

## Chair's Report

### Summer Holidays....

**H**opefully, many of you will have enjoyed some summer sunshine, whether at home or elsewhere.

I have had very positive feedback regarding the holiday to Chester and I thank the Events Team, and particularly Pat Bell, for all the organisation of this popular event.

Unfortunately, I was unable to join you all this time...(too busy sipping wine in the Portuguese sunshine!!) 🍷☀️🍷

### Summer School....

The u3a South East Summer School was well attended this year and Suzanne Burdon (our French Group Convener) led discussions and interactive sessions over the three days. She shared with me a very pleasing and positive email that she had received from a member of her study group.... always good to share such lovely comments.

### Summer Outings....

This month I have taken part in a London Walk from Tower Hill to Cannon Street, a Village Visit to



West Malling and a Garden Visit to Chilham Castle....all very enjoyable and I thank the leaders who organised such good

events.

Best wishes to you all.

**Melanie Blewer**

## October Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 5th October 2023 at 2pm

**TONY HARRIS**

**Hercule Poirot**

**T**ony Harris is a professional comedian, raconteur and actor who specialises in historical talks with a hysterical twist. Tony has previously entertained us as Henry VIII and Winston Churchill. This time he will give us his Hercule Poirot. A talk not to be missed.

## Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, 2nd November 2023 at 2pm

**MIKE BEAN**

**The Work of a Magistrate**

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

## Events Calendar 2023

\*October 17th - Oxford Mini Plant Tour

\*October 20th - 2nd Oxford Mini Plant Tour

\*Both Fully Booked

December 5th - Christmas Meal plus Entertainment

**Deborah Langworthy**

## Holiday to Chester

**O**ur holiday this year was to Chester. We stopped en route at Stratford Upon Avon for lunch and to visit Shakespeare's birthplace. We continued our journey to our hotel, the DoubleTree by Hilton, a former 18th-century manor house with modern facilities.

The following day we travelled to Conwy and visited the amazing castle. We had time to explore the town and have lunch. In the afternoon we visited Bodnant Garden close to Conway. This National Trust garden comprises 80 acres of different gardens, created over 150 years ago by the McLaren family, who brought plants back to Britain from far afield. This was a stunning place.

Chester was our next visit. On arrival, we were greeted by a Roman soldier in all his gear. He informed us how the Romans invaded the City and set up their fort. He gave us a fascinating account of

the Romans' way of life and located the various sites in the City including the old amphitheatre. We saw



children pretending to be Romans in their gear, which was amusing.

We went into St. Johns, the former cathedral, and were treated to a piano recital and had tea. We then went into Chester Cathedral and had a good look around this stunning place and had lunch there too.

We went into the town hall and were given a tour.

Such history was contained in the Victorian building including some beautiful embroidery illustrating the history of the city.

We had a walk around the two-tiered shops and walked around the Roman city wall seeing the clock erected for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.



Some of the group went on a boat ride on the River Dee.

Our next trip was to the World of Glass where we had a tour of the museum and a demonstration on glass blowing, even seeing the original kilns and going down the tunnels. After lunch at the museum,



we went to the Anderton Boat Lift. This is one of only two working boat lifts in the UK. It is known as the Cathedral of the Canals. It was designed to do the lifting of boats and barges 50 feet from the River Weaver Navigation to the Trent and Mersey

Canal. It was designed by Edwin Clark in 1875 and was in operation for over 100 years but was closed in 1983 due to corrosion. However, after renovation, it was opened again in 2002. We were told how the lift worked by two caissons (tanks) each with watertight doors and with a counter-balanced system. We experienced the boat lift in operation and even had a river cruise.

On our homeward trip, we stopped off at Wightwick Manor and Gardens, a National Trust property, formerly the home of Geoffrey Mander, a former Liberal MP and paint manufacturer. The house was inherited in 1937 from his parents,

Theodore and Flora Mander. Geoffrey Mander persuaded the National Trust to take on a house created in the "Old English Style" and not very old, being constructed between 1887 and 1893. The house contained designs of William Morris and his British Arts and Crafts contemporaries. We had a look around the garden, which contained topiary and even knitted fruit and vegetables before having lunch and commencing our journey home.

**Pat Bell**

## Lunch Club

Lunch Club will meet at The George and Dragon, Ightham, at 12 noon for 12.30pm on Friday, 20th October. Please let June Rose know either by email at [junerose43@btinternet.com](mailto:junerose43@btinternet.com) or by phone 01634 240655 if you intend to join us.

**June Rose**

## Groups Coordinator

Thank you all for such an encouraging welcome to this role, and a huge thank you to the new convenor of the new 'Furry Friends Walking' group. This new group has been established with a few owners and their dogs planning to meet for refreshments at the recently opened Lakes cafe, followed by a lap or two around Leybourne Lakes. October 11th marks their first walk together.

There may be a need to establish a second Art Appreciation group. Please contact me if you would be willing to lead that second group

Pickle Ball goes from strength to strength, as does the recently started 9-hole golf. Nordic walking has been put on hold just for a while, but there will definitely be more news for that group soon.

If you have been seriously affected by the pandemic, but would still like to enjoy U3A activities in your own home read on! An Interest Groups Online (IGO) article in our magazine 'Third Age Matters' gives information on Page 61. It explains a selection of 30-minute taster sessions from October 2nd to 6th at 9-30, 11-30 and 3pm every day. Go to [www.u3a.org.uk/igo](http://www.u3a.org.uk/igo) if you'd like to access a wide range of groups in the comfort of your own home. From October 1st anyone can join IGO for £6 for 6 months membership.

