

Chair's Report

Amidst the colours of autumn, we have found much colour within our u3a....

Colourful entertainment....

Once again, Tony Harris, in his colourful outfit as Hercule Poirot, kept us well entertained with stories about Agatha Christie. The monthly meeting had a record turnout of 178 members and guests.

Colourful sculptures....

I spent a gloriously sunny day with my London Walks Group visiting the fascinating area of Trinity Buoy Wharf near Canning Town. We had great views across to The Millennium Dome and enjoyed

looking at the colourful sculptures on display in the area.



Colourful exhibits....

I also enjoyed the visit to the Mini Plant at Oxford, organised by Jeanne Couch for the Events Team. It was unfortunate that the robots weren't working on the day that I visited....however, there was still lots to see and learn about the whole fascinating process.



The exhibits in the museum were also fascinating, and my

particular favourite was the striped Mini Cooper designed by musician Paul Weller.

And finally....

On Sunday 12th November, I shall once again be representing KHaD u3a by laying a wreath at the statue of The Running Airman at Kings Hill Community Centre. There is a Remembrance Service being held from about 10.00am in the vicinity and I look forward to seeing some of you there on the day.

Melanie Blewer

Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 2nd November 2023 at 2pm
MIKE BEAN

The Work of a Magistrate

As a retired Magistrate, Mike will keep us fascinated with anecdotes and stories of his varied and at times scary experiences.

December Monthly Meeting

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

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

Events Calendar 2023

December 5th - Christmas Meal plus Entertainment

Deborah Langworthy

u3a 2024 Pocket Diary (only £4, incl. P&P)

Time to think of planning for next year with the new u3a 2024 Diary.

A great asset to keep on top of all of your u3a Activities, Meetings and Events, and of course, birthdays, anniversaries and private appointments. Also, a great stocking filler for Xmas!!



Please can you let me know if you require one, or more, of these sought-after items as soon as possible, as I plan to do one order by mid to late November so that they will be available to collect at the December meeting, or from my home address. Thanks.

David Murray, Treasurer

Science for Grandparents

The third “Science for Grandparents” session was held on October 11th at Brenda and Philip’s house and garden in Birling. It was not a lecture but a session for grandparents to try out experiments which they could then do with their grandchildren.

One of the favourites was to weigh one of Phil’s giant Kelsae onions, then find the volume and predict whether it would float or sink. The giant went up to its neck before floating. One photo



shows Frank and Lisa Dean weighing the onion. The weighing equipment is useful for children as it involves sliding hundreds, tens and units weights on

scales rather than electronic measurement. A cylindrical can of beans sank but a cubical can of tuna floated. Another favourite was to find which objects conducted electricity in a simple circuit, as shown by a bulb lighting. The grandparents were not surprised to find that a spoon, a metal coffee pot and a silver model otter all conducted but some were surprised that salt water, vinegar and a pencil sharpened at both ends all conducted. An experiment which children would enjoy was started by mashing up plant parts in water to extract the colour. Items used were purple petunia petals, blackberries, beetroot juice and red dahlia petals. The resulting solution was then divided into two parts with vinegar (acidic) added to one half and baking powder (alkaline in solution) to the other. The point was to find which plant part showed the strongest contrast in colour between acid and alkaline solutions. Petunia petals were the best.

Barry Evans, the cycling group convenor, tried a powerlifting exercise. He did a shoulder press with a 4kg. weight to find how many times he could lift it in 30 seconds. The outcome was to find that 50 Barrys would equal the power of a horse. One witty grandparent said that if fifty Barrys pulled a cart up

Kingshill Avenue it would cause a traffic disturbance. Lisa also tried this experiment.



In the other photo, Barry is holding a model Alsatian aloft. He found this in the hedge border by following a compass bearing.

Brenda Pretty, from the hostess team, showed some experiments to show optical illusions. In one, a hole in your hand appeared as though you had been shot through the middle of the hand. The witty grandparent said he hoped the chocolate biscuits did not disappear at the next monthly meeting.

Sue Andrews took the photos and joined in with the experiments. A fourth session could be held if there is enough interest. Tell Phil or Brenda at the next monthly meeting.

Philip Pretty

BMW Mini Plant Tour

Thirty members left Kent on 17th October to travel to the BMW Mini Plant in Oxfordshire stopping off for a lunch break at the lovely Waterperry Gardens where the “everything homemade” lived up to expectations.

We had allowed enough time in case of hold-ups on the M25/M40 to relax and explore although not enough time for the acres of gorgeous gardens. But what an amazing time lay in wait for us as we arrived in what seemed a futuristic World of Robots at Mini which put together the cars at speeds no man could match.

First a visit to the Mini Museum which held glorious old versions of the Mini and also famous ones used in films. The much-awaited glimpse of the



manufacturing was nigh and we were given hi-viz jackets, listening devices and protective glasses.

