

Live meetings resume
Help needed for General Meetings
The u3a in the UK - a 40-year retrospective



Front Cover: A medley of fantastic work from the Art Group. Contributions from Mo Barnes, Mary Hooper, Janice Cross, Leslie Bennett and Angela Spittle.

Anticlockwise from left: The man behind the cards: Ian Keable, who recreated some of Charles Dickens' card tricks at June's General Meeting: on Zoom.

The Gardening Group got to explore the wonderful gardens at Chesham Bois House in June.

Butler to Royalty, William French, explains how the uniform he wore when he first joined the Royal Yacht Britannia appears to have shrunk with age and no longer fitted, at our first live General Meeting in August.

Striders managed their first long walk in months. They found these horse sculptures at Harleyford Golf Course on their walk along the Thames Path towards Marlow.



Speakers for General Meetings

All meetings start at 2pm
Broadway Baptist Church
76 The Broadway
Chesham, Bucks HP5 1EG



Colin Smith

Thursday 9th September

Coffee

Colin is MD of Smiths Coffee Company, which he joined after 13 years teaching. The company roasts coffee, specialising in quality grade coffee (and teas). He represented Europe on the panel of judges for the world champion coffee producer, and is coffee advisor and taster for *Which?*. Colin's fee will raise money for St Francis Hospice.

Elizabeth Gowring

Thursday 14th October

Unlikely Positions in Unlikely Places: A Yoga Tour of the UK

A year ago, Elizabeth gave us a superb Zoom talk on an Edwardian Traveller in Kosovo. This time we have a talk from the point of view of an explorer rather than a yogini! It tells a funny and touching tale of characters and communities met along a fascinating journey. Elizabeth is an Arts Society lecturer and is a frequent contributor to BBC.

David Barber MVO

Thursday 11th November

Swan Upping

David is the Queen's Royal Swan Marker and is responsible for the annual ceremony of Swan Upping, which takes place in July each year on the River Thames. Mute swans are rounded up, caught, ringed and then released.

Paul Robbins

Thursday 9th December

Great British Eccentrics

Paul is an author and an historian, who gives a wide variety of talks. This one is an amusing, entertaining and light-hearted journey looking at some of the great characters from our past.



The Broadway Baptist Church is accessible to wheelchairs and is equipped with a hearing loop.



Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our Autumn 2021 newsletter.

As you will read in the following pages, many of our Groups are getting back into action, sometimes in people's gardens and sometimes alternating 'real' with Zoom sessions. In August, we had our first live General Meeting in 17 months, which attracted 61 members and two guests and was adjudged a success. I personally felt it was really great to be in the company of 'real' people once again.

General Meetings 1 – Catering

After many years, Gill Biddle has decided she wants to take a back seat from providing the refreshments at our General Meetings and I would like to thank her for the many cuppas and biccies she has supplied to us. She is, however, prepared to be part of a small 'catering crew' who can provide the refreshments on a rota basis. I think we need a team of about six, which provides some flexibility for people's absence. If you can help, please contact me: chair@cvu3a.uk.

General Meetings 2 – Technical support

Also a veteran of the General Meetings, Liz Stoelker will soon have to give up being our main 'technical support' person because she is moving away from the area. Thanks are due to her for leading the technical team for so long. She does have one understudy in Ian Hutt but we really need at least one more person to provide the necessary resilience. Some familiarity with computers and A/V technology would help but Liz is happy to provide an induction as needed. Again, if you are interested, please contact me: chair@cvu3a.uk.

Annual quiz, Saturday 25th September, 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start, White Hill Centre, Chesham

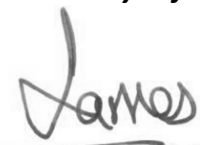
I can now confirm that we have enough teams to make this event viable and it will go ahead. However, we have room for a few more teams (of up to six players each) and, if you want to take part but can't field a whole team, Brin Harvey is quite happy to help in assembling 'scratch' teams. Please contact me if you'd like to take part on either basis: chair@cvu3a.uk.

General Meeting, Thursday 9th September, 2pm, Broadway Baptist Church

Our second live meeting features Colin Smith, MD of Smiths Coffee Company and he will present a history of this important drink and discuss current trends. He is also bringing samples to taste!

In response to popular demand, I will send out an email reminder a few days before the meeting.

With best wishes – and stay safe



James Cadle
chair@cvu3a.uk

Copy date for the next newsletter is 22nd November 2021

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Geoff Barker	<i>Amersham</i>	Jacqui Kean	<i>Lee Common</i>
Stuart Campbell	<i>Amersham</i>	Eleanor Phillips	<i>Chesham</i>
Jacky Charman	<i>Amersham</i>	Stuart Rudd	<i>Naphill</i>
Clare Esson	<i>Amersham</i>	Chris Shelton	<i>Chesham</i>
Derek Hearn	<i>Chesham</i>	Bob Woolley	<i>Latimer</i>
Angela Holland	<i>Chesham</i>		

If you know anyone you think might be interested in joining, please ask them to get in touch with the Membership Secretary; contact details below.

From the Groups Coordinator

Well, I am really pleased that so many more Groups are meeting in person with various others due to start in September.

The Knitting and Crochet Group is now up and running with our first meeting on September 6th at my house. We have expanded to include other crafts such as embroidery and cross-stitch so please do email if this might be of interest.

The Keep Fit Group is floundering at present as we are in need of new Convenors so if you are able to help please come forward. It is not complicated and help can be given. In addition we are looking for a new instructor so please do contact me if you know anyone.

Always remember that if you have an interest or hobby you think we can form a Group for, please let me know and I will see what we can do.

An Appeal

Just in case I do not have enough to do with the u3a, I am also a trustee of our local branch of the RSPCA. Our shop in Chesham High Street is in need of volunteers so if you could give a few hours a week please telephone the shop's manager Julie on 07877 155028.

Helen Barnard
Groups Coordinator
 groups@cvu3a.uk

Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle	chairman@cvu3a.uk	01494 716992
Vice-Chair	Helen Barnard	vicechair@cvu3a.uk	01494 715588
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor	treasurer@cvu3a.uk	01494 434918
Business Secretary	Colin O'Rourke	secretary@cvu3a.uk	01494 728897
Membership Secretary	Jim Wilkie	membership@cvu3a.uk	01494 782081
Groups Coordinator	Helen Barnard	groups@cvu3a.uk	01494 715588
Webmaster	Valerie Garrood	webmaster@cvu3a.uk	01494 433585
Newsletter Editors	John Bunyan	newsletter@cvu3a.uk	01494 778858
	James Cadle		01494 716992
Speaker Organiser	Michael Cohn*	speakers@cvu3a.uk	01494 763542
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb	eventscoord@cvu3a.uk	01494 773718
* indicates a non-voting member			

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

Group	Convenor/s	u3a e-mail
Art	Mo Barnes	art@cvu3a.uk
	Angela Spittle	
Art Discussion 1	Angela Bishop	artdiscuss@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 2	Caroline Jenks	artdiscuss2@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 3 <i>(currently dormant)</i>	Helen Barnard	artdiscuss3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 1	Gillian Eastmond and Mavis Earnshaw	bookgroup1@cvu3a.uk
	Liz Howlett Christine Ross	
Book Group 2	Eileen Overton	bookgroup2@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 3	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 4	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup4@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Short Mat)	Sue Spalton	shortbowls@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Williams	
Bridge	John Curtis	bridge@cvu3a.uk
	Patrick Clarke	
Bus Pass Adventures	Anne Muir	buspass@cvu3a.uk
Canasta	Sue Wilkie	canasta@cvu3a.uk
Chess	Peter Schweiger	chess@cvu3a.uk
City of London Churches	Jackie Cobb	londonchurches@cvu3a.uk
Current Affairs	Eileen Overton	currentaffs@cvu3a.uk
Digital Imaging	Pippa Greensmith	digimaging@cvu3a.uk
	David Hurd	
Dinghy Sailing	Wendy Barnes	sailing@cvu3a.uk
	Judith Young	
Eclectic Music	Danny Robins	music@cvu3a.uk
	Rod Stevens	
Family History	Sue Broad	familyhist@cvu3a.uk
French Conversation	Morag Robertson	frenchcons@cvu3a.uk
French Intermediate	Hilary Alleston	french@cvu3a.uk
Gardening	Stephanie Rothwell	garden@cvu3a.uk
	Camilla Plummer	
German	Jenny Lee	german@cvu3a.uk
History	Claire Paterson	history@cvu3a.uk
	Ian Hutt	
Italian <i>(currently dormant)</i>	Joanna Hughes	newitalian@cvu3a.uk
Jazz Appreciation	Danny Robins	jazzmusic@cvu3a.uk
Keep Fit for 60+	Vacancy	keepfit60@cvu3a.uk
Knitting and Crochet	Helen Barnard	knit@cvu3a.uk