NO SIGN-UP DAY so....remember to contact the convenor of any group you'd like to join.

It's up to you how many groups you join, and therefore how many new friends you may make.

Best wishes to you all.

**Kathy Booyen**

## News from our Groups

### Art Appreciation

This month six of us went on a trip to Leighton House in Kensington. Leighton House is the former

home and studio of the leading Victorian artist, Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-1896), a former President of the Royal Academy.



Leighton acquired the empty plot in 1864. He worked on the design with his friend, the architect George Aitchison, and the house evolved into a palace of art and a setting for his collections.



We were very impressed by the 'Arab Hall', inspired by Leighton's travels to North Africa and the Middle East. The hall is covered in elaborate Syrian tiles and mosaics and contains beautiful furniture, lamps and ceramics, as well as an indoor pond.

The house has recently been extended

to provide a café, shop and spiral staircase joining the two floors. The staircase has been decorated by Shahrzad Ghaffari, a contemporary Iranian artist, using beautiful colours and symbols to form an 11-metre high mural, entitled 'Oneness'.



There were many Leighton sketches and some paintings in the house, although much of his work and the contents of the house were sold off when he died. The house, although large, had only

one bedroom, for Leighton's use, so no one wanted to buy it at that time.

We then had a lovely lunch at Megan's on Kensington High Street, a recommendation from Mary. Appropriately, we ate Turkish and Middle Eastern food. We travelled from the train station via bus, using our bus passes – Pat Bell would be proud of us!

**Jill Rutland**

### Classic Vehicle Appreciation

This month's talk described how Derek, one of the group, built a Caterham 7 from a kit. The first kits, originally designed by Colin Chapman of racing car fame, became available in 1957 and were called the Lotus 7.

The kits and factory-built cars were produced by Lotus. In the 1970s Lotus stopped making them and



they became known as the Caterham 7. The kits are still made in Crayford.

In the 1990's an academy was started to encourage people to buy them.

A kit cost £10,000

and you had to build it yourself within 3 months. He, with friends, succeeded in building one and raced it in circuit racing and hill climbs.

Everyone found the talk very interesting and discussions moved on to a multitude of other vehicle-related topics.



The next meeting is about The London Taxi.

**Hilary Kilborn**

### Crafts

Too Yule for skool! It was peace and goodwill all round as we spent an afternoon making Christmas cards.

Let's hope we can afford the stamps!



**Janet Chittenden**

## Digital Photography 1

Our first topic was “Clouds” and we viewed lots of interesting cloud formations photographed both in our own area during the month and further afield.

Our second topic was “Stripes”. This produced a wide range of photographs including household items, articles of clothing, insects, zebras and an owl with stripey feathers.



car and a Yaris.

Our third theme was “Beginning with Y”. We had an abundance of Yachts and Yellow flora and fauna as well as a Yellow

Cathy Sargent

## Digital Photography 2

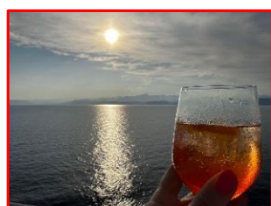
I’ve not been able to attend the meetings recently so have not been there to enjoy the usual variety of photos that are submitted.

The photo for Eating Out was taken at Leybourne Lakes on a sunny day whilst enjoying some refreshments.



This unusual view of a door was taken during a holiday. Can’t imagine what the owners were thinking when they painted this crazy design. Presumably, it means something to them.

There were two photos chosen for the Letter S, the first whilst clearing up the garden with the snail desperately trying to escape its fate in the bin.



Secondly, a beautiful sunset taken whilst on holiday in the Mediterranean.

At last, some rain to wash away the cobwebs. We have been inundated with lacy webs homing loads of baby spiders outside on our windows. I don’t like to kill anything so the downpour yesterday gave us a natural solution to the problem.

Our subjects next month are Letter T, Amusing, Strange and Tall Things. I feel certain that we could take a photo of a Tall Amusing and Strange thing illustrating the Letter T. Food for thought.

Take care and stay safe.

Brenda Powell

## Don’t Get Me Started

The main topic chosen was ‘Nationalisation versus Privatisation’. They are the two economic policies that transfer ownership of assets from the public sector to the private sector or vice versa.

It was argued that Nationalised Industries could be better coordinated with a central plan or strategy especially beneficial in times of national crisis. Also, governments can guarantee the production of strategically important goods/services such as energy, water supply, transport and food.

It was highlighted that the absence of this strategy has led mainly to the underprivileged paying a costly price. The disadvantages of Nationalisation could lead to costly management. A lack of decision-making could lead to a lack of efficiency. The absence of a profit margin, a huge driver, can often lead to increased chances of loss and limited investments.

On the other hand, Privatisation in the main involves selling state-owned assets to the private sector. Much of this took place in the 1980s in the UK and has been profitable for companies and individuals often at the expense of the public.

The advantages of Privatisation, it was argued, facilitate healthy competition and for resources to be used efficiently. Often, risk sharing with the government provides a safety net with the added advantage of minimal political influence in the process of profit maximisation.

The main disadvantage of Privatisation was the lack of transparency. Private players may also enter the market which can lead to more complications in the management of companies. This can lead to higher costs to consumers as realised within the public services in recent decades.

In the main, it was agreed that privatisation over the decades has led to inequality and poverty amongst the masses whilst profit margins continue

to soar for the companies and individuals. The lesson here is perhaps the need for essential services to be in the control of governments.