After an introduction to the safety rules, we boarded a coach to drive through high security to the Robot Cell.

What we saw was incredible!

Over 900 Minis are produced each day by these robots! The robots work 20 hours in 24. Humans feed the machines with the necessary parts working two shifts in 20 hours.

We then were taken to the assembly cell where more humans worked alongside the robots completing the task in unreal time. The paint shop is not accessible on the tour as it has to remain sterile but is capable of spraying a different colour every next car.

We were not allowed cameras in the plant itself but I imagine the memories will stay with us for a very long time

Jeanne Couch

Esme Streatfield's Garden

An article championing Esme's garden was recently featured in the Daily Mirror (Thursday, 5th October).



Well done, Esme!

Elaine Scutt

Groups Coordinator

All credit must go to group leaders and their members! So many choices and so many opportunities.

I have recently used those opportunities to dip into new interests with great success, and I'd encourage every member to try something new whilst continuing in the groups you enjoy. All our group leaders are so welcoming, and if they are unable to accommodate you, I'm sure you will pass on your details to me to see if a new group can be formed. Remember you are always able to 'test the water' before committing to more regular attendance, and your company will always add to the dimension of the group.

The following groups are just waiting to welcome you:

NORDIC WALKING - short gentle walks all taken with your health in mind

PLAY READING - enjoy plays selected monthly to suit the group - AND cake!

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY - capture memories and share them with good friends

I may not know you yet, but my most important message today is asking you to completely forget possible responsibilities of the past. Get involved, feel secure in good company, volunteer when you can and notice that smile creeping over you when you realise how important to our u3a you really are.

We all rely on each other.

Kathy Booyesen

Lunch Club

The next official Lunch Club meeting will be on Friday, 8th December when we will have our Christmas Lunch at Kings Hill Golf Club. Please let June Rose know as usual if you would like to join us. We will meet for lunch at 12.30pm to enjoy a Christmas Carvery. Phone June on 01634 240655, or email junerose43@btinternet.com. A booking fee of £10 will be required and June will deal with this until she can be reimbursed by those wishing to attend.

June Rose

News from our Groups

Book Group 2

For the last year, members have chosen between two books per month - one classic and one modern. Here are the books we've discussed in order of popularity together with our average scores for those books (out of ten).

- The Road Home*, Rose Tremain, 9.5
- The Way We Live Now*, Anthony Trollope, 9
- The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot, 8.8
- 1984*, George Orwell, 8.7
- The Salt Path*, Raynor Winn, 8.5
- The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas, 8.25
- The Seven Sisters*, Lucinda Riley, 8.2
- Snap*, Belinda Bauer, 8.1
- Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont*, Elizabeth Taylor, 8
- Of Human Bondage*, Somerset Maugham, 8
- A Tale for the Time Being*, Ruth Ozeki, 8
- Small Island*, Andrea Levy, 8
- Dear Mrs Bird*, AJ Pearce, 8
- Disgrace*, JM Coetzee, 7.7
- The Night Watch*, Sarah Waters, 7.6
- I Capture the Castle*, Dodie Smith, 7.5
- Human Traces*, Sebastian Faulks, 7.5
- The Muse*, Jessie Burton, 7.2

The Sun Also Rises, Ernest Hemingway, 7
The Old Wives Tale, Arnold Bennett, 7
Our Man in Havana, Graham Greene, 7
Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe, 7
The Essex Serpent, Sarah Perry, 6.25

This coming year, we are going back to just one book per month, alternating classic and modern. If a member doesn't want to read the nominated book, they are invited to share their appreciation of a book they have been reading that month.

Caroline Slater

Classic Vehicle Appreciation

During our October meeting, we were given a very informative presentation on the History of London Taxi.

Hackney carriages were the oldest form of taxi hire in England from 1621, that is a year before the Mayflower sailed to America. They evolved from 4- to 2-wheeled horse-drawn carriages known as the Hansom Cab. This proved very popular resulting in 11,000 of them in use in London. Together with horse-drawn buses and commercial transport, there were a staggering 50,000 horses



immersing London in horse manure and all its associated health concerns. This problem was solved by the introduction of rather unreliable electric-powered cabs in 1901, followed by petrol and diesel-powered taxis. The current rate of taxi fares was discussed, as was the 4-year stringent knowledge test that all taxi drivers must pass, and their possible annual earnings. Photos of driver shelters were shown, these now being listed buildings. Currently, the Uber taxi is a very popular competitor that can be called from an App on a mobile phone. The current modern London Taxi, built in Coventry, is electric-powered, has wheelchair access and costs £63,000. No welding is used, just glue that is supposedly stronger and is used in modern aircraft design - remember that the next time you fly! It has a turning circle of 60% as opposed to the normal 30%, this being introduced in order to turn vehicles around in the Savoy Hotel courtyard. These taxis drive for 80 miles fully electric and have a 300-mile range when the petrol engine switches in to charge the battery.

