

Chair's Report

We started the month in warm and sunny climates with a hose-pipe ban and brown patches on our lawns....and we're finishing the month with greener grass but the need to put up our umbrellas and dig out our socks and jumpers!!

But nevertheless....I hope, like me, you have still managed to take part in a variety of enjoyable activities with our u3a.

It was lovely to see such a large crowd of you at the Monthly Meeting where we were fascinated by Janie Ramsay's talk about the splendid jewellery of The Duchess of Windsor.

And I have heard great praise for the theatre trip to see ABBA Voyage....attended by some of our own 'Dancing Queens' maybe???



This month I have been out and about (on good weather days!) visiting Russell Square and Coram Fields with my London Walking Group.



And the beautiful gardens at Norton Court near Sittingbourne, with the Garden Visits Group.

And finally....Are you interested???

A fourth one-off session on simple science experiments will be held in September at Ryarsh village hall. It may be combined with Malling u3a.

It is set up for grandparents or parents to do experiments with children, but you are welcome if you just want to do it for yourself. No science experience is required and some members will be there to talk you through the experiments. For those

of you who have been to previous sessions, there will be a mixture of old and new items.

Examples are:

- Finding the range of a car key in opening doors.
- How many helium balloons are needed to give a teddy bear lift off into space?
- Predicting whether cylindrical objects such as a jam jar will float or sink by measuring the mass and volume.
- Mashing up cherries in water, then finding if the purple solution shows colour change with acidic vinegar or alkaline baking powder.
- Making a square-based pyramid.

The session will be run by Brenda and Philip Pretty. If you are interested, email Phil Pretty at philpretty@live.co.uk or phone 01732842599. The cost will be £5.

Best Wishes

Melanie Blewer

Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 3rd August 2023 at 2pm

DAVID TADD

The Role of Forensic Investigation on Homicide

David Tadd, Forensic Expert, who worked for the Metropolitan Police for 40 years and ended up heading Scotland Yard's forensic investigations, in charge of over 900 officers. He will tell us about the vital role forensics plays in modern police work.

September Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 7th September 2023 at 2pm

MIKE GRILLO

The Day the Music Died

The Day the Music Died is a highly entertaining presentation by Mike Grillo recounting the history of Rock 'n' Roll tracing this explosive music genre's murky origins through to its heyday in the mid to late 1950s and finishing with a glimpse at its legacy. Specific mention is given to Rock 'n' Roll's terminology - along with some of the most innovative singers, songwriters and performers.

Groups Coordinator

Unfortunately, as we no longer have a Groups Coordinator in post, there is no report this month.

Events Calendar 2023

September - Holiday to Chester - Fully Booked

***October 17th - Oxford Mini Plant Tour**

***October 20th - 2nd. Oxford Mini Plant Tour**

***Both Fully Booked**

December 5th - Christmas Meal plus Entertainment

Deborah Langworthy

Trip to Wisley Garden

We went on a special outing to RHS Garden Wisley, which is the flagship garden of the Royal Horticultural Society. It is one of the great gardens of the world.



We were fortunate to have a tour of the garden, where it was explained that Wisley has always been about Plant-Manship and experimentation. We learnt about the formation of such a great place.



The laboratory was purpose-built as a training facility for horticultural students in 1907. The building is of Arts and Crafts design

being constructed from reclaimed materials from old manor houses. In front is the Jellicoe Canal, which has the largest collection of water lilies. One of the lilies is named after the famous potter, John Wedgwood, one of the RHS founders.

The garden is divided into various areas and here are some:

The Exotic Garden contains tropical plants you would not expect to see here in the UK like bananas, palms and gingers.

The Plant Trials Garden – this continues with the work of Wisley and contains many new varieties of plants and fruits.

The Rose Garden is spectacular containing so many varieties of roses, so colourful and sweet smelling. It contains a Pavilion in memory of Sir David Bowes-Lyon (RHS President 1953 -61).

The Rock Garden is one of Wiseley's oldest gardens and has magnificent features including many alpine plants.

Mixed Borders bring rich and bold colour throughout the year.

The Mediterranean Terraces display plants from countries that enjoy a Mediterranean climate, as well as plants from the Mediterranean.

A collection of century-old trees, many coniferous, the Pinetum is the place to enjoy magnificent mature trees.

The cottage garden designed by Penelope Hobhouse, is captivating and so pretty.

Wisley now has its first-ever dedicated wildlife garden, which aims to encourage visitors to think of nature and consider this when establishing their gardens.

Pat Bell

Lunch Club

Lunch Club will meet on Friday 18th August at Audley House Restaurant, Mote Park, at 12 noon. Please let June Rose know either by email at junerose43@btinternet.com or by phone 01634 240655 by Saturday 19th August if you will be joining us.

June Rose

News from the Groups

Art Appreciation

This month we had a very interesting and well-illustrated presentation from Joan W about 'Trees in Art'. This proved to be a very fruitful (!) subject as trees have been depicted in art in many different ways since the earliest times. This shows that they are considered important, for aesthetic, spiritual, practical and environmental reasons.

