

Chair's Report

SADLY...

It is with sadness that I pass on the news that Colin King has passed away peacefully at the hospice. Colin was a keen member of our u3a, enjoying time with the Art group, Bird Watchers, Petanque players and All-day walkers. I have been speaking with his wife Lynda who has asked me to pass on the details of Colin's funeral. It is to be held on Wednesday 10th May at Kent and Sussex Crematorium, Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells TN2 5JJ at 12.15pm. u3a friends are also invited to join the family afterwards at The Spa Hotel, Langton Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 8XJ. Lynda has said she is willing to share her contact number if anyone wishes to get in touch....it is 07776305612 (we don't usually publish contact details, so I ask that you treat this information with appropriate respect regarding GDPR).

REMINDERS...

Just reminding you all that our May Monthly Meeting date has changed to Thursday, 11th May at 2.00pm in KH Community Centre.

You may recall that last month I told you about the Sevenoaks u3a Annual Science Seminar, to which our members are invited. Please see their flyer for further information and details about how to obtain your tickets:

<https://www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk/Flyer-2023-Sc-Seminar-Final-11Apr2023>

FINALLY...

My thanks to Elaine, our Groups Coordinator, for organising such a worthwhile and thought-provoking meeting for our Conveners this week. We listened to SallyAnn regarding details of our Here-to-Help and Welcome Teams and were guided in our thoughts and concerns by Simon our Diversity Officer.

We discussed many issues facing our u3a and our groups regarding Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion. And of course, we also enjoyed a delicious fish-n-chips lunch!

Thank you to all who attended...For further details, please see the Meeting Notes and slides that will be available shortly on our website for everyone to read.

Until we meet again...look after yourselves and keep an eye open for some long-overdue warm and sunny weather!!!

Best wishes

Melanie Blewer

Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 11th May 2023 at 2pm

IAN PORTER

The Real Downton Abbey

Whilst we enjoyed Downton Abbey for its entertainment value, most of us would say we were sceptical about the familiar relationships portrayed between master/mistress and their servants. During this talk, Ian Porter will leave us in no doubt about what domestic service in a big house was really like and that familiarity between upstairs and downstairs would have been very unusual indeed!

June Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 1st June 2023 at 2pm

AGM

followed by

GUY BARTLETT

The Red Arrows

It's hard to imagine flying in a Red Arrow plane in close formation, at 332mph, and performing amazing aerobatics. However, our speaker this month, Guy Bartlett, will create the effect with his excellent talk, illustrated with videos and film. The nine "Hawk" aircraft have been in action together since 1965, entertaining crowds around the world, and we learn the history and the selection of RAF pilots, with their incredible flying skills.

Lunch Club

Lunch Club will meet on Friday, May 19th at 12 noon at The Cock Horse Inn, 39 The Street, Detling ME14 3JT.

Please let me know by phoning 01634 240655, or emailing junerose43@btinternet.com by Friday, May 12th.

June Rose

Groups Coordinator

A meeting for group convenors, and members of the Welcome, Here to Help and Hospitality teams took place on Thursday 27th April.

Thank you to everyone who helped with setting this up, to the speakers SallyAnn Clark and Simon Ellis, and to everyone who attended. Over 40 Special Interest Groups were represented, and we had an interesting and informative meeting looking at Diversity and Accessibility in our u3a.

Notes of the meeting will be circulated to all convenors. I hope that all convenors will consider the information given and how it may apply to their own particular group. I am very happy to discuss any specific issues if anyone wants to contact me directly.

I have received the following suggestions for new groups this month:

Pickle Ball – there was an article in the recent TAM about this new sport, and one of our members has contacted me to see if other members would like to give it a try. Please contact me if you are interested and we will look at setting up a ‘trial’ session.

Electric Guitars - Kevin Stephenson has offered to help set up a new electric guitar group. Further details are given by him below.

Trip to Eastbourne - Phil Pretty has suggested that we could have a trip to Eastbourne this year. He is thinking of a day trip by coach aimed primarily at walkers, the idea being that the coach could drop off walkers for their choice of either a 3 Mile walk from Birling Gap or a longer walk from Seven Sisters. Both walks would finish up in Eastbourne to pick up the coach. Any non-walkers could spend time in Eastbourne.

As you all know, I will be standing down as Groups Co-ordinator at the AGM in June, and so far no one has come forward to take over. Please do think about whether you could take on this role, perhaps with someone else if you prefer to share the role.

Elaine Scutt

Possible New Electric Guitar Group

If there is enough interest I am willing to set up a new U3A electric guitar group. This would be for players of a good standard who can play barre chords and scales.

The group would meet up once a month and would welcome members who play rhythm, lead

and bass and who could maybe sing or harmonise over popular songs from the 60s onwards.

Email kevinstephenson@hotmail.com

Kevin Stephenson

News from the Groups

Art Appreciation

We had an excellent talk this month given by Julia Stacey about her great aunt Mary Gillick OBE (1881-1965). Born Mary Gaskell Tutin in Nottingham, she was educated at the Nottingham School of Art and the Royal College of Art, where she studied under the sculptor Edouard Lanteri.