Richard Bowles

Digital Photography 2

Our first photo this month for the subject "Strange" was taken at the Battersea Power Station in the lift looking up the inside of the chimney. When you go to the top there is a fantastic view across London and you are 109m above ground level.

From the 1930s to the 1980s Battersea Power Station was a working power station. At its peak, it supplied a fifth of London's power including the



Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. Originally the chimneys were to be square rather than circular. During the



war, the RAF used the white vapour plumes to guide them home in the mist. The launch of BBC2 was delayed by 24 hours because of an electrical failure across London. In 1980 it was awarded Grade II Listed status. It closed in 1983 and was redeveloped in 2012.

One of our members was on a London walk and saw this sculpture of a hand on the rocks.



For "Amusing" a member saw the toys hanging out to dry on a neighbour's washing line. Perhaps they were getting spruced up for a picnic in the

woods. I hope they have all been good and can enjoy their holiday

My daughter has Covid for the second time and says it is far worse than the first time. So, take care out there, it's still about.

Brenda Powell

Digital Photography 3

I haven't put anything about our Photo Group in the Newsletter for several months, so this is a bit of a catch-up and update on how we're going along.



For the July meeting the topics were 'Food & Drink' and the letter 'N'. The photos covered 'Food and Drink' in some detail, ranging from freshly prepared meals to



freshly dug new potatoes. The subjects for the letter 'N' covered buildings, scenery, flowers and even managed a New York cop car.

In August we had a morning out as a group in Tonbridge, taking photos around the castle, sports ground and streets to the west of the High Street. The group viewed the photos at our meeting in September. There was a good selection of photos with a gold-finished Range Rover proving a very



popular subject.

For October the topics were 'Feet & Footwear' and the 'Outside of Historic Buildings'. The 'Feet & Footwear' concentrated on the footwear with only a few photos of real feet and some of the feet of sculptures. 'Outside of Historic Buildings' ranged across history from ancient Rome, through the medieval and renaissance periods to Victorian and some modern notable buildings.



For November the topics are 'Abstract' and 'Boats/Ships'. 'Abstract' will give us the opportunity to use unusual camera settings and post-processing software – the outcomes should be interesting.

With the four photos here, I've tried to capture the range of subjects covered.

If anyone is thinking of joining a photo group, we have room for a couple more members. We meet on the morning of the first Wednesday of the month. Please contact Kathy Booyesen (Groups Coordinator) for details.

Robin Trow

Contract Whist

Seventeen of us played this month so Lin and Mike shared the session and quite by chance ended with the highest overall total of 156.

The best successful declaration was 6 with Peter achieving this twice and Janet Poulton once.

What happened to John Poulton this month? He'll doubtless say he was stale having not played in September!!!!

Michael Martin

Don't Get Me Started

The topic chosen for the first hour was 'Should assisted dying be made legal?'

Assisted dying also known as mercy killing or euthanasia is putting to death of another individual to end their suffering from a painful medical condition or illness.

The Law as it stands in England, Wales and Northern Ireland states assisting suicide is a crime and the law in the UK prevents dying people from asking for medical help to die.

MP Andrew Mitchell believes that there is growing support among MPs for a change in the law after parliament previously voted against it.

Currently, euthanasia is illegal and could be prosecuted as murder or manslaughter under Section 13 of the Criminal Justice Act 1966.

We have had the Liverpool Care Pathway for some 10 years till 2014 whereby people had some 29 hours to say their goodbyes in a hospital, hospice or community setting. This came to an abrupt end as, for one, The Daily Mail brought to our attention the increasing number of deaths using the pathway.

The main reason for the end was the lack of communication with the individuals, healthcare professionals and relatives. Baroness Neuberger cited the overuse of drugs in the care pathway to speed up the deaths thus vacating beds and for financial reasons within Trusts.

Currently, there is the 'Individual Care Plan' in place which is to promote more patient involvement in their dying process. Nevertheless, there are an increasing number of Brits with means who access

Dignitas as the current plan does not meet their needs.

The majority in the group had their own life experiences to support the 'For' or 'Against' view of assisted dying. A vote was taken and 6 were for and 3 against. As a group, we are likely to revisit this highly charged topic as many members were absent at the meeting and voiced their interest/participation.

As the former Public Prosecutor, Sir Kier Starmer stated, "We have arrived in a position where compassionate, amateur assistance from nearest and dearest is accepted but professional medical assistance is not". Here within is an injustice that we have trapped ourselves in the current laws as they deny dying people a meaningful choice over how they die.

Angelene Rothwell

Easy Singing

We finally launched cd7 which was very well accepted by our members. Joy has told me she has lined up cd8 for launching next year sometime - she doesn't hang about! Anyone who would like to see our group at play can just turn up at our next session on 3rd November at 10.30 in Nettlestead Village Hall; plenty of parking and free tea or coffee and biscuits. Beverly, Joy and I would be very pleased to welcome you as would our other members.