Prehistoric drawings of trees have been found in Zimbabwe, showing people dancing around a tree, as well as in an Egyptian tomb, from 1900 BCE. The Tree of Life has been an often-used symbol. One of the earliest dates from an 8th-century BCE carving, depicting birds in an acacia tree. Gustav Klimt in 1909 produced his own version, and Marc Chagall in 1948 produced a surreal version of the Tree of Life.

In the 13th century, trees and their roots were used to give medieval messages on morality. Portrayals of Greek myths involving trees, such as Apollo and Daphne, were prolific.

Joan provided lots more fascinating images of tree depictions in the works of Edward Burne Jones, Carl Wilhelm Kolbe, Meindert Hobbema, Frida Kahlo, Arthur Rackham, Eric Ravilious, Elidon Hoxha, Van Gogh, Piet Mondrian, Egon Schiele, Paul Nash and David Hockney, as well as many more artists. It was a good opportunity to see the work of artists some of us had not heard of before and an original topic for our session.

Next month, Elinor will be telling us about the artist Stanley Cursiter.

Jill Rutland

Birdwatching

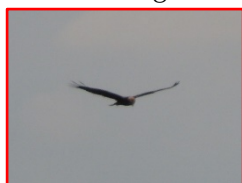
As we left the car park we walked straight into a rain shower. Fortunately, we were able to shelter, as further into the reserve we would have none. With spirits dampened rather than soggy, we took the easterly path along the edge of Flamingo Pool.

At the first viewpoint, Helen noticed a small wader along the shoreline. Careful study of the bird confirmed its identity as a Green Sandpiper – a Chris Packham ecstasy moment. These birds are on passage from their Northern breeding grounds to winter quarters further south. It was a cracking spot.

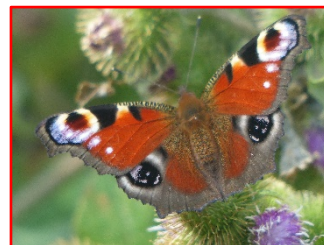


Cliffe can seem barren to a casual observer but with patience, telescopes and brighter conditions, we steadily increased the tally to twenty. At the Northern edge of Flamingo Pool, our methodical checking was interrupted by a hunting Peregrine amongst a confused swarm of waders. We thought it must have been a low-level ambush attack as there had been no warning for the waders. Unsuccessful, we watched it cross into Essex to recover a bruised ego.

We stopped for a coffee break overlooking Cliffe Creek and were rewarded with close views of Curlew and Oystercatcher whilst the raptor count was increased by adding Buzzard and Marsh Harrier to the list.



It was an uneventful walk to the seawall for lunch where we were surrounded by Butterflies; Peacocks, Red Admirals, Gatekeepers and Small Whites according to the lepidopterists in our group. Oystercatchers diligently probed the mud below us. Small passerines had been low in numbers but on the long stretch to the Black Barn Viewpoint, Linnets and a Greenfinch were added to the list and a Hobby flew swiftly and with purpose across our track, its long pointed wings ensuring rapid progress.



Stopping at the Black Barn Viewpoint, we had excellent views over the pools, as the tide was rising, Avocets dominated one pool and Black Tailed Godwits the second. The latter had returned from their



breeding areas to the north and many were still in their magnificent russet breeding plumage. They would overwinter here and flocks of both Avocet and Godwit,

numbering 100+ will steadily increase through the next month. On the edge of one of the pools, a Ruff was spotted and identified with the aid of a telescope. It had been a super thirty minutes of mindfulness.



We headed back to the Car Park satisfied with a good day's birdwatching although we had missed out on Curlew, Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank by fifty minutes and the hoped-for Spoonbill turned up the following day.

John Lambert

Classic Vehicle Appreciation

A few of the chaps displayed their cars at Wrotham Classic Transport Show, a sunny day so a good time was had by all.

One of the older and more interesting cars seen is shown here, 1904 Humberette, a British automobile

that owes its origins to Thomas Humber's bicycle company founded in 1868.



The name Humberette literally means 'small Humber', this model being powered by a single cylinder 3-horsepower engine giving a top speed (downhill with a following wind) of 25 mph.

At this month's meeting, it was my turn to present. I have a 1966 Morris

Traveller, not surprisingly then the topic was "The Morris Minor", arguably one of Britain's best-loved motor cars.

Our meetings start at 2pm (the dreaded sleepy after-lunch spot) and much to everyone's horror I kicked off with a quiz, no conferring allowed, paper and pencils supplied. Just a few carefully chosen questions about this little car and its designer had everyone wide awake and scribbling profusely. A bit of fun, but what it did prove is that our group members are pretty smart and know more than they let on about our motoring history.

The beginnings of the Morris Minor can be traced back to 1942, in the midst of the Second World War. The car company's owners were planning their post-war activities even then, confident that a new, economical and affordable family-size car was the recipe for success

In 1948 at the Earl's Court Motor Show, the Morris Minor was launched, seen as an exciting new family saloon with which to boost early post-war sales, especially in the important export market

In February 1961, the Morris Minor became the first British car to sell over a million units – a remarkable feat that was achieved in less than 13 years. Years of Production: 1948-1971, Body Styles 2 and 4-door saloons, 2-door Pick Up, Van, Convertible, Traveller.



