

Chair's Report

HELLO TO all my u3a friends. At long last we're getting back to our seasonal weather – we hope!!

So much has been happening since our last Newsletter; we've had an almost total eclipse of the sun, unfortunately. By the time I found a suitable way of viewing this, it started to get light, and I



couldn't even take a picture; however, one of my grandsons captured it for me! Perhaps I might get better luck when it comes again in 2090!

I mentioned at our last meeting about the government Independent Commission on Adult Social Care, also known as the Casey Commission. This is a Government initiative on the future of adult social care and is a chance for everyone in England to have their say. I have contacted the wider u3a who have said that it's not something that they will get involved with, but it's up to individual members to voice their opinions. I have done this; if you feel you want to, just go to the Casey Commission website.

A few weeks ago, we held a very successful welcome meeting for 12 of our newcomers; they came with some great ideas, and I look forward to them getting involved with our u3a

Mike problems. I have received several comments about my poor microphone skills at our last monthly



meeting, for which I apologise profusely. Unfortunately, before I became chair, I was unable to connect to the u3a policy on microphones. However, with the help of the Hairy Mikers and other micro-organisers, I can promise you that I have improved and will do better at our next meeting.

Take care

Tony Metcalfe

Next Monthly Meeting

SEPTEMBER Monthly Meeting
Thursday 3rd September, 1.45pm.
DR KATHRYN HARKUP

THE CHEMISTRY OF THE BODY

The surprising chemicals that go into making a fully functioning person.

OCTOBER Monthly Meeting
Thursday 1st October, 1.45pm.
EDDIE PRESCOTT

THE RAF AT WEST MALLING

The important part our airfield played as a fighter base in WW2.

Groups Coordinator

WE CURRENTLY have space in various groups as listed below. If you are interested in joining any of these groups, please contact me at groups@kingshillu3a.org.uk and I will forward your enquiry to the relevant convenor.

Book Reading (4th Wednesday)
Chess (2nd Tuesday)
Crafts (2nd Monday)
Digital Photography (1st Wednesday)
Easy Singing (1st Friday)
Easy Walking (4th Monday)
Conversational German (1st Wednesday) not for beginners
Golf
Harmony Singers (2nd/4th Monday)
Journey Challenges
London Walks (3rd Thursday and 3rd Friday)
Mah Jong (2nd and 4th Thursday)
Moto (Members on their Own)
Play Reading (1st Wednesday)
Quilting and Sewing (2nd Friday)
Ten Pin Bowling
Ukulele (2nd and 4th Wednesday)
Half Day Walks (1st Wednesday)
Wine Enthusiasts (1st Tuesday)
Historic Transport

Eve Stephenson

Visits

Shuttleworth Collection

The trip to The Shuttleworth Collection on September 10th still has spaces for more members who would like a day out seeing the amazing historical place.

Coach leaving Kings Hill before 9am and returning between 6.30 and 7pm.

Contact Trips at Kings Hill u3a. Or call 07717 378393 to tell us you'd like to come.

May 2027 Holiday

Plans are going ahead for our u3a trip – Austria's Little Boats and Trains.

The excursions and accommodation, including breakfast and evening meal, are in a beautiful hotel in the mountains surrounding Innsbruck.

More information available by contacting trips at Kings Hill u3a

Jeanne Couch

News from our Groups

Half-Day Walking

JULY'S WALK took place before the heatwave arrived and was led by Fay and Martin. We also welcomed a new member, Nick.

Our walk started at Linton Church car park and headed west through orchards until the Greensand Way and Vanity Lane to Coxheath. From there we



followed footpaths through woods and more orchards towards the Loose Valley with views of the South Downs. The route then took us through Boughton Monchelsea village to St. Peter's Church, where again we enjoyed more far-reaching views over the Deer Park, before returning to Linton Church and lunch at The Bull Inn on Linton Hill.

Leigh Morris

Makers of History

JOSEPHINE BAKER, our choice of subject this month, was the fascinating story of a black woman who came from a very poor background in racially divided St Louis, USA, to make a name for herself in 1920s Paris.



In the era of the Jazz Age, she was at the centre of the lively crowd of writers, artists and musicians who lived there. Ernest Hemingway called her

"The most sensational woman anyone ever saw. Or ever will." Josephine became famous for introducing the Charleston and for her exotic 'banana dance' routine, wearing nothing more than a G string of bananas and a bead necklace. She was also the first black woman to star in a film.