After making her first exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1911, she designed many medals to be used as awards and many other larger relief sculptures in stone and bronze. In 1905 she married the sculptor Ernest Gillick. They lived in Chelsea and then in the Kings Road, where they had their studio. They were associated with the Newlyn School and were friends with Laura and Harold Knight, Lamorna Birch, and many prominent artists of the time.

Her greatest achievement, and the one which brought her fame, was, in 1952,



being selected to produce the design for the new Queen Elizabeth's head for coinage. Gillick's design was selected from a field of seventeen. She was the only woman on the shortlist and in her early seventies at the time.

Gillick worked on the portrait between March and October 1952, with one sitting and close supervision by the Duke of Edinburgh. Gillick's design was notable for portraying the Queen uncrowned, and was the last to be used on the pre-decimal coinage.

What made her talk especially interesting was the stories Julia was able to tell us, about inheriting many of Mary's plaster casts for medals and sculptures and her memories of her great-aunt.

She brought along pictures, artefacts, coins and other treasures belonging to her aunt, as well as excerpts from her letters. It was a fascinating talk, enjoyed by the whole group.

Next month, Helen will be talking about the Japanese artist Kawanabe Kyosai.

Jill Rutland

Classic Vehicle Appreciation

This month's meeting proved to be very different with Keith Booyesen taking those present on an adventure to the Serengeti in his customised 4x4.

Dressed for the part he described the meticulous preparation required for such a six-week trip, and the East African villages, towns and cities visited along the way.



Seeing African animals in their natural habitat was amazing, but most appreciated was the annual stampede of the herd of Wildebeest across the Mara River.

An impressive and spectacular hot air balloon flight over the plains added an additional dimension. The occupants of the 12 strengthened vehicles communicated by two-way radios whilst driving in convoy and making the round trip of around 10,000km.



Kathy Booyesen

Contract Whist

We welcomed two new members - Maggie & Leslie Dixon - both of whom acquitted themselves very well considering neither had played before.

Although I don't keep records, I think Maggie achieved the highest number of tricks ever - 9 - but as she only wanted 7 this was invalid. Shows great potential though!!

Jacqui had the best overall score with 160 and both Leslie & Lin had successful declarations of 6 tricks.

As usual, the air was full of hearty and sometimes noisy banter showing everyone was having a good time.

Mike Martin

Croquet

Come and join us on Medway Croquet Club's beautiful lawns in a lovely setting at K Sports (Ditton). Medway Croquet Club provides all the equipment we need. Croquet is a competitive game and we take it seriously, but it is also a social game and great fun.



New members are welcome, most have never played before. At your first session, we will teach you the basics: how to hold the mallet and hitting a ball through a hoop, etc. Then, after our mid-session break for tea and a chat, you play your first game; each game takes about 40 minutes.

Here is a report by one of our members:
"I started to play about 4 years ago, time passes so quickly and I thoroughly enjoy the game. It is not difficult to learn, the company is pleasant, and we all get frustrated when the ball doesn't go where we think it should (or should I say, where we intended it to go), but it is a very pleasant way to spend a Tuesday afternoon in the Summer. Of course, the only way to find out if you will enjoy it is to join the Croquet Group and see for yourself. I do not think you will be disappointed."

So, if you feel you might like to give Croquet a try do get in touch.

Val Lurcock

Digital Photography 1

In April one of our themes was "Famous Churches". This proved very popular with photographs of churches from every continent. The more unusual ones included the Chapel of the Holy Cross in Sedona and the Cardboard Cathedral in New Zealand.



"Favourite Places" ranged from a sandy beach in Devon where dogs were welcome, to a different kind of sand at Alice Springs.

One brave member included a photo of Chelsea Football Ground, where dreams have been dashed this season!

It was also interesting to note that a lot of our favourite places were within easy walking distance of our own homes.

“The Letter R” included Red, Reflections, Roses, Railways, a Rabbit and this delightful photo of a little robin, which made us all smile.



Cathy Sargent

Digital Photography 2

It never ceases to amaze me at the variety of photos submitted each month.

Our first picture for the Letter N reminds me of a rainbow and the bright blue effect of the sky reflected in the swimming pool lights



up this image taken in Tenerife while our member was on holiday.

Love the rabbit in this still life of Easter as it looks like it is smelling the daffodil.



Our final submission is for Patterns. It was taken at a wildlife exhibition in Cape Town. Rhinoceros means nose



horn and it is one of the largest creatures in the world. Such an interesting way to display different patterns. The ears look as though it has periscopic eyes.

Let's hope May will bring us less rain. Take care.

Brenda Powell

Don't Get Me Started

The main topic of discussion was Artificial Intelligence or AI as it is known. The Oxford English Dictionary defines AI as the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence.

Members were actively engaged by the realisation of AI's impact on our daily lives in both positive and negative ways, now and in the near future.

A project undertaken by PricewaterhouseCooper in 2018 estimated that AI technologies will increase global GDP by \$15.7 trillion by 2030. Monetary-driven world economies will strive towards this. Progression of AI to SENTIENCE; whereby AI will be able to think, perceive and feel for themselves may be a reality in the future. Scientists are divided on the question of whether an AI system will be able to achieve these characteristics. Fears have been expressed by experts who are calling for government regulation so as not to find ourselves in a place of no return.

