

u3a
Chess Valley

Registered Charity 1126990

NEWSLETTER

June - August 2023

website: www.cvu3a.uk



Front cover: 40 of our members visited the Royal Hospital, Chelsea in April. One of the resplendent pensioners talks to the group about the Hospital, in the incredible Wren Chapel.



Top left: Yes, it really is a goat on a park seat. Amblers noticed it on their walk around South Heath.

Top right: Author Timandra Slade shares a moment with one of our members buying her book. To discover what this is about, please read the History Group report.

Above: Striders make it to the summit of Roseberry Topping in the North Yorkshire Moors during their weekend in Whitby in May.

Right: The Walks into History, Country Group had a successful walk around Historic Aylesbury in May, and ended up here.



Speakers for General Meetings

All meetings start at 2pm

Broadway Baptist Church
78 The Broadway
Chesham, Bucks
HP5 1EG

Kindra Jones

Thursday 8th June

1066: An Exploration of the Bayeux Tapestry

Kindra is a professional historian, author and presenter, as well as a natural-born adventurer, having sailed a medieval ship, lived in a round house, climbed a volcano and performed similar exploits. Her talk will bring the Bayeux Tapestry to life and, after giving an overview, she will delve deeper into this epic work to uncover its mysteries and reveal some unlikely surprises hidden within its stitches.

Paul Barwick

Thursday 13th July

Alexander Litvinenko: The Spy Who Solved His Own Murder

Paul spent over 33 years in the Police Service, latterly in the intelligence area focusing on national security and public safety. He has founded Barfield Capital Tours, highlighting London's unique connection to the world of international espionage. Paul's talk centres on the spy's life and death, as well as the conclusions of the public enquiry and asks if his family will ever find proper justice.

Gordon Rogers

Thursday 10th August

Winston Churchill's Toyshop

Gordon is a chartered surveyor turned amateur astronomer at the Crendon Observatory. His talk centres on the UK's premier weapons experimental station in WW2, known as MD1. Located just north of Aylesbury, it was created by Winston Churchill after he appointed himself as Minister of Defence. Over 50 weapons were invented there which went into service.

Clive Trott

Thursday 14th September

Don't Poke the Bear

Clive was an army officer posted with the UN Observer Mission to Georgia months before the Russians invaded in 2008. During the mission, he was surrounded by Russian troops, was detained, and was involved in negotiations over the partial withdrawal. Since leaving the army, Clive manages long-range communications for the UK Ministry of Defence. Prior to joining the army, Clive was a trained actor.



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



Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our Spring/Summer newsletter.

The main event this June is our AGM on 8th. I sent out the documentation by email (or by post to some members) a couple of weeks ago. We do need at least 60 members to be present for a quorum but that shouldn't be a problem as the AGM will be followed by Kindra Jones's very interesting talk *1066: An Exploration of the Bayeux Tapestry*. I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

With best wishes



James Cadle
chair@cvu3a.uk

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Margaret Bedford	<i>Chesham</i>	Catherine May	<i>Great Missenden</i>
Carol Blackman	<i>Bovingdon</i>	Robert Millar	<i>Amersham</i>
Carol Brown	<i>Chesham</i>	Barbara Morrey	<i>Hazlemere</i>
Neil Cooper	<i>Chesham</i>	Richard Norton	<i>Seer Green</i>
David Ellis	<i>Chesham</i>	Beverley Pearson	<i>Chesham</i>
Elizabeth Evans	<i>Farnham Common</i>	Lynda Revell	<i>Amersham</i>
Simon Evans	<i>Chesham</i>	Michael Vincent	<i>Chesham</i>
Robert Fish	<i>Chesham</i>	Susan Windsor	<i>Bovingdon</i>
Geoffrey Hayes	<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 on page 5.

From the Groups Coordinator

There is not much to report this time, except perhaps some disappointment that none of the proposed new Groups attracted enough interest to get off the ground. On the bright side, though, two members have come forward to take over as Convenors of the Gardening Group, so this large and well-attended Group has a future.

Helen Barnard
Groups Coordinator
groups@cvu3a.uk

Events Team update

On 22nd June 2023, Alan Gray is organising a coach visit to **Syon Park House and Conservatory** where we will have a guided tour. In the afternoon we will travel to the **Musical Museum at Kew** where we can get a coffee/tea and will also have a guided tour of the museum ending with a tuneful finale.

Please contact Alan Gray alan.gray177@ntlworld.com for further information.

The Events Team
events@cvu3a.uk

We are sorry that, due to lack of space, we cannot include in this newsletter the answers to the March-May mini-quiz. We'll include them in the next e-bulletin.

Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle	chair@cvu3a.uk	07889 732291
Vice-Chair	Helen Barnard	vicechair@cvu3a.uk	01494 715588
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor	treasurer@cvu3a.uk	01494 434918
Business Secretaries	Colin O'Rourke	secretary@cvu3a.uk	01908 384990
	West Marshall		07931 433382
Membership Secretary	Jim Wilkie	membership@cvu3a.uk	01494 782081
Groups Coordinator	Helen Barnard	groups@cvu3a.uk	01494 715588
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	James Cadle		07889 732291
Speaker Organiser	Michael Cohn*	speakers@cvu3a.uk	01494 763542
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb	eventscoord@cvu3a.uk	01494 773718
* indicates a non-voting member			

Visit to Chelsea, April 2023

A dry and bright day greeted us at Chesham FC for an easy drive to Chelsea, where we started the day with coffee etc at the National Army Museum, a venue unknown to many members and well worth a visit on its own merit.

The tour proper started just down the road at the Physic Garden, celebrating its 350th anniversary. It was originally laid out by the Worshipful Company of Apothecaries of London as a source of medicinal plants widely used as cures for most ailments. Today it stands in 30 (prime Chelsea) acres and is one of the oldest and most respected botanical gardens in Europe, only surpassed in age by The Oxford Botanic Garden. As the party consisted of 40 members, we split into two groups, and were shown round by excellent guides who explained many of the plants, bushes and trees. The planned duration of one hour proved to be too short and in fact it lasted an extra 30 minutes and even that was insufficient to absorb information on more than a small proportion of the Garden's contents; luckily, there was no exam afterwards!

Most members took lunch back at the Army Museum's cafe and some even took the opportunity to take a brief look round the Museum.