Her celebrity brought her fame across the world, and on the outbreak of World War Two, she used this to establish a centre for the Resistance in her chateau in the South of France, going on to travel and perform in neutral countries such as Portugal.

She was fearless acting as a spy to pass on messages as she travelled. Written in invisible ink on her sheet music, or hidden in her undergarments, she assumed that German troops would not dare to search her. Among the valuable intelligence she passed on were details of Operation Sealion (the planned German invasion of Britain) and of spies recruited by the Nazis to be sent to Britain.

At the end of the war, the French awarded her several medals, including the Croix de Guerre (the first American-born woman to receive this) and the Medal of the Resistance. Josephine never spoke of her work, and much of her espionage activities only came to light when the French Government released papers in 2020.

On returning to the USA in 1951, by then well-known and highly regarded across the world, she experienced the continuing widespread racism there when she and her white husband were refused rooms at 36 New York hotels owing to travel of 'coloureds' with whites being prohibited. Speaking out and writing about such racist policies led to her being listed as a Communist sympathiser by the FBI and being barred from the US.

Returning to her home in France in 1953, she adopted 12 children from all over the world aiming to demonstrate that all people could live together in peace and harmony. This became known as her 'Rainbow Tribe'.

Josephine later became a strong supporter of the civil rights movement in the US and was the only official female speaker at the famous Washington rally led by Martin Luther King.

She died in 1975 but her contribution was only recognised in 2021, following a petition, when President Macron declared that she should be given Pantheon honours as a National Hero. Less than 100 individuals have been granted this honour, only six of them women, and only four of them people of colour.

We were all captivated by such an intriguing story of a woman who led such an extraordinary and memorable life.

Elaine Scutt

Garden Visits

OUR GARDEN visit for August took us to a garden at Wormshill, Sittingbourne. It is situated right in the heart of the countryside, and we had lots of negotiation of small lanes getting there.

On arrival at the property, we were surprised to see many cows in their sheds waiting for us, all looking very healthy. We walked up to the house from the farmyard and were totally surprised to see such a beautiful garden. It consisted of a vegetable garden and a very colourful flower garden. The



latter was small but completely packed with plants, many of them unusual. The colour combinations were really breathtaking. Our host had lots of knowledge and gave us tips on growing many of the varieties.

The choices of cake were amazing and the slices huge. We will certainly go

back there in June next year when everything is in full bloom.

Pat Bell

Don't Get Me Started!

THE SUBJECT chosen for discussion was, 'Andy Burnham in power as Prime Minister'. Andy Burnham had been in post as Prime Minister of UK as of 20th July following Sir Kier Starmer's resignation.

His premiership is taking a distinctive direction involving devolution – shifting responsibility for economic growth away from the Treasury toward the new northern hub.

With regards Public Services he is pursuing greater public control of essential services including buses, and has signalled ambitions around water, energy and housing.

Cost of living: his Government has plans to scrap VAT on household electricity bills as of October and restore a £2 bus fare cap in England from January 2027.

Homelessness: he has committed hundreds of millions of pounds to end rough sleeping. This is a tall order as ending rough sleeping by Christmas; which Christmas one might ask.

With Europe, his government is pursuing closer UK-EU relations, including trade, defence and youth mobility.

Ukraine,: Burnham has reaffirmed that the British will continue supporting Ukraine 100%. This is in the interest of Britain, Europe and the world at large.

Andy Burnham has had a relatively strong political start. YouGov poll published on 18th August found 46% favourable and 33% unfavourable, thus giving him a clear 13% net favourability rating. This is the strongest for a prime minister since 2020. Britain is to become less London-centric, which is probably the biggest structural change, as Burnham's Manchester experience has convinced him that power should move out of Whitehall. This will shift the responsibility of economic growth away from the traditional Treasury-centred model. In other words, Manchester is to become a model for the rest of England.

Angelene Rothwell

Cycling

THE CRAB and Winkle Caper. It was, as the meteorological sages foretold, the sort of day on which thermometers lose their nerve and retire from public life. Lesser mortals might have taken one look at the forecast and opted for a long lie-down with a damp flannel. Indeed, two of our number did precisely that. But five stout-hearted members assembled at Harbledown, ready to tackle the Crab & Winkle line with the breezy nonchalance of people who believe shade and sea air will sort everything out.

