1

**T**his month we did something a little different - we had a walk around Maidstone. We walked up through Brenchley Gardens, once the grounds of the Elizabethan manor house which is now the museum. Here we saw the war memorial designed by Edwin Lutyens, a smaller version of the Cenotaph in London.



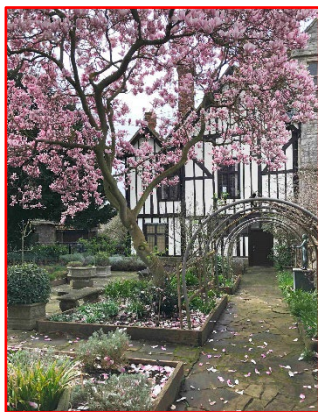
After seeing the old Sessions House we walked down Week Street, which follows the course of a Roman road. We admired the pargeting before turning into Earl Street. Here we found the carved head of Benjamin Disraeli above a doorway, commemorating the fact that he was elected MP for Maidstone in 1837.

Our route then took us along Market Buildings to the High Street before walking down medieval Bank Street, where most of the buildings date from the 15th to 17th century. At the bottom of Mill Street,



we went into the Palace Gardens to the wonderful collection of 14th-century buildings – The

Archbishop's Palace, All Saints Church and College and the Old Tythe Barn (originally the palace stables, now home to the Carriage Museum). We also found the remains of the medieval bridge that crosses the River Len, which has been preserved underneath



the road.

Between the church and the College is a passageway leading down to the Medway where, in the 14th century, was a Ford which gave a crossing over the river.

We walked along the river path and crossed over to Fairmeadow, where seven people were burnt for their religion in the 16th century. A little further along is Corpus Christi Hall, once Maidstone Grammar School. Walking up Earl Street we stopped at the house of Andrew Broughton, who signed the death warrant for Charles I. We ended our walk at Frederic's bistro where we enjoyed lunch.

If you are interested in this historic walk you can get the details from the 'Visit Maidstone' website.

**Jenny Parietti**

## Village Visits 2

**T**hirteen of the group visited Eynsford and Lullingstone on a very sunny day, but with a cold north wind. In Eynsford, we visited the Norman castle and church as well as the picturesque ford and bridge, together with the spectacular railway viaduct, and walked to the sites of the old school and forge and viewed old photographs of the buildings.

We heard about notable people who once lived in the village:

- \*Ross Parker (co-composer of We'll Meet Again)
- \*Peter Warlock (composer, music critic and rabble-rouser!)
- \*Leslie Hore-Belisha (politician of Beacon fame)
- \*Graham Sutherland (artist of the infamous Churchill portrait)
- \*Arthur Mee (editor of Children's Encyclopedia)

We talked about Elliot Downes Till, a local entrepreneur, who pleased villagers by building the

Village Hall, beautiful wooden Elizabeth Cottages, and promoting Arbor Day to plant many trees in and around the village. On the other hand, he displeased the residents by building replica stocks on common land and the Dartford Brewery Company by restricting the drinking of alcohol at the Castle Hotel, which he was leasing.

We also learnt what might have been. There was a proposal just before the Second World War for a new London Airport at Lullingstone and a station



servicing the airport was actually built and the platform still survives (just before Eynsford Tunnel). The war caused a rethink and Heathrow 'took off' from then. Additionally, Percy

Pilcher, an aviation pioneer who flew in the countryside around Eynsford, was a world-record holder for distance in gliding and had built a powered aeroplane which may well have beaten the Wright Brothers to the first powered flight but for a fatal accident (in a glider) in 1899 – four years before the Americans.

After a light lunch at the Lullingstone Country Park, we looked at the castle and inside the beautiful St Botolph's Church with its amazing tombs, stained-glass, rood screen and unique font to end our visit.

**Mick Sutch**

## Wine Appreciation 2

**O**n announcing the mysterious title of this month's wine evening as "SPAIN with a twist," and explaining my idea, as well as providing supporting information and scoresheets, there was complete and bemused silence. From my recollection, such a silence had never happened before at the beginning of any of our wine evenings, causing me some consternation as to whether my theme for the evening was a good idea!

The challenge set was to name the grapes used to make each of the four wines tasted and which countries, from a list of four, each wine came from, with only one of the four wines coming from Spain.

The first twist was that the initial letter of the names of each grape variety started with either S, P, A, I or N, with each letter being used only once. The second twist was that two of the wines came from countries not generally associated with the wine grape varieties.

However, my fears were allayed when the evening progressed in its normal fun way with the usual banter and many laughs along the way.

For those interested, the wines tasted were an Albariño from Spain, a Pinot Grigio from Australia, a Nero d'Avola red wine from Italy and a Shiraz from South Africa which was also voted the favourite wine of the evening.

Not for the first time at our wine evenings, we did not excel at correctly naming the wine grape varieties or the countries from which the wines came, but "c'est la vie!"