At 2pm, we met at the visitors' reception of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, and were greeted by a splendidly attired Chelsea Pensioner who introduced us to the Hospital through a very informative video narrated by Dan Snow.

The Hospital was founded over 300 years ago during the reign of King Charles II whose vision for a home for veteran soldiers was brought to life by Sir Christopher Wren. The first Pensioners were admitted in 1692 and by the end of that year the full complement of 476 were in residence.

We were shown round by two Pensioner Guides, starting with the original accommodation rooms (6ft x 6ft); today's are more like comfortable hotel rooms with modern facilities. We then saw the magnificent Wren dining hall and adjacent Chapel and admired the grounds next to the Thames Embankment. The tour ended at the Museum and Gift Shop, and our somewhat weary members returned from a fascinating day after visiting two very different venues, both steeped in history.

As this visit was over-subscribed, we have organised a second visit for 25th July 2023 and details were contained in the e-bulletin at the end of May. Please contact me using events@cvu3a.uk.

Michael Cohn, Events team

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

(All phone numbers are prefixed by 01494 unless otherwise indicated)

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
Art	Angela Spittle	art@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 1	Angela Bishop	artdiscuss@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 2	Caroline Jenks	artdiscuss2@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 1	Gillian Eastmond and Mavis Earnshaw	bookgroup1@cvu3a.uk
	Mavis Earnshaw	
Book Group 2	Liz Howlett	bookgroup2@cvu3a.uk
	Christine Ross	
Book Group 3	Eileen Overton	bookgroup3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 4	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup4@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Green), Outdoors (Chiltern)	Margaret Stickland	bowls@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Short Mat), Indoors (Chiltern)	Sue Spalton	shortbowls@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Williams	
Bridge	John Curtis	bridge@cvu3a.uk
Canasta	Linda Hepworth	canasta@cvu3a.uk
	Sue Hawksley	
Chess	Caroline Jenks	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	
Family History	Sue Broad	familyhist@cvu3a.uk
Folk Music	Richard Skepper	folkmusic@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	
Keep Fit for 60+ (currently dormant)	Vacancy	keepfit60@cvu3a.uk
Knitting and Other Crafts	Sue Rawbone	knit@cvu3a.uk
Line Dancing (Chiltern)	Linda English	linedance@cvu3a.uk
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott	mahjong@cvu3a.uk

(continues on next page)

Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

(All phone numbers are prefixed by 01494 unless otherwise indicated)

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
MOTO	Mo Barnes	moto@cvu3a.uk
MOTO 2	Rodney Newth	moto2@cvu3a.uk
Patchwork & Quilting	Angela Bratton	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Dee Watson	
Photography	David Hurd	photography@cvu3a.uk
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	
Singing for Pleasure	Angela Bratton	singing@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
Spanish Conv (Inter)	Hilary Alleston	spanishconv@cvu3a.uk
Stamps	Vacancy	stamps@cvu3a.uk
Tai Chi	Sue Broad	taichi@cvu3a.uk
	Meg Brinton	
Theatre	Group run by a small sub-committee.	theatre@cvu3a.uk
Ukulele	Jeff Naman	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
	Heather Sprake	
Amblers	Susan Osborne	amblers@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 1	Stuart Stanley	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3	Jane Towers	walkers3@cvu3a.uk
Striders 1	Andrew Brown	striders@cvu3a.uk
Striders 2	Ian Lee	striders21@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: Country	Peter Schweiger	walkshist@cvu3a.uk
	Tony Biddle	
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

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd August 2023

News From The Groups

GROUP MEETINGS

Groups are now meeting in person. All Groups are open to enquiries from new members and, if full, will hold a waiting list. Groups that are 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.

Art

Angela Spittle



We have completed our jigsaw Hockney poster, (see colour picture on back page, ed.) which bears more than a passing resemblance to his *Going Up Garrowby Hill*, which sold last year for £14 million. We are inviting similar bids for our efforts, if you are interested. Mo Barnes is stepping down as a Convenor so we are looking for a replacement to help run the Group alongside Angela. The Group is currently full.

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



In March we met to discuss Francisco Goya, to coincide with the exhibition at the Royal Academy. Considered to be the most important Spanish artist of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, his works are said to have influenced Picasso, Manet and Degas. We looked at his portraits of the Spanish aristocracy, during a period when he was the court painter. One example is the haughty *Duchess of Alba*, which featured in the exhibition. He appeared to have been particularly moved by Napoleon's war against Spain, as we saw in his graphic image of an execution by firing squad of Spanish soldiers. Finally we discussed his 'black' paintings, composed towards the end of his life, when he was alone and deaf. These were a puzzle to us all: frightening images of death and destruction. These late works have been described as "a grand finale to his years of experimentation".

In April we discussed Claude Cezanne, as several of the Group had seen his exhibition at Tate Modern. Like Goya, he provided a wealth of art works during his long life. Known as a Post-Impressionist, he was experimental throughout his life and is thought to have influenced Picasso and inspired the Cubist movement. Our Group chose several of his lesser-known works. One member chose *Negro Scipio*, a powerful image of a beaten slave, dating from 1897. We all liked his delicate watercolours, particularly *The Pistachio Tree in the Courtyard of the Chateau Noir* and were fascinated by his still-lives and images of his beloved Mont Saint Victoire.

Our discussion in May was on 'What is Art?' A definition of art could be "paintings, sculpture and architecture" (Google) or "a human skill as opposed to nature" (Concise Oxford Dictionary). Our debate was most wide ranging from our personal likes and dislikes, innovation in art, art providing a historical narrative, what's in fashion in art, and who commissions the work: a fascinating and thought-provoking subject.

Future subjects will include David Hockney and 'A living artist that you enjoy'.

Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



We discussed German art in March's meeting, a country whose art has been rather overshadowed by French, Italian, Dutch, Flemish and Spanish artistic movements. We looked at a fifteenth century watercolour of a young hare by Albrecht Durer, showing supreme craftsmanship and sensitivity. Also we considered Caspar David Friedrich's romantic landscape, *Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog*. There was a dream-like image and domestic scenes by Heinrich Hirt, a prolific painter of the nineteenth century, who was unfamiliar to us. (cont.)

We discussed the profound effect that Nazism had on art during the twentieth century, the Nazis censoring any modern interpretation of the Weimar period, including Der Blaue Reiter, Die Brücke and The New Objectivity movements. Otto Dix was a member of The New Objectivity movement and his art concentrated on rather dark images of The First World War. The Nazis encouraged art based on classical Greek and Roman art aesthetics. It was a most enlightening afternoon.

