

## Chair's Report

### Remembering the past

It was indeed an honour to represent our organisation and take part in the Kings Hill Remembrance Day service on Sunday, 12th November. I laid a wreath at the Running Airman together with other adults and children representing groups and local schools associated with the Kings Hill Community.



The service was led by Rev Mark Montgomery of St. Gabriel's Kings Hill and attended by many locals including some of our u3a members.

### Welcoming the future

Looking forward....together with other committee members, it was my pleasure to meet with a group of new members at a recent Welcome Meeting.

Thank you to those who attended and we hope to see you at future groups, meetings and events....sharing our u3a's positive and sociable outlook in our 'Golden Years' of retirement.

Take care one and all, and I hope to see you soon for some festive merriment...🌲🌲🌲

Best wishes.

**Melanie Blewer**

## Next Monthly Meeting

**Thursday, 7th December 2023 at 2pm**  
**The Antique Roadshow Band**

A musical afternoon as we are entertained by the Antique Roadshow Band which is a Kent-based band playing Rock'N'Roll, Pop, Country, Rock, in fact, most genres.

## January Monthly Meeting

**Thursday, 4th January 2024 at 2pm**

**DR JAMES TAYLOR**

### Brilliant British Humour on the Forgotten Art of Picture Postcards

From the Edwardian era to the outbreak of World War II, millions of humorous postcards were produced to entertain, bolster morale, inspire, instruct, motivate and persuade. Discover the popular themes and styles of the period by the masters of the medium such as Mabel Lucie Attwell, Dudley Buxton, Donald McGill and Fred Spurgin, and the reasons why their popularity waned with the British public.

## Groups Coordinator

Can you believe that it's almost Christmas? Your groups are perhaps planning celebrations together, and I send very sincere wishes to you all for the festive season. Over 70 groups have given us pleasure throughout 2023, and at least 5 relatively new groups have added to that very extensive mix.

2024 is on the horizon and I am so looking forward to communicating every month with your convenors in order to keep in touch with you all. As for New Year's Resolutions linked to Kings Hill u3a? Thinking caps on because YOU are our wonderful u3a. 🌲🌲

**Kathy Booyen**

## News from our Groups

### Birdwatching

The group met on a cold but sunny morning at Riverside Country Park near Rainham. Although the tide was higher than expected, the site does allow for close observation of waders and ducks close by the coastal path.

Turnstone were quickly found on the stony beach leading to



Horrid Hill. Clumps of waders were found on higher ground waiting for the tide to recede.



Brent Family

Redshank, Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Lapwing, Avocet, Curlew and Dunlin were quickly

identified. Further along, overwintering Brent Geese had arrived from Greenland (white-bellied) or Russia (grey-bellied), constantly calling to each other, we wondered how their conversation went. As we approached Bloor's Wharfe it was time for ducks: Teal, Wigeon, Shelduck, Shoveler and Pintail were added to the list, the drakes beginning to show their springtime plumage.



Mr & Mrs Pintail

We had lunch on Bloor's Wharfe, where we met a group of jealous birdwatchers from Berkshire. They were envious of the variety of species we have in Kent and the great venues we have to watch birds. The return walk to the car park was spent on close observation of the species we had seen earlier whilst several common species kept us company on the way back.



Widgeons

A few days later, I visited Shellness at the far end of Sheppey, adding Short-Eared Owl and Purple Sandpiper, and saving the best to last, a male Hen Harrier. I had spent several hours in very cold conditions searching for Merlin to no avail. Finding one would have made a great day out.

**John Lambert**

## Classic Vehicle Appreciation

### "Historics" Classic Car & Motorcycle Auction

A group of six of our members attended this memorable event held at the Mercedes-Benz World site next door to the famous Brooklands race track and Museum.

The venue itself is an awesome "state of the art" building and managed to house all 169 classic cars and many motorcycles on 3 floors as well as the auction itself with all the technical displays and

hospitality to keep the punters quiet(ish) for upwards of 9 hours.

Needless to say, we kept our hands firmly sat on when it came to the bidding. What were we doing there you may ask? Well, it was a great day out and a chance to get up close and personal with some of the best and most valuable classics in one place and all for £15 each if you



shared the £30 cost of a catalogue.

Examples on offer were the Star of the Show – a 1957 Mercedes 300SL Coupe for a mere £860,000 (can't imagine how much if it was Gullwing doors model?) - another £200,000 on top perhaps). Or if you felt like a challenge, how about a total basket case – a 1957 Aston



Martin DB2/4. The ultimate "barn find" – a partially decomposed body shell on a trolley together with pallets of corroded components, all wrapped in cling film. Somebody, (off their trolley perhaps??) was happy to bid £52,000 for this project!