The later part of our meeting concerned the process of restoring my Morris Traveller, a project undertaken in 2015 by a local garage in West Malling. The car reg CDY 803D was recovered in a very

poor state indeed from a farm building near Folkestone where it had been for more than 30 years. The restoration was extensive but essential to

bring the car back to its former glory. It is now used on a regular basis, still returns roughly 40mpg and is great fun to drive. In case you're wondering the wood on the rear is structural and it's Ash.



Chris, Alan, Hilary, Richard and I also displayed our cars at the West Peckham Fete - a truly enjoyable and well-organised event. A rare French Amilcar built in 1925 drew a crowd. This racing car has a top speed of 56mph and has competed in rallies

in England, Ireland, Spain, France, Norway and New Zealand.

Bill Burr

Contract Whist

Another lively session was enjoyed by 14 members with Peter having the highest overall score of 200 which, if not the best ever, is close to the top - congratulations.

For a while, it looked as though Lin had the best successful declaration of 7 but then she was pipped by Leslie (a new player) who had 2.

This just goes to show what a great game contract whist is as nobody can be certain of the outcome.

Mike Martin

Digital Photography 1

This month our subjects were "Water", "Facial Expressions" and "Beginning with N". Water provided us with scenic seascapes, raging waterfalls, rivers both at home and abroad, a village pond and the sprinkling of garden flowers from a watering can.



Facial Expressions included children, animals, statues and gargoyles. "Beginning with N" proved a bit problematic for one of our members, who thought the subject started with a different letter. We all

had fun trying to find something in the submitted photos, that began with N!

We also started a new edition of "Story in Pictures" in which we are given a photo and a storyline to

start with. Each following month a different member of the group continues the story and adds a photograph.

Cathy Sargent

Digital Photography 2

After an enjoyable and fun meeting, we nominated the following photographs for the u3a monthly newsletter. Photos were submitted based on 4 subjects chosen the previous month.

Our first photo this month is of the magnificent Shard Tower in London. It was submitted for the category "Skyline", taken on an overcast day in July this year. The 72 story Skyscraper is 310m high (1017 feet)



One of our categories was "Farming Life" and this subject was interpreted very widely.

Our final choice was taken by one of our members



during a visit to the Kent County Show recently.

Finally, under the category of "Antique", is a photo of a vase of flowers sitting on two antique suitcases. The vase is also antique.

Ian McGill

Don't Get Me Started

The topic was chosen by Denise Allgood: "Was it so good when we were young?" A UK survey in 2015 found that 70% of people thought that the world is getting worse.

It is believed that human memory has a tendency to filter out bad experiences and look at life in the past with rose-tinted glasses, according to one, Nick Chater, Professor of Behavioural Science.

The group argued that in reality going back in time would lead us to other events such as the devastation of the two World Wars, global nuclear threats, 9/11, increased infant mortality, shorter life expectancy and the absence of all the technological

advances that have made our lives so much better since.

Not forgetting the introduction of the NHS over the past 75 years which has improved medicines and technology resulting in improved health and increased life expectancy. As we speak, the role of Artificial Intelligence in the various aspects of our lives is resulting in the speed with which this is impacting us as humans for the better.

People can expect to be in employment today with pension schemes and benefits to tap into during times of need. In days gone by, this was only available for the very few.

Women and their lives have improved immensely today with better education, work opportunities and general acceptance of their role and contribution to families and society. This cannot be said some fifty years ago as with numerous other aspects of life we enjoy today as a society.

The idea that everything is getting worse has very little truth as our memory tends to forget negative events in our past as a coping mechanism. Humans rehearse and dwell on the good, retelling and reinforcing the positives and hold on to these experiences. Of course, there has been good in the past, but as a group, we agreed that today life is that much better.

Angelene Rothwell

Easy Cycling

Once again we set off into the back streets and byways on a very interesting and comfortable ride - this time the weather



was perfect - Goldilocks weather - not too hot and not too cold.

Expertly led by Tony, and starting from East Malling we soon disappeared into a network of footpaths, walkways and backstreets, emerging at the Medway Malta Inn lock, where we posed for our photo.

The ride on the Medway footpath was really pleasant and we didn't meet any walkers but we did meet a cyclist who by coincidence was a friend of

Tony's! There are many coincidences in life - some are unbelievable.

We had our tea break at Snodland where we had a very brief five-minute shower of rain as we sat under a huge umbrella for our tea & coffee. We came back home via Birling and from there it was an easy ride back to East Malling. Altogether an interesting ride which we will certainly do again.

Barry Evans

Flower Arranging

This month the subject was an arrangement using chicken wire, which is called Pillow Talk.



The idea is you use a homemade chicken wire pillow balanced on the top of the rim of a vase. The stems will be

held steady by two layers of wire.

You make the floral pillow with chicken wire by bending the mesh gently in half to form a square then twist the ends of the wire to join around the sides.

Tina Patterson

Full Day Walks

On Tuesday 11th July, with a group of eight, we met at Aylesford car park at 9am for the 3rd and final part of the Medway Valley Walk.

We started at the medieval bridge passing the splendid St Peter & St Paul church then the Friars at Aylesford Priory, along a concrete track past the sewage works and then thankfully into a long pleasant woodland path.

