




The recent snowfall in Chesham provided a brief but ideal photo opportunity for members of the Photography Group. From Keith Hoffmeister we have his garden Summerhouse - in the winter snow! More snow pictures feature on the inside cover



Subscriptions Update
AGM Information
Carry on Quilting
More Members Wanted



(Anti-clockwise from top right):

Happier days (before Covid) with Richard Ogden and Ian Hutt at a Railways Group visit in 2019 to Adrian Shooter's light railway.

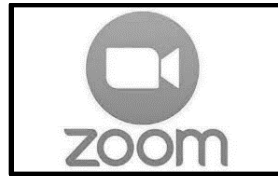
A snow...pup? Captured for posterity by Keith Hoffmeister (Photography Group) after our recent snowfall.

Not much chance of a bath for the birds here; again by Keith.

Neil Lynch, also of the Photography Group, shot this classic profile of a blackbird enjoying the meal he'd provided



Speakers for General Meetings



Michael Kushner

**NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING VIA
ZOOM**

Thursday 11th March 2021

A Journey to Station X – Bletchley Park

Michael is a guide and lecturer at Bletchley Park, having worked previously for Thorn EMI, and has a keen interest in historic military communications. The talk provides a brief history of British Signals Intelligence up to and during WW2, and explains how Winston Churchill organised funding to maintain over 10,000 staff, all sworn to complete secrecy. Station X was the largest code-breaking operation in the world, and is now known as GCHQ Cheltenham.

Andy Thomas

**NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING VIA
ZOOM**

Thursday 8th April 2021

A Conspiracy History of the World

Andy is one of the world's leading researchers into unexplained mysteries and cover-ups, and is the author of several books, as well as making numerous appearances on radio and TV. His talk questions why people believe in conspiracy theories and what is the evidence to support them, taking in everything from The Roman Empire and the Gunpowder Plot to JFK, 9/11 etc.

Mark Godsland

**NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING VIA
ZOOM**

Thursday 29th April 2021

Cybercrime and Protection

Mark is the Security Advisor for Thames Valley Police, and this talk covers how to protect your internet-connected devices and your online identity, giving details of Cyber Aware tips from the National Cyber Security Centre. This talk is a follow-up to an Amersham u3a study day last October, and there will be a summary document available.

Patrick Lunt

**NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING VIA
ZOOM**

Thursday 13th May 2021

My Life as a Voice Artist

Patrick is a broadcaster, presenter, voice-over artist, audio producer and voice trainer. He produces recordings in several European languages using voice-over artists from the countries concerned. He began his career with the British Forces Broadcasting Service, spent 30 years as a regular voice on BBC radio, and he has several tales to tell from inside 'Auntie'.

Ian Keable

**NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING VIA
ZOOM**

Thursday 10th June 2021

Charles Dickens: Conjuror

Ian is a member of the Magic Circle (with Gold Star!) and has written books on magic. He cut his teeth in the tough world of comedy clubs alongside comedians such as Frank Skinner, Harry Hill, Jo Brand and Graham Norton. Dickens was an amateur conjurer for seven years of his life, and had a show on the Isle of Wight in 1849 when he wrote a highly-amusing and informative playbill to promote his appearances.

Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2021.

I delayed writing this piece until the Prime Minister set out his 'roadmap' on 22nd February and that does, indeed, offer us the prospect of resuming normality, albeit in slow, careful stages. It may be that some of our smaller Groups can start to meet (outdoors) before too long but it now seems as if July is the earliest we can hope to have larger-scale indoor gatherings.

Attracting new members

I must level with you that we have lost – temporarily we hope – over 100 members during the last year. Pretty obviously, most of these will have not renewed because they cannot participate in their favourite activities during the lockdowns, tiers and whatnot. We expect that many of these members will return to the fold once normal life resumes.

However, each year we lose about 10% of our members for various reasons and we need to have a pipeline of new people joining to replace them. Apart from anything else, we cannot arrest the ageing process, so we need younger people with new ideas to keep our u3a fresh and vibrant.

Discussing this recently with the Chairs of other local u3as, we agreed that word of mouth is by far the most common way that new people come to u3a. So this is where you, our members, come in. If you enjoy and value your u3a membership – which presumably you do, or you wouldn't be reading this – then help spread the word about what a great organisation u3a is. Let your non-u3a friends see this newsletter or, if you'd prefer, contact me and I'll post a copy to them. Non-members can also attend up to two General Meetings or Group meetings as guests, to test the water, and this is especially easy to organise while we're still using Zoom. If you have a friend who might like to attend a General Meeting, let me have their email address (with their permission of course) and I'll send them the link for the next one.

Annual General Meeting, Thursday 10th June

In the centre of this newsletter, there is information about our Annual General Meeting on 10th June. Because of the steps set out in the government's 'roadmap', this will be held via Zoom. I will send out the Zoom link in my monthly e-bulletin at the end of May

General Meeting, 11th March 2021 at 2pm

Our speaker will be Michael Kushner and his topic is *A Journey to Station X – Bletchley Park*. More details are on page 3 and I'll send out the Zoom link a few days before the meeting.