Currently, there is 30% AI use in the UK. It has been estimated AI could have a 20% chance of SENTIENCE in 10 years. Experts predict human-level machine intelligence (HLMI) has a 50% chance of occurring in 45 years or even sooner. Many pioneers of AI, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and the late Stephen Hawking to name a few have all voiced their aspirations and concerns regarding the subject, citing profound risks to society. More than 1,000 tech leaders, researchers and others have signed an open letter urging a moratorium on the development of the most powerful artificial intelligence systems.

In conclusion, whilst AI promises great advantages for humans, limited access to AI will lead to even more global inequality. An estimated 300 million mainly blue-collar workers worldwide are projected to be unemployed as a result of AI. Hence the need for regulation and the urgent need to work closely with countries leading in this field shaping the future of humanity.

“Humans are walking into the realms of science fiction” (J. Bezos).

Angelene Rothwell

Easy Cycling

Our ride from Marden to Headcorn is one of our favourite rides - through the beautiful Kent countryside down winding country lanes, looking at some very nice (and very expensive) country houses and farm machinery. On this ride, we were all worried about the weather.

On the day before our ride, it rained nearly all day. There were short patches of sunshine and blue sky, but the rain was never far away. On the day of our ride, however, the sky was a beautiful blue with hardly a cloud to be seen.

Six of us met at Marden library car park and



headed off to Marden. We made good time as it was downwind all the way, and had a lovely

cuppa at Headcorn Airfield. There was not much to see as all the aircraft were strapped down against the recent high winds.

On the ride back, poor Jim, who had recently returned to us after a minor



operation, had a rear wheel puncture on his e-bike. We had difficulty repairing the puncture as a replacement tube had a faulty valve. Tony kindly offered to go on ahead, get his car (which had a bike carrier for two bikes), collect Jim plus bike and take him back to Marden to collect his car.

While Jim was waiting, a lady mentioned to him that there was a bike shop across the road, behind the guitar shop (which also sold Ukeleles). Jim investigated and the bike shop man agreed to fix the bike - and Jim bought an 8-string Ukelele - he'd been looking for one for a long time!

So all ended well. Our 19-mile ride was very enjoyable with no steep hills but a good many puddles and a lot of water lying in the fields.

Barry Evans

Flower Arranging

This month an L-shaped design was chosen. We had a picture to work to, which included using lilies. Several of us did manage to buy some lilies. However, many refused to open up in



time, so several alternatives were used.

This made for an interesting mix of designs, but a good attempt at keeping to an L shape was achieved. The photo shows a few examples of this.

Christine Hutchins

Garden Visits

Riverhill Himalayan Gardens was the destination for our April visit. The weather was not that kind to us having showers in between sunny spells.

The gardens are very beautiful and historic with breath-taking views across the Weald of Kent. Home to the Rogers family since 1840, there are 12 acres of historic gardens based on themes.

There is a walled garden, a wild jungle, a rose walk, a wood garden and an Edwardian rock garden

The Walled Garden is a must-see with the sculptural grass terraces leading down to a central water feature, with gently bubbling fountains and a centre piece by renowned British sculptor, Julian Wild. The amphitheatre design is influenced by the cultivation terraces seen in the Himalayas and is the perfect location for the summer theatre season.



The Himalayan Hut on the top terrace is made from traditional Kentish hop poles.

An enchanting place for a wander, the Wood Garden, as we saw, is carpeted with bluebells in spring and is home to many prized rhododendrons and azaleas, some of which arrived at Riverhill as seeds sent back by the intrepid plant hunters. Many of these took as long as 30 years to flower for the first time.

The area has many intriguing twisty paths and hidden spots to discover,

Unfortunately, the garden was almost destroyed by the Great Storm but has been renovated, although there is still much work to do. Interestingly enough, the old house was featured on Country House Rescue and the property has been the subject of a complete renovation programme.

Pat Bell

Half-Day Walks 1

Phil led 12 of us on a 5-mile circuit from the King and Queen, East Malling towards Barming. We returned via the research station into glorious uplifting sunshine.



Barbara Bryant

Journey Challenges

Cranbrook was our latest journey challenge. It has unusual shops and cafes. The local state school, which has boarders too, is where Tim Peake, the astronaut, studied.

After getting the bus from Maidstone, we had coffee then headed for St Dunstan's Church. This is a large church (it's called "the Cathedral of the Weald") and has an interesting history. It owes its size to the money, which flowed into Cranbrook in the 200 years (from 1300 to 1500) from its prosperous cloth industry. It was a Catholic church pre-Reformation and there's a connection with "the Reformer", Henry VIII. There's a memorial to the local Baker family. Sir John Baker was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Henry VIII's time, retaining the post during Edward VI's reign.

Cranbrook native, Comfort Starr, one of the founding members of Harvard College, was baptised at the church on 6 July 1589. A memorial plaque to Starr was installed in the church after his death in 1659. The wooden carvings on the church are linked to the Jack in the Green festival. The church tower is a must to climb with fantastic views and contains a clock, which was the prototype for Big Ben.

We treated ourselves to lunch and then headed for the museum, which is a Grade II, 15th-century timber-framed building set in a quiet garden. We were informed on our tour that the oldest part was probably used to house the bailiff of the Rectory Farm, belonging to the Archbishops of Canterbury.