When we reached Burham church we entered a grassy track and massive reed beds where you can see across the river to the village of Snodland and the only remaining paper-making plant in Kent.

We stopped at a memorial stone that commemorated the Battle of Medway, where in 43AD the Roman army crossed the river and defeated the British and went on to London.

We continued and passed the newly established Peters Village, then on through Wouldham. In All Saints churchyard, Walter Burke is buried - he was a purser in the Royal Navy best known for serving aboard the HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar and Horatio Nelson died in his arms.

We carried on climbing an uphill track to meet the North Downs - this is where we stopped for our lunch enjoying fine views of corn fields across the Medway Valley.



We continued to Rochester where the walk ended beside the famous Medway crossing bridge. We took a well-earned



rest at a Wetherspoon's pub, The Golden Lion, located on Rochester High Street. We then walked across the Rochester bridge to Strood railway station to catch the 3pm train back to

Aylesford, then a short walk back to our cars.

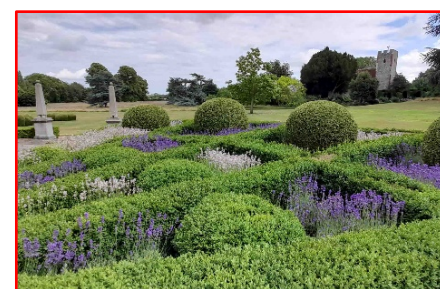
Richard Bowles

Garden Visit

Our garden visit for July took us to Norton Court in Teynham. We found ourselves in a beautiful 10-acre garden within a parkland setting surrounding a stunning 17th-century Grade II listed mansion.



There are mature trees, a topiary, wide lawns and clipped yew hedges. There is an orchard with grass paths through wildflowers and also, a walled garden with mixed borders and climbing roses, a pine tree



walk and a formal box and lavender parterre.

The land was the subject of an enquiry as the owner, a former Queen's banker, wanted to close ancient pathways, which once made up Geoffrey Chaucer's Pilgrims Way.

We finished the visit by going into the local church close by.

Pat Bell

Half-Day Walks 1

Carole led 11 of us on a 5.5-mile circuit from Weaving via Mote Park. We found the River Len looking picturesque in the Spot Lane nature reserve, and stopped briefly at the Downswood gym equipment for this photo, on our way to Otham.

By-passing the overgrown path to the NT Stoneacre

Yeoman's House, (which is open at the weekends), we returned through ripening wheat fields, back to Mote Park and a welcome lunch at the Fox and Goose.



Barbara Bryant

Journey Challenges

For July we went to the pretty medieval market town of Faversham, which is situated halfway between Sittingbourne and Canterbury on the A2 (formed on the old Roman Road linking Dover to London). We picked up a bus from Maidstone, which was on time and, in less than an hour, we had reached our destination.

To commence our visit, we had coffee in a cosy café and then went on to explore. Some of us went into the Fleur de Lis museum and gallery which



contained so much information giving the full history of the area including local trades.

We went onto the stilted Guildhall and the oldest chartered market in Kent, which is even mentioned in the Domesday Book. There were many stalls there including those that sold

bread and cakes, games, useful items, household objects and even antiques. We liked the busy flower market, which sold lovely shrubs and flowers at such reasonable prices.

There are over 300 listed buildings in Faversham, all so different.

We then went for lunch in a local café where the food was exceptional. After catching up, we went

around the streets seeing individual shops and finding many that were selling unusual things.

It started raining so we went to find the bus home. Once again this was running on time.

Pat Bell

London Walks 2

Russell Square to Coram Fields

Our walk this month began in Russell Square, one of the largest squares in London and previously part of the estate of the Dukes of Bedford. The square has been the home of many significant people including Lillian Lindsay, the first woman to qualify as a dentist despite strong opposition (and became known as “a woman who didn’t take ‘No’ as an answer!”), and Oscar Wilde, who spent his last night in England here.

We saw Senate House, where both Graham Greene and George Orwell worked during World War 2. T.S. Eliot worked for Faber & Faber on the Square, and on one occasion had to endure his estranged wife marching up and down the pavement with a sandwich board proclaiming “I am the wife that T. S. Eliot abandoned”.

From Russell Square, we walked through Woburn Square and Gordon Square, also originally part of the Bedford Estates but now owned by the University of London. Houses in Gordon Square were the focus of the Bloomsbury Group. In 1922 Virginia Woolf remarked rather smugly that “everyone in Gordon Square has become famous”.

Gordon Square has an interesting memorial to Noor Inayat Khan, the first female British resistance wireless operator to be sent into France, who was sadly executed at Dachau. The bust was unveiled in 2012 by Princess Anne and had a number of flower tributes around it when we visited.

From Gordon Square, we made our way into the University to visit Jeremy Bentham, the 19th-century philosopher who left instructions that after his death his body should be dissected and then permanently preserved as an “auto-icon”. His wishes were carried out and he now sits, dressed in his own clothes (but with a wax head) looking out at the world, and attending occasional council meetings where he is noted in Minutes as “present, but not voting”!

We made our way up to Tavistock Square, site of the terrorist attack on a bus in 2005, and visited the memorial to those killed. This square, with a statue of Gandhi in the centre, also has a cherry tree

memorial to the victims of Hiroshima and a memorial to conscientious objectors.