Gaynor Trevett

Full Day Walks

With the boss away on a sabbatical, seven of us ventured out on a 10-mile circular starting from Penshurst.

We crossed the Medway over the Packhorse Bridge at its junction with the Eden and followed a gentle climb through Swaylands to the 16th-century Poundsbridge Manor. This was built in 1593 by the Durtnall brothers for their father William, who was Rector of Penshurst until 1596. Apparently the somewhat garbled inscription 'ETA 69' indicates that he was 69 when the house was finished. It was



later sold and subsequently divided to become a tavern for a while. A stray WW2 bomb

extensively damaged the building, which coincidentally was then restored by Durtnells, a local building firm, to give the now Grade II listed residence. The climb got a little steeper as we cut around the back of Speldhurst where we stopped for nibbles and a drink whilst taking in the views back down the valley we had just left and forward to our target for lunch near the windmill (albeit sans sails) visible on Bidborough Ridge. Skirting the back of Southborough Common we emerged from the woods into glorious sunshine again to have our



picnic under the watchful eye of the minion, Lance! With the hard work over we walked further along the ridge to get a panoramic view across the Medway Valley to the Greensand Ridge before descending to Haysden and then climbing over the newly extended flood barrier to the west of Tonbridge. Upon return to Penshurst, we retired to the Leicester Arms for a well-earned drink and a homemade sausage roll.

Neil Whittall

Next month, on 14th November, we propose starting on The King Harold Way, the path he followed on his fateful route march to get 'one in the eye' from 'Bill the Conqueror' at Battle. It comprises 10 sections each of about 10 miles at a reasonable pace from Westminster to Battle, which we will attempt on the first Tuesday of each month.

If you would like to join us, contact me.

Richard Boules

Half-Day Walks 1

We commenced our walk on a lovely sunny morning at Teston Church. Our walk took us down Love Lane in Wateringbury to the historic old mill pond with its ducks and resident heron. On our way, we viewed an old pill box and part of the Pluto oil pipeline which supplied the Allied invasion of Normandy during the Second World



War. From here we took the scenic route along Old Road with its picturesque cottages and rural views. Our walk then took us down country footpaths up past Kings Hill Golf Course and round to Cannon Lane. From here we walked through a vineyard with stunning views over adjoining countryside. We then recommenced our walk back to the village of Teston. Our total walk was just over 5 miles, after which we enjoyed a pleasant lunch at The North Pole, Wateringbury.

Fay Leahy

Journey Challenges

Tonbridge was our latest journey challenge. The town was recorded in the Domesday Book. Until 1870, the town's name was *Tunbridge* as shown on old maps including the 1871 Ordnance Survey but this was changed to *Tonbridge* by the GPO due to confusion with nearby Tunbridge Wells.



We discovered the Tonbridge School, the famous public school, was established in 1552 under letters patent of Edward VI, to educate the sons of local gentry and farmers (There was already a nearby school in existence for poorer boys, now Sevenoaks School.)

After our arrival and having coffee, we visited the castle finding an art exhibition in progress. This had some lovely pictures on show. We had a walk around the shopping areas and were surprised to find many charity shops, as well-known shops have disappeared.

We did think about doing a river walk or the Jane Austen walk but the weather was very cold on our visit and rain appeared, so after a quick lunch we finished our journey challenge and headed home.

Pat Bell

London Walks 1

Visit to Salters Livery Company

Fourteen of our group visited the Salters Hall, home of the 9th-ranked Livery Company.

Our walk leader, Ian, told us that the livery companies were set up like the medieval trade guilds as mutual assurance standards for members and their customers. The Companies were granted Royal Charters, and all had a charitable side to help

their members in need. The charitable and philanthropic activities of each livery company are the most important part of their work today as some companies such as The Longbow Makers are trades that no longer exist.

The top 12 Great livery companies were ranked by The Lord Mayor of London in



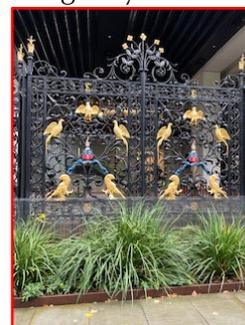
1515. There are now 111 livery companies listed, the latest, The Worshipful Company of Nurses was established in 2023.

There are 40 livery halls in the city, and they house the company treasures and are used for company business and many private events.

Our walk took us passed The Draper Hall, which was holding one such Private event, then The Carpenters Hall with its impressive Carved doorway. We then went on to The Salters Hall where we had a tour.

The Salters company is the 9th-ranked livery company which indicates how important salt was when it was established in 1394. Today it also incorporates the Chemical Industry.

