

Chair's Report

Did you see??

Yes....the unfortunate news is that our u3a holiday to Bavaria will no longer take place this year. I'm disappointed not to be visiting such a beautiful part of Europe with you....and I thank the Events Team, particularly Jeanne Couch, for making every effort possible to give our members a great holiday opportunity.

Maybe next year we can enjoy a getaway together.



Did you read??

Did you read the article in the recent edition of the TAM magazine, (Pg 26)...entitled "Get your strength back"?? good advice!

It's not always easy when the weather is so wet, but hopefully, with warmer Spring sunshine on the way, we can all enjoy some quality time outdoors.... keeping as active as we can, strengthening muscles and taking weekly exercise.



Did you know??

My Goodness....our u3a has such great opportunities for furthering our knowledge....

This month I found out lots of fascinating information about the work carried out at East Malling Research Centre with our speaker at the February Monthly meeting. With my London Walks Group, I got to hear stories (some rather risqué) about the goings on in Soho in previous years!! And, my visit to Waitrose warehouses at Aylesford broadened my understanding of the John Lewis Partnership, its history and the warehouse organisation of distribution.

(Of course, I also enjoyed discovering my personal taste preferences at my Wine Appreciation Group's latest meeting!!)



Until we meet again....keep exercising and learning....to keep ourselves fit in mind and body!

Best wishes.

Melanie Blewer

Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 7th March 2024 at 2pm

TRICIA FRANCIS

LONDON STREET ART

When you hear the words "street art", do you think of graffiti and vandals scrawling on walls or a genuine art form? It will be a slide presentation based



•Is it graffiti, is it vandalism or is it art?

predominantly on Tricia's original art trail but also includes additional research which she hopes will aid your understanding of what has become for her a fascinating subject.

April Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 4th April 2024 at 2pm

ADAM TAYLOR

ISLANDS OF THE MEDWAY ESTUARY

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

Groups Coordinator

Two months into the year and winter is almost over. It must be time to check the recently produced Kings Hill online Handbook to see which groups will start again in the warmer months, and to catch up on any group you may now wish to join - simply email the convenor and ask to be put on the mailing list.

Further interest in Wine Appreciation leads me to ask if YOU would consider starting a new group. You would be well supported and I know would thoroughly enjoy leading such a tasty group. Do

contact me if you are interested in either leading or joining a new group.

Also, you may be one of the many who would like to join an existing group, but feel that time has eroded past skills and confidence - don't hesitate to contact the appropriate convenor to ask if a gentle reintroduction could be arranged. It may be that there is enough interest for a temporary 'beginners' group to be established.

YOU determine what groups exist in our vibrant u3a but we rely upon you telling us where our gaps lie. Fill my mailbox with requests and I will see what can be done!

Best wishes.

Kathy Booyen

Upcoming Events 2024

Cadbury World, tour of Bourneville and afternoon tea - MARCH 14th

Arundel Castle - APRIL 17th - details to be released shortly

Holiday in Bavaria - MAY - **CANCELLED**

Beth Chatto Gardens + Colchester with a visit to Kelvedon Bunker / Ingatestone Hall - JUNE - details TBC

Fishbourne Roman Palace + Sistine Chapel Ceiling at the English Martyrs Church, Goring-by Sea - JULY - details TBC

Milestones Museum - Basingstoke - SEPTEMBER - details TBC

Deborah Langworthy

Lunch Club

Lunch Club will meet at The Plough, Langley, at 12 noon on Friday, 15th March. Please let me know as usual if you will be attending. Email junerose43@btinternet.com or phone 07595 021130.

June Rose

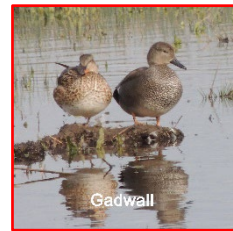
News from our Groups

Birdwatching

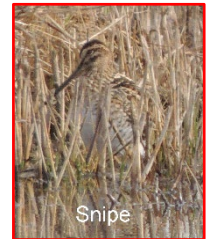
The group met at the reserve in weak late-winter sunshine accompanied by a strident Cetti's Warbler staking out territory. Cakes in the Visitor Centre were carefully scrutinised as we set off for the first hide overlooking the marshes.