From Tavistock Square, we made our way back to Russell Square, where we had a brief guided tour of the Kimpton Fitzroy Hotel, formerly the Hotel Russell, a palatial 19th-century building, as you can see in the photographs. The architect was Charles

Fitzroy Doll, who also worked on designs for the Titanic; we saw the tiled floor which was a copy of the one on the ship, and met Lucky George – a bronze dragon, “lucky” because the identical copy went down with the ship!



We then walked by way of Queen Square and Great Ormond Street to Lambs Conduit Street, where we enjoyed lunch at The Lamb.

After lunch, our focus was on the work of the Foundling Hospital, which was founded in 1740 to take in babies whose mothers were unable to care for them. We walked up to Coram Fields, where it is forbidden for adults to enter without a child, and looked at all that is left of the hospital now, the outer enclave and the colonnades allowing children to play outside in all weathers. We walked around to the statue of Thomas Coram, founder of the hospital, and the Foundling Museum, and learned how the hospital was established, and the role of benefactors such as William Hogarth and Handel, who gifted the copyright of The Messiah to the hospital. I was also able to tell the group about my work, partly as a national u3a project, in transcribing handwritten documents so that the hospital archives can be searched more easily by researchers. The museum is closed on Mondays, but we were able to go into the small exhibition next door.

We left the museum area and walked back to Russell Square underground via Handel Street and Marchmont Street, noting the replicas of ‘tokens’ in the pavement. Tokens were left with babies by their mothers, with one-half being kept by the mother so that the baby might be reclaimed at a later date.

Elaine Scutt

London Walks 3

On a showery day in early July, LW3 went to Brixton, South London, for their monthly walk. Starting with a David Bowie mural and then coffee in Morleys, we found lots of history when we strolled up to Windrush Square. Sir Henry Tate gave Brixton their splendid library; on another side of the cultural space, there is the Ritzy, the second oldest picture house in London and still showing movies. The nightclub Electric Brixton opposite was famous as a launch pad for many famous bands and artists, including Pet Shop Boys, Rolling Stones, Madonna, Diana Ross and The Clash.



Further up Brixton Hill an old nuclear bunker has become a community orchard and a lovely old windmill, complete with sails (or sweeps) still stands. Sadly the rise in density of houses built after the second world war literally took the wind out of the sails.

Moving on to Brockwell Park, we enjoyed the amount of green space, the beautiful community gardens, Brockwell Hall and the enormous lido.

The rain started in earnest now so we swapped the walk down Railton Road for a bus trip back to Coldharbour Lane and a walk round the many markets including Electric Avenue, made famous by Eddie Grant. The market stores were great, with colourful fabrics and even more colourful (and



sometimes unidentifiable) fruit and vegetables. Neil was tempted briefly by a Dragon Fruit, but no one knew what to do with it!

A final point of interest was provided by a giant mural in Coldharbour Lane depicting a nuclear dawn. It was commissioned by the council in the 1980s when there were strong feelings about the sighting of American nuclear cruise missiles at Greenham Common. Despite the sobering finale, a very enjoyable and interesting day was had by everyone.

SallyAnne Clark

London Walks 4

M is for the macabre. Margaret's walk was entitled Monasteries, Martyrs, Meat and Medicine but there was plenty of blood and horror in our tour of Farringdon.

We saw where William Wallace was hung, drawn and quartered, where Protestants were burned alive and, in the wonderful medieval church of St Bartholomew the Great, a golden statue of the martyr being flailed alive.



Highlights of a visit to St Bart's Hospital included seeing the skeleton of a Black Death victim and the signed cricket bat of Dr W.G. Grace who studied medicine there.

Smithfield Market had shut up shop for the day but we learned it is soon to move to Dagenham and one day will host the London Museum instead of joints of meat.

Even our lunch was historic; in The Castle, the only pub licensed both as an ale house and a pawnbroker's shop.

The tour was delivered by Margaret without any notes or hesitation. The only question that stumped her was when does the banana season start!

Photo: Bill Burr

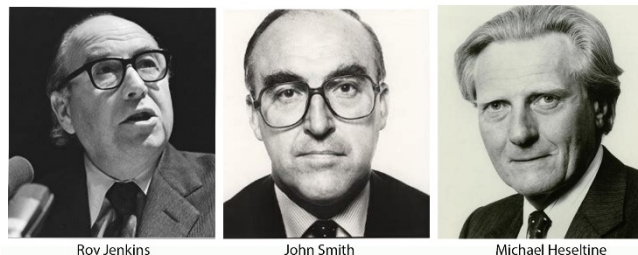
Maurice Chittenden

Makers of History

Our talk this month was very different with the intriguing topic of "Those Who Didn't

Make It," with the subjects a closely guarded secret until we met!

The criteria for the people chosen were that they were honest rather than self-seeking and had never



got the "top job." We looked first at Roy Jenkins, who was responsible for multiple reforms during his time in government during the 1970s but, with others, broke away from the Labour Party in 1981 owing to disagreement over a move to the left and away from the EEC and European unity. The more centrist party, the SDLP was formed and, although it later failed, our speaker felt that it led to Blair's New Labour approach which followed.