In contrast, there was a charming little 1931 Austin



7 saloon that was snapped up for £7,840. For a complete listing of the runners & riders, look up the

"Historics Auctioneers" website.

So it was a really good experience if somewhat exhausting. We didn't check out the Mercedes museum and historical display, perhaps another day...

**Kathy Booyen**

## Contract Whist

Due to last-minute ailments, just 14 of us played today and it turned out to be an interesting session.

Leslie started with a successful declaration of 7 and didn't look back scoring the highest total of 240. Not only that but he scored in 14 out of 15 hands, which I think is the best ever.

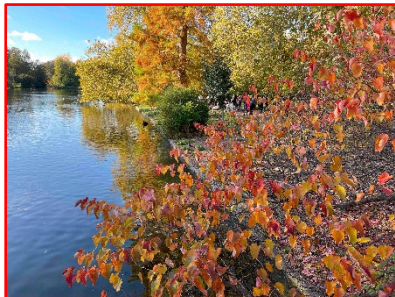
Not to be outdone though was Sue who also had a 7 and a special mention should go to Helen (who it's fair to say did not have a good morning) and achieved a 7 on the very last hand.

**Michael Martin**

## Digital Photography 1

We had a full house for our November meeting and had 82 photographs on display.

Our first theme was 'Autumn' which featured lots of trees with brightly coloured leaves and others with more muted autumnal shades. We all agreed that we didn't have to travel too far from our front doors this year to see the beauty of nature.



Last but not least was 'Spooky' – well, it was Halloween! Amongst the exhibits, we had an overgrown graveyard, scary masks, sinister figures, ghostly galleons and lots more besides. In this photograph, Photoshop has been used to combine 2 separate shots.

We are now having a well-earned Christmas break.



**Cathy Sargent**

## Digital Photography 2

Our group didn't have to venture far for



some of their submissions this month as they were taken in King's Hill. The first one is a toadstool outside the Council offices and the second one is near the Community Centre.



A member's favourite photo was shot while they were waiting for their dinner to be cooked. They noticed the shape of the tomatoes, added a piece of cream cheese for the head and voila you have a running man.

The last photo was taken on a trip to London and is of a sculpture on the 14th plinth called Antelope by Samson Kambalu and features the representation of two men, John Chilembwe (large figure) and John Chorley. They were the first named individuals to be represented on the plinth since its debut in 2005. The two men vary in size and are turning their backs on each other.



John Chilembwe (1871-1915) was a national hero in Malawi and features on banknotes and has a National Day dedicated to him. He was one of the first Africans to mount a serious uprising against British Colonial rule in the early 20th century.

John Chorley was a British missionary who posed next to Chilembwe in a famous 1914 photograph. The two men had become friends and in this photo, Chilembwe keeps his hat on in defiance of the colonial rule that forbade Africans from wearing hats before white people.

The statues are different from conventional statuary to make people stop and think.

What a fantastic way to celebrate their friendship and courage to defy the rules.

**Brenda Powell**

## Digital Photography 3

November's topics of 'Abstract' and 'Boats/Ships' gave us a nice selection of pictures.

The 'Abstract' photographs covered everything from the textures and patterns of surfaces, through extended exposures of moving objects (or a moving camera) and light distortion through wine glasses, to changing the colours and shapes in photographs using post-processing (using a computer to change the image).

Examples of textures and patterns were represented by the grain and ring patterns in logs and tree stumps, an Icelandic lava pebble beach, and the calm sea surface alongside a ship.



Roadworks and the M20 at night provided examples of extended exposures of moving objects. Post-processing included using software filters

to reverse and adjust image colours, simulate a watercolour painting and produce a kaleidoscope image.

I've included four 'Abstract' photos, to illustrate the range of abstract images we produced.

The 'Boats/Ships' photographs included modern vessels, historic vessels, small boats and large ships.

For December, the topics are 'Heat' and 'Autumn'.

**Robin Trow**

## Don't Get Me Started

Politics in the UK is mainly a two-party system. Since the 1920s, the two dominant parties have been the Conservatives and Labour.

Prior to the Labour Party's rise, the Liberal Party was the other major party along with the Conservatives.

The UK is a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch. King Charles III, as the current monarch, has a mainly ceremonial role as head of state but not head of government. This role belongs to the Prime Minister, currently Rishi Sunak MP, of the Conservative Party. It was agreed that over the past decades, the media has played a large part in who comes to power.

Then there is of course the constant change in Prime Ministers over the past eight years which has been detrimental in the power game and ultimately affects the people adversely.

England, Scotland, Wales and N Ireland have their own governments but are ultimately beholden to English Law, England being the most powerful. The UK is a rich country and also has the sixth-largest economy in the world.