The current Salters Hall (their seventh building) was completed in 1976 to a design by brutalist architect Sir Basil Spence with interiors designed by David Hicks. This Grade II listed building underwent an award-winning restoration in 2016 to make the front of the building more attractive in London Wall Place gardens. These gardens also display the



wrought iron gates of the company and a part of the original London Wall.



Having admired the impressive entrance area, we went up to the 5th floor where we saw the Foyer with its large collection of silver salts, portraits of the Grand Masters

and a large sculpture of rock salt.



More treasures were on show in the Court Room, Private Dining Room and in the

Main Hall with its impressive acoustics. Our extensive tour had taken longer than expected so we completed our walk with a brisk journey to our lunch venue.

Roma Elson

London Walks 4

“The Four B’s walk: Bridge, Buddha, Battersea and Brewer”

This walk was planned some months ago but the rail strikes played havoc with our group’s schedule. As the majority of the walk hinged around Battersea Park, we needed good weather to ensure success and oh my, were we lucky, Friday, 6th October was just perfect!

Battersea Park and Power Station have been comprehensively described by LW group 3 in last month’s newsletter. Yes, it seems we were pipped at the post, so I’ll just mention a few highlights from our day.

On arrival at Victoria Station Keith had decided to try the “itsu” Asian-inspired fast-food shop for our light refreshments. Not the normal u3a coffee and pastry sort of place but it did result in us seeing the British Pullman train preparing to depart. Passengers, many wearing 1940’s style outfits were boarding to appropriate mood music provided by a trio of young lady singers. Free live entertainment and we hadn’t even left the station!



A short bus ride delivered us to Albert

Bridge and to the introduction of our guest speaker, David Spragg. His career as a civil engineer just happened to involve working on the strengthening of Albert Bridge. What are the odds of having an expert in our group?

A few facts from David:

Commissioned by Prince Albert and designed by architectural engineer Rowland Mason Ordish construction began in 1870. Ordish used his own patented design for a suspension bridge with inclined stays.

Ordish’s design was plagued with problems from the start and it quickly gained the name of ‘The Trembling Lady’ as severe vibrations were caused when large numbers of people crossed the bridge at once. With Chelsea Barracks nearby troops

were asked to break-step when marching across the bridge.

I joined the GLC in 1967 to work with the Planning and Transportation Dept. in 1970 as a civil/structural engineer and was part of the team to investigate the vibrations felt as caused by traffic on the bridge. The result was to install the new 2 concrete piers and together with new beams spanning between the existing piers and new piers, the bridge became a spanning beam bridge as seen today as against a suspension bridge.

The Albert and Tower Bridges, are the only bridges spanning the Thames that have retained their original form and are considered by many as one of the most attractive examples of Victorian architecture in London.

After crossing the “trembling lady” and entering Battersea Park we headed for the English Garden, hidden away this is a real gem, with plenty of plants still in flower, lily ponds and ornaments including a sundial, an hour slow, still on GMT. Our walk in the park continued to Battersea Power Station via the Buddhist Peace Pagoda. It’s a rather splendid walk along the riverside with views of the cityscape and Chelsea on the opposite embankment.

We gathered on the coal wharf at the Power Station by which time we felt we had definitely earned our lunch. Regrettably, our original plan “A” to eat in the Battersea Micro Brewery wasn’t an option, having changed the booking several times they were unable/reluctant to accommodate us.



Onward to the north entrance of the Power Station to an exhibition of its history and its transformation to a very upmarket shopping mall, then time for plan “B” - the Arcade Food Hall. This 24,000 square foot space, houses a 500-cover food hall, offering 13 different cuisines so it was indeed quite an experience. The thing is, it’s super modern, you need to scan a QR code to see any of the menus and then order from your smartphone which must be linked to your credit card in order to pay. True to say that in our group of 12, there were mixed feelings about the experience. Had it not been for a very helpful young man who assisted with proceedings, we could well have starved, but once food and refreshments arrived, a favourable mood was restored to all present.

Our visit concluded with a wander around the rest of the Power Station and our second live music treat of the day. BoogieWoogie Piano from Dr K (Brendan Kavanagh) a chap who is famous for his impromptu sessions in public buildings (if you are interested take a look on YouTube). BoogieWoogie proved too much to resist for some of the group who eagerly demonstrated their dance moves!!

Bill Burr & Keith Booyesen

Makers of History

This month we welcomed Mike Nash, as a guest speaker from the Military History Group, who gave us an extremely interesting and informative talk on the little-known Thomas Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dundonald, who arguably deserves the same fame as Nelson.

Born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, in 1775 into a wealthy family, he was enlisted into the Navy at age



5, an illegal but common practice intended to hasten his promotion through the ranks of the Navy, leading to him attaining the position of Acting

Lieutenant at the age of only 20 in 1795. As he rose up the ranks gaining remarkable seamanship skills, there followed a string of victories, where his ship evaded capture, often by far larger enemy vessels owing to Cochrane using various strategies and ruses, often of his own invention. In just one year, he defeated 53 enemy ships and disrupted Napoleon's supply lines. Such was his ingenuity and success that Napoleon named him "the Wolf of the Seas". Despite this, he was a controversial figure in Britain, being unafraid to speak his mind and criticise his superiors, which led at one time to a reprimand and being court-martialled.