Internally, there are some fine original features including a dragon beam and massive moulded corner post but there have been many later additions and changes of use. Its tenant in the late 16th century was Richard Taylor, a member of one of Cranbrook's rich clothiers.



Union Mill built in 1814 was our next visit. It is England's tallest working smock mill. Its white weatherboarded smock tower stands on a tall brick base of three storeys. Four 'patent' sweeps drive one of the two remaining pairs of millstones.

The mill is a Grade I listed building and has been in the care of Kent County Council since its restoration in 1960. The mill is managed and operated by the Cranbrook Windmill Association.

Pat Bell

London Walks 1

Around Blackfriars and St Paul

Jean and Gordon led our walk around the vast area of the former Dominican Monastery of Blackfriars.

It covered this part of London from 1278 until 1538 when it was largely demolished. In Church Entry we saw the



small garden which marks the site of the church nave from the original Dominican Priory of Blackfriars.

We walked to Playhouse Yard, which is the site of Blackfriars Playhouse, a theatre partly owned by Shakespeare. His Kings Players performed there until it was demolished in 1655.

Soon after this, we arrived at the Apothecaries Hall, which was rebuilt in 1688 following a fire and is largely unchanged today.

The next point of interest was Wardrobe Place. In this tranquil courtyard a 14th-century house had stood, housing the ceremonial robes of Edward III. This house was destroyed by the great fire, but today there are some fine 17th and 18th-century houses here.

Back in Carter Lane, there is a finely decorated house that was St Paul's Choir school but is now the City of London Youth Hostel offering affordable accommodation to young people.

Around the corner is The Old Deanery, built by Sir Christopher Wren as the home for the Dean of St Paul's.

Now it is the palace of the Bishop of London. We walked on to Amen Corner. The houses within Amen Court provide



accommodation for the officials of St Paul's. In 1958 the CND was founded here by John Collins, Canon of St Paul's.

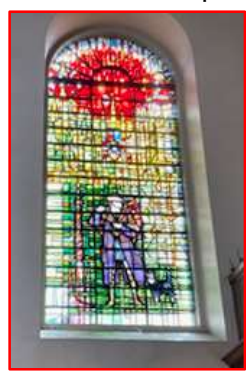
In Ava Maia Lane we passed the modern Angel Wings sculptures (aka Paternoster Vents, as they disguise the vents for an underground electrical substation).

At the end of the lane is Paternoster Square. The square is named after the Pater Nosters (Turners of rosary and prayer beads) who used to live here.

To the right stands Temple Bar Gate, designed by Wren in the 1670s and originally positioned at the most westerly point of the City. Heads of traitors were displayed on it until 1746. In 1878 it was removed from its original position due to traffic congestion and, after spending more than a century on a Hertfordshire estate, was rebuilt here in 2004.

Other notable sculptures in the square are more modern and include Elizabeth Frink's "Shepherd and Sheep", "The Wild Table of Love" by Gillie and Marc, and "The Paternoster Square Column", which is a memorial to the two great fires in 1666 and the Blitz of WWII which affected St Paul's.

We walked on through Cheapside, down Bread Street to the bustling Watling Street and Bow Lane where we saw another church designed by Wren "St Mary-le-Bow". Crossing into College Hill we saw two blue plaques commemorating Dick



Whittington. The former Lord Mayor lived here and founded the church, St Michael Paternoster Royal, where he is buried. The church has a stained-glass window of Whittington and his cat.

Nearing the end of our walk, we passed the International HQ of The Salvation Army completed in 2005. It is built using lots of glass to show openness and transparency. In contrast, opposite is the College of Arms, the 17th-century home of the royal heralds with imposing wrought iron gates.

We were too late to visit St Benet's church (another Wren church). This is sometimes known as the Welsh Church, as in 1849 Queen Victoria granted Welsh Anglicans permission to hold services here in their language.

We ended our walk at the Blackfriars Pub, where we were able to view the amazing décor with a welcome drink. What a lot of history we discovered on the grounds of this former Monastery!

Roma Elson

London Walks 2

The sun put in a welcome appearance for our exploration of Mayfair, known for being one of the most affluent areas of London, and the millionaire's playground.

We began by learning about the Grosvenor family who can trace their ancestry back a thousand years,

and how, through a marriage in the 17th century, Sir Thomas Grosvenor acquired the farmland of the manor of Ebury. Over the following century, the land was developed, wealthy people moved in and the area became the Mayfair we know today.



We observed G. F. Trumper, the long-established upmarket barber's shop where royalty and the rich and famous have had their hair cut and whiskers

trimmed.

We explored the surprisingly quiet little paved alleys of Shepherd Market, with its restaurants and small shops, where the fortnightly May Fair that gave Mayfair its name was once held.



We heard about the reputation of the area as a 'red light' district, and with reference to Jeffrey Archer, the former high-profile politician, we reminded ourselves of how a prison sentence can result if you lie in court about a liaison with a prostitute.

Mayfair was once the home of MI5, and we heard how Russian spies used to operate close by, using a lamp post as a dead letter box.

We noticed Farm House that once belonged to Lady Thelma Furness, the mistress of the then Prince of Wales in the 1930s, and heard how she lent the



property to her friend Wallis Simpson asking her to "look after David for me" while she visited her sister in the USA. We all know what happened subsequently...