So why the crisis in the UK? This is caused in part by a rise in inflation in both the UK and the world in general. Some argued that this was cyclically, a trend. The economic impact of issues such as the 2008 Financial Crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic (which alone cost the government £400 billion), Brexit, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and now the Israel-Gaza War. While all in the UK are affected by rising prices, it mostly affects those on low income.

Ultimately, politicians have a responsibility to the people who elect them to power. There is a need to tackle the UK's chronic lack of business investment and promote a stable macroeconomic environment and an investment-friendly tax system. There is a need to leverage existing strengths in services and shape our trade strategies.

The UK is, after all, the country that gave the world Shakespeare, the Beatles and the endeared universities, Oxford and Cambridge. There is also London, a city of influence and hub of world finance. Now we need our politicians to get in touch with the people and their needs. Too much to ask...?

By popular demand, the topic of the Israel-Hamas War came up for discussion. Many argued for the immediate ending of the devastation and loss of civilian lives in Gaza. The world is looking on and calling for the same stance.

Others saw the need to continue with the bombardment by the main players in this war. The reasons given were the same as those of Israel, who believe this continued devastation will bring an end to Hamas.

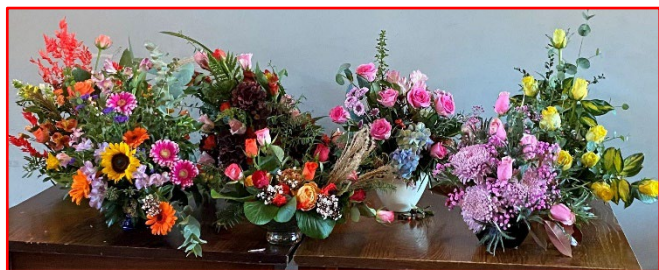
Will it? Or will it lead to the proliferation of another generation of Hamas? In the meantime, there is no talk of peace in sight and the worldwide demonstrations continue protesting against what appears to be an inhumane war, breaking the Geneva Convention.

There is also the long-standing mistrust between Israel and Gaza, making the mediators' role an impossible task. All wars have concluded with involved parties coming to the table to negotiate peace. Let's hope this happens soon.

**Angelene Rothwell**

## Flower Arranging

**W**e had an excellent attendance for our meeting this month, with members making an arrangement chosen by Ann.



Our meeting in December will see members enjoying Christmas food whilst making a seasonal arrangement.

New members are very welcome to join us. We are a friendly bunch and we will all help each other if necessary. Every month one group member chooses an arrangement for other members to copy with whatever flowers/foilage and container they bring. If we can, we use flowers from a supermarket or our gardens rather than a florist which helps to keep costs down.

We are hoping to arrange a workshop with a flower-arranging demonstrator next year, and this will provide an opportunity for us to pick up some useful tips.

Merry Christmas everyone, and happy flower arranging in 2024.

**Silvie Knowles**

## Full Day Walks

### 1066 Harolds Way

**O**n Tuesday, 14th November our group of 9 caught trains to Charing Cross station. We all met up and walked along Whitehall passing the Horse Guards Parade entrance, where Jim Spellane pointed out the clock face over the entrance that had a black spot beside 2 o'clock, this

being the time Charles I was beheaded directly across the road.

We continued passing Downing Street to the start of our walk at Westminster



Abbey on a route that King Harold with his Saxon army followed on their forced march to Hastings in their failed attempt to defeat William the Conqueror from invading England.

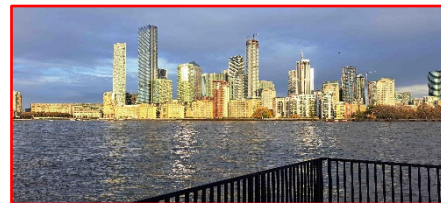


As you can all imagine our walk was full of interesting

statues, memorials, and sights. We followed the Thames along its embankment. Unfortunately, it started to rain hard, so we took shelter in a cafe and a Wetherspoon's close to Tower Bridge.

As the rain eased the day turned sunny and dry.

We passed the famous Mayflower pub, the Brunel Tunnel and



Museum and so many interesting buildings and pubs, that I have to refrain from writing about. Our finishing destination was the Cutty Sark at Greenwich, a total of 13.7 miles - a most enjoyable walk and one I would highly recommend.

**Richard Bowles**

## Gardening 2

**G**arden Group 2 met at Brookside Garden Centre due to the persistent rain lately. We viewed the rather depleted stock of plants



outside, but far more enjoyable was the tea, cake and chat in the café.

After that, we had a great time looking at the Christmas

Decorations and gifts and had our photo taken by a lovely member of staff.

**Julie Glew**

## Half-Day Walks 1

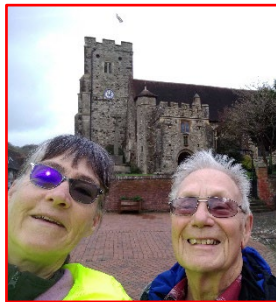
Thank you to Richard and Dee Nice for leading last month's walk.