**Angelene Rothwell**

### Easy Walking

This month's walk took place in Cobtree Manor Park, Aylesford. We had a smaller number than normal due to people taking late holidays.

However, we enjoyed a very peaceful, lovely walk taking time to appreciate the many trees and green surroundings. The park was created in 1970 on the site of the former Maidstone Zoo, which was open throughout the war years until 1959. The photo shows the elephant house, which has recently been smartened up.



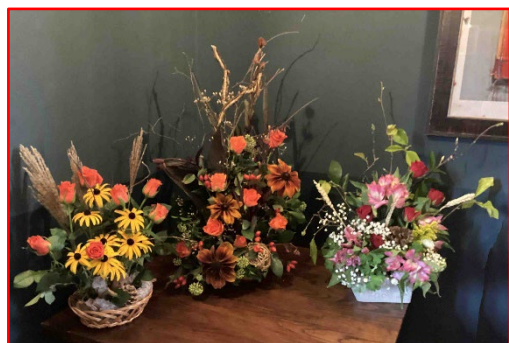
We aim to keep our walks to around 1.5 miles and are ideal for those who maybe want to start walking after a break following health issues or who just enjoy a slower pace in good company, followed by refreshments when possible.

**Christine Hutchins**

### Flower Arranging

We were a bit thin on the ground for our September meeting with holidays taking precedence. As a result, we were a small but perfectly formed gathering of just three members.

The arrangements made were lovely though, and



I'd like to thank Vallie for "holding the fort" for me while I was away, and for

taking this delightful photo of the afternoon's endeavours.

**Silvie Knowles**

### Full Day Walks

On Tuesday, 12th September our group of nine walkers set out on the final part of our Eden Valley 9-mile walk. We all met at Tonbridge car park where we parked 3 cars then drove to the start at St Marys Church, Chiddingstone.

The weather forecast was not bright but despite a quick shower at the start, it turned out fine. We came across the nearby Chiding Stone. It's possible that it gave the name to the village and was possibly used to chide (scold or rebuke) wrongdoers and nagging wives.



We continued to Penshurst; through a gate into the churchyard of St John the Baptist, the Anglian Church, where we came upon a Medieval Dole Table, where money, food or clothing was placed on the table for the poor.

We walked past the magnificent Penshurst Place with its grounds and trout lakes then on to the straight mile. It is the remains of a section of canal from Tonbridge to Penhurst that was never completed. It is now cut in two by Haysden Water as the result of gravel extraction in the 1970s and is now a pleasure lake. We stopped here for our lunch and afterwards continued our walk beside the Medway to Tonbridge, finding a Wetherspoons where we took refreshments.

**Richard Bowles**

### Half-Day Walks 1

We walked from St Nicholas Church on Linton Hill on a very hot day, two weeks ago.

We started walking on the Greensand Way and then on to Coxheath. We then walked through apple and pear orchards down into the Loose



Valley. From there we headed to Boughton Monchelsea and St Peter's Church where we stopped for a photoshoot by the deer park.

The Church is famous for its lychgate dating back to the 15th century. The final part of our walk was back on the Greensand Way through Linton Park.

We had a very pleasant alfresco lunch at the Bull on Linton Hill.

Fay Leahy

## London Walks 1

### Around Kings Cross and The Canal Museum

We emerged from Kings Cross underground station onto a lovely wide paved open space complete with a bird cage style swing and could see the impressive St Pancras Station building and many new buildings still under construction screened by some impressive artwork hoardings.

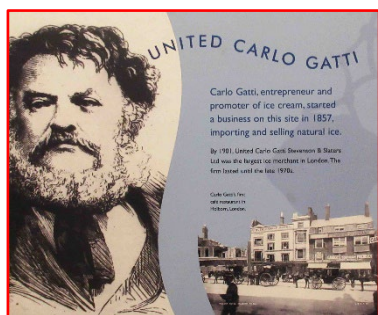
After our coffee break, we walked into Kings Place. This large modern building houses two concert



halls, a restaurant, art galleries and an area for sitting and working. The rear door led us onto a large terrace with views onto the

Regent's canal with its moored narrow boats, old converted warehouse and modern new buildings all existing side by side.

One of these buildings was The Canal Museum which is housed in a former Ice warehouse. The 13-metre-deep ice well was built in about 1862 for Carlo Gatti. He arrived penniless from Switzerland and made his fortune by importing ice from Norway and storing it in the ice well. He then supplied ice in a fleet of horse-drawn wagons all over the city to help hotels, restaurants and large houses preserve foodstuff. He also gained a reputation for making delicious ice cream.



The museum has details of the development of the canal system and the products it transported over the country. We squeezed inside a narrow boat and

marvelled at how whole families could live in such a small space. The upper floor of the museum, where the horses for the business were stabled, now contains an area demonstrating ice cream making. Unfortunately, our visit did not coincide with this experience.

We moved on to look at Keystone Crescent. This unique development has matching houses on both sides of a crescent, which has the smallest radius of any in Europe. It was built in 1846 by bricklayer Robert Stuckey to a design to fit in as many properties as possible (24) in an awkward site. The crescent was nearly demolished twice in the 20th century but is now Grade II listed.



We walked on through several well-redeveloped walkways until we came to The Coal Drops yard. This shopping centre houses many small businesses in these former warehouses and stables all adjacent to the canals. There is also a large open paved area with dancing fountains. We passed a narrowboat on the canal that is now re-purposed as a bookshop named "Word on the Water" and completed the walk with lunch in our chosen restaurant just before the rain arrived.