We strolled down Upper Bond Street, with its up-market shops, and then had lunch at an authentic 1770s pub. Some of us couldn't help looking longingly in the Bentley showroom before we visited Berkeley Square, with its exclusive members-only clubs and wonderful Georgian architecture.



A photo opportunity with Churchill and Roosevelt



then presented itself. The “Allies” sculpture was designed to show the intimacy between the two men and was unveiled in 1995 to commemorate 50 years of peace after WW2. Then, it was a short walk

back to Piccadilly where we finished our walk.

Margaret Hall

London Walks 3

Law Courts and Fleet Street

Once again, the group took advantage of the new rail service and started our walk with a stroll up The Strand. The early April sunshine was pleasant but the temperature was cool. As with all our adventures, we started with a coffee and pastry at the excellent Ole & Steen bakery and coffee shop.

We then walked through the newly pedestrianised area top of The Strand passing the now defunct Aldwych Tube Station to the fascinating RAF church of St Clement Danes. We looked from outside Twinings Tea Shop, at the huge and imposing building of the Law Courts of Justice where many a famous person has been involved in civil cases.

A visit to the spacious gardens of Lincoln’s Inn Fields followed before moving across Fetter Lane and Fleet Street to visit the Ceramic Memorial wall of the area printing industry. This was of particular interest to me being a retired typesetter spending my working life in the industry.

After visiting several other local landmarks, the pull of food became more pressing, as is often the case with this group! The Italian Prima Sapori saved a table for our party of nine and fed us with a selection of pastas and salads.



Afterwards, we went our own ways and wandered around a sunny, colourful and busy Covent Garden meeting up later at Charing Cross station with a boisterous return journey fuelled by Italian wine!

Laurie Frowde

Makers of History

This month, we had a maritime theme, learning about three fascinating naval characters.

The first was James Lind, described by the Royal Navy as “the father of naval medicine,” for discovering the link between diet and scurvy in the 18th century. The disease caused horrendous symptoms, including potentially fatal heart problems, and ended more lives than the naval battles with France and Spain combined.

To prove his theory, Lind carried out the very first controlled clinical trials ever recorded in medical science. However, his resulting 454-page persuasive treatise wasn’t acted on by the Admiralty for 42 years, sadly a year after Lind died, when the issue of lemon juice on ships was finally made compulsory in 1795. However, it wasn’t until 1928 that vitamin C was identified as the reason why those lemons worked!



Our second subject was the Irish naval surgeon, William Beatty who, having survived many expeditions, was appointed surgeon of the flagship, Victory, and dealt with the casualties during the Battle of Trafalgar, saving many lives. However, when Nelson was wounded, Beatty decided that he was beyond treatment.



Aware that Nelson did not want to be buried at sea, Beatty famously decided to place his body in a barrel of brandy, which had to be topped up with wine in Gibraltar as the top of the barrel had come open in transit. Beatty concluded that gases from the body had caused this, rather than the brandy having been drunk by the sailors! On returning to England, Beatty removed the fatal musket ball from Nelson’s body and placed it in a locket on his watch chain which he wore for the rest of his life!

Lastly, we heard about the wonderfully named Sir Cloudesley Shovell, who first went to sea as a cabin boy aged only 13 in 1663. He had a remarkably successful career, surviving countless battles while continually rising up the ranks, eventually becoming Admiral of the Fleet. Along the way, he



accumulated considerable wealth from victorious battles and salvaging defeated enemy ships. He

became MP for Rochester in 1695, paying for various improvements in the town. His luck ran out in 1707, when his ship struck rocks in the Scilly Isles with no survivors.

Regarded as the worst disaster in maritime history, the need for improved navigation was pressing and led to John Harrison's discovery seven years later of establishing longitude. Shovell's body was discovered in Porthellick Cove, St Mary's, seven miles from where his ship was destroyed. He was temporarily buried there until he was exhumed on the orders of Queen Anne, given a state funeral and interred in Westminster Abbey.

Joan Warren

MOTO

April was a rather quiet month for MOTO. Some members enjoyed the Tulip Festival at Pashley Manor and on Sunday 23rd, five of us went to the Ringlestone Arms for a lovely Sunday Roast.

The journey out to Harrietsham could be described as wet and soggy with lots of the narrow roads flooded, but the pub was lovely and warm, with very friendly staff and delicious food. Thanks to Sarah Barker for organising this.

On Wednesday 26th, four of us entered the National u3a Zoom quiz hosted by Ayr u3a and came 7th out of 12 teams.

We would welcome any others who would like to enter this regular quiz as a team. Most of the others are from the north or Scotland. We need more representatives from the South of England!

Finally, 23 members came to our monthly meeting on Wednesday 26th.

Vivienne Lindridge

Motorcycling

On 26th April, five of us met at Newnham Court on a dry but chilly morning. After the pre-ride briefing, we set off at 10.00.

Our destination was Whitstable: we set off along the A20 to Charing, then onto Challock where we took the A251 toward Ashford.

Turning off at Boughton Aluph, we headed towards Wye, then on to the A28 to Chilham for a coffee at the farm shop. Coffee was accompanied by chickens scratching around the floor under the tables and chairs.