November's walk commenced at Stonehouse Field, St Mary's Platt (just as the rain ceased!) We ventured through Platt Woods, observing cute family groups of llamas and toadstools. Onward via Platt Industrial Estate, over the M20 footbridge to Wrotham. After noting the wall plaque near the Bull Inn about Lt. Col. Shadwell, who was shot by an army deserter in 1799, a selfie was attempted at the church!

Storm Ciaran wasn't due till the evening, but both Tony and Barbara have now put waterproof trousers on their wish list, following a thorough drenching of much-travelled ancient clothing, (just as they were returning to base!)

Sitting companionably by the radiator in the Blue Anchor, whitebait and salad completed a 'different than expected' adventure.

Thank you Tony for braving the rain!



Barbara Bryant

## Journey Challenges

Our recent Journey Challenge was to Rochester. It was a very cold day but fortunately no rain.

We visited the cathedral, which had recently been renovated and had a look around. We visited the café and had coffee and cake to warm us up.

We then headed to the Christmas Market, which was held in the castle grounds. Most of the stalls were in the open but crafts were in a large marquee. There were quite a few unusual items available.

We explored Rochester taking in the different shops. We went into the Medway Visitor Centre and Art Gallery.

By this time, we were hungry again, so we had an enjoyable lunch in a High Street café. After that, we decided to head home and think about where our next adventure should be.



Pat Bell

## London Walks 1

### Around Parsons Green and Fulham

Our journey began at Parsons Green Station, the site of the 2017 train bombing. We walked through Parsons Green, observing several points of interest: the historic 19th-century "White Horse" pub, the former Fulham maternity hospital now an NHS centre, and the three houses that comprise Lady Margaret's school, named after Henry VII's mother. The school proudly displays a Tudor Rose as its emblem.



On the right side of The Green, we admired St Dionis church and its Church Hall, a gift from Charlotte Sullivan, a benefactor whose wealth originated from an ancestor, a chairman of the East



India Company. The Sulivans contributed significantly to the area, gifting other notable buildings like the Parsons Green Working Men's Club and the ornate, turreted Castle Club, a former "ragged" school now being converted into retirement apartments.

Leaving the green, along Peterborough Road, spotting the Lion Houses, part of the vast Peterborough Estate. Their builder, Jimmy Nicholls, adorned them with numerous stone lions due to an ordering error. He mistakenly ordered 2,500 rather than 250 stone lions. Across the road, we noted Sullivan Court, a social housing project and



school funded by Laurence Sullivan, on a large area of land once a Polo ground for the Hurlingham Club.

Our next stop was South Park, previously Broomhouse farm and home of the Sulivans. Sold to the council in 1904 as a recreation ground for local people. After the Park, we came to The Piper Building, a modern apartment complex decorated with John Piper's artwork, and once offices and labs for British Gas.

At the riverside, we noticed the construction for the Thames Tideway, a 25km super sewerage tunnel designed to curb river pollution. We passed the former Broomhouse Farm Ferry and the Hurlingham Club, founded in 1869 for Pigeon Shooting and Ballooning, and now adjacent to the public Hurlingham Park.

Crossing under the railway at Putney Bridge, we observed the Fulham Pottery Kiln, the last remnants of a stoneware pottery started by John Dwight in 1672. John Doulton, founder of Royal Doulton, was an apprentice there. Before he established his Staffordshire pottery, he made a fortune when he set up his pottery in Lambeth, using his skill as a "big thrower" to make sewage and drainage pipes.

After lunch at The Kings Arms pub, we crossed the road into Church Gate leading to Sir William Powell's Alms Houses, beautiful residences endowed in 1680 for 12 poor widows. Our exploration of this richly historic area was a journey through time, revealing fascinating stories at every turn.



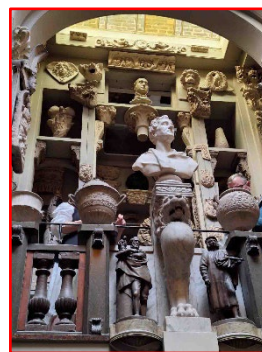
We walked through All Saints Churchyard, admiring Putney Bridge, The Thames, and boat houses, the starting point for the University Boat Race. We briefly visited the International Brigade memorial to locals who had died during the Spanish Civil War, then concluded our walk at Fulham Palace in Bishops Park, the 1300-year residence of London's Bishops until 1973. The Palace, a Tudor construction, houses the Porter's and The Coachman's Lodges. Inside, we delved into its history, the Bishops' connection to slavery, and its abolition. Our visit included the Great Hall, Library, and Chapel before our time ran out. This means that we can revisit this area and enjoy the walled gardens and more of this interesting part of London.