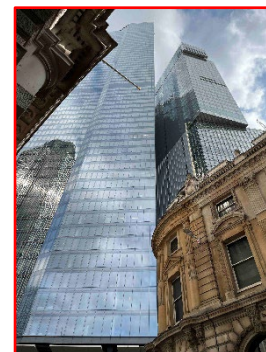
Roma Elson

## London Walks 2

Starting out from London's original East End at the Roman Wall on Tower Hill, our route covered a fascinating corner of the city and involved walking through a variety of intriguing Passages, Rows, Lanes and Courts.

We viewed London's oldest surviving building, the Keep in the Tower of London, and its newest arrival, Horizon 22, in Bishopsgate. It is free to visit the viewing gallery at 254m (833ft.) above street level, which is 10m higher than The Shard's and is due to open to the public on 27th September.

Close to the Tower, in Trinity Square Gardens, are plaques commemorating prisoners publicly executed there. Some had the misfortune to have Jack Ketch



as their axman, probably the most inept practitioner of his profession. Following his botched beheading of Lord Russell, he was forced to publish a public apology in which he claimed Russell had distracted him by not being in the correct position, and whilst halfway through his attempted execution of the Duke of Monmouth, he asked if anyone in the crowd of onlookers might take over!

Although our walk spanned 2000 years in its 3.5-mile route, much of our "time travelling" was through London's Middle Ages with its keen influence on the development of the wealth and power of the capital. A religious mosaic of churches and monasteries was established during this time, such as the Augustinian Monastery founded in 1253 on what is now Austin Friars, and many of the Guilds were also established during this period. The Carpenters located their Hall on London Wall in 1429 where they remain today, whilst other Guilds took the opportunity to relocate following the dissolution by purchasing former monastery property. The Worshipful Company of Leathersellers purchased land, previously owned by the somewhat satanic-sounding Benedictine Black Nuns of St. Helens, building their new Hall in elegant St. Helens Place.



By the end of our walk, we had also learnt how Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II contributed to the creation of London Zoo and Henry III's link with the iconic emblems on England's football team shirts. We discovered why a single red rose has been delivered to the Mansion House

each midsummer morning for over 600 years and why Pepys buried a parmesan cheese and several bottles of wine. We found out how the term "A1" came to denote something in tip-top condition and why Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell are recognized as amongst the finest English authors of the 19th century.

And finally, we also learnt what a 'French Ordinary' once was.



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**Jim Spellane**

## London Walks 3

### The much-revitalised Battersea and Nine Elms

**O**n leaving Battersea Park station for our September walk, we first sought a blue plaque over archway 75 of the railway viaduct dedicated to the Short brothers. They prepared their first balloon here for commercial flights in the adjacent pleasure park. Their business lifted off which prompted a move to Sheppey to build six Wright Brothers Model A aircraft under licence, the first batch production of aircraft in this country.

They then developed their own designs: the first did not get off the ground, but the second was successfully flown by John Moore Brabazon who thus became the first Britain to fly a British-designed aircraft on 29th October 1909. Seemingly a bit of a lad, 4 days later he flew again with a live pig in a basket strapped to the wing of the plane, thus proving that pigs can fly!

Crossing into the park we strolled to the Pear Tree Cafe for the obligatory coffee and cake to sustain us until lunch. Suitably refreshed, we continued in pleasant sunshine hearing how Battersea Fields had been marshland used for market gardening and the occasional duel. The Duke of Wellington and the Earl of Winchelsea were notable opponents although they faked the contest and the Earl promptly apologised.

The 200-acre park was established by an Act of Parliament in 1846 and opened in 1858 after Thomas Cubitt used earth excavated during the development of Victoria Dock further downriver to raise the level here to alleviate the regular flooding.

Several sculptures are to be found dotted around the park - one by Eric Kennington commemorates the 24th Division of the British Army, which lost 35,000 men in WW1. Robert Graves, the war poet, is the subject of one of the three figures. This was relatively easy to find but we needed help from a local to discover the more intriguing statue - that of 'The Brown Dog affair'. This is hidden in bushes beyond the fabulous fountains in the north-west corner of the park.

Perhaps it was made purposely difficult to find because it commemorates a very controversial affair involving the allegedly cruel vivisection of said animal in the pursuit of science back in 1903. The physicians involved considered the experiment justifiable in their effort to establish the effects of the chemical messenger, Secretin, for which they coined the term 'hormone'.

The original statue had been removed in 1910 after prolonged protests led by two Swedish feminists, but a replacement was eventually installed in 1985.

Having read all about this gruesome affair we emerged on the riverside path near the Buddhist Peace pagoda for some quiet contemplation.



Originally inspired by his meeting with Gandhi, a Japanese monk called Fujii took it upon himself to promote the

construction of 80 of these beautiful temples around the world. This one dates from 1985 and was the second in this country: the first was built in Milton Keynes five years earlier.

Walking east along the riverside, we approached the iconic structure of Battersea power station via an archway which harbours a compact museum depicting its history. This stretches back to the 1930s when the first half was built to the Art Deco design of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. It survived virtually unscathed through WW2, perhaps because it was too useful as a prominent navigational landmark for pilots of both sides.

The second half was completed in the same style in the 1950s and the whole resembles that of Scott's other work, Bankside Power Station, which is now Tate Modern on the Southbank. At its peak, it supplied electricity to 20% of London, including the BBC, Buckingham Palace and parliament.



This proved an embarrassment in 1964 when a major failure caused the postponement of the evening launch of BBC 2 until the next day when power was restored.