It was readily apparent that recent rainfall had been heavy, which would affect access to some parts of the reserve.

We could watch a pair of Long-Tailed Tits flitting through brambles as we approached the hide, from which a good variety of ducks could be seen. The drakes were moving into breeding plumage, the most striking being the elegant Pintail though we did admire the subtly marked Gadwall plumage.



A kestrel hunted ineffectively close by. A Little Grebe rapidly scooted across the flood and we were also able to find a Snipe well camouflaged amongst the Lapwings. In the distance, a solitary Curlew was found. En



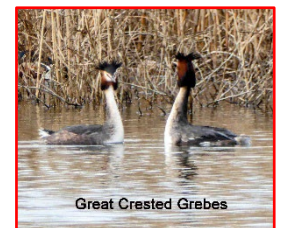
route to the second hide, a lone and late Redwing was found.

Proceeding there, a patrolling male Hen Harrier was seen quartering the marsh. Here we were able to observe a pair of

Great Crested Grebes going through a courtship dance and nest building. Supremely elegant on the water, they were clumsy and unbalanced when trying to clamber onto the nest pad.

Unfortunately, our way to the best hide on the reserve was blocked by flooded footpaths so we were forced back to the Visitor Centre for lunch. A walk along the sea wall added Oystercatcher and Shelduck to the list but we missed out on Goosander on the Thames.

Though we were disappointed about the flooded paths, we had a creditable list of 44 species for the day.



John Lambert

Board Games

I have spaces left for new members for the Board Games groups. Group 1 meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 9.45am and Group 2 on the 1st Monday of each month at 9.45am. Both groups meet at the convenor's home in Kings Hill.

We play a lot of games in two teams so it's not you playing on your own against other members. You will be a valuable member of a team

Please email boardgames@kingshillu3a.org.uk if you are interested in joining.

Pat Symes

Contract Whist

This month, we welcomed two new members - Mary & Barry Chapman - and Mary in particular excelled with a total of 122 so well done to her. I'm sure a bit of family rivalry will ensue over the coming months.

Not for the first time the best total was scored by John Philbrick with 184 and Peter had the highest successful declaration of 7.

We've now had several sessions in the "wine cellar" and everyone seems to prefer the cosier atmosphere.

Michael Martin

Craft

Ready to hatch? Seven of us gathered at the Spitfire to make Easter jars decorated with ribbons and full of chocolate eggs, bunnies and chicks.



We suspect most of them will end up with grandchildren and we hope we don't get a dentist's bill from the parents!

Janet Chittenden

Don't Get Me Started

This month, the topic chosen was, 'Implications for UK and the World, should there be a Trump triumph in November 2024'.

Trump's first term had a clear narrative. He systemically purged his government of those who stood up to him and replaced them with loyalists who indulged his whims and worldview.

Should he be re-elected in November, Trump will feel vindicated by a second term. It was argued that this would lead to Trump thinking that he is truly in touch with the American people.

In many ways, the world today is the one the US made after the 2nd World War. One asks how much longer will this be the case. And what might follow?

The outcome of the next US election might answer these questions, not just decisively but alas, very badly, some argued.

The historical, Special Relationship between the US and the UK; will this survive, should Trump win? We would be adapting to a re-election of a man who had tried to subvert its democracy. What democracy one might ask? This is a world power/democracy involved in unjust wars in pursuing US foreign policies and the American role in Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Vietnam and more before that.

Trump, is an avid supporter of a fascist dictator Putin. His recent rhetoric re NATO support/withdrawal and implications for Ukraine and the West, should this be the case. Then, there is China, sabre rattling regarding Taiwan. Trump's position on not getting involved in world conflicts will have a huge negative impact on world stability as we have become accustomed to a US superpower's protective role.

Trump's proposal to turn inwards with a protectionist and isolationist stance will have the UK in a rock and Brexit hard place. The UK seeking future close relations with Canada and Australia might be inadequate substitutes for the scale of existing economic and security relations, some argued.

A Trump triumph in November would spell US rejection of its traditional leadership role making a lasting impact on the world when it is at a particularly vulnerable moment. US alliances would be likely to crumble and the world economy might close especially with Trump's 10% tariff proposal.