**Roma Elson**

## London Walks 2

November is often wet and cold, so we opted for 'indoor exploring' this month. Having passed 'The World Turned Upside Down' sculpture, and The Old Curiosity Shop, we

then entered The Hunterian Museum, within the Royal College of Surgeons. We wandered past thousands of exhibits displayed in jars, but couldn't find Winston Churchill's dentures!!



every inch of wall space used to display the extraordinary collections amassed by the renowned British



architect, such as sculptures, furniture, antiques, and paintings including work by Hogarth, Turner and Canaletto.



Our next stop was The London Silver Vaults - housing the biggest retail collection of antique and contemporary silver in the world.



pub in the City).

Thanks to Ian McGill for organising our great day out.

**Melanie Blewer**

## London Walks 3

### A Walk Around Mayfair

Our November walk took 13 of us on a 3-mile walk around Mayfair on a beautiful day, where we saw many wonderful old buildings. There were numerous Blue Plaques and a

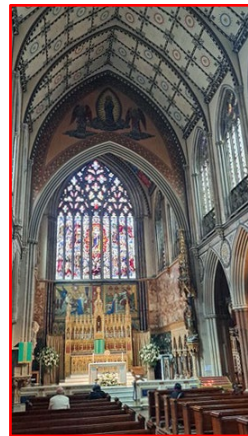


few Green ones, which we discovered were for people still living.

One of the squares we visited was Grosvenor Square, which has many connections to the United States. As well as the original site of the American Embassy, several ambassadors made their home there. No less than four memorials decorate the space: the Roosevelt Memorial; one for the Eagle Squadrons of the RAF (which had many US pilots); another for the D-Day landings; and lastly, a memorial to the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attack. These included 67 Britons as well as 2,600 American citizens.

Sadly, we heard no 'nightingales in Berkeley Square' but we did admire an elegant statue of a nymph holding an overflowing vase, carved from Carrera marble. The plane trees in Berkeley Square are said to be the oldest in London, having been planted in 1789.

We wandered through Mount Street Garden, the previous site of a burial mound and a workhouse, but now home to trees such as palms and mimosa, due to its sheltered nature. The adjoining Farm Street Jesuit church was very impressive, with lovely stained glass and artworks, vaulted ceilings and striking sculptures.



We ended our walk in St Christopher's Place where we enjoyed a delicious Turkish meal at the Grand Bazaar restaurant.

**Barbara White & SallyAnne Clark**

## London Walks 4

**G**o west, young man! Well, at least the geographical part is true. For our latest adventure, we went to one of the furthest points of the London Underground.

Tim, our leader, took us to Kew where we walked around the 30 acres of Kew Green, counting the five pubs, looking at the blue plaques on houses where artists such as Camille Pissarro lived and admiring the pristine cricket green. It was once considered good enough to host the first-ever



women's one-day international cricket match - although it was abandoned without even a toss being made.

At the west end of the Green stands the ornate Elizabeth Gate, one of the two main entrances to the world-famous Kew Gardens. We learned that two of its botanists were on board HMS Bounty when the crew mutinied.

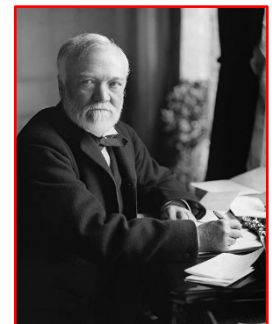
We then crossed Kew Bridge to Chiswick for our own muted version of a taste of paradise - lunch at the Bell and Crown pub on a leafy towpath of the River Thames.

**Maurice Chittenden**

## Makers of History

**T**his month we heard the remarkable story of the philanthropist and steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie.

Born in 1835 in Dunfermline, he came from humble beginnings, living as a young boy in a small cottage, which also served as the workplace of his father, a handloom weaver. When Andrew was 12 years old, the family fell on hard times and emigrated to America where Andrew helped the struggling family by undertaking a series of jobs, firstly as a poorly paid bobbin boy. He gradually worked his way up, to eventually become Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, where his employer encouraged him to make some shrewd investments. Carnegie's maxim was "watch the costs and the profits will take care of themselves." This started him on his road to accumulating vast wealth which eventually enabled him to purchase Skibo Castle in Scotland and build a huge mansion in New York.



After pursuing his business career for many years while amassing his extraordinary fortune, he sold the Carnegie Steel Corporation in 1901 to J.P. Morgan for \$480 million to become the richest man in the world. He felt the time had come to devote the rest of his life to philanthropic acts, stating that, "the man who dies thus rich dies disgraced," and he spent the rest of his life donating money to his chosen causes.