'Paintings conveying the weather' was April's subject. Individually we chose a lot of rainy and stormy pictures: the earliest by Hokusai, *The Wave*, a picture well-known to us all, depicting man against the elements; Claude Monet's 'foggy' pictures of London, also familiar to us, and the American artist Winslow Homer's dramatic picture of a roiling sea, *Northeaster*. A more gentle interpretation of the weather was from David Hockney. His *Rain on the Studio Window*, created on his iPad, was a simple but memorable image. When we individually research our subject we are introduced to so many artists unfamiliar to us, for example, a sunlit mountain scene by Jens Ferdinand Willumsen. This is always a pleasure and this widens our artistic knowledge.

Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



This friendly Book Group of about eight people meets on the third Friday morning of the month. We meet in three different members' homes in rotation, as this spreads out geographically the places where we meet.

We bring a fiction or non-fiction book that we have found interesting and so want to tell the Group about. After a brief description of the book's content, we say why we thought it worth reading. Often other people have also read the book and can give their comments, or we just ask further questions about it. We might sometimes progress to a short lively discussion about the theme of the book, or suggest other worthwhile books on the theme that we have read. Unless the book is on Kindle, or is a library book, the owner may be able to lend the book to those who want to read it.

If you want to join us, please email a Convenor to tell them you wish to come. You can always try us for a session to see if we are what you are looking for.

Book 2

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Book Group 2 meets at 2pm in Amersham Library on the first Wednesday of the month. Two of our most recent reads were last minute selections by the Library to fill the gaps in our 'wish list' where our selected book sets were either unavailable or lost! It seems to be a recurring problem. The first was *Long Way Down* by Ewan McGregor and Charlie Boorman; a tale of the pair's motorbike journey in 2007 from John o'Groats to Cape Town. The second was set in much earlier times, *Harvest* by Jim Crace, which tells the story of the swift destruction of an isolated rural community following land enclosures to enable sheep farming. So, not our first choice of books, but we learned quite a lot; mostly about motorbikes! We've just finished reading *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt; a lengthy read. We could have done with longer than a month to take it all in and enjoy it. So, too long to summarise it here; just read it for yourselves. It provided much scope for discussion, which is what a book group is all about.

Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. The size of our Group is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham library. However, due to members moving away, two vacancies have occurred. Please contact the Convenor if you are interested in joining us; we are a very friendly and welcoming Group.

We are currently reading *A Ladder to the Sky* by John Boyne. Our June book is *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles and next is *All the Light we Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. We are putting together our wish list for 2024 from the books that are available to us in the Buckinghamshire Library Reading Group Scheme. We often do not know many of the books and, although we use online reviews, we can sometimes choose bad books. This is fun, trying to read an uninteresting book, and we enjoy talking about it.



We meet in each other's homes once a month to discuss the month's book that each member has chosen, one in turn. We all read the same book, which makes for a good discussion. In April we read *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris. Our current book is *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Bronte; a totally different read. We still have room for another member if you are interested.

Bowls (Green Outdoors)

Margaret Stickland (Chiltern u3a)

From May to September, CVu3a members can join Chiltern members for the season of weekly outdoor bowls on Wednesdays at Amersham Bowls Club, Hervines Park, from 10.30 to 12.30. The cost is £50 for the season. Contact Margaret to check on the availability of places, on bowls@cvu3a.uk.

Bowls (Short Mat)

Sue Spalton & Peter Williams (Chiltern u3a)

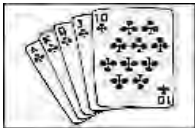


Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. In the summer we meet each Monday from 13.50 to 16.00 at Holmer Green Sports Association, for Outdoor Short Mat Bowls. The cost is £4.00 including a cup of tea per session.

There are vacancies for members who would like to 'try their hand'; experience not needed; tuition given; bowls available. Interested members should contact the Convenors using: shortbowls@cvu3a.uk.

Bridge

John Curtis



The Bridge Group continues to meet on a Wednesday afternoon to play duplicate bridge to a reasonable standard in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. A number of new members have recently joined the Group which is encouraging but means we've had to start a waiting list. If you wish to join it, please contact the Bridge Convenor.

Canasta

Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley



Our small Canasta Group meets on the third Monday of each month from 2pm until 4pm.

We gather in members' homes but if you are unable to accommodate the Group that won't be a problem. We would welcome new members or if you would like to come along just to see what the game is all about, we would be happy to have you join us.

Chess

Caroline Jenks



If you want to exercise your brain and keep the old grey matter working, there's nothing better than trying a new hobby. Come and join us in the Chess Group. None of us are expert players and some of us are beginners, so any ability level is welcome.

The emphasis is on having a go, improving a bit and having a good chat over tea! We meet in a member's dining room or, weather permitting, play outside in the garden. Just come and have a try: no commitment or cost.

Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We discuss all sorts of topics which are in the news, and we listen to everyone's point of view. Come along and join us for a fun discussion when we all learn so much from others. We do not discuss politics or any divisive topics and always remain friends. If you are interested please contact the Convenor for details of the next meeting.

"You know nothing for sure... except the fact that you know nothing for sure." (J F Kennedy)

Digital Imaging

Pippa Greensmith & David Hurd



We continue to meet every fourth Monday in Little Chalfont Village Hall. Topics covered during our discussions about Photoshop include the use of Brushes, Artificial Intelligence in photography and creating 'bokeh' in images.

In future meetings we will be looking at the use of Smart Objects and enhancing our own images.

New members and visitors are welcome at any of our meetings.

Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



We have started our sailing again now on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of each month until October. We sail a variety of boats with two or three of us in each, always with one experienced sailor at the helm. For the competent, single-handed boats are available. Experience is not necessary. You can have some dry land tuition before going on the water. We sail on Troy Lake near West Hyde (between Rickmansworth and Denham).

So, if you would like to join us please contact one of the Convenors. There is always a safety boat on the water just in case of a capsized, but that is rare. Always come with old clothes and a change just in case you get wet!

Family History

Sue Broad



We have had a variety of subjects over the last three months. In March two members gave a presentation on how to use 'Family Search'. In April we watched some videos covering the misinformation, errors and bad transcriptions on some of the well known genealogy programmes and in May we invited a member from Amersham Family History Group who regaled us some of the interesting items that he had found whilst transcribing the school records from Chesham Bois Church of England School.