Above all, democracy and human rights could be in rapid retreat worldwide without any leadership in place, something the world has become accustomed to.

Recent polls suggest that almost 55% of US voters disapprove of Joe Biden's performance. Donald Trump is reported to be slightly ahead of Biden in head-to-head polling with the election only months away in November 2024. Finally, it was suggested that Trump is ahead of Biden in 5 of the 6 most important battleground states. Despite pending court cases, and indictments, a Trump victory is clearly and disturbingly plausible.

Angelene Rothwell

Easy Cycling

Our ride last week was postponed to this week because last week was f-f-freezing cold and raining. Today was warm and

sunny, and nobody was cold - in fact, we were all wrapped up against what we thought was going to be cold - so we were too warm - an unusual occurrence at this time of year. If this is Global Warming, let's have more of it!

Five riders left the car park at East Malling - four e-bikes and Barbara, on her trusty steed. She did amazingly well and didn't complain once. She must be very fit - trumpet playing is good for the lungs.

I try to keep these rides away from traffic, and as flat as possible, but as you will all know, it is impossible to have an entirely flat ride - and if you spend some time going downhill, there will be a corresponding climb later.

We headed out past the East Malling Research Centre and spotted more new buildings going up on the left-hand side of the entrance road. Soon after this, Alan left us as he had an appointment at the hospital. We all wish him well.

We carried on in a roughly circular ride, down to the North Pole pub, where we turned right into Kings Hill by a little-known footpath - works for bikes but too narrow for cars. Too narrow even for bicycles in one place - a "gate" where bikes with straight handlebars can only just squeeze through. Then down Cannon Lane - a beautiful swoop down a long but bumpy road to the A26. A careful right turn then a nice cruise on a good surface through Mereworth to West Peckham, where we stopped for coffee at The Swan - a lovely 'olde-Worlde' English pub overlooking the village green and the ancient St



Dunstan's church (with three bells). After coffee, we went back to Mereworth where we stopped for a photoshoot (I had meant to take them

to the pub but forgot). Then a one-mile climb up Butchers Lane (Barbara managed really well - the e-bikes had to turn up the power a bit) and a right turn along Kent Street, across the dangerous A228 and then along the new footpath plus



another "squeeze gate" into Kings Hill. Down the by-pass, across a field (I still call it The Orchard though the trees were grubbed up ten years ago) and downhill back to East Malling again.

It has been a good ride - about 17 miles in all (24 miles for me) and I think everybody enjoyed it. We had a little chat about next month and Roy agreed to lead it, so it should be interesting - let us all hope that the weather is as good as it was today.

Barry Evans

Flower Arranging

We had a good turnout for our meeting in February and it was lovely for so many of us to get together again and have a friendly chat as well as working with our flowers.

The arrangement for this month was chosen by



Vallie. We created some really nice displays as you can see in the photo.

Silvie Knowles

Full Day Walks

We've still currently abandoned the 3rd leg of the 1066 Harold's Way walk until it's a little dryer as our walk continues through some marshy areas next to the Thames and the River Cray. So, on Tuesday 13th February, we did a local circular of 8.5 miles walk starting from



Leybourne following footpaths to Addington where we were treated to a wonderful carpet of snowdrops. On arriving at St

Margaret's, a beautiful 12th-century Norman church with wonderful stained glass windows, we were surprised to see it open. On entering a



lovely lady invited us to sit in the café area for our coffee break despite our muddy boots. This was very much appreciated as it was drizzly and cold outside.

We continued through West Malling Golf Course taking care to miss the golf balls from the driving range. Then still using footpaths, on to Offham,

Manor Park, West Malling and past the West Malling plague pit returning to Leybourne, where we called into the Old Rectory Pub to have a lunch snack and a beer.

Richard Bowles

Garden Visits

Our first garden visit this year was to Fairseat Manor. We were welcomed by the owners and were shown around by them and their gardeners. Unfortunately, we had chosen a cold cloudy day, but the rain held off for our visit.



We entered the property via a gate in a large wall, which was intriguing. The front garden was laid out formerly in squares with low box hedges. We saw some lovely varieties of snowdrops, crocuses, primroses and even some irises in the big garden. There were some unusual trees too, including a redwood.