**John Warren**

## **Wine Enthusiasts**

**O**ur topic this month was a comparison of Alsace wines with their German and Austrian equivalents.

Alsace is sandwiched between the Vosges mountains and the River Rhine in north-east France with Germany on the opposite side of the river.

We learnt about the unique aspects of the Alsace wine region, the role the Vosges mountains to the west play in making it the driest wine-growing region in France and how the region's benign climate results in long periods for the grapes to ripen.

The region's unusually diverse geography and geology provide winegrowers with a wide range of soil types and growing conditions. The complex history of this scenic region has resulted in long periods when Alsace has been part of Germany, and to this day the region remains heavily influenced by German traditions, although nowadays inhabitants very much identify themselves as French.

Our first comparison was a blind tasting of an Alsace and German Riesling. By a significant majority, the Alsace Riesling was preferred to its German cousin, being fresher and more complex - ideal for a warm summer evening or pairing with seafood salad, or perhaps a contrasting fish dish with a creamy sauce.

Our second blind tasting was a little less obvious, with an Austrian Grüner Veltliner being compared with an Alsace Gewürztraminer white wine. Again, the Alsace wine won the day with powerful flavours of lychees, stone and tropical fruits, an ideal pairing with Chinese and Thai food. This time the result was not quite so conclusive, with a few finding the Gewürztraminer a little too sweet and fruity for their tastes.

Our last comparison was due to be between a German and Alsace Pinot Noir. Unfortunately, one of the wines was faulty and undrinkable, making a comparison impossible.

A big thank you to Terry and Sheila for being such excellent hosts and organising such a fun evening with excellent wines, prompting interesting conversation and good banter.

**John Warren**

## **Garden Visits**

**F**or March, Garden Visits went to Potmans Heath House at Wittersham. The choice was to see a good display of daffodils in bloom. The gardens surrounded a period property and were extensive.

They contained a series of rooms each containing various trees and plants. The views from the garden were amazing. The owners of the garden have been working on their garden for over 35 years and we were intrigued to see the garden well. The animals on the property were well looked after, especially the chickens who had individually painted houses.



**Pat Bell**

## KHaD u3a Information

### Monthly General Meetings

**T**hese are held on the 1st Thursday of every month in **The Kings Hill Community Centre**, off Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, (Near ASDA) at 2:00 pm. We usually have a speaker following refreshments and a social get-together. Our meetings are normally very well attended, and it is recommended that members plan to arrive early (soon after 1:30 pm) in order to secure parking and reduce queuing for registration and refreshments.

Entry to the monthly meetings (including refreshments) is included in an annual £20 fee (currently reduced to £15), which also includes membership in the Special Interest Groups. Guests may attend monthly meetings for a maximum of three visits, at no charge, prior to becoming full members.

### Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The Special Interest Groups meet at various places, and often these are in a member's house to avoid fees for hiring a venue. Contact the Groups Coordinator and convener before you attend.

See the website for a full list of SIGs and contacts, and watch the Newsletter for their latest activities.

**Cancelled Meeting:** If the General Meeting must be cancelled for any reason, we will try to get a note on the website by 11:00am on the morning of the meeting, so please check there if you are uncertain.

**Parking:** There is a small tarmac-surfaced car park at the Community Centre, but this fills quickly. There is an additional parking area to the east of the Community Centre.

Otherwise, there is a large public car park behind **ASDA** (3-hour parking limit) and another on **Crispin Way** to the south. All of these parking options are shown on the map below...

### KHaD u3a Committee

#### Officers:

Chairman	<b>Melanie Blewer</b>
Vice Chairman	
Treasurer	<b>David Murray</b>
Business Secretary	<b>Maggie Bishop</b>
Membership	<b>Mark Richards</b>

#### Other Roles:

Groups Co-ordinator	<b>Kathy Booyen</b>
Speakers	<b>Sue Christie</b>
Hospitality	<b>Brenda Pretty</b>
Diversity	<b>Simon Ellis</b>
Events	<b>Deborah Langworthy</b>

#### Plus:

<b>Maurice Chittenden</b>
<b>Don Bone</b>
<b>Elaine Scutt</b>
<b>Sue Watson</b>



### KHaD u3a Website

[www.kingshillu3a.org.uk](http://www.kingshillu3a.org.uk) (Ctrl+Click)

### Membership Enquiries

[membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk)

**Newsletter** - SIG reports and photos deadline: Friday before each General Meeting.

**Editor: Don Bone** - [newsletter@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@kingshillu3a.org.uk)



To see us on Facebook [@u3aKingshill](https://www.facebook.com/u3aKingshill)



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

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Dear friends,

**Welcome to our u3a friends newsletter – another great month of u3a action and adventure, community and friendship.**

This month, we have had International Women's Day as highlighted in the newsletter. **I also thought of another International Day in March which reflected u3a in action – the International Day of Happiness, with the theme "Reconnecting for Happiness: Building Resilient Communities."** This is a good description of u3as all over the movement.