We then looked at John Smith, who was elected Labour Party leader after Neil Kinnock's surprise loss in the 1992 general election. Committed to devolution, he was widely admired for his honesty and integrity, as well as his talent, although not popular with Tony Blair or Gordon Brown, who thought his approach to the economy over-cautious. He sadly died of a heart attack before he could lead the Labour Party to probable victory.

Our final subject was Michael Heseltine, a clever man who always followed his own principles, thinking things through and taking an outward worldview. While he had a more privileged upbringing than the other two, he was responsible for the expansion of Docklands and stuck firmly to his principles over the Westland affair when he famously disagreed with Margaret Thatcher which led to his resignation. Having been a lifelong Conservative, he urged voting Liberal Democrat owing to his unwavering opposition to Brexit.

The talk gave rise to a lively discussion, not only about the people themselves, but also how we define a "maker of history," which we agreed is a broad term and covers people, either well-known or obscure, who are interesting in a general historical context in either a good or a bad way.

In the interests of diversity, there were some suggestions at the end of women who could be included in the "Those Who Didn't Make It" category, such as Barbara Castle, Shirley Williams and Harriet Harman.

Joan Warren

MOTO

Unfortunately, some of our proposed outings for June had to be cancelled or postponed. These were a trip to The Tate to see an exhibition of paintings by Rosetti, a talk on the Salvation Army at Maidstone Library and a Wine Tasting. The following events did take place, although they may not be in chronological order.

The Changeling Theatre are performing Love's Labours Lost this year - not one of Shakespeare's better plays, but very enjoyable nonetheless and well acted as always. Those of us who went to see the performance at Boughton Monchelsea Place had an added bonus as it was on the same day as Headcorn Airshow and we were treated to a view of the Red Arrows in the distance then a Lancaster bomber flew very low directly over our heads.

Three people went to Sissinghurst Castle where they met another member who just happened to be visiting on her own. Those who made it to the top



of the tower thought the views were outstanding. Four of us went to see Oppenheimer at Rochester

Cineworld. The film was 3 hours long but kept us all captivated by his powerful story. An excellent cast and some fine acting by Cillian Murphy, Emily Blunt and Robert Downey Jr.

Sarah kindly drove us to Dulwich Picture Gallery to see the Berthe Morisot exhibition which we enjoyed very much. One member waited such a long time for her lunch to arrive that she was given a free meal, while the others had free coffee by way of compensation.

Vivienne Lindridge

9-Holers Golf

The 9-Holers Golf Group started up in April this year and has now grown to include 12 members. That's just about the right number initially to get it going, whilst we sort out any snags.

It's for our members who are not part of a golf club, but now want to play a sociable round of golf on a "play when you fancy it basis".

I chose to base it on 9 holes as a start because now I am getting older, 18 can be a bit too much sometimes, and it is proving to be popular.

Some members prefer to play 18 which is fine because this is a group with very few rules.

Poult Wood Golf Club is both reasonably close and reasonably priced but if someone wants to play at Leeds Castle for example and can find someone to join them, that is just great.

If anyone is interested and would like some more information please feel free to contact me at golf@kingshillu3a.org.uk

David Rooke

Pubs, Pies and Pints

It is not every u3a which mounts an expedition to the North Pole!

Luckily, no sleighs or huskies were needed as this was the North Pole pub on Red Hill, Wateringbury, probably the closest pub to Kings Hill as the crow flies after the Spitfire.

Seventeen of us turned out to celebrate the first anniversary of Pubs, Pies and Pints, including five members joining us for the first time.



The pub baked a special steak and red wine pie for our visit and it was chosen by a dozen of us. Others enjoyed a cheese, leak and Stilton pie, fish and chips and other dishes.

The pub first opened in 1826 and over the years its inn sign has alternated between a polar bear and the 'north pole' boundary of a hop field.

Maurice Chittenden

Rock & Pop

Denise and Geoff hosted this month's music fest. In their garden – as shown in the photo.



Each member had chosen a favourite track from the 60s, 70s and 80s. All 3 of Maurice's selections were by the Bee Gees. John surprised us by not including a Marillion number.

We had the Beatles 'All you need is Love', an early Dusty Springfield number and some Tom Petty. the 'Woodstock' anthem epitomised the early '70s, and Denise told us about being at 'Live Aid' in 1985.

We also discussed Elton John's Glastonbury gig.

David White

Short walks

Thirteen of us met at Ightham Mote on 11 July for a circular walk of almost three miles. The weather was good with no rain, despite the

forecast, and all survived the steep and narrow downhill sections.

Highlights were the extensive views over the AONB to Tonbridge, Shipbourne and Hadlow, the huts used by hoppers in the past, and meeting the friendly three-legged black greyhound.

It was a lovely morning for walking and when we arrived back at Ightham Mote we were able to enjoy a coffee at the National Trust Tearoom.

Mick Sutch



Ten-Pin Bowling

No bowling booked for August as the kids are off !!

The next meeting has been booked for Wednesday 6th September at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone. Please arrive by 11am - 3 Games £9.

If this is of interest to you or would like more information, I can be contacted on 07305-926811 or roysimpson@hotmail.com 📧

I am setting up a Pickleball group which will be open to all our members. Check it out on YouTube.