Popular with the public, he stood for Parliament and became an MP for Honiton in 1806, but his radical views alienated him from many of those in government and he was convicted, with only circumstantial evidence, of being a conspirator in the Great Stock Exchange Fraud of 1814, resulting in him spending time in prison and being stripped of his knighthood and naval rank. It took 33 years for him to finally clear his name when it was proved that the evidence against him had been fabricated.

In 1817, with his reputation tarnished in Britain, Cochrane assisted Chile in its battle for independence from the Spanish. He was made a

Chilean citizen and given command of the Chilean navy, after which his adventures in South America continued when he went on to assist Peru and then Brazil in its campaign for independence from Portugal. He later returned to Europe to help the Greeks in their war fighting for independence from the Ottoman Empire. He returned to Britain in 1830 when the war ended in a victory for Greece.

Married with six children, surprisingly, Cochrane's family frequently accompanied him on his potentially perilous foreign exploits, although he and his wife later separated.

Following his father's death in 1831, Cochrane inherited his peerage, and 15 years later his knighthood was finally restored owing to the intervention of Queen Victoria. He died in 1860, aged 84, during surgery for kidney stones, and is interred in Westminster Abbey.

He is the inspiration behind the Hornblower books by C S Forester and Patrick O'Brian's books, notably *Master and Commander*.

Joan Warren

MOTO

On Sunday 15th October, Jenny arranged for a mixed group of members of Malling District MOTO and Kings Hill MOTO to spend an enjoyable afternoon at the Hazlitt Theatre watching Susie Dent's show, 'The Secret Life of Words'. You may know Susie from 'Countdown' and '8 Out Of 10 Cats Does Countdown'. To give you a flavour of the afternoon among many other things we learnt how "currying favour" originally referred to combing a French horse called Fauvel, the connection between the Jerusalem artichoke and Jerusalem (there isn't one, they couldn't pronounce it so made it up!), and the precise moment in 1704 that the expression "to steal one's thunder" was brought into existence by a playwright miffed that a production of Macbeth had appropriated his contraption for simulating the sound of storms. Also, that our ancestors had words for the comfy clothes you slip into at the end of the day, "hufflebuffs", and the frantic last-minute tidying you do before guests arrive, "scurryfunge"!



Ten of us enjoyed a delicious "Afternoon Tea" at the Holiday Inn, Wrotham. When we arrived, we were delighted to find the table had been laid in the private room, The Penshurst Suite. The room had

been set out beautifully which added to the enjoyment of the afternoon.

Three of us went to the "Crown and Couture" exhibition at Kensington Palace. The organisation



there was a little chaotic but the exhibition was worth the visit.

There were outfits from the 17 and 1800s mixed in with outfits from the Met Gala some of which were quite extraordinary! Where do you draw the line in fashion?

Also displayed was a "ready to wear" collection, but for whom, I'm not quite sure!

Esme found two good films to see this month:

"The Great Escaper" tells the true story of Bernard Jordan (Michael Caine) who made global headlines in Summer 2014, when he "escaped" from his care home to join fellow veterans on a beach in Normandy to commemorate their fallen comrades.

Bernie embodied the defiant "can do" spirit of a fast-disappearing generation. His adventure also coincided with his diamond wedding anniversary but his wife (Glenda Jackson) still encouraged him to go. A superb film brilliantly acted. A fitting swansong for two great actors!

"The Miracle Club" - a film set in Ireland in 1967, starring three amazing Oscar-winning and/or nominated actresses (none of whom are Irish?), Maggie Smith, Kathy Bates and Laura Linney deliver a heartwarming story of a group of working-class women whose dream is to visit Lourdes - where each hopes for a miracle. The film explores emotions, resentments, the silliness of holding grudges and the pain beneath the surface. Sprinkled

with comedic moments to lighten the mood.

Ten of us went to Chef's Table in West Malling for the Sunday lunch. The chef there was Michelin trained and the food was fabulous. There were five courses including snacks and the

main course came with wonderful roast potatoes (some of the best we had eaten). The restaurant can only seat up to 12 people so we had the whole restaurant to ourselves. The service and atmosphere were fantastic and everyone enjoyed the afternoon.



Apologies to those who are missed out on the photo, but all the others were blurred and the one taken by the waitress was blank for some reason!

Finally thank you to Jenny, Deborah, Di and Esme for their contributions to this report.