The first mile, being uphill, provided an early



opportunity for character-building. Once on the old railway path, however, we found ourselves swooping merrily downhill, only to be confronted by climbs that could best be described as 'grinding' in the way that millstones grind corn. The surface alternated between gravel and tarmac, keeping us alert and occasionally providing moments of what one might call creative wobbling.

We paused to admire Canterbury Cathedral from a respectful distance, its spires doing their best impression of a postcard. The Sustrans Route 1

markers appeared at regular intervals, looking terribly pleased with themselves, as if personally responsible for the entire national cycle network.

A couple of drinks stops kept spirits buoyant, and upon reaching Whitstable we repaired to the Lifeboat station café. Here, blessed by a cooling sea breeze, we took tea, photographs, and a general sense of triumph.

The return leg was brisk, aided by the knowledge that cars – and therefore shade – awaited. We encountered a few fellow cyclists but very few dog walkers, presumably because the nation's canines had unanimously declared pavements out of bounds.

Sixteen miles in total, almost entirely off-road, with loose surfaces, lively gradients, and not a single moment when the heat got the better of us. A thoroughly jolly outing enjoyed by all.

Barry Evans

*(in the style of PG Wodehouse,
ably assisted by Microsoft Copilot)*

Full-Day Walking

AFTER MISSING our last two monthly walks, we finally enjoyed a welcome break from the extreme heat, perfect timing for the final and twelfth stage of our 1066 Harold's Way journey.



A group of eight met at Battle car park, leaving a couple of cars there before attempting to drive to Bodiam Castle. Roadworks had other ideas, and after several diversions and a good deal of head-scratching, we identified a point where the route crossed

a road with parking. This allowed us to begin our walk from Brede High Wood, albeit much later than planned.

The weather was ideal: bright skies, a gentle breeze, and beautiful scenery throughout. We walked through stunning woodland and open meadows, stopping for coffee while admiring a superb view across East Sussex. Our lunch stop came at Sedlescombe, where we found seats overlooking the village green; a perfect spot to recharge, and watch a local gaggle of geese.

The final stretch proved more challenging, with the footpath becoming difficult to follow and leading to a few unintended detours. Working together, we navigated back onto the correct route, but time was now against us. With only a six-hour allowance at Battle Abbey car park, we picked up the pace and made a determined dash for the finish.



We arrived back just in time, avoided a parking fine, and successfully completed the last leg of our 1066 walk. A pub stop also made a satisfying end to a memorable long distance walk.

Richard Bowles

Short Walk

WE ENJOYED a walk along the river and back along the other side, culminating in a welcome drink by the river at Wateringbury.

Lucille Hampton



Digital Photography 2

IN SPITE of the hot weather we gathered as usual to view the photos submitted by our members on the subjects of 'The Number 4', 'Book Titles', 'Yellow' and 'Before and After'. The last subject concerned the way, with a modern camera, a photo can now be modified. Our prize selections this month are as follows:

The first subject was 'The Number 4'. Following on from our last u3a visit to Liverpool, Ian tabled a photo of the fabulous FOUR, say no more!

Also, Jan, whilst in holiday mood, found another fabulous FOUR on the counter looking very cool and desirable.



Also, Helen O depicted *The Salt Path* in a dramatic and simple way. The book was written by Rayner Winn in 2018 and describes the walk along the South West Coast Path in South Wales.



The subject of 'Yellow' was dominated by all the beautiful array of flowers that are now in full bloom. Sue was walking past a house and noted this exotic example of yellow.



Finally, for 'Before and After'



A very pleasant afternoon had by all.

Ian McGill

Digital Photography 1

OUR FIRST topic in August was 'Lamp Posts'. It gave us the opportunity to really look at them rather than take them for granted. We were all amazed at the variety to be seen both here and abroad. This photograph was taken in London and features an old gas lamp being repaired by two tradesmen who seem to be enjoying the attention of the passers-by.

For the subject 'Book Titles', whilst on holiday in Ireland, Tony met 'a man and his dog', as well as a few other beings. The book was written in 1918 by Thomas Mann and is about the narrator and his dog, Bauschan, and their walks in the local area around Munich.





We then moved on to 'Fluffy or Furry Things'. Needless to say this topic was chosen by one of the ladies in our group! We had an abundance of cats, dogs, birds, cygnets, furry toys, furry chairs and even a furry sloth. This little chipmunk doesn't seem daunted by the vastness of the Grand Canyon.



Our final topic was 'Rivers', and this photograph shows a helicopter filling a red water bucket from the River Douro in Portugal to help in the fight against fires which raged through the countryside in northern Portugal a couple of years ago.