After looking around the owners invited us into their large farmhouse kitchen, which was very warm and we were given homemade cake, tea and coffee, which went down a treat. It turned out that we were their first group of visitors. It was a great outing.

Pat Bell

Half Day Walks

Tony led us on a five-mile circuit from Penenden Heath to Boxley. We slowly ascended various stile challenges to enjoy the view from the Downs. The photo was taken at a random shrine-like spot with posters referencing William Blake and E.F. Schumacher.



We turned westwards and descended via Boarley, vineyards and the scout camp and back for lunch at The Bull.

Thanks, Tony and best wishes from the Half Day Walkers for settling into your new home.

Barbara Bryant

Historic Transport

This month we held our second meeting of the year at the Spitfire, our January get-together was largely devoted to brainstorming potential ideas for the groups' activities in the coming months.

Surprisingly a lot of potential visits and events were soon identified covering a good variety of themes not limited to road transport. This reflects the group's desire to have a broad interest in a variety of historic transport such as railways, aircraft, steam engines, and not forgetting classic cars and motorcycles.

Our homework was to research these ideas and list the "what, where and when" for discussion at our February meeting.

We now have a calendar of activities that will keep us busy until November.

Kathy Booyen

London Shows

I have decided to rename The Theatre Group to London Show Group to more accurately reflect the aim and function of the group. With London shows so expensive, by organising a group we can gain substantial savings of up to £70 per ticket. Regional theatres do not offer such generous savings so there is no value in organising such trips.

This month a 4th group of 12 members saw the excellent Witness For The Prosecution. We also secured stalls tickets for Fawlty Towers in August for £50 each instead of the theatre rate of £123 plus booking fee. This list is now closed.

We now also have closed bookings for Mrs Doubtfire in June and Hello Dolly! in July.

If any u3a members would like to join the Group for future shows please email me on folderspring@tiscali.co.uk

Laurie Frowde

London Walks 1

Visit to The Supreme Court

From Victoria Station we passed by Westminster Cathedral to the Supreme Court at Parliament Square. It was established in 2005 as the UK's highest Appeal Court taking over that role from The House of Lords.



The home of the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) is in Parliament Square. The Grade II listed building was formerly the headquarters of Middlesex County Court. The interior was altered significantly to accommodate its new purpose whilst many of the original features and artwork were kept.



In the exhibition area, we attempted to judge several cases that had been held in the court and found that we generally agreed with the Judge's decisions. The exhibition also highlighted the many Commonwealth countries for which the JCPC acts as the highest court of appeal.

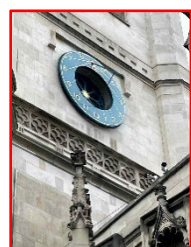
We sat in on a JCPC Appeal hearing in Courtroom 1 about a murder in Jamaica in 2014. Points being contested over the verdict involved telecommunications evidence relied on by the prosecution and the attempted bribery of a juror. The proceedings involved many highly technical legal points, so it wasn't as interesting to us as we had anticipated. We did however have time to



admire the stained-glass windows and intricate carvings on the benches in the room. Outside this courtroom on the 2nd floor, we had a

wonderful view of the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, and St Margaret's Church, which we visited after leaving the court.

Known as the parish church of the House of Commons, St Margaret's has been adjacent to the Abbey since the late 11th century. It was built so that local people could worship there rather than disturb the Monks worshipping in the Abbey church.



The present building is a much-restored version of the second church erected here in 1523. In 1982 the sundials were added to the tower. The striking blue and gold colours are thought to be how the clock face would have looked in Tudor times. Inside the church, amongst the many memorials, we saw plaques for Sir Walter Raleigh and William Caxton, both of whom were buried here.

Finally, we took an up-close look at the 12 statues of Famous Statesmen and World leaders in

Parliament Square. We finished our walk with a leisurely stroll up Whitehall with all its magnificent government buildings to our lunch in The Horse and Guardsman pub, housed in a former bank near Trafalgar Square.

Roma Elson

London Walks 2

February being the month of the Chinese New Year, we visited Soho and Chinatown. Setting out from Madame Bertaux's patisserie in Soho made for the perfect start.