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Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

Group	Convenor/s	u3a e-mail
Line Dancing	Lynne Benes	u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk
	Linda English	
	Elaine Knowles	
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott	mahjong@cvu3a.uk
MOTO	Mo Barnes	moto@cvu3a.uk
MOTO 2 <i>(currently dormant)</i>	Peter Page	moto2@cvu3a.uk
Opera and Dance <i>(currently dormant)</i>	(South Bucks u3a)	agopera@sbu3a.org.uk
Patchwork & Quilting	Mary Thompson	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Angela Bratton	
Photography	Keith Hoffmeister	photography@cvu3a.uk
	David Hurd	
Pilates (1, 2 and 3)	Christine Ross	pilates@cvu3a.uk
	Liz Howlett	
Play Reading	Claire Paterson	playread@cvu3a.uk
	Linda Hepworth	
Poetry	Christine Ogborne	poetry@cvu3a.uk
Railways	Graham Yellowley	railways@cvu3a.uk
	James Cadle	
Scrabble for Fun	Tony Muir	groups@cvu3a.uk
Science & Technology	Mike Christianson	sciencetech@cvu3a.uk
	Allan Saunders	
	Peter Twist	
Singing for Pleasure	Angela Bratton	singing@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
Spanish Conv (Inter)	Hilary Alleston	spanishconv@cvu3a.uk
Stamps	Brian Feakes	stamps@cvu3a.uk
Tai Chi	Sue Broad	taichi@cvu3a.uk
Theatre	Vacancy	theatre@cvu3a.uk
	Vacancy	
Ukulele	Alan Bridges	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
Amblers	Susan Osborne	amblers@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 1	Stuart Stanley	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3		walkers3@cvu3a.uk
Striders 1	Andrew Brown	striders@cvu3a.uk
Striders 2	Ian Lee	striders21@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: Country	Tony Biddle	walkshist@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Schweiger	

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Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

Group	Convenor/s	u3a e-mail
Walks into History: London	Angela Shipley	walkslondon@cvu3a.uk
Wildlife	Harry Howlett	wildlife@cvu3a.uk
	Keith Sonley	
Wine Appreciation 1	Pauline & Tom Hohenberg	wine@cvu3a.uk
Wine Appreciation 2	Graham Hitchenor	wine2@cvu3a.uk
Writers	John & Helene Bunyan	writers@cvu3a.uk

Do we have your up-to-date contact details?

If you have moved, changed your phone number or have a new email address, please make sure you update your information via the Chess Valley u3a website (www.cvu3a.uk). Click on 'Membership Login' on the homepage and then use your ID which is your membership number (from your membership card) prefixed by the first two letters of your first name (for example 'Jo9999'). If you don't have internet access, please let the Membership Secretary know (contact details above). We'd hate for you not to be kept up-to-date with the happenings in your u3a or miss out on events and visits.

Language Inflation

I don't mean the Victor Borge version where he added the number one to any word containing a numeric, resulting in wonderful absurdities such as 'threeday is twoderful'. No, I mean the exaggeration that has taken hold in much of the media. For example, when a small price rise occurs it is called a 'hike' and a correspondingly tiny fall is a 'plunge'. This, plus the BBC's minutely-detailed daily reporting of the exchange rate of sterling, seem excessive to anyone but a currency dealer who in any event has more immediate sources of information. As usual, I digress.

There also seems to be an inflationary element in the terms of gratitude used on the *Today Programme*. From a curt and simple 'thank you', moving on to 'thank you very much', right up to the oleaginous, 'thank you very much indeed'. The last one is seemingly reserved for BBC colleagues who are, after all, only doing their jobs but who clearly need that extra stroke. There are however, signs of sanity with the appointment of Amol Rajan to the team. He actually apologises if he interrupts someone and - heaven forfend! - waits for answers. (On a personal note, I often think that he should simply replace the whole of the BBC, although I think he is already en route to that destination.)

But it's not just the media that seek to exaggerate. In my far-off days in advertising, it was sometimes necessary to stretch a point or to approach that point at an oblique angle. I remember once when an ad man of my acquaintance had the knotty problem of making a silk purse out of wallpaper paste and not the usual sow's ear. Wallpaper paste not being the sexiest product, he came up with the claim that it was non-carcinogenic. On being told that all wallpaper pastes have that benevolent quality, he countered with 'Yes but our claim will be the first to be made and will introduce an element of consumer doubt about other brands'.

Or, as Victor Borge might have said "five goodness sake twice bitten three times shy".

'Timewaster'

News From The Groups

GROUP MEETINGS

Groups are gradually returning to normal activities as the pandemic and government restrictions ease. On-line conferencing is still proving useful to some. All Groups that have vacancies, whether active or dormant, are open to enquiries from new members. The few Groups that remain inactive do not have an entry in the newsletter.

In public buildings it is important that the Convenor knows who is at the meeting in case of fire. Please, always sign in and out of the building. Also, make sure you know where the fire exits are. Please adhere to the pandemic hygiene rules set for the premises.

Art

Mo Barnes & Angela Spittle



The Art Group held its first physical meeting at the White Hill Centre as soon as regulations allowed, when it was decided that every member should choose a topic for each session. The first theme was appropriately entitled *New Beginnings* during which a variety of artistic interpretations around spring, flora and fauna, a sunrise and the employment of new technology were produced. Following the David Hockney exhibition, our next topic was *Painting Without Paint* using the Brushes App. on our iPads: Great fun with lots of interesting results! Another challenging session was *Painting with the Pointillism Technique*, as used by Georges Seurat. This drove us all dotty! Then back to more usual subjects such as *A Seashore Landscape* and *Still Life*, concentrating on light and shade. Finally, our latest session was *Painting in the Style of Cézanne*: the father of modern art, who introduced the palette knife technique. We are all enjoying returning to art for fun, including a catch-up over coffee and biscuits! We are not looking to expand our membership at present.

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



Our Group has met twice since the last newsletter. Both meetings took place using Zoom, and thank you James Cadle for facilitating all our Zoom meetings. We had hoped to meet in person in July, but took a decision to play by the rules.

In June our meeting looked at the Art Deco movement. Many of our Group chose buildings that demonstrated the features symbolising luxury, glamour, exuberance and faith in social and technological progress. The movement declined in the '30s and ended not surprisingly with WW2. Examples ranged from the Beach Ballroom in Aberdeen to some parts of the London Underground. One member chose the local Grade II listed house in Amersham: 'High and Over'. Sonia Delauney and Tamara de Lempicka were two European artists who exemplified Art Deco in their work.

A welcome subject in July was Gardens. The range was extensive: From a medieval monastic garden and one very early Theban garden, to the most renowned exponent of the garden: Claude Monet. Some members chose more abstract works, like those by Patrick Heron and Georgia O'Keefe. We finished with the serenity of the gardens of Japan: A relaxing topic in our troubled times.

Thanks to the hospitality of one of our members with a large conservatory, we will be having a face-to-face lunch later this month. We hope to meet in person in September when the subject will be Wall Art.

Q: How many modern art gallery visitors does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two: One to do it and one to say that his three-year-old kid could have done it just as well.