We welcome new members. We meet on the first Tuesday in the month at Chesham Town Hall, starting at 2.15pm.

Folk Music

Richard Skepper



Our Group has had some enjoyable, enthusiastic sessions but, in short, it could do with some new members to keep a more consistent level of attendance. Our age group is affected by travel and medical bugs as well as competing demands on our time so that sometimes we have been very thin on the ground. Any instrumentalists or singers who would like to come along to see and hear what we do would be most welcome.

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



The French Conversation Group has continued to meet regularly. We chat about numerous topics, whether in France, other Pays Francophones, or more locally! These may be about favourite buildings, books we have read or can recommend, or television programmes we have seen, some of which may be in French. The aim of the conversations is to revise vocabulary and verb structures so that when we eventually return to France we feel more confident orally and can participate in every day life in France (or other Pays Francophones).

French Intermediate

Hilary Alleston

We enjoy our monthly meeting, trying to use plenty of French while we learn about the culture and traditions of the different departments of France. New members are welcome.

"The Texan turned out to be good-natured, generous and likable. In three days no one could stand him." (Joseph Heller, Catch 22)



At our February meeting, Keith Hoffmeister gave us a photographic presentation entitled *A Year at Chenies*. Keith used to be Convenor of the Photography Group and, as expected, he showed us some wonderful scenes of Chenies Manor and Gardens through the seasons.

Keith began his presentation with beautiful views in the winter snow followed by views of the garden as the seasons changed from winter into spring and summer. Keith has a long association with the family at Chenies Manor and he was therefore able to photograph the beautiful tulip displays during the first Covid lockdown, a sight that the general public were unable to see and admire. Apparently, they plant approximately 40,000 tulip bulbs every year for this display.

Keith accompanied his photographic slides with many amusing and interesting anecdotes about Chenies, including the revelation that there is an underground tunnel in the garden! John Noakes explored this tunnel in the 1970s for an episode of *Blue Peter* and Keith showed us a video of the event. Some of the Garden Group members had memories of Chenies Manor and Gardens from earlier years.

We all thoroughly enjoyed Keith's presentation and his beautiful photographs. The fact that Chenies is so local to us, made it even more special.

On a very wet and windy afternoon in early April a small but intrepid selection of Garden Group members visited the garden at Magnolia House in Wooburn Green. Alan Ford and his wife Elaine donned their wet weather gear and took us around their garden.

As Alan said, the garden was unfortunately not at its best! Some of their plants had suffered from the prolonged cold spell, as had those of many other members and he felt that it was this cold spell, coupled with the heat of last summer, that caused the damage. The recent prolonged periods of wind and rain had not helped either!

Nevertheless, we enjoyed looking around his garden and were able to take shelter in his conservatory when the rain became too heavy. We all admired the Japanese garden that his grandson had helped to build and his well-established acers. Eventually, we all had to retire to their garden room and enjoy Elaine's tea and cake while looking through Alan's albums of his charity fund-raising activities over the years. He thinks he has probably raised over £40,000 for different charities.

German

Jenny Lee



Our German Conversation Group continues to meet twice a month in each other's houses. We have a lot of fun talking in German about anything and everything. Also we sometimes do a crossword or translate some prose or a poem etc. Here is a very poor German joke:

Q: What's a German's favourite number?

A: Nein!!!

History

Claire Paterson & Ian Hutt



In March, we were very pleased to welcome again Stephen Barker, a military historian and excellent speaker. Following on from his tour with us around the City of Oxford last summer taking in places of leading significance in the English Civil War, his talk was entitled *Saints and Sinners of the English Civil War*.

He gave a snapshot of six figures of the period who were involved in different ways: William Lenthall, Speaker; Elizabeth Poole, Prophetess; Lucas Cary, Second Viscount Falkland and Secretary of State; Anne Fanshawe, whose Royalist family fled to Oxford (her recipe for ice-cream thought to be the earliest recorded in Europe, her everlasting claim to fame); John Taylor ("The Water Poet") and Lady Jane Whorwood of Holton, spy to Charles the First. Stephen is such a good speaker, and passionate about his subject, leading us through the complexities and factors in the Civil War and, in particular, how it impinged on the lives of ordinary people.

(cont.)

With no meeting in April due to Easter Monday, we next met in May when our speaker was Timandra Slade who has recently published a book: *From a Hard Place to a Rock* and came to relate the fascinating story behind it; an account of British soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force who escaped to Gibraltar during World War Two. The soldiers featured were her father and his cousin. The story, completely unknown to her, came to light through documents she found stored in an old suitcase. After the war the two men had recorded their escape with drawings and maps together with descriptions of their journey, including their re-capture and second escape, their ingenuity, acting ability, use of bicycles and an awful lot of good luck.

Absolutely fascinated by her find, Timandra set about intensive research using points from the documents and eventually put together the whole story and published her book; a very pleasant lady who presented the story with clarity, and managed to convey the excitement she clearly feels at her discovery of her father's war, and what a great tribute to him.

Our member Sheila Pitman will speak to us in June on *The History of Sheep in Britain*; wool being a highly valuable commodity in our economy in the past. It's a subject which will be quite new to most of us, I imagine, so looking forward to learning more.

Keep Fit for 60+



The Keep Fit Group is suspended and 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 & Other Crafts

Sue Rawbone



We continue to meet up regularly and many projects have been completed; Mirit Douglas has recently finished a lovely child's jumper (see colour pages: ed.)

I am continually amazed by the number of lovely pieces of work that have been finished in the 18 months the Group has been in existence. Other members are using different crafting skills, embroidery and crochet being just some of them.

We do now have space for one more person if anyone is interested. We meet in our own homes on the first and third Monday afternoons of the month so please get in contact with the Convenor if you would like to join us.

Line Dancing

Linda English



The Line Dancing Group is run by Chiltern u3a, but we also welcome members from Chess Valley u3a. We normally meet in the Methodist Church, Bellingdon Road, Chesham, HP5 2HA on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 10am. Meetings last one hour and we pay our teacher each time we attend a class. No experience is necessary and the emphasis is on enjoying ourselves, exercising body and mind and having fun. Parking is available at the venue. We currently have a waiting list. Please contact the Convenors if you wish to be put on it.

