

Chair's Report

Sad Endings

We say a fond farewell to Alan Atkins who passed away peacefully on 8th December. Alan had been one of the founding members of our u3a and had many friends within our branch. He enjoyed the holidays and outings and we send our condolences to Jan and his family.

Happy Endings

On a happier note....

Oh my goodness ~ I've eaten SO many festive meals with our different groups....enjoyable every one of them (but rather expanding on the waistline!!!).

Our Christmas Lunch at The Holiday Inn was very well attended and 90 of us ate a delicious meal, whilst trying to solve the 'Murder Mystery'!!!



Thank you to our Events Team for organising such a great end-of-year celebration.



It was also good fun at the end of year Monthly Meeting....as 123 members listened to The Antique Roadshow Band; giving us opportunities to sing along and dance to their mixed variety of rock and pop and festive tunes.



And....as we close 2023 and raise a glass of good cheer to the New Year....I thank you ALL for your continued support and enthusiasm for our great u3a....



Take care, and I hope to see you soon in 2024.

Melanie Blewer

Next 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.

February Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 1st February 2024 at 2pm

ROSS NEWHAM

The History of East Malling Research Centre

Ross Newham is Head of Communications at East Malling Research (EMR) in Kent, where he assists in the delivery of science messages to the many varied audiences of the organisation. His horticultural career started in Bedfordshire, growing veg, salad and cut flower crops, before working at a garden centre producing nursery stock, bedding and pot plants.

East Malling Research celebrated its centenary in 2013. Ross Newham outlines the way its research has changed fruit growing around the world. The future, he predicts, looks productive and assured, and international collaborations are increasing.

Fun Experiments at Home

The former title of "Science for Grandparents" has been changed to "Fun Experiments at Home" as several members have told me that the word "Science" made them think of formal school science activities.

The experiments are ideal for trying with grandchildren, but also interesting for those who want to try back at home or just have an interesting morning doing some of the activities.

As there will be new participants, some of the old experiments will be repeated but there will be some

new ones too. An example of the former experiments is the prediction of floating or sinking. A near-spherical object such as an orange, and a cylindrical object such as a tin of tuna, will be weighed and measured for volume. From the results, it can be predicted whether the object will float or sink.

Another favourite experiment was to find whether a variety of objects such as a saucepan, a pencil and vinegar would conduct electricity. There is no danger as only a low-powered battery is used.

New experiments will include:

Comparing the friction on a non-slip tray and a smooth tray.

Finding the temperature difference if two teapots are filled with hot water and left for ten minutes. One pot will have a cosy and the other no cosy.

Finding the power developed by the legs in a leg squat. How many members would we need to overpower a Shire horse? How much hay would they need to eat?

A new type of bird feeder is based on the principle of spring extension. When a heavy bird such as a magpie lands on the perch, a spring is extended so that a cover goes over the feeding porthole. From a list of weights predict which out of a goldfinch, long-tailed tit, greenfinch and greater spotted woodpecker will be able to feed. Unfortunately, in practice, the dreaded magpie may learn to feed by fluttering alongside the porthole without using the perch!

The session will be at Ryarsh village hall and available for members from Borough Green, Malling and Kingshill. Maximum of twelve. Phone Phil Pretty at 01732842599, email at philpretty@live.co.uk, tell Phil at a monthly meeting or a group meeting if in the same group as Phil.

The session will be held in February. The date will be given when the approximate number of participants is known.

Phil Pretty

Lunch Club

We will meet at The Bull, Penenden Heath, on Friday, 19th January at 12noon for 12.30pm.

Please let me know by 12th January if you will be joining us by phoning 01634 240655 or 07595 021130, or by emailing junerose43@btinternet.com.

June Rose

Groups Coordinator

The new year of 2024 is almost in full swing! What's on your bucket list for the coming year?

New people to meet, great friendships to keep, and so many opportunities to learn.

I am hoping that your group convenors will be able to spare me an hour in March to review our roles in order to best support you.

Perhaps in the meantime, you could offer your time to support them - by offering to substitute for them should they be on holiday, or taken unwell. I am sure it would give them great reassurance to know the group would always be in safe hands - have a word with your group leader offering to help whenever needed.

P.S. I've just updated my calendar so that all my groups and monthly meetings are in place until August (New Year Resolution No.1 - completed).

Time to fill your lovely new diaries friends.

🍷 Happy New Year 🍷

Kathy Booyen

News from our Groups

Contract Whist

We were due to have a record turnout today but regrettably, due to illness, 6 members had to drop out of the game and lunch.