Music fans may recall the 1977 cover of Pink Floyd's album, *Animal*, which depicted their PR stunt of tethering an inflatable pig to the south chimney of the power station. Unfortunately, the adage was proved again when the balloon broke free and floated into the flightpath for Heathrow. Police helicopters escorted it to a safe landing on the Kent coast.

The coal-fired station was closed in 1983 and languished for 30 years before the current owners redeveloped it as part of the revitalisation of Battersea. This involved rebuilding all four chimneys and replacing 1.75 million of the total of 6 million bricks, sourced from the original brickyards before it opened last October. Inside you can appreciate the vastness of the generating hall which is capable of engulfing St. Paul's Cathedral. A myriad of high-end shops and restaurants are there to view but we found a suitable repast in the arcade on the first floor which offers 13 different 'street-food' cuisines in a communal dining area.

Refreshed and replenished we emerged from this cool cavern to proceed east along the now very warm and noisy road leading to Vauxhall Bridge. Several of our group bailed out here and caught a bus back to Victoria, but the hardy continued to the recently relocated US Embassy in Nine Elms, its very modern facade in stark contrast to that of the power station. We watched enviously as residents of the apartments immediately behind the embassy cooled off in the transparent swimming pool which stretches between the blocks, 35 metres up in the air.

A few hundred metres further on we came to the infamous MI6 building completed in a Post-Modern style in 1994 which mimics the Art Deco power stations mentioned earlier. It has gained a number of unedifying descriptions over the years - Babylon-on-Thames, an Inca jukebox and Legoland. The last is attributed to the staff who cheered enthusiastically when they were privy to an exclusive preview of the *Bond* movie, *Spectre*, wherein the building gets blown up! Contrast this with the paltry effect of the rocket attack by the IRA in 2000 which caused only minor damage.

This postmodernist ziggurat sits adjacent to Vauxhall Bridge which was opened in 1906 by the Prince of Wales (later George V) and features classic figurines on each of the four west piers. One of these represents architecture by holding a model of St Paul's in her hand, a fitting finale for this epic tour through two districts currently undergoing an amazing transformation.

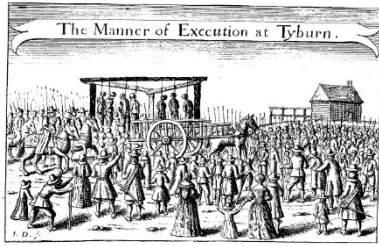
**Neil Whittall**

## Makers of History

Instead of one person, three people were covered this month under the heading of 'eponyms' (a discovery, invention, place, etc named after a person).



The first was the 16th-century executioner, Thomas Derrick, who invented a pulley system which enabled as many as 24 people to be hanged at once. Little is known about him, other than he was offered the unpopular job of executioner at Tyburn as an alternative to being hanged himself as a rapist!



Over 50 years, he was responsible for the death of 3,000 convicts and the derrick was in use for 200 years after his death at the age of 70. He had been offered the job by Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, who was later accused of treason by Elizabeth I, and Derrick was given the task of beheading, rather than hanging, his former employer! Today a derrick crane is one that has a moveable arm, mainly seen on ships, at docks and on oil rigs.



Our second subject was Colonel Charles Lynch, a staunch patriot and fierce anti-loyalist at the time of the American War of Independence. Despite coming from a Quaker family and being a JP, he got away with ignoring the law, taking matters into his own

hands to brutally punish Loyalists in his own garden in Virginia. Victims would be nailed by their thumbs to a tree and mercilessly whipped and if they failed to change to his side, they would be tarred and feathered. Despite his excessive cruelty and Thomas Jefferson having attempted to put a stop to his activities, he became a member of the Virginia Senate after the war and successfully persuaded his friends in Congress to pass a new law that exonerated him from all wrongdoing!

For some light relief, we moved on to our final subject, who attempted to protect and save lives, Baron Isaac Hore-Belisha, who was Minister of Transport in the 1930s. He was determined to reduce the number of people killed by motorists, approximately 7,000 per year. Pedestrian crossings were poorly marked with only studs on the road, which led to the invention of the 'Belisha beacon' with its familiar orange globe on a



pole to alert motorists to a crossing. He was also responsible for the Road Traffic Act of 1934 when a 30-mph speed limit was imposed in built-up areas amidst howls of protests from many motorists. Hore-Belisha had various roles for all three major political parties at different times during his career, finally standing as an independent in the 1945 general election when he was defeated by Michael Foot.

All three subjects led to lively discussion and we reflected on how road deaths today are half what they were in the 1930s with increasing legislation, which succeeded despite the inevitable opposition it always faced.

Joan Warren

## MOTO

Since the last newsletter, MOTO activities have included a lovely meal at the Thai Orchid in Maidstone, where nine members enjoyed exceptional food and excellent company.



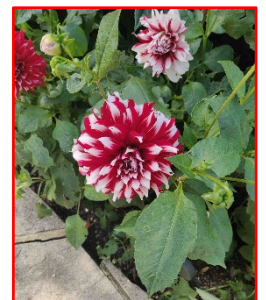
A MOTO quiz team went to the Kings Hill WI Quiz where we came halfway in the scoring, but all had a fun evening.

Just two members took an enjoyable boat trip on the River Medway.



Two members had arranged to meet to go to the Pashley Manor Dahlia Festival. It proved to be probably the hottest day of the year, but we left Kings Hill at 9.30am hoping to miss the hottest part of the day.