Email: u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk

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. Our Group is currently full. If you would like your name to go on our waiting list, please contact the Convenor.

Since our last report, the MOTOs have continued to enjoy their convivial fortnightly Sunday lunches at local hostleries and restaurants. These include 'The Boot and Slipper', 'The Full Moon', 'The Pomeroy' and Zaza. We have also arranged trips to see *The Mousetrap* at St Martin's theatre in London (it's surprising that after 70 years there are still some of us who haven't seen this play!) and the Arundel Cathedral Carpet of Flowers Festival in June. Meanwhile, we continue to hold our monthly planning meetings during a coffee morning at the Convenor's home and look forward to further outings during spring.

MOTO 2

Rodney Newth

We continue to meet for lunch on the second Saturday of each month. We have 11 members now and normally between six and eight attend our Saturday lunches and are open for new members. We have met at the 'White Hart', Whelpley Hill; a slightly noisy lunch as the pub was very busy, and at the 'Hit or Miss', Penn Street and the 'Boot and Slipper' in Amersham. Our July and August meetings will be in two members' gardens (or inside if wet). We will return to local pubs in September.

Patchwork & Quilting

Angela Bratton & Dee Watson



In the last newsletter, we mentioned that we support local charities. Our Group continues to patchwork and quilt for ourselves, working at our own pace, but we also love being able to share our hobby and our projects with worthwhile causes by donating many items we make for babies and children as well as adults, and we are encouraged by knowing how much these donations are appreciated by the recipients (see colour pages for a picture: ed.)

Although our meetings are well attended, we can still offer a place to anyone who wishes to join us, whether it is to learn to patchwork as a beginner or someone returning to soft crafts. Do contact us if you would like more information; you would be welcome to come to see us while we sew in our workshop session at Hyde Heath each month.

We love what we do and the Group also finds time to make visits to exhibitions and craft shows to experience what others can achieve; we freely share our ideas, expertise and advice with each other.

Photography

David Hurd



The Photography Group meets on the third Wednesday in the month and new members are always welcome; come along and give it a try! At each meeting we generally look at members' photographs and show a video to demonstrate photography techniques. We also arrange field trips from time to time.

In January, the Group decided on a project which would run through the rest of the year, as this would encourage members to use their cameras. Individuals can choose their own subject for this and the results will be shown at the December meeting in place of 'Five Minutes of Fame'.

At the March meeting Drew Burnett presented a wonderful selection of his wildlife photographs. Members of the Wildlife Group were invited to attend, and a good number did so. There was no meeting in April but the Group took part in a night photography field trip to Amersham followed by dinner at Zizi's in Whielden Street.

In May the Group had a field trip to College Lake and enjoyed a beautiful day chasing birds (feathered variety!) round the Lake, followed by lunch at the Grand Junction restaurant. The regular May meeting was a practical session on table-top/macro photography. Members watched some videos to help with ideas and then set about photographing an eclectic set of objects. A selection of these photographs is on the Photography Group section of the Chess Valley u3a website. (cont.)

"The freelance writer is a man who is paid per piece or per word or perhaps." (R Benchley)

Looking forward, the Photography Group programme is shown below:

7th or 14th June: Field Trip to Beaconsfield (Meet at 'The Old Tea House')
21st June: Regular meeting: College Lake photos, night photos, spring photos, Beaconsfield, table-top photos and a video on street photography.
5th or 12th July: Field trip to London, Canary Wharf or Battersea Power Station.
19th July: London photographs
No August meeting.

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Pilates continues to be as busy as ever with the maximum of 20 per class; all three classes are full.

As we meet on Mondays, May has been a quiet month with three Bank Holidays and Suzanne our much valued and loved instructor in the Bahamas celebrating her Silver Wedding Anniversary. Congratulations to Suzanne and David from all the Pilates Group members.

No doubt we will have to work extra hard in June to increase our fitness and flexibility. I am sure the Pilates rings will come in handy to keep our bodies in line.

This term ends on 7th August; we will then have a break to enjoy the beautiful English Summer before resuming in September.

Play Reading

Claire Paterson & Linda Hepworth



A Little Love Besides, which we read in March, was by Alan Plater of *Z-Cars* and *Softly Softly* fame, and of many other plays, mostly for television. It was an unusual play for us out of the usual mould and we enjoyed the change.

April's reading was *Autumn Manoeuvres*, a comedy by Peter Coke, the third play of a series of comedies, and the only one which we have read. It is based on the character of Dame Beatrice and her many lodgers who endeavour to help some homeless friends purchase a flat. Their series of 'operations' to acquire funds to purchase a flat and their complicated but well-planned manoeuvres are so successful that they end up well on the way to obtaining a second flat too.

We have chosen a crime play by Falkland Cary, *An Air for Murder*, for our May meeting. Again, the plot revolves around lodgers in a boarding house and the murder of one of them. The daughter of the owner is the number one suspect, but the police find all the other guests have motives for wanting the deceased removed. We will find the true killer at our next meeting.

As Claire Paterson is stepping down from the position of Joint Convenor, we are very pleased that our member Joan Barton is going to take on the sharing role with Linda Hepworth after the summer. We look forward to her fresh input.

Poetry

Christine Ogborne

Our Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month and for our meeting in March our subject was 'Trees and Woods'; very appropriate in fact, with trees just bursting into leaf. We heard poems by Robert Frost such as *Stopping by Woods* and *Tree at my Window*; Seamus Heaney featured with *The Wishing Tree* and we had the superb *Loveliest of Trees* by A E Housman, as well as many other choices. In April we chose to read the works of T S Eliot and the main readings were from *The Wasteland* and *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock*, but another enjoyable choice was *The Journey of the Magi*.

In May the poetry of The First World War was our choice, and we heard poems by Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Edward Thomas and others who had also written about their experiences in that terrible conflict.

Future meetings will be:

June 22nd: Philip Larkin
July 27th: Family and Childhood
August 24th: Welsh Poets

Please contact the Convenor if you are interested in joining our Group.



The Railways Group continues to grow with a good turnout for the meetings. Thanks to all the members for their continued support.

March 17th: Ian Arthurton: *A Life on the Tube*. Well what a really interesting career Ian has had on London Underground / TFL. Ian had a really good life story backed up with wit and anecdotes throughout. His work on the Victoria Line and the Automated Train Operation (ATO) was fascinating. He was so good, we have invited him back next year for a talk on a different subject.