Nonetheless, a good morning was had by all with John Poulton having the overall best score of 180 and also the highest successful declaration of 7.



Not far behind were Lin and Derek (both on the same table) who were equal on 142.

11 of us enjoyed a very social pre-Christmas lunch, and hopefully we can look forward to continuing the fun in 2024.

Michael Martin

Digital Photography 2

One of our member's "Favourite pic of the month" was of a dog that kept running along a wall to catch the sea spray.



Our next photo was taken in London and is of a shop front painted in bright blue. A bold choice of colour but it does stand out from the one next door.



The "Close Up" of the robin was shot in the courtyard where a member parks his car. One wonders what it must think when its reflection copies its every move.



Finally for the Letter V a view across the countryside showing Mount Vesuvius in the distance, a volcano that changed the course of history when it erupted in 79 AD. It destroyed Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplantis, Stabiae and several other settlements. More than 1000 people are thought to have lost their lives although the exact toll is unknown.



It has erupted several times since ending in 1944. Still regarded as an active volcano although it now produces little more than sulphur-rich steam. It is regarded as one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world because 3,000,000 people live near enough to be affected by an eruption and many more are in the danger zone.

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Brenda Powell

Don't Get Me Started

The subject for this month's meeting was light-hearted and seasonal - CHRISTMAS.

The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on the 25th of December by Christians worldwide was introduced not by a disciple but by a military leader, the Roman Emperor Constantine.

Christmas was unknown to the early church and the festival of Christ's birth was not invented until 312 AD.

Where did the 25th of December come from? There were many pagan festivals during the time of the winter solstice. To end the many pagan festivities, Christmas Day was introduced to celebrate the Nativity.

The Bible is silent and does not mention the birth of Christ as the 25th of December. The early Christians did not celebrate the birth. Some of the celebrations are believed to come from customs that have endured including the decorating of homes with greenery, giving gifts, singing songs and eating special foods.

The date of birth of Jesus is not stated in the gospels or any historical sources. But, biblical scholars generally accept a date around the year of the death of King Herod between 6 and 4 BC.

Members present eagerly shared their personal experiences in celebrating the festival involving family and friends. Although it was agreed that Christmas has become commercialised and perhaps not a festive period for all with the present economic strife experienced by many.

Also, the way one celebrates is evolving with the times as fewer greeting cards are sent and texts or emails have risen. Church attendance has reportedly dropped drastically as people are more inclined to give the religious aspects of Christmas a miss. The discussions were lively and lighthearted giving an insight into people's lives and their celebratory experiences.

Happy Christmas and New Year to all.

Angelene Rothwell

Easy Singing

Had a great session with warm punch (non-alcoholic of course), mince pies and chocolate. It even started snowing as we sang our Christmas songs.

Looking to our 3rd year since Covid. Come and join us if you like singing along to great songs. Everyone is welcome.



Gaynor Trevet, Joy Watson & Beverley Duval

Flower Arranging

For our last meeting of 2023 we had a Christmas lunch get-together at the Spitfire in addition to making a festive arrangement.



It's a busy time of year, but those of us who attended had a good time. We look forward to next year and the different arrangements we will make to reflect the seasons.

We are a friendly group and new members are always most welcome.

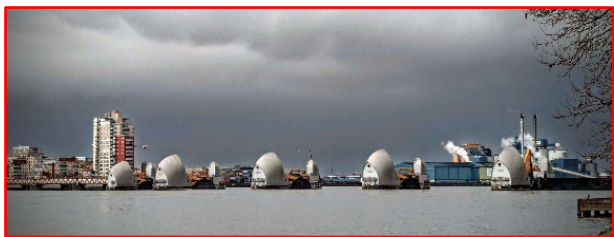
Happy New Year to you all!

Silvie Knowles

Full Day Walks

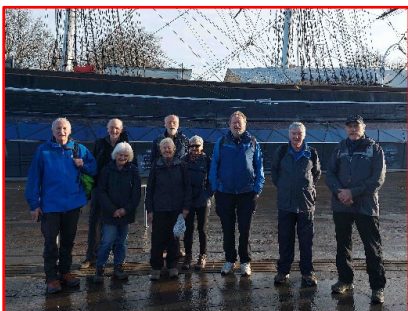
Our group of nine started the second part of the 1066 Harold's Way on Tuesday, 12th December. We drove with just two cars to Abbey Wood through the rush hour traffic.

We parked and grouped at the rail station then caught the train to Greenwich and started our walk from the Cutty Sark. The weather forecast was slight showers and a gentle breeze. How wrong it was, as later in the walk it turned into a biblical storm of lightning and heavy rain.