There were some beautiful blooms but unfortunately, several plants did not survive this year. We had coffee and some very tasty cakes, but unfortunately, the wasps wanted them too. The owner of Pashley Manor told us that they had already destroyed 22 nests this year. We got back to Kings Hill at about 3pm when the temperature gauge on a car which had been parked in the sun read 35 degrees!! A very enjoyable albeit hot day out.



Vivienne Lindridge

## Pickleball

Ten members played at Larkfield Leisure Centre on Friday 29th for an enjoyable energetic hour.

We play fortnightly on Fridays 10.00-11.00. The next meeting will be Friday, 13th October. The cost is £1.70 entrance fee for non-members (if you are over 66), £2.80 if not and £2 towards the cost of the court.

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

**Roy Simpson**

## Pubs, Pies and Pints

We almost did a mash-up with the Makers of History group for our latest adventure. Ten of us held court at the Amherst Inn between Borough Green and Seal.

Many of us remembered it as the Crown Point pub which had seen better days. Now it has been re-born and re-furbished and taken the other half of its original name.



Perhaps originally built as a hunting lodge, it has been a pub for 200 years and

once had the longest pub name in Kent: the Sir Jeffrey Amherst Crown Point Inn.

Amherst, who was born in Sevenoaks, was commander-in-chief of British forces during the Seven Years War which saw France surrender Canada to the British.

Crown Point Fort, the remains of which are in what is now New York State, was the largest military installation ever built by the British in North America.

Surely food for thought. As for this group, we just enjoyed the pies and mash.

**Maurice Chittenden**

## Short Walks

Eighteen of us met at Spadeworks car park. We passed through the village to Offham Woods,



emerging onto the lettuce fields.

We then made our way around and re-entered the woods through an apple orchard, rejoining the main road by the cherry farm.

We crossed the road and down a path, eventually coming to the village pub and returning to the garden centre for a well-deserved treat.

**Jean & Gordon Grimshaw**

## Ten-Pin Bowling

The next meeting has been booked for Wednesday, 4th October at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone. The cost for 3 Games is £9.74.

Please arrive in time for 11.00 start. If this is of interest to you or would like more information I can be contacted at 07305-926811 or [roycsimpson@hotmail.com](mailto:roycsimpson@hotmail.com) 🏹.

**Roy Simpson**

## Theatre Group

The Theatre Group had a successful visit at the end of September to Private Lives at the wonderful Ambassadors Theatre, London.

The Noel Coward play, which he penned and first performed in the 1930s with Gertrude Lawrence, was a superb production. Nigel Havers and Patricia Hodge were perfect for the main parts and the Theatre made it a very intimate setting.



Amazingly, the Kings Hill Theatre Group made up 10% of the audience with a reduction of £50 on the normal seat price.

October sees the Group going for its second visit to the Agatha Christie old chestnut of Witness For The Prosecution at the old County Hall building on the South Bank. I will be organising a third trip to this for those who couldn't make the dates for the first two as it's been so well received previously.

In November and 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.

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](mailto:folderspring@tiscali.co.uk)

**Laurie Frowde**

## Village Visits 2

This month we visited West Malling, meeting at Manor Park. Peter led the way to St Leonard's Tower; a Norman keep built by Bishop Gundulf. He had arranged for the tower to be opened to give us a glimpse of the interior.

Peter explained about the ice house in Manor Park, which belonged to the manor.

In 1791 JMW Turner painted a watercolour at St



Mary's Abbey of an ornamental waterfall on Swan Street. The waterfall is still there today.

We learned of Peter's interest in researching many of the old buildings and instigating the blue plaques throughout the village. We finished at The Bull for lunch.

**Gordon Grimshaw**

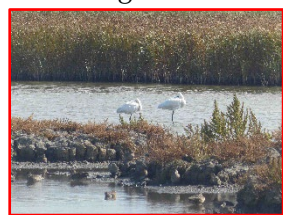
## Birdwatching

Last Tuesday a small group met at Oare Marshes in fine weather for an excellent few hours of birdwatching. Whilst waiting for everyone to arrive, a hunting Sparrowhawk was spotted, trying to winkle out small birds from bushes around the car park and a Cettis Warbler could be heard calling from its usual spot.

As the tide was in on the Swale, we headed down to the flood to check out the waders. As we did so a regular stream of late Swallows passed by us.

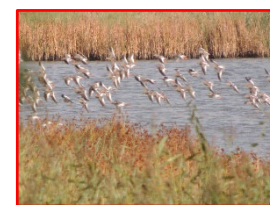
Against the sun, we had good views of a group of Ringed Plover close by the roadside, a solitary Golden Plover was a good identification test, with a golden sheen to its winter plumage in the bright sunlight.

In deeper water, Black-Tailed Godwits and Avocets gathered waiting for the tide to turn. Two Spoonbills were located next. We were all thrilled but they wouldn't be the star birds of the day. More Golden Plover were found and we decided to head for the flood hide hoping to get better views of the waders.



Disappointingly, the reeds were too high to make out the waders but a group favourite - a Stonechat was spotted flitting from bush to bush giving excellent views. As we headed away from the hide

towards the Creek, a Peregrine dashed up the Swale alarming the waders in the flood, the Golden plover climbed quickly into the sky whilst flocks of Redshank and Dunlin chose a shallower zigzag path, flashing brown and white as they changed direction - aiming to confuse a predator. All that energy expended was unnecessary as the peregrine ignored them, it would be too much effort and we could watch it until it disappeared from view. Further on, it returned again causing more panic amongst the waders but no attack was made.