April 21st: James Cadle: Railway DVDs. James ran the April meeting and showed a DVD provided by Norman Smyth about Australian Ironmen, which was particularly appreciated. They built 1,000 miles of track in five and a half years during wartime, and with only picks and shovels (and camels)! It was surprising that they ran the first train five days after completing the line. No 18 months of testing, mileage accumulation and such then! This DVD was followed by another interesting one on European Railways.

May 19th: Gary Heelas: *The 125 Group*. This was a very interesting presentation about the 125 Group by Gary, a founding member of the Group, which is preserving whole Inter-City 125 trains. Unlike other preservation groups, which restore locomotives, a 125 train has a power car at each end and carriages in the middle, so the whole train is effectively one unit; a really informative talk about a train that was meant to be a short-term stop gap for British Rail and ended up lasting almost 50 years.

The Railways Group Programme for the next few months is as follows:

June 16 th :	<i>P2 Prince of Wales</i> : Chris Ardy
July 23 rd :	Fawley Hill Railway visit: Graham Yellowley
August:	no meeting
September 30 th :	<i>Nene Valley Railway</i> : John Bratton
October 20 th :	<i>District Line</i> : James Cadle
November 17 th :	<i>HS2</i> : Bernie Rowell (Head of Rolling Stock, HS2)
December 15 th :	<i>Swiss Railways in the 21st Century</i> : Robin Addison and Denis Weller

Please contact the Convenors if you wish to join the Group; you will be very welcome. The Railways Group talks are held in Christ Church Hall, Chesham.

Singing for Pleasure

Stephanie Rothwell & Angela Bratton



The highlight of this term was seeing our teacher Ali on television singing with the Monteverdi Choir at Westminster Abbey for the Coronation of King Charles. She was caught on camera several times, and everyone was very excited to see her at this prestigious event. We all feel very lucky to have such a professional performer as our choir leader.

A few members of the choir gave a short concert in May at Winchmore Hill Cricket Club (not quite such an awe-inspiring venue as Westminster Abbey) for the Totteridge Stroke Club (see picture; ed.) These concerts were a regular event for the choir before the pandemic and we're delighted to be able to resume them. The audience was so impressed with our singing that we have been invited to perform at the Club's Christmas social.

Now, we're busy practising for our next performance, this time at Amersham Free Church on July 11th. We shall be providing musical entertainment for members of the public who attend the weekly Tuesday Lunchtime event. These performances were also a regular part of our programme before the pandemic, and we hope they will become so once again.

We're hoping to end the summer term with a concert in the new Community Centre in July; details to follow!

If you enjoy singing and would like to join the Group, then please contact one of the Convenors. Full details can be found on the Singing for Pleasure web page on the Chess Valley u3a website.

Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



We are often travelling and enjoy hearing about each other's experiences, whether in a Spanish speaking country or not. We are great readers and keen to share ideas for new books to try, as well as discussing current events. The Group is still full.

Stamps

Vacant

Brian has stepped down as Convenor for the Stamps Group, which is currently not meeting. If you are interested in reconvening the Group, please contact Helen Barnard, Groups Coordinator at groups@cvu3a.uk

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton



We continue to enjoy our weekly sessions of Tai Chi. We have now progressed on to learning a set of 16 Yang Style postures. Some of the postures are similar to those we have already mastered so it is becoming easier to learn and remember. However, mastering 'repulse monkey', 'snake creeps down' and 'fair lady at the shuttle' has caused some difficulties.

Unfortunately the class is full and we are unable to offer places to new members.

Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



We have two trips booked. The first is on 3rd June to see the Somerset Maugham play *The Circle*, and then on 16th November to see the adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's book, *Hamnet*. Both are fully booked.

New members are always welcome... as are members' suggestions. Future trips are likely to include a further trip to ever-popular Sonning, and hopefully in the New Year to see the new production of *King Lear* with David Tennant who may be known to you either as Hamlet or Doctor Who!

We are still able to accept new members so please do email us on: theatre@cvu3a.uk

Ukulele

Jeff Naman & Heather Sprake



Our new members are thriving in our Ukulele Group, and we are always happy to talk to anyone thinking about joining us. In May, instead of one of our normal meetings, we performed a gig at Prestwood Village Hall; the audience were provided with song sheets and a good musical afternoon was enjoyed by all. We are hoping to hold a 'Family and Friends' afternoon in the summer. If you are interested in coming along, please let me know; as of yet we have not fixed a date. If you want more information on the Group and our activities, please contact me.

Jeff Naman 07976 633798

Walking Groups

Walking Groups are now fully active. Individuals from the Groups are also walking individually to scout new routes.

Amblers (3 - 4 miles)

Sue Osborne

On a dry Tuesday in May the Amblers Group assembled in South Heath at the home of one of our members. The walk had been recced the previous day but overnight heavy rain had made parts rather muddy! However, all was well. We pressed on with our poles at the ready and, as ever, saw beautiful countryside with bluebells in full bloom. We concluded the morning at our leader's house with sandwiches, cake and much sociable chat. Thank you, Gill, for leading and feeding: We all appreciate your kindness.

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

Our Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10:00. Walks are 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; members advise the walk leader if they wish to participate. For the first quarter in 2023, we held walks in Willstone, Chipperfield and Chenies. For the second quarter our walks were at Amersham, Harefield, Lane End, Redbourne and Little Gaddesden.

New members are welcome, including members of other Walking Groups.

Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

Most of our walks have been local in the past few months, which has been a good thing, as we have had to cope with some very wet conditions. The leaders have done a good job at avoiding the very muddiest places, which has become quite a challenge. Hopefully the ground will dry out before too long and we will be able to enjoy some warmer weather.

We walk on the fourth Thursday of the month and the length is generally between five and seven miles. New members are always welcome but please contact the Convenor first.

Walkers 3

Jane Towers

Walks have taken place on the first Wednesday of each month with the only questions being how many stiles, how many hills or how much mud! April's walk took us roughly six miles to the north and west of Berkhamsted and the May walk, on a circular route from Chesham up to Chesham Bois via fields, woodlands and back down again. Walks for June, July and August are planned but we are still looking for leaders for September, October and November. December's walk will probably be jointly with Walkers 2, but that's a little way off yet! Thanks to all leaders so far this year.

Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



It is very pleasing to report that Striders have been able to welcome several new members in recent weeks and months, thereby rebalancing the membership numbers between the two Groups and also lowering our average age. Already, some of the new members are volunteering to lead walks, which is even more encouraging for the future of Striders. Any other Chess Valley u3a members who enjoy walking and would be interested in joining one of our Groups, or merely finding out more about how we operate, should contact one of

the Striders' Convenors: see the details below.

Despite the weather during the first half of 2023 being inconsistent and at times obstructive, both Groups have for the most part been able to carry out an almost complete programme of regular walks. Some have been enjoyed in sunny, and occasionally warm, conditions; and we have treated seasonal mud in the Chilterns as just another challenge!

Over the May bank holiday weekend about 25 Striders decamped to Whitby where we enjoyed three days of walks of varying lengths on the North Yorkshire Moors and along the coastal paths between Scarborough and Teesside, mainly in very pleasant weather and sometimes hot sun. Rumour has it that the world-famous fish and chip shops in Whitby also enjoyed an unanticipated increase in their profits! Dracula, however, remained undisturbed in his grave (wherever it is), which is certainly not at St Mary's Church, Whitby, as their visitor information is keen to point out!

Our attention is now turning to the second half of 2023. The annual joint summer walk is rapidly approaching: this year it will be from Winchcombe to Broadway in the Cotswolds. We are grateful to John Bratton who has once again put his organisational skills to use in arranging a coach to transport us there and in filling as many seats on it as possible.

(cont.)

The Convenors and some willing volunteers will shortly carry out a recce of three walks of differing lengths; and the expedition itself will take place on 11th July. There are still some places available on the coach at a modest cost (please contact either Andrew Brown or Ian Lee for details). Apart from the walks, some will be enjoying a ride on the steam train, which plies between Broadway and Cheltenham, or just enjoying a day out in the Cotswolds. You do not need to be a regular member of Striders to join us for this outing.

The summer months also give Striders an opportunity to tackle longer walks over a full day, with a picnic lunch en route, on any months with a fifth Tuesday in it. Jill Smith organises those and has volunteer leaders in place for walks on 30 May, 29 August and 31 October.

The Convenors of Striders 1 (Andrew Brown) and Striders 2 (Ian Lee) will continue to welcome any new members of Chess Valley u3a. Striders 2 walk on the first and third Tuesdays of every month; Striders 1 walk on the second and fourth Tuesdays. Please contact Andrew or Ian if you would like to join one of the Groups or need any further information about them.

Walks into History: Country

Tony Biddle & Peter Schweiger

Walk into History – Aylesbury 10th May 2023



Ian Hutt and I checked out the route for the May Walk into historic Aylesbury. Unfortunately Ian developed severe knee trouble that prevented him from joining the actual walk. We had hoped to do a double act but as it was, the dozen who came seemed to be pleased with how they explored the ancient parts of Buckinghamshire's county town.

The Market square has all the main banks that Amersham and Chesham used to have, as well as lions, statues, and a clock tower. The weather smiled as we had coffee in the museum gardens and we saw magnificent flower decorations in the church in celebration of the Coronation. We visited four of the five squares in Aylesbury and did not see any ducks, but we did go into the Quaker Meeting House.

We enjoyed good food in the Kings Head where we could sit together and miss the shower outside. To make a day of it, four of us went on the see *Buddy*, The story of Buddy Holly, in the Waterside theatre. The tunes are still ringing round my head.

Peter Schweiger

Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell

Bohemian London: April 12th



This London walk was so full of facts and cold enough to freeze the brain that I arrived home with nothing in my head and any notes I had made were illegible thanks to numb fingers. Consequently, a few tall stories will have to suffice:

April should have been warming up. It didn't! Bohemian London was so stuffed with facts that I can only recall the useless bits that are probably best forgotten. It was full of untimely deaths and suicides; the usual mediaeval gruesome behaviour. A funeral director (still in business) opened in the 1700s, which made coffins for overweight kings. There was enough namedropping of authors, poets and politicians whose personal relations with each other had my head swimming. From Holborn we passed the original 'Gamages' opened in 1930. Arthur Gamage was so into bikes that when he died he insisted on having his body lie in state in the bicycle department of his store.

On to Red Lion Square. Oliver Cromwell is possibly buried here and haunts it. After his death, he was dug up, put on trial for treason, hung, carved up and his head displayed on a spike for 15 years. Bertrand Russell's unflattering statue is also here; he died in 1970. He was orphaned aged five and, as an adult, imprisoned in Wandsworth jail as a pacifist. He had four wives and finally gained credibility as a Fellow of Trinity College. The perfect street of Bedford Row, existing from 1690, became the centre for the legal profession and was also home to Charles Dickens and Benjamin Disraeli, who was a writer before becoming a politician. Around the corner, Great James Street was laid out in 1721, home to many writers including Dorothy Sayers and Algernon Swinburne, as indeed was Rugby Street further on, where, at number 18 in the 1950s, Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath romanced in squalor and he wrote poems for her to make up for it.

(cont.)

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, 171 years old, benefited from Charles Dickens who donated the proceeds from *A Christmas Carol* to the work of the hospital, as did James Barrie with the proceeds from *Peter Pan*. The royalties of every book sold to this day going to the hospital and, from Disney alone, are said to be in the millions. A memorial statue of Peter Pan stands in the entrance and the ashes of James Callaghan and possibly his wife are scattered amongst the flowers surrounding it. Both died within days of each other in 2005 and had a common interest in child welfare.

We ran out of time so The Bloomsbury Set got a bit glossed over, but the Woolf sisters lived in Gordon Square: The prolific writer Virginia, troubled by mental illness since the death of her mother in 1895 when she was just 14, and then of her sister two years later, ended her days in Sussex: One night in 1941 she arrived home wet, having stepped into the river as a dress rehearsal for the real thing: Ten days later, she filled her pockets with heavy stones and drowned herself in the River Ouse.

Angela Shipley

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



The Wildlife Group has a full programme in place for the rest of 2023. Recently our April meeting saw two of our members give presentations: Keith Sonley talked about the conservation work done by the 'Revive the Wye' Group on the River Wye through High Wycombe, while Ian Lee explained how the 'Elephant Co-Existence Project' in Africa has been set up to raise awareness, enabling humans and wildlife to co-exist. In June we are paying a return visit to Road Farm near Great Missenden (we were there in 2019) and are looking forward to getting an update on how they are supporting wildlife by working with various environmental groups, while continuing to operate successfully as a farm.