Roy Simpson

Theatre Group

Forty-six members of the Theatre Group went to see ABBA Voyage in July. It was the first time we have utilised a coach as the venue is a tricky journey. The show was much enjoyed by all

the Group and the coach made it easier for the group to travel in the evening.

In August we are going to see The Crown Jewels starring Al Murray and Mel Giedroyc. Unusually, this is an evening performance.

In September we are currently booking the old Noel Coward play Private Lives starring Nigel Havers and Patricia Hodge which is on in London for a short season to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Noel Coward's death.



Once again if any u3a members would like to join the Theatre Group to take advantage of much-reduced London theatre tickets, please email me at folderspring@tiscali.co.uk.

Laurie Frowde

Ukulele

We were pleased and privileged to be able to play some of our favourite songs at the Dementia Café this month (part of the Heart of Kent Hospice). We met some lovely people who joined in enthusiastically. A warm welcome and plenty of smiles all around.

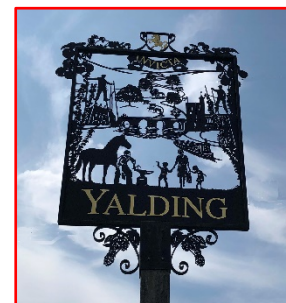


Caroline Slater

Village Visits 1

This month we visited Yalding. The village tea rooms provided a relaxing spot to meet. We walked around the village admiring some of the lovely old buildings and hearing stories of past inhabitants. We heard of varied businesses that used to operate in the village, from wig makers to sweet shops to butchers.

We then went to visit the forge – a family-run business, still being operated by a third-generation member of the family. He told us about the business and gave us a demonstration. Apart from fences, gates and horseshoes, he told us that he is also





making sculpted pieces and we were able to see some of his beautiful work.

We continued our walk and after crossing part of the lovely medieval bridge, returned to visit the

church.

After the walk we retired to the Walnut Tree for lunch.

Jennifer Parietti

Wine Appreciation Group 2

This month's theme was "Which is the English Wine?". There were four wines to choose from, the first being an Alvarinho from Portugal, the second a Viognier from France, the third 'Lark Song Rosé' by Balfour (bottled on the Hush Green Estate in Staplehurst, Kent) and the fourth wine was a Shiraz from Australia.

The wine of the evening was the Shiraz narrowly beating the English Rosé by one point!

The Shiraz can be purchased from Sainsbury's on sale at the moment at £7.50. The name of which is 'Leaps and Bounds'. The label is very interesting featuring a story about 'Bob' the Australian railway dog.

Jim DeSave

Wine Appreciation Groups 2 & 4

Social Events

Over the summer we have united wine groups two and four for two delightful events. Firstly an evening of summer wines provided by ourselves and more recently a Garden Party. With self-catering by Denise and Val and everyone bringing wine, it kept the cost down and was relaxed and more importantly – fun despite the windy conditions. We were also able to pop in and out to keep up with the Men's Finals at Wimbledon which gave an added frisson of interest.

The wines were scored for their suitability for a summer



afternoon. The winner by one point was the Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc.

We must thank Denise and John for hosting the event at their lovely home and Ukrainian guests Nadia and Yosyp for the Ukrainian desserts and their help over the day (especially the washing up!) With a mixture of Google Translate and sign language, we managed to communicate.

Of course, it was the friendships forged over these two events that were such a delight and we are looking forward to our next joint venture. Did we Learn, Laugh, Live? You bet we did!

Val Pratt

Wine Enthusiasts

Our hosts for the meeting this month were Graham and Maggie and their chosen theme was "Mystery Wines."

The task Graham set us was to undertake a blind tasting of four wines, asking us to identify the grape/type, country of origin, estimated price, as well as our scores for each wine according to preference.

He served a white, a rosé, a red and a sparkling wine. Always a difficult task, we did not fare that well with limited success in correctly identifying any of the challenges set, although Joan showed the true colours of a "seasoned winetaster" with a number of correct answers.

After the tastings were completed, we learned that the wines served ranged in price from £17.99 for an excellent Provence rosé to £7.50 for a Porta 6 red wine from Portugal.

As has been the case on many previous occasions, the lowest-priced wine scored higher points than the more expensive wine, with the Porta 6 being the runaway winner, second being an excellent Cava sparkling wine, followed by the Miraval rosé, and finally the Gruner Veltliner white wine from Austria.

Our thanks to Graham and Maggie for being such excellent hosts and making the evening so enjoyable.

John Warren

KHaD u3a Information

Monthly General Meetings

These 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 £10), 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 11:00 am 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	Melanie Blewer
Vice Chairman	Margaret Hall
Treasurer	David Murray
Business Secretary	Maggie Bishop
Membership	Mark Richards

Other Roles:

Groups Co-ordinator	Sue Christie
Speakers	Brenda Pretty
Hospitality	Simon Ellis
Diversity	Deborah Langworthy
Events	Maurice Chittenden
Plus:	Don Bone



KHaD u3a Website

www.kingshillu3a.org.uk (Ctrl+Click)

Membership Enquiries

membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk

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

Editor: Don Bone - newsletter@kingshillu3a.org.uk



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

July 2023

Phone National Office: 0208 466 6139 u3a.org.uk



Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear members,

It was great to have the opportunity to meet u3as in the West Midlands this month and to find out what they are all doing post Covid. Filled with great volunteers leading interest groups and committees, the importance of volunteering was high on everyone's agenda.