At the Sea Wall hide we could watch the Seals on Horse Sands basking in the warm sunlight, then seemingly out of nowhere, the star birds arrived - a party of Cranes (feathered variety). They landed close to the seals and good confirmatory views were possible through a telescope. When I arrived home, I discussed this find with fellow birdwatchers and it was decided to publish this on a Kent Birders Rare Birds group. A first for our group!

Feeling elated, we headed back to the car park and whilst further wader sightings were made including Oystercatchers, nothing could cap the Cranes. Thanks to Helen and Sue for the photographs.

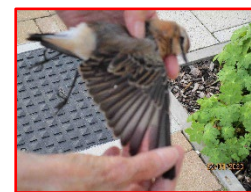
Regular photographer Sue spent a few days' holiday at Dungeness where she saw Glossy Ibises and Cattle Egrets.

On a sadder note, another u3a member found this female Wheatear which had flown into a window. It would have been on migration back to Africa having probably bred in the North of the UK.



On a sadder note, another u3a member found this female Wheatear which had flown into a window. It would have been on migration back to Africa having probably bred in the North of the UK.

John Lambert



**John Lambert**

## 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:

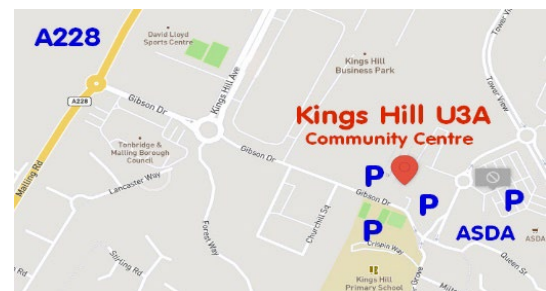
|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Chairman           | <b>Melanie Blewer</b> |
| Vice Chairman      | <b>Margaret Hall</b>  |
| Treasurer          | <b>David Murray</b>   |
| Business Secretary | <b>Maggie Bishop</b>  |
| Membership      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

#### Other Roles:

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

#### Plus:

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| <b>Maurice Chittenden</b> |
| <b>Don Bone</b>           |



### KHaD u3a Website

[www.kingshillu3a.org.uk](http://www.kingshillu3a.org.uk) (Ctrl+Click)

### Membership Enquiries

[membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk)

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

**Editor: Don Bone** - [newsletter@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@kingshillu3a.org.uk)



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

September 2023

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



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear friends,

Over the last few years, the newsletter has grown and developed and you have shared within it many stories and opportunities from across the movement.

We are now a community of people and the conversation we are having with each other covers a whole range of topics, ideas and interests.

Many of you have emailed following the newsletters, setting out your personal experiences about what the u3a means to you.

This feeling of friendship is at the heart of the newsletter, because that is what is so special about the u3a. Going forward we want to reflect our sense of togetherness in the newsletter.

We are people who support all that the u3a stands for as Friends of u3a. As Friends we can identify all the continued opportunities, ideas, services and interests that our great community bring together to share with one another.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

## News from the Trust

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### Our movement celebrates u3a week

From Dundee to Penzance, u3a members got out and about in their community during u3a week. There were beach cleans, table tennis tournaments and open days. The smiling faces in your pictures are a testament to how much fun being a member of the u3a movement can be.

*Pictured, Bromley u3a at their showcase event at Bromley Little Theatre where they recruited six new members.*

### Update on our anniversary woodland

The u3a movement planted almost 10,000 trees as part of our u3a anniversary woodland. We are regularly in conversation with the arborists who look after our woodland and are delighted that our trees, whilst still very small and growing amidst competitive vegetation, are generally doing well. This is after surviving the hottest and driest summer in south Wales in modern history.



Our woodland is planted for future generations and we will enjoy seeing them take root and grow over the years to become strong and established. We hope to organise a u3a visit at a suitable time in the future when there is more to see.

## Sources Blog

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### u3a One Movement

u3a week showcased how, though we are spread across the UK, we are all connected together as one movement. We asked Trustees to tell us what they think 'One Movement' really means when it is used to describe u3a.

John Bent, Trustee, says, "To me, the term One Movement sums up the vision the founders of the u3a had at its inception. A national, and international, organisation encouraging third agers to partake of self-help, lifelong learning through local u3as."

Liz Thackray, Chair of u3a, says "A family comes to mind. We have a common lineage and have a family likeness, but we express ourselves in different ways and have different roles while being part of the same whole."

Allan Walmsley, Vice Chair of u3a, says "When new members join their local u3as, u3a membership provides opportunities way beyond those provided by their local u3as, including network and regional activities, national learning activities and national projects."

## A new u3a film

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### A new film celebrating Hayling Island u3a's Sea Shanty group

On the eve of u3a week, we launched a new u3a film, showcasing the sea shanty group at Hayling Island u3a. It has since received over 5,000 views on YouTube. The transcript of the film is below.

#### Transcript

[John, Shanty group leader] Shanties began way back in the 1700s to help the sailors on the boats. You can imagine the guys pulling on the ropes, pulling on the anchor. It gave them a bit of camaraderie and at the end of the day, they'd probably all sit around and sing a few songs as well.

I wanted to sing shanties but couldn't find a group on Hayling which is strange because it's an island.

I came to the u3a and said I'd like to start a shanty group and it's built up from there in very few months.

[Liz, Shanty group member] I have neuropathic pain and I can usually forget it when I'm singing. I thought sea shanties looked like it would be fun, easy to do, easy to learn.