On the road again towards Canterbury, then cross country to Chartham Hatch. Next along Bigbury

Lane where there are remains of an iron age hill fort in Bigbury Woods. We did not stop to look but enjoyed some challenging bends coming down the hill.

Through Blean and onto Tyler Hill, then onto Chestfield and finally Whitstable Harbour.

Crab and Fish Finger Sandwiches (not in the same sandwich) and a few chips for lunch, a walk around the harbour and back on the road.

Continuing through Seasalter and along the Graveney road to Faversham, after a short run along the A2, we then turned off to Newnham and Doddington, through to Lenham, along the A20 where we finished the run outside the Great Danes Hotel.

The total ride was 85 miles - 5 hours journey time, we travelled mainly on twisty B roads and lanes, a good run to wake us up after the winter break.



A great time was had by all. Next month we are off to Hastings, date to be advised.

Bob Phillips

Pubs, Pies and Pints

The name of the pub is a little gruesome but the food and company was far from it.

We headed up onto the Downs to the Hook and Hatchet at Huckling.

How did the hostelry get its name?

Serial killers and butcher's blocks



came to mind. And the pub had a role in the 2006 Security Express heist when a van used in the raid was abandoned in its car park.

But it actually goes back to the days of sail and refers to the badge worn by a Royal Navy shipwright empowering him to order timber to be felled at any suitable site when wood was needed to repair a ship.

Maurice Chittenden

Play Reading Group 1

Desperately Seeking Men!
Having lost a few members recently we have spaces if anyone would like to join us. We would especially welcome some more men.

We meet on the second Wednesday of the month, in the afternoon, at a member's house, and read a 2 or 3-act play each time.

This month just five of us covered the 10 parts of Verdict by Agatha Christie, which kept us guessing what was going to happen right up until the last minute. Not her usual sort of thing but exciting nonetheless.

If you are interested, please get in touch with Gill Bridge at gillybridge@yahoo.co.uk

Helen Turner

Play Reading 2

This month we read "If I Were You" by Alan Ayckbourn. It certainly gave our brains a jolly good workout, as the plot entailed complete role reversals!

Jill and Mal have lost the spark in their marriage, their son resents his father and their daughter Chrissy has recently become a mum and is dealing with her own marriage issues.

One morning Jill and Mal wake up to find they have switched personas, Mal in Jill's body and Jill in Mal's. They try to continue life as normal as their other half. Jill has to work with her son-in-law as a store manager. While Mal has suddenly become a housewife.

The family learns secrets about each other and has to see things from the other side. Does it save the family or make matters worse? That was the intriguing question!

At times comedic at others insightful, giving plenty of food for thought. Certainly different from anything we've read before.

Esme Streatfield

Rock and Pop

This month several members met informally at Costa, and there was some interest in an upcoming tribute band concert. Weather dependent the next meeting could be at Denise's.

David White

Short walks

Twenty-one members took part in our walk this month. We were lucky to have a lovely bright sunny day, although it was quite chilly, and there was still some mud around after the previous week's heavy rain.

We met at Spadework on Teston Road, Offham. We walked



across the fields to Fartherwell Road, admiring the beautifully laid out salad crops at Betts Farm, and took time to listen to the skylarks which nest in that area.

We crossed through to St Leonards Tower in West Malling, skirted the lake in Manor Park, and then walked past West Malling church, down Churchfields and Fartherwell Avenue, before crossing the fields back to Offham.

We then split into two groups. One took the slightly shorter route straight back to Spadework. The other group walked on a bit further to go by Offham Church and then through the woods back to the centre of Offham.

We all met back at Spadework for coffee/tea and an early lunch for some. It was also good to have time to browse the Charity's Garden Centre, Farm Shop and Gift Shop before it started to rain again.

Jill Rutland

Theatre Group

We have spent the last couple of weeks formulating our visit to the spectacular presentation ABBA Voyage on July 10th. I have managed, with some difficulty, to fill a 32-seat minibus as this is a difficult venue to get to.

However, another 11 members are making their own way there. Our London Theatre visits are always "make your own way to the venue" but this is a one-off.

Moving forward the next offering in early June is The Mousetrap, an



Agatha old chestnut celebrating its 73rd year in London.

As always, if any members would like to join the group and receive information and invitations to London matinee shows at attractive reduced prices, please email me at folderspring@tiscali.co.uk

Laurie Frowde

10-Pin Bowling

Four of us bowled in April. The next meeting has been booked for Wednesday, 3rd May, at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone - 3 Games for £9.

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

Roy Simpson

Village Visits 1

On a very wet morning, 21 of us explored the pretty village of Farningham, which has been a popular place to live since neolithic times owing to its fertile soil, plentiful fish in the river and good grazing land. It is now home to an impressive total of 46 listed buildings and structures.

The Romans had farms and manor houses in Farningham, and following the Norman Conquest, the nobleman, Wadard, was granted a manor here by William the Conqueror's brother. A direct copy from the Bayeux Tapestry of Wadard triumphant astride his horse is prominent on the village sign.