We then had a short but fascinating tour of the area and learned many of its hidden secrets and the stories of some of its famous residents including Casanova, Karl Marx, Mary Seacole, Mozart and The Beatles, John Logie Baird and not forgetting Jeffery Bernard who, of course, was frequently



unable to complete his Spectator column because he was "unwell". There were many others.

In Soho Square, we heard about St Patrick's Catholic Church - one of the first following the removal of restrictions imposed after the Reformation - as well as the last remaining French Huguenot church.

We heard stories of an "interesting" nature and gained an insight into some less well-known aspects of some famous lives. Two contrasting hotels were Hazlett's, known as one of London's finest and most discreet hotels, and Mimi's whose rooms range in size from "luxe" through "cosy" and "mini" right down to the six square metre "tiny". Most of them have no room for luggage, although this can be stored at extra cost, and more than half don't have that popular feature known as a window!



Most of the pubs and clubs had fascinating stories and the French House during World War II was the unofficial HQ of the Free French under General de Gaulle.

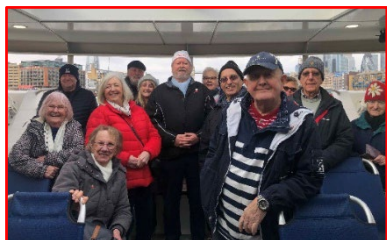
We finished in Chinatown to welcome in the Year of the Dragon, the most auspicious in the Chinese calendar - everyone in the country hopes for a 'Dragon baby'. We

learned about the history of the Chinese in London and, of course, the story of how the Chinese calendar came about. Needless to say, we finished with a delicious Chinese meal.

Tricia Francis

London Walks 3

Twelve members plus a most-welcome special guest Elaine Scutt, took the usual train from West Malling to London Bridge and crossed Tooley Street into Hays Galleria for coffee and refreshments.



We then took the short walk to old Mother Thames at London Bridge City Pier. With sea-bands in place, we boarded the UBER Clipper to take us easterly, with stops at the Tower of London and Canary Wharf, before alighting at our destination of Greenland Surrey Quay Pier.

We had a brief talk on the fascinating history of Surrey Docks before starting our 4-mile walk along the Silver Jubilee Thames path back to Tower Bridge. Along the way, we saw various landmarks including Surrey Docks Farm, Rotherhithe Tunnels and the embankment memorial of the Mayflower's departure from Rotherhithe in 1620.

The highlight of the walk was the brief talk about the Marchioness disaster on 20 August 1989 resulting in 21 fatalities. Kevin Stevenson, our designated group security officer, was a serving police officer in the area at the time and had the task of searching the north bank of the Thames for bodies and debris which might have been washed downriver.

We completed our walk on Tower Bridge Road with lunch at Wetherspoons The Pommeliers Rest.

Laurie Frowde

London Walks 4

To think, to eat, to share....it could almost be a new motto for our u3a rather than the name of the art installation we found at the Whitechapel Gallery in East London.

It was a brief cultural refuge from the crime-heavy itinerary of our walk.

Joined by two guests from London Walks 1, we visited pubs where Dick Turpin and Ronnie Kray operated, alleys where Jack the Ripper stalked his

victims and the site of the Siege of Sidney Street where two members of Peter the Painter's gang held off 200 police and Scots Guards for seven hours.

We also stood on the site of the medieval white chapel made from Kentish chalk rubble which gave the area its name.



After all that thinking and sharing, we went to eat curries at East London's oldest Asian restaurant.

Maurice Chittenden

Makers of History

In a departure from the norm, we are learning about Elizabeth Fry in three different sessions and we enjoyed the second instalment at our February meeting.



The first session introduced us to her early years when she was described as "poor Betsy," a girl, born into a wealthy Quaker family, who feared ghosts, drowning and suffered horrendous nightmares and found learning difficult.

In this second session, we heard how following her marriage to Joseph Fry she had eleven children despite a fear of pregnancy, thinking she might die as a result. However, her religious and philanthropic work led to her paying little attention to her own children who were largely looked after by their nursemaids and father.

By 1811, she had been made a Minister of Friends and, influenced by the American preacher and anti-slavery campaigner, William Savery, she toured the country with her sister, spreading the word and helping the poor. She was horrified by what she saw in the slums, including the tragic results of children abandoned, having been put into the hands of notorious 'baby farmers.'