Q: What is the difference between an artist's briefcase and a castle full of sick people?

A: One's a portfolio, the other is Fort Polio.

(kidadl.com)



We 'Zoomed' our June meeting with the theme of Gardens. We journeyed through history, beginning in 650BCE in Nineveh with the Paradise on Earth Gardens of Ashurbanipal, a fearsome warrior but also a very keen gardener! Roman times were represented with frescoes of garden views from Palazzo Massimo (40BCE) and we relaxed in a medieval rose garden with Emilia. We saw recreational pictures of artists immersing themselves in tranquil settings, painting 'en plein air', people reading surrounded by beautiful, colourful gardens, and a garden painted in photographic precision by Korean artist M S Park. There were so many different interpretations on the theme of gardens, but it would not have been complete without including the ever-present Claude Monet.

In July we met in person: a real treat after so long. We discussed enjoyable art visits. There were vivid memories of Frogner Park in Oslo: a remarkable sculpture park created by Norwegian artist Gustav Vigeland in the mid-twentieth century. But there is no need to go abroad in these Covid times when you could visit: Compton Verney, with its award-winning art gallery, Woburn Abbey and Kedleston Hall. Carrying on the gallery theme, the Watts Gallery in Guildford and Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, with its collection of Modern British Art, were recommended by our members. Wales was represented by Castell Coch, a fantastical medieval creation by William Burgess and our journey around Britain ended in Scotland with Hill House, designed and furnished by Charles Rennie Macintosh.

'Pattern' was the theme of our August meeting and we were able to meet in Caroline's garden again. The dictionary definition of pattern is "a repeated decorative design", which sounds rather dull, but we came up with many different interpretations, including a beautiful collection of scarves, some Art Nouveau wrapping paper and Willow Pattern plates. We learnt the history of Tartan and of Paisley (a symbol of fertility). And we were introduced to Maori Whanaungatanga (friendship) designs and Orla Kiely's fresh designs of the 1990s, including her Stem pattern and, from Finland, Marimekko's brightly coloured printed fabrics. The weather was kind to us and we ate delicious cakes too: A lovely afternoon.

Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



This smaller friendly Book Group meets about every six weeks on a Friday morning, before the pandemic at a member's home, but for the time being on Zoom, except for some summer meetings in a garden. We bring with us a book that we have found interesting, fiction or non-fiction and give a very brief description of the book and say why we thought it worth reading. We then have a lively discussion about the theme of the book. In normal times the owner often can lend the book to anyone who wants it. We have found our discussions are better with up to nine people at most, so you would be put on a waiting list if you want to join the Group.

Book 2

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Book Group 2 is limping bravely along! Our venue, Chesham Library, can currently only accommodate a group of six people. We are hoping that this limit will be increased soon so that our Group of ten can meet as before. In the meantime we've abandoned our Zoom meetings. Because numbers over the summer have been depleted for various reasons: grand-parenting duties, being pinged for Covid, longed-for days out and even going on holiday, we have been able to have informal get-togethers. In August, only two of us were available on the day, so we met up for a very enjoyable coffee and chat about our book.

We've nonetheless managed to read the books we had on our list: *The Cellist of Sarajevo* by Steven Galloway and *The Lie* by Helen Dunmore, both of which most of us enjoyed. The third book was meant to be *The Frozen Heart*, an epic saga about the Spanish Civil War, but the library supplied us with *Her Frozen Heart* by Lulu Taylor. It could have been classified as Chick Lit and got the thumbs down!

Youngster: "Oh! I wish I had a Kindle that never ran out of batteries."

Older Person: "What, like a book, you mean?"

(humansoftumblr.com)



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Availability is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham library. We have our full quota of members at the moment but please contact the Convenor in case a vacancy occurs. We have been meeting in gardens but can go inside when the weather is unkind. We are reading *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt and our next book is *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Both books are on our schedule but have not necessarily become available in the order we were expecting. However the library is doing a sterling job in getting our books organised.

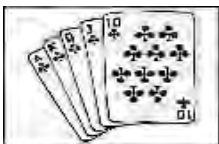


We are hoping to go back to meeting in person soon. The books we read are chosen by each member in turn. As the book choices are varied it makes for a good discussion each month. The next books we intend to read are: *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *The Dutch House* by Anne Patchett, *Good Behaviour* by Molly Keane and *A Single Thread* by Tracy Chevalier.

That will keep us reading up to the end of December.



Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. Due to COVID restrictions, the Group has not met for some time but they are planning to resume their meetings in October. They will meet at the White Hill Centre in Chesham each Friday starting at 1:15 pm. Interested members should contact the Convenors using shortbowls@cvu3a.uk.



The Bridge Group will recommence on Wednesday afternoons at Chartridge Park Golf Club. Our first session will be on Wednesday 15th September.



With the relaxing of Covid restrictions, our first welcome trip saw a small group of us head out on a beautiful morning for Henley on Thames. The bus journey from High Wycombe to Henley took us through beautiful countryside. On our arrival we headed to a quirky cafe for the best coffee in Henley. Suitably refreshed, we wandered through the interesting town down to the river. A gentle amble along the path, stopping to read the obelisk, took us onto the River and Rowing Museum and on towards the wooden bridge at Marsh Lock. After admiring the view we made our return.

We passed the church of St Mary where there is a memorial to the singer Dusty Springfield, and had a look at the 15th century Chantry House. By now it was time for lunch and we decided not to eat inside and miss the sun, so we enjoyed an al fresco lunch whilst watching the world go by at the charter market.

It was then time to wend our way home after an enjoyable and relaxing day.



This small but enthusiastic Group meet once a month in each other's homes, so it has been a while since we have been together. At the moment, we have arranged our first meeting for the middle of September. New members are most welcome; we will all probably be classed as beginners after such a long time!



The Chess Group has been inactive during the pandemic and is now looking to start up again. It is in great need of new members so, if you want to play Chess in a friendly atmosphere, please contact Peter at chess@cvu3a.uk. The Group meets in the afternoon on the last Friday of the month at the Convenor's home.



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We give our opinions on how to sort out the world's problems in a spirit of mutual respect and friendship. It has been lovely meeting up again after so many Zoom calls. With everything that is going on in the world we are never short of topics to discuss and it is so good to be able to listen to different points of view. If you would like to join us please contact the Convenor for details of the next meeting.



In the Digital Imaging Group we work together to take photography one step further on the computer. Our aim is to correct photographs and also to be creative with new ideas. Members use different software packages from Photoshop and Affinity to Lightroom and we find that most information is easily transferable from one application to another. New members are welcome.

In June, Alex Brown gave a very useful presentation on Soft Proofing, explaining how to use the correct paper and monitor settings for the perfect print. David Hurd demonstrated the benefits of resizing and using gradients in July and at our August meeting we are showing our various creative composite photographs that use the same five originals.

Digital imaging lends itself to Zoom meetings and we are all now experts at screen sharing and using online demonstrations, so after all these months of lockdown, we are now considering using a mixture of both Zoom and physical meetings in the Little Chalfont Village Hall. Our first Hall meeting will be on Monday 27th September, 10am to 12pm.



The Dinghy Sailing Group were unable to meet last summer because of the restrictions on social distancing; it is too difficult to keep two metres away from your crew in a small boat. In April, however, we were allowed to meet outside in small groups and so we arranged two social sessions under a marquee in the grounds of Rickmansworth Sailing Club, so that we could meet potential new members and discuss future arrangements.

At the beginning of June, when restrictions eased again, we invited the safety team for a refresher session in the rescue boats, to give everyone practice in boat handling skills and to talk through basic safety routines. This was very well attended and so we were able to have a Launch Day on 30th June, when our members could get back on the water. We have followed the guidance from the RYA on social distancing and hygiene and it has been a joy to get back to some form of normality. Our sailing days are normally on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month. We welcome members of any U3A Group, and currently we have representatives from eight different Groups in the Chilterns and South Hertfordshire. For more information, please contact either of the Convenors.