Farningham has had its share of 'goodies' and 'baddies.' The unpopular Ralph de Freningham narrowly escaped assassination here at the time of the Peasants' Revolt in the 14th century. The MP and JP William Isley was named as one of the four great extortioners of Kent for blatantly abusing his office and was hunted down and murdered in a bedroom at the vicarage here during Jack Cade's Rebellion. In the 16th century, however, Anthony Roper, a grandson of Sir Thomas More, was a great benefactor, setting up a charity for the needy of the village, a charity which still exists today.

It was surprising to learn that Farningham Airfield was situated less than two miles from the centre of the village. Set up during World War I, it was one of ten airfields in a ring around London to provide a

first line of defence. Two biplanes and their pilots were stationed here and on constant alert.

Among the church's many interesting features is the impressive West Window, which replaced the one blown out during World War II. Dedicated in 1954, Charles I kneels opposite Queen Elizabeth II in the very first example of her depicted on stained glass. The very fine stained glass Winston Window was painted in the 19th century by the son of the vicar when he was a mere 18 years old.



An artwork, *The Cross*, created entirely out of words by Tom Phillips, a prolific award-winning artist who only died last year, hangs on the east wall.

A famous hymn writer, Marianne Farningham (née Mary Ann Hearn), lived in a cottage on the High Street. Denied an education other than bible lessons from her pious parents, she escaped a life of drudgery to become one of the very few women authors from the working class. She also wrote poems and biographies, including those of David Livingstone, Grace Darling and Queen Victoria. William Bligh, of Mutiny on the Bounty fame once lived in the Manor House, near where an old World War I tank later stood for many years on the verge as a tribute to its designer, Major W G Wilson CMG, who had lived in the village.

After admiring the thoughtful renovation project transforming the old water mill into modern housing, we finished our visit with lunch at the Lion Pub, which has been central to the village and a popular entertainment spot since the 16th century.

Jennifer Parietti

Village Visits 2

Goudhurst was our visit for April led by Maurice and Janet.

Starting with coffee at the Star and Eagle, we began by seeing a group of weavers' cottages which stand opposite St.Mary's church on a hill with lovely views over the surrounding countryside.



Smuggling was known in the area by a notorious gang called the Hawkhurst Gang. Its leader, Thomas Kingsmill, who following the battle of Goudhurst in 1747, was caught and executed with his body being hung in chains in the village.

We all retreated to the pub for a well-deserved lunch.

Gordon Grimshaw

Wine Appreciation 2

We have all watched Saturday Kitchen or read articles pairing wine with a certain recipe. Do we always agree? No! So at our last meeting, we welcomed everyone to 'Viva Vino Ventures' where Vic and I had produced our own 'programme' using TV visuals, our suggested recipes, with our recommendations of wines that paired.



The picture here is the roast seafood.

We had researched well, cooking and testing recipes and trying wines over the last couple of months. We enjoyed that immensely and changed a few of our original ideas.

To our immense relief, the evening was a huge success. We told the group about the wine, showed a picture of the meal on the TV and had tasters on the table of the sauces or main ingredients along with a few other Tapas to give a genuine feel of the

suitability. Scores were required for the wine quality and value for money and a separate score for the way it complemented the flavours of the dish.

It was a very close result. When the scores were combined there were only 4 points between them all. Coming equal 4th with 120 was the Pouilly-Fume 2022 which accompanied the Seafood Roast, and the Crozes Hermitage 2020 with the Spiced Roast Chicken dish. Scraping through to 2nd with 121 points it was the Faustino VII with Sausage Hotpot.

Our winning combination however was our cheapest, the Vino Verde from Aldi at just £4.99, served with Fish and Tomato Stew (though we only had the tomato and pepper sauce to taste) It scored 124 points and would have been equally good with the seafood roast and most Tapas dishes. It was declared excellent both in terms of quality, value for money and pairing. One person had found the wine not to his taste until he tasted it with food. A great result for us.

The exciting thing for me was that we shared ideas for adapting food to personal taste and seasonality and shared culinary tips. Everyone was given paperwork with the recipes and wine details and there were promises of trying them out.

All in all, everyone agreed it had been a very enjoyable evening and a very different theme. We are looking forward to our usual great night at Sheila and Terry's next month.

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 £10), which also includes membership in the Special Interest Groups. Guests may attend monthly meetings for a maximum of three visits, at no charge, prior to becoming full members.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

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

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

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

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

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

KHaD u3a Committee

Officers:

Chairman	Melanie Blewer
Vice Chairman	Elaine Scutt
Treasurer	David Murray
Business Secretary	Janet McKenner
Membership	Mark Richards

Other Roles:

Groups Co-ordinator	Elaine Scutt
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)

March 2023

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



Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear members,

The u3a is a mix of many talents and ideas, views and experiences. This u3a collective provides many opportunities to do new things and find common ground with new people.

The Trust works very hard to include everyone in what we are doing and to build our approach based on what you have to say. Over the last year we have had many ideas put to us which we have taken up.

The newsletter offers a really good opportunity to reach members in u3a and we would like to enable as many people as possible to receive it and add their voices and ideas to the future. If any of you would be kind enough to pass on the newsletter to your u3a friends or colleagues and ask them if they would be interested in signing up through the u3a website, I would really appreciate it.