We walked beside the Thames skirting the O2 Arena and along the Thames path towards the Thames Barrier.

From there we continued the Green Chain Walk through parks and playground areas with tennis courts, climbing ahead on steps and across heaths to more parks.



The heavy rain prevented us from enjoying a view across London. It was so heavy we moved off the footpath as it

entered a slippery woody area. Some caught a bus to where they had parked their cars.

Our total walk was 11.6 miles and we climbed 522 feet. We were all thankful to reach the end and dreamt of a hot bath and a cup of tea. There was great camaraderie between us.

Richard Bowles

Half-Day Walks 1

Ten walkers led by Maurice set off on a 4 1/2 mile walk from Linton Church. We passed Linton Place built in 1730, the country seat of the Duke of Cornwallis, recently a business centre. If anyone has £185,735 per month for repayments on a 25-year mortgage, this could be yours for £32m!

The 'Little Switzerland' signpost led us to a 'secret enclave of million-pound homes', some built in the C17th on hilly terrain and terraces left by Kentish ragstone excavation.



Ragstone was quarried locally from Roman times till the 1930s and had been used to build ramparts of Rochester Castle, and Boughton Monchelsea Place. Henry V ordered 7000 stone cannonballs from here in 1417 to fight the French.

We returned via Salt Woods from a most enjoyable walk and headed off for lunch at the Bull Inn.

Maurice Chittenden

Harmony Singers

In December, Harmony Singers met for their last session before Christmas. We sang some old favourites and of course Christmas songs and carols.



We finished with lots of nibbles, mince pies and lots of chat!

This group has grown to over 30 members from four u3as, Paddock Wood, Pembury, Kings Hill and Malling, making quite a unique arrangement.

We are a very friendly group and always open to new members. "We never close" as this photo proves!!

Maggie and Graham Hall

London Walks 3

A Christmas Visit to London–

The December walk was based on a Christmas theme. We walked along Oxford Street and learnt the history of the street; one of the most famous stores there is, of course, Selfridges. Harry Selfridge opened his store in 1908.

The display windows this year were like stage sets: each set of elaborate curtains opened slowly onto a stage with a variety of themes, but all had props that were items sold in the store.

John Lewis was even older, as it was built in 1864, and the architecture reflected a more detailed style. A little later in the century was the creation of Hamley's Toy Store in 1881. The Guinness Book of Records shows that it is the oldest and largest toy store in the world. When we stopped to look at the windows, there were a couple of human elves dancing in the doorway, but they looked a little tired, we thought. As did the display windows, which used to be spectacular.



In Regent Street, the group were allowed a thirty-minute spending spree in Liberty (another very old store – this one was opened in 1875) and several people could not resist buying a sparkling Christmas bauble to take home. A last trip down Carnaby Street, and then we ended our day in a Cote Brasserie in Wardour Street for lunch.

A lovely Christmassy visit to London which definitely put us in a festive mood!

Pauline Miles and SallyAnne Clark

London Walks 4

Guided by Anne, we started our latest adventure in the sumptuous surroundings of Hertford House in Manchester Square where we had coffee in the covered courtyard before exploring the treasures of the Wallace Collection.

From there it was a short stroll to Selfridge's where we visited the Christmas shop before lunch at a Turkish restaurant.



Then a spell of window shopping at the likes of Cartier in Bond Street before arriving in Piccadilly to buy chocolate at Fortnum and Mason's to share on the way home.

Maurice Chittenden

MOTO

There is very little to report for December as MOTO members have all been very busy in the December run-up to Christmas.

Seven members went to a Twixtmas Lunch at the Spitfire on 28th December and we are, of course, all looking forward to our Christmas lunch at Kings Hill Golf Club which will, as usual, be in January.

It only remains for me to thank all those MOTO members who have contributed to this newsletter throughout the year and to wish everyone a very happy, healthy and peaceful 2024.

Vivienne Lindridge

Pickleball

We, play fortnightly on Fridays at 10.00-11.00am. The next meeting will be on Friday, 5th January at Larkfield Leisure Centre. The cost is £1.70 entrance fee for non-members (if you are over 66) and £2 towards the cost of the courts.

If this is of interest to you or would like more information I can be contacted at 07305-926811 or roycsimpson@hotmail.com

For those of you who have not heard of Pickleball, I suggest that you view it on YouTube.