Recognising the enormous importance of free public libraries to self-improvement, these were made a priority and it is perhaps for these that he has become most famous. Various other institutions



he considered worthy also benefited, but after the initial funding, they were expected to be self-sufficient, which could in some instances unfortunately prove to be a burden over time. As a life-long pacifist, he was also responsible, somewhat ironically as it turned out, for the construction of the grand Peace Palace in 1913 in the Hague.

Andrew's father and younger brother died young and he retained a close relationship with his mother, not marrying until after her death. In 1886 at the age of 51, he married Louie Whitfield, 21 years his junior, and the couple had one child, Margaret.

Andrew Carnegie died in 1919, aged 83, of bronchial pneumonia and is buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in New York.

There will be no talk in December as we are meeting socially for a Christmas lunch at The Spitfire.

**Joan Warren**

## MOTO

**A**t the end of October, twelve members of MOTO enjoyed a visit behind the scenes at the Waitrose distribution depot in Aylesford.

We started with a talk about the history of Waitrose and how the partnership works today "No employees - all are partners" and it is certainly very much that. They don't have a staff canteen, they share a partners' dining room. And, when we left at lunchtime, the food smelt excellent and cost next to nothing. They have their own gym and other good facilities.

We then went all around the massive complex. We saw inside all three storage units - chiller, fruit and veg and ambient and found how everything is computerised and "picked" for delivery to stores all over the southeast. Items in the chiller and fruit and veg sections usually arrive and are gone again in less than twelve hours. The ambient store holding everything from stationery, toiletries, biscuits and general long-life items is the biggest of all. We watched the loading of the trucks and found the whole procedure quite fascinating.

There are also various workshops and maintenance areas and even a Waitrose driving school to train their lorry drivers.

It was all quite an eye-opener and we all very much enjoyed our visit, especially as most of us then also enjoyed lunch together nearby.

Another tour is planned for next February and now on to November - A group of MOTO members also enjoyed an excellent talk at Bradbourne House in

East Malling about the 'Roles of Women in World War Two'. We were warmly welcomed to the beautiful and historic house with refreshments. Our speaker invited us to share information about 'what our mothers and grandmothers did in the war' - it was fascinating to hear anecdotes but most of us had sketchy knowledge even though we knew what our fathers had done - what a pity it's so late to ask those questions!

The presentation highlighted stories of inspirational women whose acts of compassion, wisdom or, in some cases, heroism contributed hugely to the lives of others during the war, certainly thought-provoking and worth finding out more about. Following the presentation the speaker took us for a walk around the outside of Bradbourne House which was owned by the Twisden family for many years, we also visited the walled 'apple, pear and plum' garden.

On the 18th of November, the MOTO quizzers took part in the Allington Green Millennium Quiz. A good evening, but despite our efforts we came about halfway in the rankings.

Some of our members recently had an outing to the Twig and Spoon for a Christmas-themed afternoon tea. The restaurant was beautifully decorated and even the cake stands had fairy lights twisted around them! The food was excellent and so plentiful that we all had 'doggie bags' to bring home! It was a lovely start to the Christmas season.

Finally, a couple of us went to see 'Napoleon' at Maidstone Odeon. It was interesting to see the life story of this iconic military man. Lots of battle scenes and a very surprising story about his obsession with Josephine, much of which we didn't realise. Before the film, we enjoyed a quick and tasty burger at the food stalls - better than expected!

**Vivienne Lindridge**

## Pubs, Pies and Pints

**W**hat a picture of happiness! Sixteen of us descended on the 16th-century Woolpack Inn at Benover for our last outing of the year and mixed a bit of Kent history and art appreciation with our meal.



When the celebrated artist Stanford Forbes, founder of the Newlyn School of Painters,



wanted to paint a quintessential English pub to show at the Royal Academy, he chose to come here.

The pub was once a smugglers' haunt and is supposed to be haunted by one old rogue.

**Maurice Chittenden**

## Short Walks

**T**welve of us met at Tonbridge Swimming Pool car park on 14 November for a circular walk,

of about three miles around Haysden Country Park, led by Vivien Brownlow.

It was a grey morning with heavy rain in the forecast. We managed over half of the walk before the rain started. As you can see from the photograph, we arrived back at the car park very wet but still smiling.



Despite the rain, we all enjoyed the walk and agreed with the latest idea that walking in the rain can be good for you. Some of the group had never been to Haysden Country Park before and would like to revisit the Park but on a bright sunny day rather than in heavy rain.

**Joan Hodgson**

## Theatre Group

**A**s we draw to the end of the year I hope many u3a members manage to find a Panto in December to have a bit of light relief.

Two hundred and twelve seats were taken up by members during 2023 covering eight presentations.