With best wishes – and stay safe



James Cadle
chairman@cvu3a.uk

New Member

We offer a warm welcome to our newest member:

Kathryn Gates

Holmer Green

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.

Copy date for the next newsletter is 22nd May 2021

From the Groups Coordinator

Sue Broad has taken a well-earned retirement from this role. I continue on my own but there is not too much action at present. My main work has been trying to find Convenors for Groups in need. It is very sad if groups fail, but we are still seeking help for Eclectic Music and Walkers 2. So please do not be bashful. If you are wary of the systems there is help available!

In addition, as we hope to restart some 'real' classes in the not too distant future, if any of you are thinking of changing venues I see that the new Scout hut in Amersham on the Hill is nearing completion and presumably will be available to rent. I also understand that Amersham Town FC have refurbished their clubhouse and that too should be available for hire. Please let me know if you are interested.

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 434498
Business Secretary	Chris Kinsley	secretary@cvu3a.uk	01442 863028
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			

Mini quiz: If this is the answer, what was the question?

- 1) Sputnik V.
- 2) Shakespeare in Love / Queen Elizabeth (2 points).
- 3) A car park in Leicester.
- 4) 16th July 1969.
- 5) 'Knowing Me, Knowing You, Ahah!'.
- 6) A Haha.
- 7) Catherine Parr, Anne of Cleves
- 8) George Lazenby.
- 9) Yes you could, on Sunday, from 1961.
- 10) 3.1416.
- 11) Gavrilo Princip.
- 12) Red Rum (3).
- 13) Coronation Street, 60 years.
- 14) Boeing factory, Everett, WA (472 million cubic feet)
- 15) Joseph Haydn (104-107).

(Answers – or rather questions in the March 2021 e-bulletin and the June-August 2021 newsletter.)

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	Helen Barnard	artdiscuss3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 1	Gillian Eastmond and	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 (Short Mat)	Margaret Stickland	bowls@cvu3a.uk
Bridge	John Curtis	bridge@cvu3a.uk
	Patrick Clarke	
Bus Pass Adventures	Anne Muir	buspass@cvu3a.uk
Canasta	Julie Wolstenholme	mahjong@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	Liz Stoelker	digimaging@cvu3a.uk
	Neil Lynch	
Dinghy Sailing	Wendy Barnes	sailing@cvu3a.uk
	Judith Young	
Eclectic Music	Danny Robins	music@cvu3a.uk
	Rod Stevens	
Family History	Marian Bangs	familyhist@cvu3a.uk
	Sue Broad	
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	Joanna Hughes	newitalian@cvu3a.uk
Jazz Appreciation	Danny Robins	jazzmusic@cvu3a.uk
Keep Fit for 60+	Chris Orme	keepfit60@cvu3a.uk
	Diane Bovingdon	

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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	Julie Wolstenholme	mahjong@cvu3a.uk
MOTO	Mo Barnes	moto@cvu3a.uk
MOTO 2	Stephanie Macnair	moto2@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Page	
Opera and Dance	(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	Marian Bangs	taichi@cvu3a.uk
	Sue Broad	
Theatre	Vacancy	theatre@cvu3a.uk
	Vacancy	
Ukulele	Alan Bridges	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
Amblers	Susan Osborne	amblers@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 1	Wendy Nimmo	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3	Mick Rothwell	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	

(continues on next page)

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

Membership renewal 2021

The Coronavirus pandemic means that our processes are substantially different from past years.

Current position

As we are all aware, activities for Chess Valley u3a have been significantly curtailed over the past twelve months. Despite the curtailments, however, some 650 members paid the full £26 subscription last year and, consequently, we have substantial cash reserves at the present time. In addition to the 650 members who paid in full, some 60 people who were members at March 2020 have made no payment since then.

No significant changes to activity levels look likely in the coming few months.

Renewals and new memberships for 2021-22

The following will apply for 2021-22

- A. For members who paid £26 for 2020-21, at renewal will pay a reduced amount.
- B. All other members will pay £26.
- C. New members will pay £26.
- D. For each category, a member will pay £3.10 extra in order to receive *Third Age Matters*.

Timing

Even though the official renewal date for Chess Valley u3a membership is 1 April, **for this year only** renewals will be due on 1 July 2021. Payment options will be explained in a future edition of the e-bulletin and in the June-August newsletter.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact James Cadle (chairman@cvu3a.uk) or Jim Wilkie (membership@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.

News From The Groups

GROUP MEETINGS

Due to the pandemic, Groups are currently adhering to government guidelines on social distancing and many are carrying on their activities using video conferencing, web resources and social media. All Groups that have vacancies, whether active or dormant, are open to enquiries from new members.

LISTINGS OF GROUPS IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Groups that are currently dormant do not have an entry in 'News From The Groups', but readers are reminded that they have not closed and will resume normal activities when it becomes possible.