A customer is considering a budget-priced sailing boat at the Boat Show and is talking to the salesman: Customer: "I hear that these cheap boats sink all the time." Salesman: "That's ridiculous sir. They only ever sink the once." (scarymommy.com)

Two sailors are talking on the quayside: First sailor: "My wife took a Day Skipper Course in Poole." Second sailor: "In Dorset?" First sailor: "No, she wouldn't recommend it." (chieftain)



We have a new venue, date and time for our meetings, which will be on the second Tuesday of the month at 2 pm in the Owen Room, Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 6AJ.

Reopening of Meetings for 2021:

September 14: *Your CD Choice*: Choose one track on a CD and tell us why you enjoy it.

October 12: Programme to be confirmed:

November 9: Programme to be confirmed:

December 14: End of Year Social: Seasonal Music, Quiz, Raffle, Wine and Nibbles.

Amersham Free Church request that you wear face masks until you are in position in the room. The building and the main rooms are cleaned each morning. Sanitiser is provided at the entrance to the building.

We look forward to seeing you all again.

Rod and Danny

Family History

Sue Broad



Our expected return to Chesham Town Hall in July was postponed and we enjoyed a talk by John Hanson via Zoom entitled: *What To Do With Your Research*, which proved to be a popular subject as most of us have paperwork scattered around, looking for a home.

In the past we have organised a trip out in August, usually in London, but this year, as a lot of places had not fully reopened, we decided that this was not an option.

We are now anticipating our first actual face-to-face meeting on 7th September, with a general catch up and to discuss the programme for the year ahead. It was much more convenient to book talks via Zoom as we could invite speakers from far and wide. Now that we are restricted to speakers that will travel to Chesham, the choice is very much reduced.

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



The French Conversation Group is continuing to meet in person and practise their language skills. We will continue to meet outside, weather permitting, and hopefully arrange a lunch session in the future. New members who are interested in conversing in French are welcome to join us.

French Intermediate

Hilary Alleston

We have started meeting normally as we are a small Group, so that even if the weather isn't good we are comfortable indoors and really enjoying one another's company after so long on Zoom. We also speak more French than when contending with the vagaries of IT.

If anyone is looking to practise their, possibly rusty, French in a small friendly group, please contact the Convenor.

Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell & Camilla Plummer



In June we had a private visit to Chesham Bois House and everyone agreed that it was lovely to meet up again in person after so much 'Zooming'. We were lucky with the weather as it was a beautiful sunny afternoon sandwiched between days of cloud and rain.

The owner, Julia Plaistowe, gave us a very interesting overview of the history of the Georgian house and grounds before we explored her very extensive and varied garden, accompanied by Jim, the gardener. Afterwards, we enjoyed a cup of tea and a slice of delicious lemon drizzle cake.

Our July meeting was once again via Zoom. Tom Cole, our speaker, explained the intricacies of growing irises successfully. He also helped us to identify the different species. (cont.)

Our second garden visit of the year was in August to Cedar House in Wendover. Thankfully, we were again blessed with a beautiful afternoon and 14 members had a very enjoyable time. The owner, Sarah, opened her garden especially for us as part of the National Garden Scheme. She gave a guided tour, explaining her planting scheme in all the borders and giving advice about growing particular species and controlling pests. The view from the garden was stunning (the reason Sarah bought the house) and we were in awe of all the hard work that she puts in to make her garden so spectacular. A cup of tea and a slice of carrot cake, as well as the chance to purchase plants, made it a perfect summer afternoon.

In September, all being well, we will resume face-to-face meetings at Amersham Free Church. The speaker this month is Russell Bowes, whose talk is intriguingly entitled *Food of the Gods*.

Details of the rest of the year's programme can be found on our Gardening Group page of the CVu3a website.

German

Jenny Lee



During the summer we have been lucky enough to have all our German Group meetings in each other's beautiful gardens. In one we watched a pair of red kites nesting, in another we learnt a lot about very special trees and of course we spoke a lot of German.

Here is a little bit of German, reflecting on the passage of time during the pandemic:

Du merkst, dass du älter wirst, wenn die Kerzen mehr kosten als der kuchen.

(You know you're getting older when the candles cost more than the cake !!!)

Our friendly group welcomes new members.

History

Claire Paterson & Ian Hutt



Still zooming into June with our Chairman, James Cadle, giving us a fascinating look into the year of 1944. He covered innovations like the introduction of PAYE and the new Education Act also known as the 'Butler Act' after R. A. Butler, President of the Board of Education. He also covered food rationing and the resulting Ministry of Agriculture campaign of 'Dig for Victory' which encouraged people to grow their own food in their front gardens, back gardens or anywhere that growing space was available; a 'looking back' talk with plenty of illustrations and a montage of the D-Day landings, the largest seaborne invasion in history,

which was quite emotive.

Well I did tempt fate hoping to be back at the Town Hall for our July meeting. However, our member Jennifer Moss was undeterred and gave a very informative presentation, via Zoom, on the Lowndes Family of Chesham. The pedigree of the Lowndes family is extensive, but Jennifer's talk was specifically about the Chesham connection. William Lowndes of Winslow bought estates in Chesham around 1692. His eldest son Charles contributed much to the enlargement of the Chesham estate, which continued in the male line to 1905. Their acquisition of estates and land was extensive, ranging from Chesham Bury Manor, Grove Manor and Hundridge Manor, to farms, cottages and pubs. Many of the family held high office, latterly William Selby-Lowndes, who was the High Sheriff for Buckinghamshire in 1939.

We were visited in August, again via Zoom, by John Sheldon who gave us the history and archaeology of the Church of St. Michael at Stewkley, one of the best preserved of all Norman churches in England. The building is listed for its special architectural and historic interest and is believed to date back to 1150. John gave a comprehensive account of the architectural aspects of the building and the various alterations and additions made over many years; all clearly visible on the many etchings and paintings he used to illustrate his talk.

Well I don't think I am tempting fate for our September 13th meeting as it seems all is well for a face to face (or mask to mask) gathering at Chesham Town Hall; usual time, 2 for 2.15pm, for a talk by Alan Kerr on his village of Seer Green. Looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Jazz Appreciation

Danny Robins



The Jazz Appreciation Group meet on the last Tuesday of the month at 2pm, in the Owen Room, Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 6AJ.

We are reopening our meetings for 2021 with the following schedule:

September 28: *Your CD Choice*: Choose one track from a CD and tell us why you enjoy it.

October 26: Programme to be confirmed:

November 30: End of Year Social: Seasonal Jazz, Quiz, Raffle, Wine and Nibbles.

December 28: Holiday break.

Amersham Free Church request that you wear facemasks until you are in position in the room. They have hand sanitiser at the entrance to the building and each of the main rooms is cleaned each morning.

I look forward to seeing you all again.

Danny

Keep Fit for 60+



The Keep Fit Group is urgently in need of new Convenors. If you are able to help, please come forward: it's not complicated and help can be given to volunteers. We are also currently without an instructor, so please contact the Groups Coordinator, Helen Barnard, if you know of anyone. Email: groups@cvu3a.uk

Knitting & Crochet

Helen Barnard



The newly formed Knitting and Crochet Group is now up and running with our first meeting set for 6th September. Due to popular request we are including cross-stitch, embroidery and anything similar. We can accept a couple more members, so please email the Convenor if you think this may be of interest.

Mah Jong

Edward Perrott



Mah Jong is a game played with tiles, which originated in China. It's a very sociable and fun game played by two, three or four people. There is no competition involved as each person plays their own game and any mistakes are easily hidden! Don't worry if you haven't played before: If you have ever played the simplest of card games, you will quickly pick up the basics of Mah Jong. This is a friendly group of people who enjoy each other's company for an afternoon playing, chatting with a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. Anyone is welcome from beginners to more experienced players. We meet on the second and fourth Mondays (except Bank Holidays) at 2pm in the Free Church, Amersham. The Group is currently full. Please contact the Convenor to go on a waiting list.