Vivienne Lindridge

Pickleball

Ten members played last Friday at the Larkfield Leisure Centre between 10.00 and 11.00. We play fortnightly and the cost is, per person, £1.70 entrance fee for non-members (if you are over 66). It is £2.80 if not and £2 towards the cost of the court. The next meeting will be Friday 10th November.

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

Ten-Pin Bowling

The next meeting has been booked for Wednesday 1st November at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone. The price for 3 Games is £9.74. Please arrive in time for an 11.00 start.

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

Roy Simpson

Theatre Group

The Theatre Group had a second successful visit to The Witness For The Prosecution in October. We are having a third visit at the end of November for those who were unable to go on the first two trips making 60 members of the Group who will have seen this fantastic production.



In December we will be leaving London alone for its Christmas festivities. This will also give members a chance to go to local Pantos with their families. Indeed, I am off to Bromley with my grandchildren.

As usual, if anyone wants to join the group and take advantage of reduced prices in London shows please email me at folderspring@tiscali.co.uk

Laurie Frowde

Wine Appreciation Group 2

Our September meeting was held in early October when the theme was 'Let's be adventurous but not too much'. As well as sampling the wine it was necessary to guess the country of origin which even given the title of the evening, nobody managed to do.

Wine 1: TUS Reserve 2020, was a dry white wine from Armenia and was made from their indigenous Lalvari grape. The wine notes described it as being unique with ripples of vanilla and caramel with a complex exotic fruit flavour! Despite it being the most expensive wine of the night it only received a 53% rating. £16.99 12.5%.

Wine 2: Krasno Ribolla Gialla 2021, was a Sauvignon Blanc from Slovenia's Goriska Boda region just a short hop from Italy's Friuli region where the Italian grapes grown in near identical conditions, cost a lot more. This wine is fresh and elegant boasting aromas and flavours of green apples, with a delicate floral touch and an impressively fruity finish whilst being crisp and dry. This wine was rated at 76% and was good value at £9.99 13%.

Wine 3: Was from the Kakhat region of Georgia, Tbilvino 2021 made from the Saperavi grape. A full-bodied wine displaying aromas of violets with notes of fresh grapes, ripe black cherry, blueberries and sweet spice. It has soft tannins and a nice acidity. Rated 72.5% at £9.33 13%.

The last wine of the evening was Xinomavro from the Thymiopoulos Vineyards. This is one of Greece's star grapes and is said to taste like a cross between Barbaresco and Pinot Noir. It is medium-bodied and has complex notes of red and black fruit, vibrant acidity with notes of anise, allspice and tobacco with a long finish. It has high tannins and is best decanted. Rated at 78.75% it was the wine of the evening. £11.99 13%.

All wines were purchased from Majestic.

Terry Hatton

Wine Enthusiasts

Many of us are quite conservative when it comes to our choice of wines. But are we missing out by not trying wines made from grape varieties that in this country generally never see the light of day?

Our theme this month was "Wines made from grape varieties that you have probably never heard of". The wines we tasted were made from Loin de l'oeuil, Manseng, Fer Servadou and Kekfrankos grapes.

Of the four wines tried, the wine that scored extremely high marks was the "[Braucol, Les Plaines Sauvages, IGP Comte Tolosan 2022](#)" red wine (Wine Society, £8.50). This wine is a recent addition to the Wine Society range and is made from Fer Servadou grapes by a wine co-operative of 50 winegrowers located in southwest France.

In fact, we all liked it so much that we clubbed together to buy a case to share between us! The bottles were distributed when we all got together for a delicious and convivial carvery lunch the following Sunday at The White Horse in Pembury, kindly organised by Graham and Maggie.

If you fancy trying a wine or two that are just that little bit different, as a first port of call I can recommend the Waitrose Loved and Found wine range normally priced at £8.99 or £9.99 per bottle. The wines available in the range tend to change quite regularly so there is always a chance of picking up wines made from different varieties every month or two.

John Warren

KHaD u3a Information

Monthly General Meetings

These are held on the 1st Thursday of every month in **The Kings Hill Community Centre**, off Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, (Near ASDA) at 2:00 pm. We usually have a speaker following refreshments and a social get-together. Our meetings are normally very well attended, and it is recommended that members plan to arrive early (soon after 1:30 pm) in order to secure parking and reduce queuing for registration and refreshments.

Entry to the monthly meetings (including refreshments) is included in an annual £20 fee (currently reduced to £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 11:00 am on the morning of the meeting, so please check there if you are uncertain.

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

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

KHaD u3a Committee

Officers:

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

Other Roles:

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



KHaD u3a Website

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

Membership Enquiries

membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk

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

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



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

October 2023

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



Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear friends,

Now that we are turning towards the Autumn and the days are getting darker, it is good to be thinking about enjoying time together in true u3a style.

Over the last week I have been at the AGM and heard about what some members are planning in the month ahead, from Harvest flower arranging to Network gatherings.