January 2024 takes us to Moulin Rouge with 34 members going. If any u3a members who are not in the Theatre Group would like to join, please feel free to do so. You will receive information on future shows in London with significant discounts by emailing me at [folderspring@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:folderspring@tiscali.co.uk)

**Laurie Frowde**

## Village Visits 1

**I**n November Village Visits took to East Grinstead. Set out in the early twelfth century by a French noble whose family came to England in 1066, the early town focused on the High Street. One feature was portlands, which were long gardens allowing homeowners to grow their own food. The town was granted a market charter in 1221, and for many centuries had a busy marketplace.

The High Street remains in much of its original form with 9 timber-framed houses from the 14th and 15th centuries, with another 13 from the Tudor and Stuart periods. Prosperity in the town also relied on livestock, the leather trades, iron and timber from Ashdown Forest.

Later, a thriving coaching business, exploiting its location halfway between the capital and the coast grew and continued with the opening of the railway in 1855. However, decline set in in the Victorian period, when the railway to the South Coast was routed through Three Bridges. In response, local businessmen and landowners funded a branch line to Three Bridges allowing access to the main trainlines.

We visited St. Swithun's Church, a Georgian building, and near the south porch were memorials to three Protestants burned at the stake for heresy.



During World War II, East Grinstead suffered a terrible impact. On 9th July 1943 bombs were dropped by a lone German bomber causing the largest single wartime loss of life in the county. Many of the victims included children who had been at the cinema when the attack took place and despite a desperate rescue effort attempted by Canadian troops, the loss toll plus those injured amounted to over 300 individuals. Many of those injured in the strike endured terrible burns and were treated by burns pioneer Sir Archibald McIndoe who performed remarkable surgery in Queen Victoria Hospital.

In September 1939, the arrival of Archibald McIndoe in East Grinstead changed the history of the town, its hospital and the lives of those he touched, forever. Each and every one of the 649 Allied Aircrew treated at the Queen Victoria Hospital knew that they were, "just a guinea pig for the Maestro." The pioneering treatment of burns patients by McIndoe and his team has gone on to

underpin modern plastic surgery, as we know it today. McIndoe's interest in his men did not stop with his surgical procedures. He knew if the men were to have any future he needed to help them recover their place in the world too. In 1941 a few recovering airmen formed a drinking group and the Guinea Pig Club was born. It was indeed "the most



exclusive club in the world" but the entrance fee is something most men would not care to pay and the conditions of membership are extreme. Vivaly, through the comradeship of its members and the encouragement of McIndoe, the club has gone on to be a support network

that celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2016.

Sackville College, a row of alms-houses which date to 1609, was founded by Richard Sackville, Earl of Dorset, who intended them to serve as a retirement home for his estate workers at Knole. The College is administered by a warden, and it was in the warden's quarters at Sackville College that the Reverend John Mason Neale composed the popular Christmas carol, Good King Wenceslas.

With industrial development on the rise, East Grinstead's once quiet and rural setting began to transform into something so much more. Crafts such as brick making, cement manufacturing and chalk extraction became prevalent to support the growing need for housing. Coupled with the introduction of proper sewerage and water supply by the late 19th century, East Grinstead was almost unrecognizable and it became a town.

**Pat Bell**

## 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 £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:

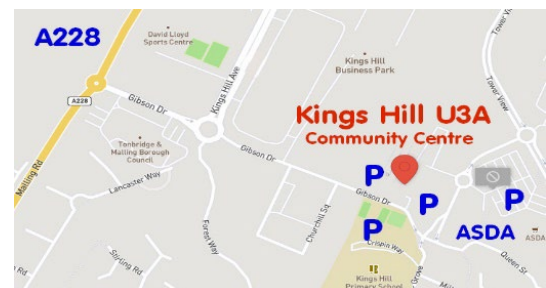
Chairman	<b>Melanie Blewer</b>
Vice Chairman	
Treasurer	<b>David Murray</b>
Business Secretary	<b>Maggie Bishop</b>
Membership	<b>Mark Richards</b>

#### Other Roles:

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

#### Plus:

**Maurice Chittenden**  
**Don Bone**



### 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)

November 2023

Phone National Office: 0208 466 6139 [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear friends,

**As we move to a busy time of year when u3as are planning lots of events, u3a committees will be working even harder than usual.** Many u3as say they are always on the look out for new committee members or even volunteers to help at u3a events. The success of our movement is built on the time and talents of our members. **If you think that you could help your committee please let them know – for many u3as your time is the greatest gift you could offer.**

Earlier this month, we celebrated Trustees Week – and you can hear from one Trustee about her experience at the end of this newsletter.

Thank you also to everyone who responded to the TAM survey – we had an amazing number of responses and we will be using your ideas as we move forward into 2024.

This newsletter also launches our new Learn Something Brilliant Today film, in which Dulwich u3a member Stuart shares how u3a, and rediscovering an old hobby, has been positive for him.