MOTO (Members On Their Own)

Mo Barnes

The MOTOs have been trying to stay in touch during lockdown, mostly by telephone or email. As soon as regulations allowed, we met outdoors in the Convenor's garden over coffee and picnic lunches. We were also able to visit a couple of gardens and art exhibitions. Since restaurants have opened, we have resumed our fortnightly Sunday lunches at local hostelrys and to date we have visited the 'Full Moon', Hawridge, 'Cote Brasserie', the 'Swan', Old Amersham, the 'White Hart', Whelpley Hill, the 'Pomeroy', Amersham Common and the 'Black Horse', Chesham. Our monthly planning meetings over coffee and biscuits have resumed at the Convenor's home and we are all looking forward to many more social gatherings in the future.

Patchwork & Quilting

Mary Thompson & Angela Bratton



Seven keen members of the Patchwork and Quilting Group met in person on the 18th August at Hyde Heath Hall; we have fourteen members in total and potentially another two. The depleted number at this meeting was because, in normal circumstances, we don't meet in August as holidays and grandparent duties are the order of the day. (cont.)

It was good to see what others had been making in the tedious lockdown: some small Linus charity quilts, and some larger ones in the pipeline. Our next meetings are planned for 15th and 29th September.

Photography

Keith Hoffmeister & David Hurd



In July we held our final online meeting. Whilst we have not been able to meet up in person, these meetings have proved popular and have given members an opportunity to look back at pictures taken over the years and share them with the Group. Images certainly look better on a computer screen than they do when projected.

Instead of an August meeting, we had our first field trip for two years. Members met up at Cliveden on the 18th. From September we will go back to meeting in Little Chalfont Village Hall each month. At the first meeting we will discuss plans for future meetings.

We meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 2.00. We intend to cover a range of topics of interest to members. New members are always welcome, regardless of experience and ability.

Our programme for the next three months is as follows:

- September 15th: Review of pictures taken on the field trip at Cliveden.
- October 20th: Monthly meeting (content to be decided)
- November 17th: Monthly meeting (content to be decided)

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



PILATES IS BACK, starting on the 6th September in the new and beautiful Jubilee Hall. The sprung floor with under-floor heating will be much appreciated.

Pilates is a low impact form of exercise that aims to strengthen muscles while improving posture, flexibility and balance, making it an ideal form of exercise for seniors.

We have a wonderful instructor who has been with us a long time and understands everyone's individual needs. She gives help and encouragement and is also great fun! There are a few spaces, so if you would like to join us please contact Liz Howlett or Christine Ross, Pilates Convenors. Email: pilates@cvu3a.uk

Play Reading

Claire Paterson & Linda Hepworth



The Play Reading Group did not meet in August but our earlier meetings in June and July were in a member's garden, which made a very pleasant venue.

We did read *Take Away the Lady* as mentioned in the last Newsletter. The story revolves around Matthew who has just returned from a 15 year sentence for allegedly murdering his mother. He still protests his innocence: so who did do the deed? Any one of his three sisters, or even his father could have done it. After much sleuthing and amateur investigating, the truth comes out. Classified as an "unusual play of suspense" well, as ever, it turns out to be the one person you thought could not possibly have done it!

In July, our chosen play was *Fool's Paradise* by Peter Coke. It's tricky as the cast called for six females and two males. Well, we only have two male members so that was ok, but we are down to four females, one of whom was unable to attend. However, we are good at doubling up and it went well. We enjoyed the play about two women married to the same man, now deceased, who has left his house to them both as long as they don't sell its contents. A wily antique dealer is soon on the case when very valuable jewels are discovered. Everyone is after them by trickery and fraud but all is well eventually and the ladies sell for a very high price, getting themselves out of debt. We won't have so much of a dilemma in choosing a play for September as we are now very pleased to welcome two new members to the Group: Looking forward to meeting them.

Two photographers are walking down a street. One of them trips and falls onto the ground. The second one immediately falls down next to him and says "Excellent angle! What are we shooting?"
(upjoke.com)

At last we are meeting in person again, and we meet in each other's homes on the fourth Thursday of each month. Ours is a very friendly group and we choose poems to read and discuss from our chosen poets or topics: no need to be an expert on poetry!

Our last three meetings have included Love Poetry, the works of Longfellow and the American Billy Collins who was Poet Laureate for the USA from 2001 to 2003. Our next meetings will take in the poems that have won a Queen's Gold Medal, the Irish poet Seamus Heaney and a further look at American poets.

We have a few vacancies for members now, so please do contact the Convenor for details on how to join us. We look forward to welcoming you along.

Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



As we should all be double-jabbed and the Government have relaxed the Social Distancing rules, we are planning to again hold our meetings in Christ Church Hall, Waterside, Chesham, HP5 1PY. It will be so nice to see everyone in person rather than on a computer screen.

In the meantime we have been enthralled by our recent talks:

June 18th, Brian Hall: *The Life & Times of 48773*. Brian gave an excellent talk with numerous pictures of the LMS Stanier 8F locomotive. The range of pictures from its travels around the world made for a very interesting talk and brought this old locomotive to life for us.

July 16th, Michael Bunn: *The History of Paris Railways*. This was another excellent talk by Michael, which covered the development of the railways around Paris. Like London, there were a number of central termini, which were not linked but were owned and operated by separate companies. The Paris Metro development linked these termini and then the RER lines. Very absorbing and it was very interesting to see how the subsequent developments built on, around and under the existing ones.

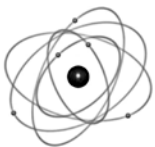
The Programme for the next few months now looks like this:

September:	Ted Cooper	<i>Buckinghamshire Railway Centre</i>
October:	John Laker	<i>Swiss Railways</i>
November:	Brian Hall	<i>Spirit of Sandringham</i>
December:	James Cadle	<i>Docklands Light Railway</i>

Please contact the Convenors if you wish to join the Group, you will be very welcome.

Science & Technology

Mike Christianson & Peter Twist



Here is the schedule for the Group's next three months' meetings:

September 20:	Gareth Evans: <i>Interesting Imaging Systems</i>
October 18:	Ian Hutt: <i>Eggcellent Science</i>
November 15:	Gillian Eastmond and Group: <i>My life as a Scientist or Technologist</i>

These talks will be on Zoom until the Group decides on a date for a return to the church hall and real meetings.

Scrabble for Fun

Tony Muir



Having had a very long period of inactivity, I am pleased to announce the return of our Group. We will continue our meetings on the third Tuesday of every month. Sessions will once again be for two hours, starting at 2.00pm. From Tuesday 19th October, we will run on every third Tuesday until March, when the winter should be abating; fingers crossed!

There is a slight change in the venue; it will still be held in Chesham Library but not in the 'Harding' room, as previously, but in the 'Tardis' room, which is downstairs with panoramic views of St. Mary's Way; an enticement in itself!

I look forward to seeing you all in October and will send you all a reminder closer to the date.



As meetings of large groups have been limited to outdoors, we have managed to congregate on Winchmore Hill Common for rehearsals during the last few weeks. However, we were often challenged by the weather and sang through gale force winds, drizzle and heat.

A big thank you to all those in the Group who have supported us through Zoom rehearsals, outdoor sing-a-longs or just by keeping in touch via email. It will be good to see everyone again and to get the vocal chords working which have become very croaky over the last fifteen months.

We are very pleased to say that we now have a starting date for live rehearsals at Amersham Free Church. The first date of the autumn term is Monday, 6th September at 5.15 p.m. We look forward to welcoming returning members and to working with our new teacher, Ali.

Details of the Group can be found on the CVu3a website. If you enjoy singing and would like to join us, then please contact one of the Convenors.

Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



No more Zoom! And it's such a pleasure to meet face to face, whether indoors or out, and our Spanish is so much better now that we can add the essential Hispanic body language and gestures! Conversation is so much more spontaneous when we are all together and sharing experiences and photos of whatever we are doing. Sorry to say that the Group is still full, with at least one person on a waiting list.

Tai Chi

Sue Broad



Tai Chi is perfect for the over 60s as it's low impact exercise that stretches muscles and maintains flexibility in the joints and muscles. Around the world, Tai Chi is practised by millions of people.