Finally I wish you a great month ahead, and hope you enjoy the coronation weekend, whether you are enjoying celebrations or simply enjoying some peace and quiet on an extra bank holiday.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

News from the Trust



Swansea u3a member Marian shares her favourite Welsh words

Following on from our Learn Something Brilliant Today film with Lynn last month, Marian from the same Swansea u3a Welsh Conversation group is sharing her favourite Welsh words she's learnt in a new film.

A transcript of the film is below:

"A favorite Welsh word? Yes. It's the word which means roundabout, and it is chwyrligwgan. (laughs)

I've been a member of u3a ever since I retired, which is now seven years. The benefits of this group is that it is a conversational group where the focus isn't on the correct Welsh at all times. And I think the language of the community is that type of Welsh, not literary Welsh.

A knowledge of the language, even a limited knowledge of the language, does help you to gain a deeper understanding of the culture of Wales.

Words in Welsh, which people would talk about, include cwtch, which is just sort of a cuddle, and hiraeth, which is a longing. It's usually used in terms of a longing for Wales.

I think we've all grown in confidence, you know, but everyone was always so encouraging and appreciated the efforts which everyone was making that we have become good friends, and I thoroughly recommend u3a groups to anyone who is interested – in any subject."

u3a members' favourite recipes

u3a members shared their go-to recipes with us, and how they would adjust them to make them fit for a King. This was in response to our u3a Cook for the King competition – the winner of which will be revealed early next month. Until then, here is a recipe from Dunmow u3a member, Amanda:



"I was introduced to a recipe some 20 years ago by a friend, simply called Tarragon Chicken – which she made with turkey as it was cheaper than chicken at the time, and with the strong tarragon taste nobody guessed.

I still make this dish today especially whenever we are entertaining guests as it goes a long way. It is one of the family's favourites still and so easy to put together with just five ingredients.

To make it suitable for the coronation, I would call it 'Tarragon Chic-king."

News from the Board

Allan Walmsley, Vice- Chair of the Third Age Trust

Whilst Chair of the Third Age Trust, Liz Thackray, is taking a well-deserved holiday, here are a few thoughts from me.

It's clear from speaking with a few former colleagues that there's much more going on in and around the Trust than ever before. Bringing the movement up to date, ensuring that u3as and their members are supported more effectively, and providing members with a range of opportunities expected in a modern voluntary organisation, are all competing with limited financial, staff and volunteer resources. Whilst we try to prioritise and focus on what we think is required, it's almost inevitable that in an organisation of 400,000 members there are lots of different views. **The Trust has been working hard in the last few months to improve the information flow and to build a greater listening culture.** However, we need to have more conversations and get more feedback to help us make the right decisions in the future.

In the meantime, I'm delighted to welcome four new Trustees to the Board – **Karen Green for Wales, Jean Jackson for West Midlands, John Lewis for East Midlands and Stella Morris for London.** We are looking forward to them settling in and making a big impact on the movement.

Finally, look out for more information about the u3a Council. Whilst in its infancy at the moment, this could become the new voice for u3as and networks. Let's see how the Council works during the pilot phase, and then we can decide whether it deserves a permanent place in the movement.

Your Stories

During Lockdown I saw an article in Third Age Matters from Ruth, the u3a Subject Adviser for Fashion. I decided I would like to set up a fashion group here in Kenilworth. I contacted Ruth for advice and it was very helpful.

Our group started in September 2021 and we meet once a month. Topics include: wearing clothes from charity/vintage shops, decluttering our wardrobe, choosing accessories, the psychology of clothes and the symbolism of colour.

June, Kenilworth u3a



Our Impact

This week Harriet, our Policy Officer, attended a parliamentary event to support the call for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing. Harriet joined MPs and representatives of over 70 organisations who signed the statement last month.

9 out of 10 people over the age of 65 support the creation of a Commissioner and for the UK to become the best place to grow old.



Spotlight On:

Jenny, Abbeywood & Thamesmead u3a



I changed my life out of all recognition at age 60, by becoming a 'silver splitter'. My husband of 39 years and I decided to divorce, amicably.

I had no strong ties in the area we'd been living in for 15 years, and was tired of my full-time job.

After taking early retirement, I decided to move to London. After moving, I was looking for all sorts of things to do.

I was lucky enough to get involved in a u3a Shared Learning Project, where we were photographing the conservation of the Painted Hall at the Royal Naval College. The project went on for over two years and there were eight of us. I had not long got into photography so we weren't chosen for the fact that we had good equipment or lots of experience; we were chosen for our enthusiasm. It gave me renewed confidence in my photographic skills. I also met a lot of new people through that project.


A couple of years later, I moved a little bit and I switched to Abbeywood & Thamesmead u3a. I tend to go to the games sessions now and the meetings. I have been teaching people to play cribbage, which I love. Getting to know people in the local area has been a real benefit.

Looking back, I think I was quite brave to make so many changes. It turned out to be the right decision for me, as I now have a part-time job I enjoy, am living with a new partner, and thoroughly enjoy semi-retirement.

Headline photos: Harpenden u3a showcasing the benefits of the u3a movement at Harpenden Seniors' Fair; an Easter themed post-box topper created by the Creative Crafts group at Eastwood & District u3a; Totton South u3a's Skills Day where they encouraged members to come along and try different groups, including Hand Massage.

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