She devoted much of her time to assisting the poor before famously going on to visit Newgate Prison, where she found conditions appalling, with men, women and children incarcerated in filthy cells, half-starved and barely clothed.

As well as hearing about her activities, we were introduced to Elizabeth Fry as a very complex and sometimes contradictory character who continued to suffer from bouts of depression and severe anxiety, as well as struggling with her beliefs as she

witnessed so much suffering. These psychological aspects led to a very interesting discussion after the talk.

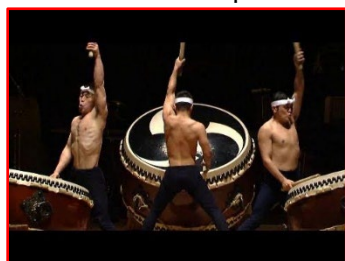
We look forward to hearing more about her work for prison reform in the final session later this year.

Joan Warren

MOTO

A Sunday lunch for MOTO members was held at the Camden Arms in Pembury at the end of January. It was a "proper" Sunday carvery so we were able to pick and choose our meat and veg exactly as we wanted. It was therefore much enjoyed by all who participated.

Now for February....A group of six MOTO members travelled up to the Barbican to see these



drummers from Japan. They are renowned for their disciplined training regime, running 10k every day and their performances do not disappoint. The whole ensemble was fantastic and totally in

sync, a very memorable experience. We also had a lovely meal at Cote before the show so a great evening all-round.

MOTO members formed a quiz team at a very enjoyable quiz evening run by Mallig u3a. We had a promising start to the evening, with an almost perfect score in the first round, doubled up by playing our Joker. We also did well on the two table rounds which covered 'mash-up' faces and anagrams of pub food items. Unfortunately, we were not so good at the different singers of the song 'Yesterday' or on TV sitcoms. The net result was that we finished close to the bottom of the table, although, in fact, only a few points separated the teams. Despite the rather disappointing finish, we enjoyed the evening – and we didn't leave entirely empty-handed as Helen managed to win a raffle prize of a bottle of wine named after her!

Seven of us spent a very pleasant afternoon having a cream tea at Where Memories Meet in Watlington. The tea was very good, especially the scones.

Unfortunately, we were unable to visit the antique and



vintage parts of the building due to flooding. A visit is thoroughly recommended.

When a group visited the Waitrose warehouse the day was sunny, but we shivered inside the Chiller Warehouse (+2 degrees!!). And in the noisy Ambient section, we remained behind the barriers as the trucks whizzed past (top speed 5mph) filling up their cages to supply lorries travelling across the South and South East of the UK. In total, the warehouses cover 40 acres with 1,500 'partners' employed on the site. It was an informative visit including the history of the John Lewis Partnership, its ethos and constitution, and its many varied opportunities for employment.



Just two of us went to The Royal Academy to see the Impressionists on Paper (Degas to Toulouse-Lautrec) Exhibition, which brings together 77 works on paper by leading impressionist and Post-impressionist artists whose innovation would challenge traditional attitudes. We ended our visit in the Academy's Jose Pizarro bar for some welcome, and very tasty, refreshments. A great day out.

On Monday 26th, seven members went to the Bluewater cinema to see "Wicked Little Letters" with Olivia Coleman, Timothy Spall and Jesse Buckley. This hilarious story is based on a true tale set in Littlehampton in the 1920s. We all enjoyed it and the acting was superb.

A larger group of 13 went to the Alim-Et in Larkfield for the Sunday lunch outing on 25th Feb. They managed to cater for all different diets and most of us really enjoyed the meal. It was also lovely to have so many members sitting together, although it was a bit noisy at times. Sorry that we all forgot to get a photo though!

We ended the month with a visit to The Oast Theatre in Tonbridge on the 29th to see "Home, I'm Darling". A play about a married couple who decide to live their lives in a 1950s style but discover this is not without its problems. A pleasant way to spend a very wet evening.

Vivienne Lindridge

Pickleball

Seventeen members played last Friday at the Larkfield Leisure Centre between 10.00 and 11.00.

We play fortnightly and the cost is £1.80 entrance fee for non-members over 66 years of age (£3.10 if not) and £2 per person towards the cost of the court.