August brought a break to our Tuesday morning sessions but our regular members will be returning to the White Hill Centre with renewed enthusiasm on 7th September. As the rules for Covid have been relaxed, we have been able to invite back some of the Group who were unable to participate on Zoom.

We still have a long waiting list and if anybody knows a teacher that would be suitable for us to engage for a second Group, please contact the Convenor.

Theatre



We are pleased to see that theatres are reopening, but believe many members would still be reluctant to travel by coach. We have therefore decided to delay any trips until the New Year. Please let us know your views on this so we can take as many of your opinions into account as possible. Enquiries to: theatre@cvu3a.uk

Ukulele

Alan Bridges & Jeff Naman



At last we're able to meet up for our practice sessions in person. We are abiding as much as we can by government guidelines, seating two metres apart with hand sanitiser available when people sign in, doors of the hall wide open for ventilation and to 'entertain' the neighbours. Not all Group members feel safe enough to join us, and it is a matter of choice for them to consider their own individual circumstances. But we look forward to the day when we can all be together again.

Since starting up again we have been joined by a new member who has provided a much-needed boost to the ranks of the men. We have also had requests to perform for the First Monday Group at Chesham Methodist Church in September and for Silver Sunday at Ley Hill Memorial Hall in October, where we hope to try out some of the songs we've learned on Zoom over the lockdown. So things are looking good.

Walking Groups

Walking Groups are remaining active whenever possible and working within the government guidelines concerning social distancing and risk assessment. Individuals from the Groups are also walking individually to scout new routes.

Amblers (3 - 4 miles)

Sue Osborne

An Eventful Amble in August

We were assured that the exit from the car park to the path was the most challenging part of our walk. What a whopper! Bravely, we persevered, walking from Little Chalfont via woods and fields down the valley to the picturesque River Chess, where we lingered for a heron and a photograph, then up the other side of the valley, enjoying the stunning views, to Latimer House with its rich and varied history and car park full of Rolls Royces.

We visited the tiny brick-built St Mary Magdalene church, famous because a medieval church was knocked down in order to build it, and because someone's mistress is buried there. It is also very pretty. Several semi-hidden footpaths took us to the historic and quaint village of Latimer with its triangular green where a horse has a grave. We joined the actual Chess Valley Walk for a short while, where several adventurous amblers debated ways to cross the river. Their skills were put to the test when we found ourselves negotiating stepping-stones through a raging torrent.

After this triumph of agility and strength, several members felt impelled to climb a fence! At this point, we were running (ambling) late, were still at the bottom of the valley on the wrong side of the road, and Little Chalfont was UP THE HILL on the other side. Several amblers were desperately pulling out phones and rearranging their afternoons when we eventually returned to the car park at Westwood Park.

Sue Masters

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

The Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10am. Walks are usually between four and five and a half miles long and are led by members. We usually meet for a picnic or pub lunch (optional) after the walk.

Walks are planned with Walk Leaders and published every three months, and members advise the Walk Leader if they wish to participate. New members are welcome.

Walkers 2 & 3

Sue Rawbone

Walkers 2 & 3 are still walking together with walks arranged on all the fourth Thursdays of the month and a limited number of first Wednesdays. The Thursday walks have been filling up very quickly but there have been reduced numbers on the July and August Wednesday walks.

The walks have taken place in various places such as Dorney, Berkhamsted, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Coleshill, and 'Beating the Bounds' around Chesham Bois, so there is no possibility of getting bored with the same old walks! My thanks to all the leaders for the imaginative and varied routes, which have been on offer.

If anyone wishes to join either of the Groups, please contact Sue Rawbone, details in the list of Convenors at the front of the Newsletter.

I've forgotten the joke I wrote about lettuce. It's a shame as it was a little gem.

I met my new girlfriend when we both worked for Bryant & May. Friends said we made a good match.

My friend Jack claims he can talk to vegetables. It's true. Jack and the beans talk. (I.H.)



Both Striders Groups have taken the resumption of activities in their stride, literally; because we have already totted up over 1,600 miles between us on Group walks since mid-May! A couple of years ago Jill Smith wondered how many miles we would accumulate during a year's walking and, after a delay caused by intervening lockdowns and restrictions, we have resurrected the idea.

At the time of writing we are notionally in the vicinity of Helsinki and by the end of the month will be in Moscow (hopefully Mr Putin doesn't think we are an advance party of some invading army and makes us walk all the way to Siberia before Christmas)! Looking at our mileage in another direction, we are already over halfway to the North Pole! So well done, Striders, and keep walking over and through whatever the elements throw at us en-route to wherever!

We have a full programme of regular walks in the months ahead with volunteer leaders booked in for all of them up to Christmas. Both Convenors wish to extend their thanks to those members who willingly come forward to lead walks; the Groups could not survive without the time and effort devoted by members in carrying out recces, and then leading walks for us. Although circumstances have restricted the number of long walks we have been able to offer this year, we have already had one very successful Thames Path walk led by Jill Smith and Pearl Howlett, and have another at the end of August led by Ian Barrett, in the Streatley area. We have also been pleased to welcome a new member: Chris Shelton.

And, as we approach the autumn, our thoughts are beginning to turn to the joint walk and Christmas lunch planned for 14th December. We missed this event in real life last year, although we managed to provide a well-received substitute, courtesy of Zoom. However, it will be especially good this year to assemble members of both Groups together in one location at Christmas and enjoy one another's company whilst at the same time raising funds for the children's hospice charity we have supported for several years now.

Should any Chess Valley u3a members be interested in joining one or other of the Striders Groups, please contact either Andrew Brown (Striders 1) or Ian Lee (Striders 2). Striders 2 walk on the first and third Tuesdays in every month; Striders 1 walk on the second and fourth Tuesdays.

Walks into History: Country

Tony Biddle & Peter Schweiger



The Walks Into History Group have met by Zoom but our July meeting did not happen for a variety of reasons. Our walk on the 1st September is a real one around Cookham. It is always fun to reconnoitre and find out where there are good places to eat and drink as well as interesting buildings and the history surrounding them. Cookham's most famous resident was the artist Sir Stanley Spencer. Usually when he went round the town pushing an old pram with his painting equipment, he looked very shabby. There is a story that he went to a house and asked if he could paint it. The owner said there was no need as it was whitewashed the previous week. There is a museum with his work in an old chapel, well worth visiting.

Our November walk will be in Hughenden.

Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell



Handel in London: A 'Zoom' Walk in May.

The blessing of Zoom outings is that we can travel further than is possible in real-time walks on foot; so this time we took a musical tour around the hotspots of Handel's life in London: "The greatest Englishman to be born in Germany" came to Britain in 1711 as London was being rebuilt after the great fire. He rented a new-build in Brook Street, Mayfair, where he lived for the rest of his life. It is now a museum, which he shares bizarrely with Jimi Hendrix, who lived next door in the '60s.

He wrote 42 operas, with 36 for the London stage. But his first performance of *Rinaldo* at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket did not go down well with an English audience who preferred the Italian operas sung in English.

(cont.)

He proved more popular in royal circles, writing *The Water Music* for George I in 1717, which was played by 50 musicians on a barge as part of a royal procession upriver from Whitehall to the Ranelagh Pleasure Gardens in Chelsea. He also courted favour with Frederick, Prince of Wales (later George II) who granted him British citizenship after Handel wrote *Zadok, the Priest* which has been used for the anointing of a new monarch at their coronation ever since. Also at the request of George II, he wrote *The Royal Fireworks*, composed for all brass and percussion, a rousing and forceful piece staged in a wooden pavilion in Green Park. And as if that was not loud enough, 101 cannons and 10,000 rockets were thrown in for good measure. The event was plagued by rain and the music criticised.

Finally, we took a look at the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury, the first children's charity in the world, where destitute mothers could leave their children in safe hands. This was set up by Hogarth who invited Handel to perform *The Messiah* there as a fund raiser. Handel left the rights to this, still most popular work, to the hospital in his will. Today, children still benefit from the playground in the original hospital grounds, where a sign says: "Adults prohibited unless accompanied by a child".