Cathy Sargent

London Walks 4

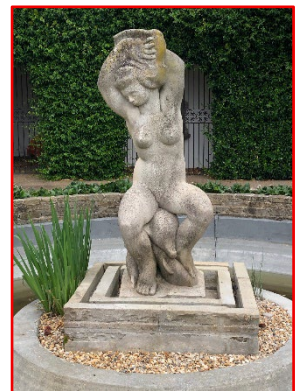
RICHMOND UPON THAMES is arguably London's greenest borough offering a perfect riverside escape with royal history, vast parks and boutique shopping.

We emerged from Richmond's beautiful art deco underground station and boarded the number 317 bus for the uphill journey to Richmond Park Gate. The Park, once a royal hunting ground, covers 2500 acres.

Only a short stroll took us to The Wick, an impressive house built in 1775 and once the home of the actor John Mills. It is said the way the wind whistled around the house inspired his wife, Mary Hayley Bell, to write *Whistle Down The Wind*. The film version starred their daughter, Hayley Mills, and Alan Bates. In 1971 the house was sold to Ronnie Wood, the then guitarist with The Faces. The lovely conservatory is where the Rolling Stones song *It's Only Rock and Roll (But I Like It)* was written during a jamming session involving Wood, his future fellow Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richards and, on backing vocals, David Bowie.

Close by is Richmond Hill's viewing point. J M W Turner painted the magnificent view and Joshua Reynolds lived near enough to visit regularly. The majestic Thames can be seen as it loops away in a large arc below. Opposite the viewpoint is Down House bought by Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall in the 1990s. One of our number was tempted to suggest that Mick got another song idea when popped round to Ronnie's for a bowl of brown sugar!

We took a gentle stroll down Terrace Gardens to see a statue of the goddess Aphrodite, which was dubbed 'Bulbous Betty' by the locals, and a river god statue which represents Old Father Thames. Our route followed the Thames embankment before a diversion to the cobbled Whittaker Avenue, where the Old Town Hall, now a museum, sits before the spot where Mr Bean, not David Bowie, fell to Earth.



The next stop was the Richmond lock and weir where we witnessed a boat passing through on its way along the Thames. We took lunch at The White Swan rather than the White Cross, a riverside pub where visitors are advised to wear Wellington boots when it is high tide.

Richmond Palace, where Elizabeth I died, once stood nearby and we viewed some of the private houses which now occupy the site. The Maids of Honour Cottages were built in 1774 to house the servants who attended the future Queen Caroline,



wife of George II. Nearby streets house small independent shops and cafes. It is here they filmed the Apple TV series *Ted Lasso*, who comes to London to coach a struggling football team. It is so successful that the busiest store is one selling souvenirs of the show to American tourists.

Our route back to the station passed Richmond Theatre. The interior has been used in many TV shows and films, including *Evita*, *Downton Abbey* and *Bugsy Malone*.



Last but not least was the original site of the Crawdaddy Club where the emerging Rolling Stones had their first residency in 1963. It was a dingy, sweaty function room at the back of the Station Hotel. There were about 500 people in a place designed for

100. A visiting *Daily Mirror* reporter wrote: 'You could boil an egg in the atmosphere'. The Stones had cracked it!

Bill Burr

Contract Whist

HOLIDAYS AND a range of unusual commitments meant a smaller than normal turnout at whist this month.

John Ph steamed ahead, with an excellent score of 224, beating Lin on 162 and John P on 156 and with Sue bringing up the rear on 58! Helen (86) and Mary (56) on Table 3 took it in turns to stick on a number they liked for a considerable part of the game, letting Janet take first place with 118.

Table 2 was a much closer run affair, just 22 points between the four players, with Rosemary in the lead on 98, Janet on 82, Debbie on 78 and Barry on 76.

Lin Martin

Historic Transport

TWO INTREPID members embarked on the *Greta* on 7th August. The *Greta* is a small Thames Sailing Barge and we sailed from Whitstable to the Forts about seven miles out in the Thames Estuary. The whole six-hour trip was in lovely weather with a moderate breeze which powered us along at an incredible three knots – About three and a half mph. The skipper, Steve, and his crew were very informative about the barge, Whitstable and the Forts. Back in the 1960's, these Forts were occupied by Radio Caroline, the pirate radio station. Later on, there were rumours that they wanted to start pirate TV transmissions, and they got evicted from the Forts. The Army were sent in, and the walkways that had joined up the various structures were cut away to then make it impossible to be used in that way. The Forts are now rapidly becoming derelict, and bits are falling off into the water.