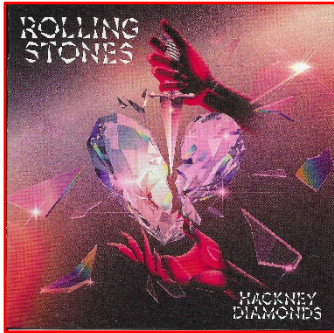
Roy Simpson

Rock and Pop

Our December meeting consisted of two halves, either side of a break for coffee and Yule log.

CD tracks included old favourites from Fleetwood Mac 'Go Your Own Way'; the Pretenders 'Back on the Chain Gang'; Oasis 'Don't Look Back in Anger'; as well as less rowdy tunes from The Corrs 'Breathless'; and Natalie Imbruglia 'Torn'.

Of course, we had to listen to a track from the new



Hackney Diamonds album – Audrey, Maurice and Janet all choosing 'Sweet Sounds of Heaven'.

YouTube videos in the second half included some Gladys Knight, Andrew Gold, Linda Ronstadt and

Elton John's opera house version of 'Philadelphia Freedom'. No Doubt with 'Don't Speak' is a compelling watch, and we finished with Supertramp 'It's Raining Again'.

David White

Ten Pin Bowling

There is no bowling scheduled for January. The next meeting has been booked for Wednesday, 7th February at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone. The price for 3 games is £9.79. Please arrive in time for an 11.00 start.

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

Roy Simpson

Ukuleles

We were delighted to be able to play for residents at the Invicta Care Home in Weaving this month. The audience sang along and played a variety of percussion



instruments and we all enjoyed the gig enormously.

For anyone who wants to give it a try, we will be organising some beginner ukulele sessions in the New Year. Please get in touch if you'd be interested in finding out more.

Caroline Slater

Walking with Dogs

Our dog walking group meets every two

weeks, on a Wednesday, at Leybourne Lakes, twice around the lake and a stop for coffee.



Our next walk is Wednesday, 3rd January at 12 noon – please come and join us!

Suzanne Briley

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	Melanie Blewer
Vice Chairman	
Treasurer	David Murray
Business Secretary	Maggie Bishop
Membership	Mark Richards

Other Roles:

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

December 2023

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



Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear friends,

It is that festive time of year – and we in the u3a team are looking for our Christmas jumpers to brighten up the office.

As we move into December many u3a members will be getting together to enjoy this time of year and also to plan for 2024.

We are always interested to hear about any unusual events that you may be having with u3a Friends or any new activity your u3a is running in their community to attract new members.

Keep warm and keep enjoying yourselves.

With very best wishes

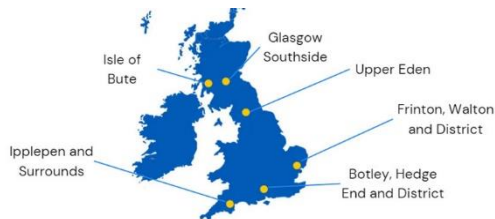
Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

News from the Trust

The u3a movement's highlights of 2023

It has been an incredible year for u3a. These are just some of the milestones we've celebrated:



We welcomed five new u3as to the movement: Isle of Bute, Ipplepen and Surrounds, Glasgow Southside, Hedge End, Botley and District, Upper Eden, and Frinton, Walton and District.

We hosted more than 170 online events throughout the year – with members learning laughter yoga, the philosophy of sport and fashion and sustainability.

We celebrated the coronation with u3a Cook for the King, our competition to find a dish 'fit for a king.' The winner was Richmond u3a member Khatoon with her Pickling Masala Mutton Curry.

Over a hundred members joined our learning event at Hadrian's Wall, u3a Off the Wall. Members took part in creative writing sessions, circle dancing workshops and more.

Our annual celebration of the u3a movement, u3a week, was celebrated in September with over 50 events across the UK.



Throughout the year, u3a was featured in The Daily Express, The Guardian, Sky News and The One Show, along with local press coverage.

Through our Learn Something Brilliant Today films, we heard the stories of u3a members in Swansea, London and Hayling Island.

Thank you for being a part of our 2023. We can't wait to see what the u3a movement achieves in 2024.

Learning News

Bognor Regis u3a members collect Second World War memories from their community

On 11 November, just after the two minutes silence, members of Bognor Regis u3a held a digital collection day, interviewing members of their local community about their experiences of the Second World War. By the end of the day, over 60 memories had been collected and a thousand images had been taken.

The event was part of Their Finest Hour (TFH), a Lottery funded campaign run by the University of Oxford to collect and to digitally preserve the stories, memories and objects from the Second World War before all these memories are lost. The project is being supported by u3a nationally.



News from the Board

Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

On Thursday 30 November, I was privileged to join representatives of a number of organisations which were founded by Sir Michael Young at a reception hosted by the Young Foundation.