Angela Shipley

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



Our Group, some eighty strong, intends to burst into physical life in the autumn with organised events in early October and November. A foraging party will be formed to search for elusive fungi, to trigger the group into collective action on Thursday Oct 7th. We will then swap a field visit for an indoor meeting on 4th November to learn more about the behaviour of our feathered friends. Let's hope that our programme is not derailed by external events, but we are ever hopeful.

We remain open to ideas for topics from the membership, so please contact us. A warm welcome awaits any newcomers.

Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In May, the WAG1 Group split into two groups of six to comply with the Covid regulations. One group had a Californian theme with a Dark Horse Chardonnay from Tesco provoking sharp disagreements. We also sampled Barefoot Sauvignon Blanc from Tesco and Wavebreak Merlot from M&S, which was very well received at £7.

In June we were finally able to meet in person as a complete group for the first time in a year and each couple contributed a favourite wine. These included Redwood Hills, a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc at £6.95, an Albarino from Avery's at £13, a Tesco Finest Pinot Grigio at £7, another Albarino from Naked Wines that had been reduced from £11.99 to £7.99, a bread and butter Californian Pinot Noir from Majestic at £10.90 and finally a Marques de Riscal Rioja from Majestic at £14. We had a very enjoyable evening!

In July we had another riotous evening with a Spanish theme. The wines included Cava from Lidl at £5.99, Albarino from Waitrose at £8.99 (less 25%), a Parclada Catalunya from Vina Sol at £7.50, a Campo Viejo white Rioja from Waitrose at £8, a Monte Lagares white Rioja at £7 and a Vina del Perdon Rioja Navarra from Avery's at £11.99.

Our new way of operating is that each member couple brings a bottle to a set theme and the hosts provide bread and cheese etc. and an aperitif. This seems to work very fairly, while spreading the costs of each evening.

Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchener



After what seems an eternity, WA2 finally got back to meeting our members 'in the flesh' again in June in Gill & Graham's garden. This featured something of an eclectic mix of wines, mainly due to the fact that Graham decided a few months back to sample small bottles that were available, rather than yet more Zoom quizzes (do we not miss them!) In reality most of the 18cl bottles were hardly the best, and comprised a very limited selection. A nice, if a little expensive, English Bacchus was the best of the minis but an unctuous Primitivo swept the board. If you enjoy a full-bodied red, do try this one, it's Terre di Faiano from Waitrose. (cont.)

It's worth waiting until they have one of their regular discounts, but still delicious at £9.99!

July's meeting was hosted by Greg and Mirit and was entitled *Wines under £6*. We were all very pleasantly surprised with the high standard of the wines, regardless of price. A very pleasant Fiano from Aldi at under a fiver was the pick of the whites but was topped by two reds, a Castellore Nero D'Avola from Aldi, which was just pipped in turn by a Wolf Blass Shiraz/Cab blend. Well done to M & G for finding these bargains!

Again we were lucky to have another dry evening in Althea & Laurie's stunning garden for our August get together. This selection was from the local brewery: the Malt. For the first time I believe in WA2's albeit relatively brief history, a rose wine topped our monthly poll! It was a Castano Rose from Murcia, which was made from the Monastrell grape, giving it just a hint of bitterness and was, personally, a much more flavoursome and refreshing drink than some other more bland roses.

Wine always seems to taste better outside, coupled with good company! I wonder if the wines will taste as good back inside in the winter months? Good slurping everyone!

Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Writers have continued to meet outdoors in Group member's homes during the last three months and have been incredibly fortunate with the weather: Plenty of sunshine and no rain. Our recent topics have consisted of 'The Plough', 'On The Water' and 'The Contents of the Bag'. One member not only wrote about the contents of his knapsack, but pulled each item out for us all to see as he read through the story. That one stole the show!

With the weather unlikely to improve as we approach autumn, we are hoping to return to our pre-Covid venue, the Quaker Meeting House in Amersham, for future meetings. Our next meeting is being brought forward one week to Tuesday 7th September when the topic will be 'Luck'.

Our numbers have dwindled a little over the last two years and we are very keen to attract new members to our small and friendly Group. Please get in touch on writers@cvu3a.uk. And don't forget to check out some of our stories on our CVu3a Writers web page.

Here's a little light relief for our various Walking Groups. These are genuine complaints received by Forest Rangers:

- 1. A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed?*
- 2. Escalators would help on steep uphill sections.*
- 3. Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands.*
- 4. Found a smouldering cigarette left by a horse.*
- 5. Trails need to be reconstructed. Please avoid building trails that go uphill.*
- 6. Too many bugs and leeches and spiders and spider webs. Please spray the wilderness to rid the area of these pests.*
- 7. Chairlifts need to be in some places so that we can get to wonderful views without having to hike to them.*
- 8. The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals.*
- 9. Need more signs to keep area pristine.*
- 10. A McDonald's would be nice at the trailhead.*
- 11. Too many rocks in the mountains.*
- 12. The places where trails do not exist are not well marked. (funny-jokes.com)*

The u3a – a 40-year retrospective

Members will be aware that, in 2022, the u3a will celebrate its 40th anniversary in the UK.

This being so, it seems timely to look back on how the movement came about and what were the milestones in its history.

The University of the Third Age originated in 1972 in France, at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Toulouse, under the leadership of Professor Pierre Vellas. The model adopted there was an academic one, with the university offering courses and qualifications to people in their 'third age' – at the time of their lives when people were no longer in full-time employment and could pursue other interests. The u3as in France issue certificates following courses in a wide range of subjects, including computer skills, languages, religion, politics and so on. Other countries in Europe also adopted the u3a idea and followed the French model.

The u3a movement was founded in the UK in 1982, by historian and academic Peter Laslett, sociologist and politician Michael Young (who incidentally coined the term 'meritocracy') and Eric Midwinter, an author, broadcaster and academic. Midwinter had started the ball rolling in 1981 when he appeared on the BBC Radio Four programme *You and Yours*. He had discussed the growing cohorts of older people in society, with longer lives, better health and higher expectations for their retirement, and his piece had attracted more than 400 letters supporting the idea of renewing education in the 'third age'.

However, crucially, the model to be adopted in the UK was very different from the French one. Instead of being linked to formal learning establishments, a self-help approach was adopted, with the emphasis being "by members, for members". Members would seek and share knowledge together, and the aim would be to eliminate the difference between the teacher and the taught.

The first u3a was set up in Cambridge and this was rapidly followed by 13 more. A national committee was established with Michael Young as Chair and Eric Midwinter as General Secretary. Peter Laslett also joined the committee, as did Dianne Norton, seconded from Age Concern in the role of Executive Secretary. The Nuffield Foundation had provided £10,000 in funding and £3,200 of this was provided to Cambridge u3a, so that a template could be established for others to follow.

Another major decision taken at the outset was that each u3a should be a self-governing entity, with as much autonomy as possible, as long as it adhered to three principles:

- It must be open to all third agers
- The purpose must be 'educational' in the widest sense, which would embrace leisure pursuits and social purposes
- It must be democratically run.

The early 1980s were times of mixed fortunes for the u3a movement in the UK. By 1984, there were 23 registered u3as but there was resistance to affiliation with the national body in some areas, notably in the south-west of England. There was also the beginning of networks – groups of u3as that decided to cooperate and support each other.

The first national conference was held at Keele in 1984 and there was a significant development there. A motion to restrict membership to over 50s was defeated because, as Eric Midwinter put it, "U3A might just have become another old-style pensioners' club".

The other challenge faced at this time was funding. As we have seen, there had been some grant funding to get started but this did not provide a reliable long-term source of income for the national body. The founders were reluctant to seek public funding, because of all the bureaucracy that might entail, not to mention the fact that the ethos of the movement was self-help.