The u3a lives and breathes volunteering, and we all rely on people to come forward and take those places that help others do everything the u3a has to offer. Summer time is often a time when we take stock of what we might want to in the future.

At times it can feel a bit daunting to put your name forward to volunteer - but if you have any time to spare there are u3as who need you.

Looking further to the future – u3a Festival 24 is featured in this newsletter celebrating the u3a and the many interest groups in our midst.

The newsletter is packed with stories of what you are all doing over this summer. I hope it is great for all of you.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

News from the Trust



Alfresco in Autumn

We are excited to announce our nationally coordinated event taking place in u3a week – Alfresco in Autumn on Friday 22 September. This event builds on the success of last year's Picnic in the Park where over 50 u3as came together in their local area.

Alfresco in Autumn could be playing football in a field, playing games in the garden or eating lunch on the lawn – anything that takes the learning and fun of your u3a outside.

u3a Festival 24

We are delighted to announce the first ever UK-wide u3a festival is taking 17–19 July 2024 at the University of York. The event will be an opportunity to bring members together to share the joy of u3a membership.

Trustee Margaret Fiddes is involved with organising the event and says, "The countdown to Festival 24 has begun and I am ridiculously excited. People are already coming up with ideas. We are planning to have a mixed and full programme together with activities, outings, music, speakers, sports and have-a-go sessions.

"What can you expect from the space at University of York? The possibilities are endless. We have meeting rooms, exhibition space, auditoria, outside and inside space and fantastic sports facilities. We just need to fill them with all the wonderful things that u3a is about."

More information on the festival will be shared in future newsletters.



Media News



u3a on the One Show

A host of stars joined Barnsley u3a member Mac McKechnie when he appeared on BBC's The One Show (Tuesday 18 July) to promote walking cricket. The episode featured a match between Barnsley u3a and Wakefield u3a's 'Wakefield Warriors' in front of broadcaster Angela Rippon and legendary umpire Dickie Bird OBE.

Elsewhere, Sidmouth u3a's mural of their town, created with local members of Girlguiding UK, featured in BBC's 'My Hometown' gallery on their website. You can read more on the mural and its creation in your June copy of Third Age Matters.



News from the Board

Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

While most of us are planning and taking holidays, I've been enjoying visiting u3as in South East and South West England.

I have met lots of u3a members in interest groups, coffee mornings, monthly meetings and network meetings.

What comes through loud and clear everywhere I go is the enthusiasm and energy of our members – whether they're playing table tennis or ukeles, writing short stories or talking about local history, chatting over coffee or over supper.

Highlights have included giving certificates to two u3as celebrating their silver jubilees, meeting possibly the youngest u3a member in the country – 27 year old treasurer of his u3a – meeting members of the two u3as whose invitations seeded these trips.

I am looking forward to visiting u3as in other parts of the UK later this year and next year.



1 Liz Thackray at a table tennis tournament hosted by Bearsted u3a

u3a News

Stone & District u3a photographer recognised by the RHS

Irene, a member of Stone & District u3a's Photography Group, was recently shortlisted in the RHS Photography and Botanical Art Competition and displayed at the Saatchi Gallery.



She and her husband Jim attended the preview of the exhibition, where Irene heard that she had been awarded an RHS Gold medal and the award for best portfolio. Congratulations Irene!



Country and Western celebration for Epsom & Ewell u3a

Epsom and Ewell u3a's Singing for Pleasure group have recently celebrated their tenth birthday.

The group started out with eight members and has now grown to almost fifty.

They celebrated by combining forces with the ukulele group for a Country and Western session. Great fun was had by all – and line dancing even broke out during their rendition of 'Achey, breaky heart.'

Spotlight On:

Tomy, Bicester u3a and u3a Interest Groups Online



It started five years ago when my wife found a leaflet about Bicester u3a. I love classical music and joined the Exploring Classical Music group.

I liked this group and the environment: For ninety minutes we listened to classical music and nothing disturbed us. The group operated in the best tradition of u3a: we were taking terms in presenting and hosting the biweekly sessions.

Then the pandemic struck and we could not meet in person. About that time I discovered u3a Interest Groups Online (then called Trust u3a). We decided to go "national": today we are again a vibrant group that continues to meet every fortnight and enjoys exploring classical music.

Recently, I have been helping with the Interest Groups Online website as a volunteer. That has to do with my professional background. By training, I am an experimental physicist. I always used computers to analyse my results. Today I can't do experiments but I can do software.

To maintain a website I had to master a completely new software. I am still learning. That's my personal benefit. I also see the benefit to the community: people are looking at the website and seeing that it's working. When I retired, I realised it is now time to give back to society something that others can benefit from. I think I am achieving this reasonably well.

Headline photos: Ards & Peninsula u3a's Allotment group who have been donating their produce to local foodbanks; Medway u3a member Danny (on the right) celebrated his 72nd birthday by climbing Snowdon with his friend Steve; Long Eaton & District u3a's belly dancing group.