Future events include a visit to Latimer Water Meadows to find out more about work on the Chess chalk stream, then we will go to Wendover Canal to see some of the biodiversity work being undertaken there. In September we will have an evening session with a ranger from a local wildlife trust, to learn about bats, and in October we have a demonstration of bird-ringing. We will have a talk about lichens in November and will finish the year with a social occasion for our members in December.

The membership numbers around 80 and we regularly have 30 to 40 members attending each month. We continue to look for ideas for future meetings and welcome any suggestions from our members.

Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In February it was Spanish night at the Hohenbergs' starting with a Cava and moving on to *El Jardin de Ana*, a Godello from Galicia at £10 from Tesco. We then moved on to *Herederos del Marques de Riscal*, a Verdejo from Rueda in the Duero region, from Majestic at £8. This was swiftly followed by a *Beronia Tempranillo Crianza* from Alta Rioja, available at Waitrose for £14.99.

In contrast, a *Grandeza 2016*, aged four years in the Howlett cellars, was disappointing. A *Carta Roja Gran Reservada Monastrell 2015* from Waitrose at £5.75 was drinkable but not exceptional. Finally, we had an *Ebeia Ribera del Duero* at a massive 14.5%, Tesco's Finest Tempranillo, reduced from £12 to £9 and excellent value.

March was Italian night at the Broombys', starting with *San Leo Prosecco* and swiftly proceeding to a *Fiano Grecanico L'Amistanza* from Sicily, available at Tesco for £9 and Tesco's Finest Pinot Grigio from Veneto, which is produced from grey grapes that hang like pine cones. Lidl's *Gavi* at £6.99, produced in Piemonte from Cortese grapes was bright, juicy and fresh.

A *Pecorino: Christian Patat* from Abruzzo in Central Italy is a marriage of Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc and available from Naked Wines, reduced from £9.99 to £7.99. Finally we had a *Bardolino* from the shores of Lake Garda, made from Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara grapes. They produce five million gallons a year and it is available from Waitrose for £7.50.



Our meeting in March was hosted by Hardeep at an Italian coffee shop in Amersham. Just four Italian wines were tasted and it was a close run thing between a Sicilian rose at the bottom of the pile (even without me there) and a full-bodied red: a Sicilian *Nero d'Avola* at the top.

April's meeting was hosted by Jenny and Ian and was a mix of white wines from Aldi and reds from the Co-op. Despite some rude comments from the Convenor, Ian also offered a home-grown strawberry wine but I suggested that he didn't give up the day job!!

The other wines were all good, particularly considering all were priced at £7 and under. The best white was an unusual *Sangiovese*, but this was pipped at the post by an excellent *Carmenere*, (Ian's favourite grape) from Chile, via the Co-op for just £7; well worth a try if you haven't yet tasted this lovely red.

Muriel and Alan hosted May's meeting, which featured Spanish wines, all from Majestic. Top of the whites was a viognier/garnacha blanca blend but it was another garnacha (grenache) but this time a red, that topped the voting by some distance, despite the tasting notes stating that "it has an aroma of tobacco leaf" (probably not Peter Stuyvesant)! Where do they get their descriptions from?

Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Our meetings have again been at reduced numbers in the last three months. Personal commitments and bank holidays have been the reason. Nevertheless, we have had some interesting and productive meetings (one on Zoom) and circulated our stories on email when any of us couldn't be present at a meeting.

We've all had a few 'Senior Moments', which provided the topic for March's meeting, which was followed in April with 'Houses I Have lived In'. 'Rodents' was the unusual topic for May and next we will consider 'Rings on Fingers'.

With our Group smaller at the moment, we are using the Quaker House when viable and making alternative arrangements when not. We are very keen to attract new members to the Group and extend a warm welcome to any CVu3a member who writes, in any capacity, and would like to share their work. So get in touch at writers@cvu3a.uk

Why was June made? Can you guess?
 June was made for happiness!
 Even the trees
 Know this, and the breeze
 That loves to play
 Outside all day,
 And never is too bold or rough,
 Like March's wind, but just a tiny blow's enough;
 And all the fields know
 This is so.
 June was not made for wind and stress,
 June was made for happiness;
 Little happy daisy faces
 Show it in the meadow places,
 And they call out when I pass,
 "Stay and play here in the grass."
 June was made for happy things,
 Boats and flowers, stars and wings,
 Not for wind and stress,
 June was made for happiness!

Annette Wynne

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 & Quilting (am)	Current Affairs (pm)			
Knitting & Other Crafts (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Keep Fit (pm) (currently suspended)			
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Family History (pm)	German (am)	<i>Bowls (Green) meets every Wednesday of the month during the season</i>			
<i>Monday Groups' schedules are sometimes interrupted by public holidays; contact the Convenors for more information</i>	Ukulele (pm)	Book 2 (pm)			<i>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	Line Dancing (am)	Keep Fit (pm) (currently suspended)	
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	French Conversation (am)	General Meeting (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Tai Chi (am)	Bridge (pm)	<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)	Folk Music (pm)		
	Writers (pm)			

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

FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Digital Imaging (am)	Striders 1	French Conversation (am)	Walkers 2/3	Chess (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Poetry (pm)	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Keep Fit (pm) (currently suspended)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)		Dinghy Sailing (pm)	Wine 1 (eve)	
Stamps (currently suspended)		Gardening (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		
		Folk Music (pm)		



Above: The Ukulele Group at their concert in May at the Prestwood Village Hall. The audience were provided with song sheets and sang along happily.

Right: The Digital Imaging Group continue to create some amazing work; this example by Sylvia Walters. For more examples of the Group's work, go to their page on the CVu3a website.

Below right: Some of the wonderful children's quilts made by members of the Patchwork and Quilting Group, and donated to local charities.

Below: Mirit Douglas of the Knitting and other Crafts Group has recently completed this truly incredible child's jumper.





Above: An excellent shot of some geese and goslings taken by David Hurd when the Photography Group visited College Lake in May.

Above Right: The Singing for Pleasure Group gave a short concert at the Winchmore Hill Cricket Club in May for the Totteridge Stroke Club. It was so good, they've been invited back to perform at Christmas!

Right: Look out David, you've got some competition! The Art Group's most recent composite is a stunningly accurate reprise of David Hockney's *Going Up Garrowby Hill*, which sold last year at auction for £14 million.