An attempt to tackle this was made at the 1987 conference with a proposal that u3as contribute on the basis of their numbers of members. A 'capitation fee' (now referred to as a subscription) of £1 was suggested but this would mean a large u3a like Huddersfield having to find £1,000 or more. There was also a debate about the need for a constitution for the Third Age Trust. It took until 1989 to resolve these issues but nine u3as disaffiliated in protest, one of them being the original one in Cambridge.

By 1991, 100 u3as were represented at the national conference. By the time the movement turned 10, there were 161 u3as and 22,000 members.

The next battle was at the 1994 conference in Lancaster where a business plan was presented and the Trust accepted sponsorship from Saga to pay for a full-time chief executive and to register the u3a name and logo. Saga also got control of the newsletter, although that arrangement ended in 1999. More funding was obtained from the National Lottery, the Nuffield Foundation and the Gulbenkian Foundation. By 1996 too, there were 15 u3as in Wales and seven in Scotland.

The u3a movement was now firmly established and the next quarter of a century saw steady growth both in the numbers of u3as, and members. It reached a high water mark in January 2020, when there were over 1,000 u3as in the UK and more than 450,000 members. However, the pandemic has given the movement rather a knock and, at the 2021 AGM, it was reported that membership has dropped by some 20% in the past year to 355,000. So the 40th Anniversary next year will see the need for some rebuilding.

James Cadle

Sources:

The U3A Story, Francis Beckett, Third Age Trust, 2009

Wikipedia entry on U3A

Chess Valley u3a equipment		
We have various items of equipment that have been purchased by Chess Valley u3a. These are held by the groups that requested and mainly use them but are available for use by other groups. If you would like to borrow any of this equipment, please contact the relevant custodian.		
Equipment	Custodian	Contact details
Data projector 1	James Cadle	James Cadle
Data projector 2	Ian Hutt	01494 716992
Laptop computer (Windows 10, Office 2016)	James Cadle	chair@cvu3a.uk
Companion speakers for laptop		Ian Hutt
PAT-tested extension cable/surge adapter		01494 583955
Projection screen 1 (5 ft)	Ian Hutt	history@cvu3a.uk
Projection screen 2 (6 ft)		
Pinboards x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	Keith Hoffmeister
Easels x 3		01494 766990
Portable PA systems x 3		photography@cvu3a.uk
PAT-tested 6-gang 2-metre extension leads (x 2)	David Hurd	David Hurd digimaging@cvu3a.uk
PAT-tested 4-gang 5-metre extension lead		
PAT-tested 4-gang 8-metre extension lead		
Rubber mats to protect extension leads (x 2)		

Places visited by Chess Valley u3a

*(As we start to think about a resumption of visits, Events Coordinator **Jackie Cobb** has looked through her archive to survey where we have been in the past.)*

The first place we visited was the Ely Cathedral Flower Festival in June 2013.

We then went at a later date to Chatham Docks, which has the longest 'ropewalk' which is ¼ mile long. They made the rope there for rigging Nelson's ships all those years ago. We had a talk on making rope, which is still carried on today. Then we wandered around the site, looking at the various exhibits and buildings, which made up a Victorian Royal Naval Dockyard as it used to be.

We have had several boat trips along the Thames from Maidenhead and on one occasion left the boat to have an Afternoon Tea in an Edwardian-style marquee with waitresses in authentic costumes. We then returned to the boat for our homeward bound trip back to Maidenhead.

Fast cars come to mind when one talks about Brooklands Museum. The site once belonged to British Aerospace. We heard a talk about the racetrack and its use during the war and also about the VC 10 aeroplane. Some of us had a simulated Concorde Experience on an actual Concorde, also exhibited there. There is so much to see and I think since our visit (in about 2014/15) it has been upgraded and more exhibits have been added. It certainly looked that way to me when I saw it recently on television.

At Christmas times we have been to the Bath Christmas Market and in other years we have been twice to Kew Gardens to see the Christmas lights.

We managed a seaside trip to Brighton to visit the Royal Pavilion. The weather was so nice I even sat in a deck chair on the beach before we left for home.

Alan Gray organised two 50-seater coaches to visit the Royal Dockyards, Portsmouth and the Mary Rose Museum. One coach went from Chesham and the other one from Amersham. We arrived almost at the same time. It was a fascinating day.

Alan also organised the visit to Richard III's final resting place in Leicester Cathedral. We also went to the National Memorial Arboretum at Lichfield and to Adam Henson's Farm and Snowhill Manor in the Cotswolds.

Michael Cohn has organised separate trips to Oxford and to Cambridge with a guided tour of each city, where we had lunch in halls. He arranged for some members to attend the Commandant's Parade at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. This is the full dress rehearsal for the Officer Cadets' Commissioning (Sovereign's) Parade.

We have also been to Bletchley Park on a visit organised by Gina Nash, to discover more information on the codebreakers of WWII.

We have visited several other places: too many to list here. But I thought this selection might bring back memories of the good times we have all enjoyed and whet our appetites for future visits to be organised by the Events Team.

Jackie Cobb

Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

FIRST in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Art Discussion 2 (pm)	Walkers 1	Walkers 2/3 (occasional)	Wildlife	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Pilates Classes 1,2 and 3 (am/pm)	Striders 2	Patchwork and Quilting (am)	Current Affairs (pm)	
Knitting and Crochet (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Italian (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Family History (pm)	German (am)	Keep Fit (pm)	
<i>Monday Groups' schedules are sometimes interrupted by public holidays; contact the Convenors for more information</i>	Ukulele (pm)	Book 2 (am)	<i>Book 1 meets at irregular intervals throughout the year Jazz Appreciation meets on the last Tuesday of each month (pm) Tai Chi meets in school term-times only</i>	
		Bridge (pm)		
		Wine 2 (eve) (pm)		

SECOND in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
History (pm)	Amblers	Walks into History OR Walks into London (alternate months)	Art Discussion 1 (am)	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders 1		Keep Fit (pm)	
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	Line Dancing (am)	General Meeting (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Tai Chi (am)	French Conversation (am)	<i>The Chess Valley u3a Committee meets on the first or second Tuesday of each month, two days before the General Meeting</i>	
	Dinghy Sailing (pm)	Bridge (pm)		
	Eclectic Music (pm)			
	Writers (pm)			

THIRD in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Science and Technology (pm)	Walkers 1	Patchwork and Quilting (all day)	Book 4 (am)	Railways (am)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Striders 2	German (am)	Art Discussion 3 (pm)#	Bows (Short Mat) (pm)
Canasta (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Italian (pm)	
Knitting and Crochet (pm)	Book 3 (pm)	Photography (pm)	Keep Fit (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Ukulele (pm)	Play Reading (pm)	<i>#Art Discussion 3 is temporarily suspended MOTO (Members On Their Own) have an 'anchor meeting' on the first Saturday morning of each month</i>	
	Scrabble for Fun (pm)	Bridge (pm)		

FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Digital Imaging (am)	Striders 1	French Conversation (am)	Bus Pass Adventures	Chess (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Walkers 2/3	Opera and Dance# (pm)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Poetry (pm)	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Singing for Pleasure (eve)		Dinghy Sailing (pm)	Keep Fit (pm)	<i># Opera and Dance is run by South Bucks U3A and Chess Valley members are welcome to attend</i>
Stamps (odd months only)		Gardening (pm)	Wine 1 (eve)	
		Bridge (pm)		

Clockwise from right: Our intrepid Singers continued to practise outside at Winchmore Hill: rain or shine.

Ablers made it down to the river Chess in August.

The entire compliment of Book Group One managed their first face-to-face meeting at a member's home in July. The scones disappeared very quickly!

A lovely holdall stitched by Patchwork and Quilting Group member, Jane Towers.



Clockwise from right:

Striders pause at Maidenhead bridge on their Jubilee and Thames river walk, clearly hoping to draw inspiration from Olympic swimmer Tom Dean's achievements.

The Ukulele Group are now able to meet up in person. They practise inside with the windows open wide, regardless of what the neighbours think.

Brian, John and Merelene rig their boat and go out on the water along with other members of the Dinghy Sailing Group.