The next meeting will be Friday, 15th March. If this is of interest to you, I can be contacted at 07305-926811 or roycsimpson@hotmail.com

Roy Simpson

Short Walks

Shrove Tuesday

On a grey but mild February day, eleven of us set off from Miggy & Glyn's house situated at the top of the hill adjacent to Bedgebury Forest. Due to the muddy conditions underfoot we stuck to the main forest paths which are wide and stony. This side of the forest is quieter and used mainly by



cyclists and dog walkers.

We made our way back through the Pinetum crossing the wooden bridge and passing Marshalls Lake. Rhododendrons were in flower surprisingly early in the season and some delightful hamamelis (witch hazel) shrubs and dogwoods provided welcome spots of colour in an otherwise winter scene.

We then stopped for a welcome coffee at the Bedgebury café before attempting the final climb up the hill to our cars.

Miggy Yeo

Ten Pin Bowling

The next meeting has been booked for Wednesday, 6th March at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone.

The price for 3 Games is around £10. Please arrive in time for 11.00 start.

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

Roy Simpson

Wine Appreciation 1

We may have missed a few newsletters due to deadline issues but that doesn't mean to say we have not been active.

In November we had a very enjoyable evening at Jim and Julie's with the usual good wines, nibbles and banter. December meant a social evening

at our house just enjoying each other's company over a glass or two, rather than braving busy restaurants.

On 31st January we were back to our usual themed evenings. Everyone having fulfilled the entry requirements of 'No Thieves, Fakirs, Rogues or Tinkers', we were delighted to welcome Melanie for her first evening with us. We hope it is not the last. And so our evening began

War of the Roses was our theme. A tray of Roses with their flowers covered was used to choose teams -everyone pegging their name to a stem. Melanie was a pink rose as there were many in the war who swapped sides if it suited them. Vic named each wine as a main character who was featured in the war and gave us a potted history as each wine was served.

All the wines were English so I chose English cheeses and other nibbles that we felt would complement the wines, but also would have been available at the time by foraging, stealing or provided by the Lords who also provided their workers as soldiers.

Our first offering was a vibrant Meophams Ridge Lane 2022 crafted from Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Madeleine Angevine. Zesty yet peachy with a honeysuckle finish, I believe it was well-liked by all coming second. £13.95

The specially selected English Bacchus from Lyme Bay Winery was an Aldi offering at £9.99. It was only OK. Quaffing in the garden you may not notice that the more expensive versions are better, but we did. It came last.

The Rose from Gorley vineyard in Canterbury was pleasant, summer fruits' flavours again good for al fresco drinking. A blend of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay. Alpacas graze in this very small vineyard. £13.33

The Meopham's Union Red Limited Edition was our favourite. Crafted from Pinot Noir, Regent, Triomphe and Leon Millot, it has been aged in oak barrels for nine months. Dark fruits, spicy yet velvety with soft tannins. Lovely.

Our two Meopham wines came out on top and we look forward to more wines from this local vineyard.

We finished our evening by discussing our way forward this year over coffee and tea. We are hoping that outings and social events will be planned with our friends in Group 4. We look forward to our next tasting at Terry and Sheila's.

Val Pratt



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
Elaine Scutt
Sue Watson



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)



Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear friends,

You may have been enjoying Lunar New Year celebrations this month as we welcomed the Year of the Dragon. This is believed to be a year of change and opportunity and the movement is certainly embracing this with a very exciting year ahead.

Today I am delighted to launch a fresh look for our Friends newsletter which I hope you will enjoy and which reflects the connection we have as a movement.

The newsletter is still packed with the opportunities, fun and learning and will always share your talents and skills. This month a special congratulations to Ilkley u3a on their landmark 2000th member.

Please encourage your friends and colleagues who may not get the newsletter to sign up. We have much to look forward to including Friends Extra which we hope to launch in April.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

Join team u3a
for the Great
North Run



Run for u3a

In 2024, team u3a will be running in the Great North Run, the largest half-marathon event in the world, to raise money for the Third Age Trust.

60,000 runners take part in The Great North Run each year – and this year, for the first time ever, this will include five members running on behalf of u3a. Starting in Newcastle Upon Tyne, the route crosses the Tyne bridge, passes through Gateshead and ends in South Shields. The event is taking place on **8 September 2024**.