[Caryl, Shanty group member] I initially got an email – "If I started a sea shanty choir would anyone be interested?" I immediately wrote back, probably one of the first to say yes.

My anxiety can be pretty bad. Once I'm there singing, I just feel so much better for it. It's just so uplifting.

[Jerry, Shanty group member] My wife has a rare version of Alzheimer's and she went into residential care and that just fills your life up. I'm really really grateful to u3a's sea shanty group. It's been a fabulous learning opportunity for me and the boost it's given me in terms of filling that bit of my life, I can't say thank you enough.

[Liz] u3a is an organisation that gives people this enormous choice of activity and if you don't find what you want, you can set it up yourself.

[John] If you want to start a group, we don't turn anyone away, come and join in, you'll learn. The good thing is that people do come to us who have had difficult circumstances but they really enjoy coming and joining the group and having a good sing.

[Jerry] Other people should get involved with the u3a primarily because of the opportunity to meet new friends and have new experiences. This group is just such fun which really makes you look forward to coming every week.

## News from the Board

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

This is a busy time of year. We have just celebrated u3a week – and it has been great to see the photos and hear of all the events. Now the final preparations are in hand for the AGM. The newly elected Trustees, who will join the Board following the AGM, are meeting staff and others as part of their induction process. We are saying our goodbyes to colleagues who will be leaving the Board.

During the past months, we have been exploring the possible benefits and format for a u3a council and have held multiple pilot council meetings. The third of these was on 20 September and included representatives from all the regions and nations and from Network Link.

## u3as in the Media

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### u3a week results in a media splash

It has been wonderful to hear of all the u3as securing coverage in the local media, which has been especially common in the run up to u3a week.

- **Yahoo UK News** – Hayling Island u3a Sea Shanties.
- **The Pensioner magazine** – full page splash on u3a.
- **The Oban Times** – a feature on Oban u3a's birthday.
- **The North Edinburgh News** – Judith from Edinburgh u3a spoke about laughter yoga.
- **The David Fitzgerald Show on BBC Radio Devon** – David from Teignmouth u3a had his ninth guest appearance.
- **The Ashbourne News Telegraph** – a page dedicated to Ashbourne u3a welcoming their 500th member.
- **Hassocks Life** – described Hassocks, Hurts and Ditchling u3a as 'thriving'.
- **Sussex Life** – a feature on Lancing & Sompting u3a's showcase.
- **The Finish Line** – Telford u3a member Rita appeared on the quiz show and spoke about her u3a.



## Our Impact

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### Debating Positive Ageing

u3a have shared new conversations with members and academics exploring positive ageing. Liz Ervine, u3a's Trustee for Scotland, and Sandi Rickerby, u3a's Trustee for the North East, were joined by Dr Melanie Lovatt, Dr Alan Gow, Shelagh Young, Susan Murray and Dr Dwight Tse.

When asked what positive ageing meant to her, Sandi said, "I am in the process, I hope, of positive ageing. For me it's a time to be who you are, to develop skills that you didn't have when you were working necessarily or to continue to use skills that you had when you were working. To feel valued and to feel that you have something to offer – but equally that there's something out there for you."



## u3a news

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### South East Forum Summer School

u3as across the South East braved the heat to learn and have fun together with sessions including Cycling (pictured), Yoga and Mindfulness, Archaeology and a Quiz. Everyone was in high spirits and, despite the high temperatures, had fun learning new things and connecting with other members from across the county. More news on summer schools will be shared in the November edition of Third Age Matters.



### Crawley u3a Open Afternoon

Over 250 potential and existing members visited Crawley u3a when they held their Open Afternoon earlier this month. The event was an opportunity not only to recruit new members, but for existing members to renew their annual membership and to discover new groups.



### Culm Valley u3a showcase their artistic talent

Culm Valley u3a recently showcased the work of their art groups in an arts and crafts exhibition – including drawings by members who did not draw at all a year ago (pictured.)

The exhibition was a huge collective effort from each of the five art groups, the committee members and other members who took photographs and generally contributed to the afternoon's success.



## Your Stories

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I was delighted to visit Verulam u3a in St Albans for a second time. I am very pleased to have been involved with this u3a during my time as Trustee and wish them very well for the future. I have been invited to attend as a guest whenever I wish, and I shall do just that.

I recently also had the pleasure of joining Thurrock u3a for their 21st Anniversary lunch. The lunch was delicious and the friendliness of the members outstanding. The chair, Paul, is clearly doing something right. He has a very proactive and enthusiastic committee of 18, with five waiting to go on the committee. Absolutely wonderful. I wish Thurrock well, keep up the good work!

*Barbara Cordina, Trustee for East of England*

## Spotlight On:

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### Gill and Greg Cockermouth u3a members and Subject Advisers for Ballroom Dancing



*As BBC's Strictly Come Dancing returns to our screen – this time with the oldest contestant ever Angela Rippon, u3a Subject Advisers for Ballroom Dancing Gill and Greg spoke about their love of the sport.*

Gill : "To enjoy ballroom dancing, all you need is the right attitude. It doesn't matter if you think you have two left feet, because it can all be worked on.

"You don't have to be the top of the tree at dancing, if you have a ready smile on your face and you're happy to have a bit of a giggle, you will enjoy it."

Greg: "It's good for bone health, circulation, posture and it is great discipline for maintaining balance. Dancing also helps keep the memory active because you must remember the moves."

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Headline photos: u3as celebrating u3a week – Lymm & Thelwall u3a's Alfresco in Autumn event, Barnsley u3a's stall at a community event, Upholland & District u3a's stall at a local shopping centre.