Saturday, 8th August, and the destination was the Richmond Light Railway in Hawkenbury. This is a two-foot gauge railway about half a mile long in



total and is all in the back garden. The charity Riding for the Disabled was the recipient of all the takings. Several hundred people were there over the day, and many had a go at

driving either a traction engine or a steam train for just £5 per go. One of our group did both. In addition to the six steam engines pulling trainloads of customers, there were traction engines, portable engines and a collection of vintage cars on show. Of particular interest was a Showman's Caravan which was an amalgam of a traction engine front and a well-appointed wooden caravan rear. The whole vehicle was quite incredible and would have also pulled various trailers behind it when in use back in the 1920's. Another day of seeing amazing historic vehicles.

Penshurst Place had a car show on 16th. Two of us went and were rewarded with seeing about 300 cars and a few motorcycles, most of which were 1960's or later. Amongst them were, however, a



lovely Austin Six and a weird Trabant – the latter from East Germany and, reputedly, made of cardboard and string! Not really. A great line up of Austin Healey Sprites and MG Midgets also proved there is still a big following of these little sports cars.

On the same day, the MG Car Club held its annual MG Festival at Brands Hatch this year. The visiting classic cars were almost all MGs and displayed in groups according to model; e.g. MGAs, MGBs and MGFs, etc.



There were hundreds of MGs on display, and after the track races finished, the day ended with a record attempt. All MG owners were invited onto the track, two-by-two, to see how many MGs would fit on a motor racing circuit at the same time.

Saturday, 22nd, there was a talk at the London Transport Museum by Tim Dunn (Secrets of the London Underground on TV) on the 120-year history of the Piccadilly Line. It was most informative, and the capacity audience was obviously impressed by it all. A lot of questions and discussion took place after the talk, including my

involvement with the design of the automatic gates and ticket machines in the 1980's.

Our next meeting at the Spitfire may be cancelled as we may go for a trip on the Waverley Paddle Steamer instead that day. Our following monthly meeting will be on the 30th October.



Hilary Kilborn

Ten-Pin Bowling

WE PLAY the first and third Wednesday every month (excluding school holidays) at Hollywood Bowl Maidstone. The next meeting has been booked for 2nd September.

The cost is £7.20 for 2 games or £10.80 for 3 games. Parking at Lockmeadow is £3.25 for 3 hours which is sufficient time if you play 3 games.

We arrive by 10.55am in time for an 11am start.

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



Roy Simpson

Art Appreciation

FOR OUR August meeting, Maggie did a presentation on the David Shepherd Foundation Wildlife Artist of the Year exhibition. This takes place every year at the Mall Galleries, on The Mall, SW1. This year the dates are 8th to 12th September 2026. The exhibition is free to visit; donations are welcome, and all the art is available to buy, some of it at reasonable prices. Half the profits go to the artists, and half go to the Wildlife Foundation, which supports field partners in conservation projects.

The exhibition showcases a breathtaking selection of shortlisted artworks commended by an expert judging panel and portraying a variety of techniques and media from recycled plastic sculptures and intricate pencil drawings to vast colourful oil paintings and everything in between.



The works of art Maggie showed us were from last year's exhibition. We were all very impressed, and it whetted our appetite for this year's exhibition. Several members are planning to go.

Jill Rutland

MOTO Monthly Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd September in the Lancaster Room, The Spitfire, at 11am. Please come and join us.

Sarah Barker

MOTO

Sunday 16th August

MOTO members had a lovely evening at the Changeling Theatre outdoor production of *Much*



Ado About Nothing held in the beautiful surroundings of Allington Castle. As usual for this company, it was an energetic and very entertaining performance.

Sunday 23rd August

A group of 11 members enjoyed good food and conversation at the MOTO monthly Sunday Lunch at The Chequers, Laddingford.



KHaD u3a Information

KHaD u3a Committee

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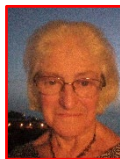
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Newsletter

SIG reports and photos deadline
Friday before each General
Meeting.

Editor: Laurie Frowde
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To see us on Facebook @u3aKingshill

Monthly General Meeting

These are held on the 1st Thursday of each month in **The Kings Hill Community Centre**, off Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling (near ASDA) at 2pm. 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 1.30pm) 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 11am 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 . . .