The u3a merchandise winter sale is now on encouraging us to get our beanie hats ready for those winter walks and there is also growing anticipation about the u3a Festival 2024 where a whole plethora of u3a skills and talents have been offered.

This Friends newsletter remains full of the u3a spirit of adventure and I hope you enjoy the many stories from across our movement.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust



You On Your Own? Not anymore!

Thornbury u3a created the YOYO (You On Your Own! Not Anymore!) group two years ago, especially, but not exclusively, aimed at members who might be on their own. The group has a monthly meeting, often with a speaker and theme, along with two get-togethers each week. Activities have included regular skittles, guided walks around Bristol,

theatre trips, National Trust events, concerts, visits to beauty spots with lunch or tea. Members have also joined with each other to attend other u3a groups.

Pictured: Recently almost 40 members of Thornbury u3a's YOYO group joined a boat trip along the Avon Gorge.

Welcome to the movement Borough Green & Wrotham u3a

The inaugural meeting for Borough Green & Wrotham u3a was a great success. The Mayor for Tonbridge & Malling, James Lark, and local Councillor Mike Taylor both attended.

73 members signed up on the day and the first meeting of the u3a will be held in November. Vice Chair, Christine says, "The future is looking bright so we all feel our months of hard work has come to fruition."



Saltburn District u3a recognised as Dementia Friendly

Saltburn District u3a have received a certificate from Dementia Action Teesside confirming that they are now 'Dementia Friendly'.

This is part of Saltburn District u3a's ongoing work to be as accessible as possible for members – the next project is a presentation to inform members how sight loss, whether total or partial, impacts on everyday life.

Your Stories

The u3a Newsletter means a lot to me. By being in contact through Newsletters or Facebook, I feel we are a family.

I enjoy the Newsletter for its good and clever ideas from members including reading their stories.

Helen, Isle of Arran u3a

News from the Board

Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

Last week we had our AGM where we welcomed new Trustees to the Board, said our farewells to those retiring from the Board and considered the future of our movement.

A resolution was passed mandating the u3a Trust to engage in efforts to increase our membership substantially. I am sure we all share the sentiments expressed by the proposer and seconder u3as of the resolution, that the u3a is a wonderful organisation and it is surprising that so few people, relative to the numbers eligible, actually join us.

As the u3a Trust staff and Trustees consider how to respond to the resolution in practice, two thoughts:

- To engage in a u3a recruitment campaign we will be pleased to have the support of u3as throughout the UK. That means having groups ready to welcome new members and where necessary forming new groups and being an open door.
- Being able to answer "what is u3a" by explaining to those asking that it is an organisation where we meet like minded people, share social activities and learn together and from each other as we develop our skills and interests.

We are getting ready to do our part, but we need to work together with all u3as to help us to make an open door recruitment campaign successful.

Our Impact

87% of members support having an Older People's Commissioner

A recent survey of u3a members shows that members overwhelmingly support having a Commissioner for Older People. Given the increasing numbers and diversity of older people, having an independent person to advocate on behalf of all older people was seen as very important.



In the words of one member "There is an increasing number of people living longer. We need someone, independent, with legal status, connected to each government in the UK, who promotes the needs of older people."

Members highlighted a huge range of issues that such a role could and should address. Most common was access to services (including health and social care) (85%), followed by social isolation and loneliness (83%), and ageism and discrimination (78%). Age friendly communities, access to affordable and appropriate housing, public transport, and design that included and factored in the needs of older people were some other issues identified.

Spotlight On:

Barry, East Suffolk u3a



I took an A Level in Computer Science in the late 1960's and later in my career, taught Computer Science to teenagers. It was while teaching that I first became aware of AI developments.

In the Spring of 2023 I renewed my acquaintance with AI so I could talk to family without being left behind by technology. In the summer, I developed an "AI for beginners" online library for East Suffolk u3a. It became very popular, with over a thousand reader visits in the first few months. We're hoping to make that available to u3a members nationally very soon.

If you use a smartphone, there is AI somewhere – as soon as you're using voice assistance technology or satellite navigation you're using AI.

I've started to research and meet other AI groups within u3a. There are probably a dozen or so groups discussing how AI works. My approach is to encourage members to have a go at using AI. It's convincing, it makes you think it's intelligent – it's not, it's mimicking human intelligent behaviour, but it's amazing what it can do.

I am passionate about "AI for All". We have learnt to safely use the Internet, Satnav, Smartphones. Now it is time to learn how to use AI safely.

To u3a members interested in learning more about using AI, I would say: you have to just have a go. I'd suggest talking to ChatGPT – it's great for generating ideas – or creating images using Bing Image Generator. It is great fun.

Headline photos: Cathryn from Bradford u3a submitted this photo into our nature photography gallery u3a Found in Nature; Sam Mauger and Liz Thackray before the Third Age Trust AGM this month; Janet of Balsall & Common u3as submitted this photo into u3a Found in Nature.