**As usual this newsletter is full of inspiring stories, from many u3as members far and wide, and shows the opportunities open to everyone to make new friends and learn new skills.**

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

## News from the Trust

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### Meet Stuart

The latest film in our Learn Something Brilliant Today series showcases the experience of Dulwich u3a member Stuart, who has rediscovered his love of Table Tennis thanks to u3a.

This film was recorded at the London Region Table Tennis Tournament. This was just one of the many events held by regions, networks and u3as during u3a week to celebrate the joy and learning of the u3a movement.

## u3a News

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### 25 Years of Handbell Ringing at Orpington u3a

Orpington u3a's Handbell Ringing Group was set up in 1998 and has continued to meet regularly ever since then.

In October, the group gathered at All Saints in Sanderstead for a training and social get together, with 12 other groups from across the South East. Coordinator of the group Jo says, "Several other players are members of u3as across the region and made themselves known to us. Playing in collaboration with other groups is always good fun and we always learn something new."

*Pictured: Orpington u3a's Handbell group, pictured earlier this year in Guildford Cathedral at a celebratory service for the Coronation. They played together with 100 handbell ringers from across the South East of England.*

### Halesworth u3a celebrate the history of their town

The town of Halesworth recently celebrated the 800th anniversary of the grant of a market charter by Edward III.

To celebrate, Halesworth u3a's local history group created displays of historical photos, which were showcased across the town, and spoke to residents about their memories.

This has spurred the beginning of an oral history project in conjunction with the local museum. The group also provided four history walking tours across two weekends, which were attended by over 150 people.

These activities significantly raised the profile of Halesworth u3a and helped them to forge new connections with other local organisations.

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## News from the Board

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### Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

A number of members have queried a statement I made at the recent AGM about criteria for being a member of a u3a.

**At the AGM I made it clear that we do not have – and never have had – any lower age limit; that the u3a is open to all that have the time to fully participate.** The decision not to have a lower age limit was taken by an AGM of the Trust in the 1980s and has never been formally discussed since.



Legal advice has been taken on how to interpret the relevant part of our objects clause, which is also the objects clause of u3as that use the model constitution.

The clause says that our objects are:

**the advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development.**

The lawyers – and the also the Charity Commission – view our primary objective as being “the advancement of education by all means”. Although there is a focus on “older people and those retired from full time work”, this is not a restriction, as is made clear by the words “in particular”.

**In plain English, this means that as long as the activities we undertake are educational (in the broadest sense), our objects do not limit who can participate.** The only limitation to this would be if our membership were to change so that most members were, for example, under 30. In that case, the objects clause would need to be revisited as the focus would no longer be on “older people and those who are retired from full time work”.

There has been no change in the criteria for joining the u3a – just a clarification of who is eligible. Perhaps the most important element, which does not form part of our legal documentation, is that the u3a is a self-help, mutual aid organisation. **It is important that those joining the u3a need to be aware that their participation involves them contributing to the life of the u3a**, as in the case of the 27 year old I cited, who is treasurer of his local u3a.

Overall we do not expect the age profile of our membership to change in any significant way – but it is an opportunity to keep our door open to all those that want to be part of the u3a movement. To benefit from their skills and experience in the same way as we do from all our current members.

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## Spotlight On:

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### Jenny, Milford On Sea u3a

*During Trustees' Week 2023, local u3a Trustees shared what a day in their life as a committee member looks like. Here's a snippet from Milford On Sea u3a Trustee, Jenny.*



My husband and I are both founder members of our u3a and I've done just about everything on the committee. I'm currently editor of the Milford On Sea u3a newsletter. It's quite simple to collate – usually the Chair writes a paragraph at the beginning and I add news of events.

In our u3a, whatever we do, we spread it out as much as possible. What we say is that when you have a group, everyone in that group is responsible and people can do different roles within it. It has definitely changed the culture.

My Mahjong group is on a Monday morning – I've just been away for six weeks, and it runs very well without me! u3a is about people learning together. For our groups to be successful they need to not rely on just one person. Now our members don't think about running a group as being daunting.

I'm sure there are lots of u3as that run like this. Running a u3a does not need to be onerous. When Milford on Sea u3a started, we thought we'd be really lucky if we got 100 members, now we have 400.

Being a committee member is great fun. We laugh, we make friends. I've made so many friends in u3a. We moved here before we retired and we didn't know a soul. u3a was the thing that gave me all my friends.

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Headline photos: Lancaster & Morecambe u3a member Pauline recently visited Southport u3a's Walking Group 4 to share the basics of Nordic walking with them; the London Region u3a week Table Tennis tournament as featured in our latest film; u3a Subject Adviser for Quizzes Ian at a recent quiz for his u3a.