We have five charity running places available. If you are interested, please email communications@u3a.org.uk by **29 February 2024** – heading your email: Great North Run. Please include the u3a you belong to and if you have run a half-marathon before. Alternatively, you can call u3a office on 020 8466 6139.

Membership milestone for Ilkley u3a

Ilkley u3a recently welcomed their 2000th member – an incredible achievement. Jenny was the lucky member and received a bouquet of flowers and bottle of champagne.

She is pictured (centre) with Deputy-Chair Peter and Chair Jacqui.

Jacqui says, "We were delighted to welcome our 2000th member to Ilkley & District's thriving community.

"Although being a large u3a presents its own challenges, every new recruit represents a new opportunity, a new skill, a new friend."

The milestone resulted in a splash in the Ilkley Gazette.



Mosaic Making at Preston Park u3a

Ten members from Preston Park u3a spent a creative and enjoyable day making mosaics.

Group member Christine shared her expertise in mosaics and led the group of complete beginners through the process. They had a lot of fun channelling their creative talents and making decorative plaques. Everyone was very

proud of the end results.

Chair of the Third Age Trust, Liz Thackray

I love this time of year when the world begins to wake up from its Winter slumber. For the Board, it is the time of year when there is a focus on reviewing the past year – preparing first drafts of the annual report – and thinking about the year ahead.

At present, a major focus is on Fit for the Future and ensuring as many u3as and u3a members as possible have the opportunity to attend a presentation, online or in-person, to hear what this is about and to get questions answered. If you are a u3a member and haven't yet heard of Fit for the Future, there is a section on the member's area of the website with lots of information and links to videos. Your opinions are important!

I've been enjoying seeing the photos in the u3a Keeping in Touch Facebook group, as u3a members share news of where they have been, what they have been doing and what they are planning.

Last month, I was able to visit some London u3as and I look forward to visiting North East England in a few weeks time. u3a offers so much to enjoy and to be stimulated by!

friends offers

Exclusive talk for u3a groups at Barnsdale Gardens

Barnsdale Gardens in the East Midlands is Britain's largest collection of individually designed gardens. On top of the normal group discount, u3a groups of more than 20 can have an exclusive extra – an introduction from either Nick Hamilton or head gardener Jon about the history of the gardens and their seasonal highlights. To find out more, email groups@barnsdalegardens.co.uk or call 01572 813 200.

Photo by Steve Hamilton.



friends stories

2024 is the year that Saffron Walden u3a celebrates 40 years. In anticipation of this event, we held an Activities and Groups Taster Meeting in January. We signed up 30 new members on the day. Two of the new members have subsequently become coordinators and have formed new groups – Scrabble and New Testament Greek Reading.

Jim Dwyer, Saffron Walden u3a

A journey inspired by film



u3a is all about learning new things and sharing new experiences. We love hearing from members of our Friends newsletter community and sharing your stories. This month, Harold from Shrewsbury u3a talks about his upcoming adventure.

Since 2003, I've been an active member of Shrewsbury u3a, participating in various groups such as folk music, Economics, Natural history, and whist.

Inspired by the film *The Last Bus* featuring Timothy Spall I plan to travel in 2025 from John O'Groats to Lands End by bus. I had mentioned to friends that it was something I would like to do and they said, why don't you?

The first leg will include Inverness, Aberdeen, Berwick, Whitby, Scarborough, York, Leeds, Sheffield, and Shrewsbury while the second includes Aberystwyth, the National Botanical Gardens in Wales, Tenby, Bath, Bournemouth, St Austell. The journey will finish in Tresco.



I am looking forward to seeing parts of the country I have not previously seen. and to revisiting the Eden project and at the end, Tresco Gardens.

As a member of my u3a folk group, I also am excited for Sidmouth folk festival during the journey.

Are you doing something exciting? Let us know by emailing communications@u3a.org.uk

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Headline photos: Grey heron, photographed by Alan of Longton u3a; Wells u3a lighting up the night as part of the Wells Lantern Parade, photographed by Brendon Doyle; Saffron and Walden u3a's Activity and Groups Taster session.