As one of the speakers, I joined a platform including those from the National Extension College, the Open University, the School for Social Entrepreneurs, the Consumer Association and the Economic and Social Research Council. The focus was on different ways in which our organisations engage and empower people, fulfilling the vision of our founder.

We were encouraged to consider how we continue to embrace the spirit of Michael Young. For the u3a this includes our principles of mutual aid and self help and how we are meeting the challenges of a changing world and society. It is good for the u3a to be associated with and seen in the company of these other organisations with shared parentage – and it is one of the ways in which we raise our profile nationally.

Personally, I found the evening stimulating and thought provoking as we all need to consider what we do well and in what ways we need to reinvent ourselves for the world of today.

u3a News

Happy Feet to a Latin Beat

Lancaster and Morecambe u3a have been dusting off their dancing shoes and learning to wiggle their hips to Latin beats. The new group is very popular, with members learning to Salsa and Merengue. After only three sessions, it already has 54 members.



Photo taken by Dave Green.



Barnsley u3a and Rotherham u3a have a kick about

Barnsley u3a's walking football team recently took part in a six-a-side tournament, where they were able to play against Rotherham u3a. It was a great opportunity to meet other u3a members.

Bollywood dancing at

Wyre Forest u3a

At a recent multicultural event held by Wyre Forest u3a, members broke out into Bollywood dance routines. The group worked with local dancer Rohini on the dances. The first was a gentle love song, the second, a drumming dance and the last a very lively Bhangra party dance. This set the pulse racing and ended with a triumphant yelp of joy.



Subject Advice News

Learning More About: Metal Detecting with Subject Adviser Roger

When did your interest in metal detecting begin?

I became interested in "digging up old things" as a small boy. Then, in my mid-thirties I realised that my days as a club rugby player and cricketer were numbered, and I decided to buy a metal detector.



What has your best discovery been?

I had a life changing experience in September 1990. In April that year, I and two other local detectorists discovered that a playing field in Reigate was being sold off. We obtained permission from the builders and began searching. After 5 months of enjoyable detecting, I decided to make one last visit.

At 6pm, I picked up a very large signal in one corner. It was getting dark and for some bizarre reason, which even now I cannot explain, I decided to dig.

I found myself looking at the top of a broken jug full of vertically stacked coins. This is what is now known as the famous Reigate Hoard. The collection of 6,705 coins date from 1278 to 1455. This is the largest post-1350 coin hoard ever recorded in the UK.

What advice would you give to members interested in trying metal detecting?

In simple terms, one needs to buy a suitable metal detector, read the instructions and maybe test it out. The next step is to find land to search. Finally, learn how to deal with your finds responsibly!

Media News



The Belfast Telegraph, Northern Ireland's main regional daily newspaper, published a story about how u3a has changed the lives of members. Pictured are members of Ards Peninsula u3a; Linda, Susie and Heather. In the article, Linda says that she has "met so many interesting people and made many good friends" through u3a.

King's Lynn u3a recently featured in their local free publication, KL Magazine. It was published just prior to King's Lynn u3a's annual open day, which encouraged visits and new members to join.

The u3a movement also featured in the December edition of Yoga Magazine, which has a readership of 32,800. In the article, Laughter Yoga Subject Adviser Judith and Yoga Subject Adviser Patricia talk about how practising yoga within u3a has been beneficial for them.

Dunstable u3a member John appeared on Good Morning Britain and in the Sunday Times where he spoke about living with grief. John started working as an extra on films after losing his wife and is in George Clooney's latest film. He also joined Dunstable u3a, where he is a member of the film club.

Spotlight On:

Prabhat, Croydon u3a

Prabhat was interviewed at the London Region u3a week table tennis tournament about his experience being a u3a member.



I joined u3a about five years ago. It's been enjoyable, mainly because it's a very friendly organisation.

My main reason for joining was to engage in some physical activity.

Table tennis, it's one of the games we've all played, and as we got older, probably all gave it up for whatever reason. So I was quite partial to starting it again because you end up enjoying the exercise.

Believe me, you will.

Because although table tennis looks simple, the play can be quite quick.

I'm very keen that we continue to engage people of all abilities and to make the ones who are not so confident or not so good, to encourage them to come and play.

So we need to promote that, actually, it's more about having fun and socialising.

You will meet new people with a common interest and you will find you have many other interests that you share with them.

Headline photos: Long Eaton & District u3a celebrated St Andrews Day by painting thistles in their art group; King's Lynn u3a's ukulele group; Mawdesley u3a shared their highlight of the year – their afternoon tea to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.