You will soon be receiving your new-look redesigned magazine with its new title, u3a matters. Thank you to everyone who gave us your views and ideas about what this should include. The magazine looks amazing and I hope you will enjoy it when it lands on your doorsteps next month.

**I wish a happy Easter to all of you who will be celebrating next week – and that you all have a happy long bank holiday weekend.**

With best wishes to all of you.

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

### Dancing the day away

Bromley u3a's newest group is 'Daytime Disco' and 30 keen dancers have already joined. The first session had atmospheric lighting and throwback tunes – and everyone was on the floor from the moment the music started.

### Discovering new wines with Guernsey u3a

Guernsey u3a's Wine Discovery group meet regularly to explore wines from their local supermarket.

Group leaders Karen and Mark say, "Our unique feature of tables of eight ensures that the event has a very social aspect. Even if you attend on your own, you will quickly find yourself in a group and making new friends."



### Uncovering the lives of incredible women from history

This month saw International Women's Day. For three years, Northwood & District u3a have been learning about the remarkable lives of women in their Women in History group.

It all began at a session of their American Politics group focussing on the life of Victoria Claflin Woodhull, an American leader of Women's Suffrage, who ran for President of the United States of America in the 1872 Elections.

It led the group to wonder, what other amazing women from history had they not heard of yet – and so their group was born.

### An Easter Puzzle

Every week for three years, a group of u3a members led by Maths and Stats Subject Adviser David have created a selection of maths puzzles, available on the u3a website. Below is a question from his Easter maths challenges – which will be the 200<sup>th</sup>.

**Helen organised an Easter Hunt, hiding eggs of three sizes, large, medium and small in the ratio of 1:2:6. She hid 36 eggs.**

**How many eggs of each size did she hide?**

Find the answer on the final page of this newsletter.

I recently received a letter drawing my attention to a question in the most recent copy of TAM: "Are our lives driven by technology?"

The letter was handwritten and spoke of how she, and probably other members, can feel cut off from their u3as because, for whatever reason, they are not users of computers. She longed for a contact list of interest group leaders – in printed form.

Though this might not be realistic, it would be good to share experiences of how u3as across the UK keep their 'analogue' members informed of what is going on in our u3as – and engaged in interest group activities.

If you'd like to share what has worked for your u3a, please do call u3a office.

Incidentally, I responded to the letter with a handwritten letter using my favourite fountain pen.

### u3a members in the spotlight

Members of Brighton, Worthing and Sussex u3as got a taste of the spotlight as extras in the new film, 'Vindication Swim.'

As a result, u3a received a mention in press about the film, including in the Observer and on BBC Radio Sussex.

Suzanne from Brighton u3a said of her experience as an extra, "We spent the day walking up and down a road, in crowd scenes and best of all, interacting with a beautiful old 1920s bus with outside stairs, open top deck and being issued with authentic 20s tickets by a very smart 20s dressed conductor."



"We got on and off many times, were driven along the museum's roads for numerous takes, both downstairs and upstairs with a little black car of the period following us. It really was an extremely interesting and enjoyable day."

The film tells the true story of swimmer Mercedes Gleitze who in 1927 became the first British woman to swim the English Channel and was released on 8 March.

### Boom Radio Advertising campaign

We are thrilled to announce that we will be running an advertising campaign with Boom Radio, which has over half a million listeners over the age of 55. The three month campaign will start in April and will feature three u3a members sharing their stories about what u3a means to them.

## Finding a new community through u3a



We love hearing from members of our Friends newsletter community. This month, Barbara from Daventry & District u3a (pictured with her motoring group, third from the left) shares her u3a experience.

My membership of u3a has been such a good thing. Suddenly on my own after many years and not wanting to impinge on children for support, membership made me 'brave' enough to venture out and meet new people. It is such a friendly group to be in, I love it!!

I saw the advert for u3a in my local village magazine. The thing that swayed me was the long list of trips that were arranged to all sorts of places and events. To me, this meant I could visit places of interest with others rather than on my own.

I can't really recall how I ended up as a committee member but am very grateful that I did. It led to me starting a motoring group and we now number 16 members. We have had some super experiences, and some that were only available to us as a group (a local technology park for one – involving a ride down a test tunnel used by F1 teams!)

My u3a has a real mix of groups to join. Naturally I joined the supper club – it being another very social event with the added benefit of not having to cook for one night.



With the friends I have made, and the enjoyment of not feeling lonely, I am so glad I took the plunge and joined Daventry and District u3a.

Headline photos: Easter eggs, to go alongside our Easter maths challenge; Salford u3a's walking group; the dancefloor before Bromley u3a's first daytime disco group.

Maths challenge answer: If Helen hid  $e$  large eggs, then she hid a total of  $e + 2e + 6e = 9e = 36$  eggs i.e.  $e = 4$  and so Helen hid 4 large, 8 medium and 24 small eggs.

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