Art

Mo Barnes & Angela Spittle



We are pleased to announce that a new convenor, Mo Barnes, has come forward to save the Group from disbanding and another member, Angela Spittle, has stepped forward to help Mo, which is excellent news. The Group will meet when possible to discuss future progress but, for the moment, is not looking to expand its membership.

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



Our Group has continued to meet via Zoom. We are most grateful to James Cadle, who sets up the technology for our meetings each month. In December the chosen theme was 'Merry Christmas'. We discussed a wide variety of works: Several members chose renaissance nativity scenes. We heard about the hidden imagery in one of Bruegel's winter scenes and another member introduced us to an amusing Christmas theme from the late Beryl Cook.

For January, one member had suggested 'Skies'. We looked at works from Georgia O'Keefe with her unique interpretation of landscape and sky. We heard about the Scottish painter Craig Aitchison, with his unique use of colour, and a contemporary Russian photographer Platon Yurich, who incorporates surrealism into his digital art of the sky.

Another member chose Edgar Degas for our February meeting: A variety of images were displayed but not his ballerina works for which he is most famous. Many of his works demonstrated his unusual angle of vision. The Group agreed he should not be classified as an impressionist, but as a realist, a definition he preferred himself. We will continue to meet via Zoom until it becomes safe enough to revert to our old format.

Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



Our December Zoom meeting was entitled *Children's Book Illustrations* and we each chose several examples: From *Flower Fairies* to *Cautionary Tales*, Quentin Blake to E H Shepard and the memorable *Adventures of Wonk* illustrated by Joan Kiddell Monroe, a childhood favourite of one of our Group. We had a rather tricky art quiz to finish off this most enjoyable afternoon.

After the frivolity of December's meeting, January's had a very different tone; *People at Work*. As in our previous meetings we all contribute to the discussion and chose two examples of men's and women's work and both physical and mental labour were considered. Dame Laura Knight's *Ruby Loftus Screwing a Breech Ring*, painted in 1943 as part of the war effort, encouraging women to take on engineering work, was contrasted with Johannes Vermeer's *Milkmaid*, a very subtle work painted in 1658. We had examples of farming by Impressionists and a monumental mural of factory work by Diego Rivera, as well as more gentle occupations: Office work and sewing by the American artist, Edward Hopper.

The Built Landscape, was the theme of February's meeting and we chose examples of man-made landscapes. They ranged from the quirky *Leicester* by Barbara Bagley to classical pictures of Venice by Bellini, Canaletto and Turner.

(cont.)

As a Group, we were introduced to previously unknown (to us) artists: George Hyde Pownall, whose atmospheric picture of Leicester Square delighted us all, and movements: Vorticism, with an example by Wyndham Lewis of a camouflaged ship in dock, and the strange and delightful Friedensreich Hundertwasser's environmentalist townscapes. We all enjoy this investigation for our meetings, and look forward greatly to the first Monday in the month: A date in an otherwise rather empty diary.

Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



This smaller friendly book group meets (in normal times) about every six weeks on a Friday morning, at a member's home. We bring with us a book that we have found interesting, fiction or non-fiction and then give a very brief description of the book where we say why we thought it worth reading. We then have a lively discussion about the book and its theme. In normal times the owner often can lend the book to anyone who wants to read it. However, until then, we are conducting our meetings via zoom, which is not as good as face-to-face, but is working well. At the moment we are full, so you would be put on a waiting list to join the Group.

Book 2

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Our monthly meetings continue via Zoom on the first Wednesday of the month, despite the occasional glitch with the technology! In December we read and enjoyed *Curtain Call* by Antony Quinn; a complex murder mystery crime packed with interesting characters and set in 1936 against the backdrop of pre-war Britain.

That was the last book set that Chesham library managed to source, but most of us managed to get hold of a copy of our January book: *The Ghost Road* by Pat Barker. This is a war novel: the last volume of a trilogy following the fortunes of shell-shocked British army officers towards the end of the First World War. It was a rather harrowing read not, we felt, the ideal choice for the current lockdown. The pandemic has certainly given us more time for reading and for listening to audio books. So it has been great to be able to exchange ideas and recommendations within the group for some uplifting novels to keep us entertained.

Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings would normally be 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 had *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett for two months now and have already discussed it, generally agreeing it was a very informative book and a good read. We are continuing with our Zoom meetings where we can discuss books we have read in the month, as well as having a good chat. Fingers crossed, we can slowly get back to normal once the library re-opens.

Book 4

Jackie Cobb



We are still continuing to meet via Zoom. The books we are reading are Bill Bryson's *The Thunderbolt Kid*; Daphne du Maurier: *Frenchman's Creek*; Colson Whitehead: *The Nickel Boys*; and Kate Atkinson's *Transcription*. Hopefully by the spring, we might be able to meet in person. In the meantime we keep reading and sharing our thoughts on the books we have each chosen.

"Show me a sane man and I will cure him for you." (Carl Jung: *The Browser*)

"If I had to live my life again, I'd make the same mistakes, only sooner."

(Tallulah Bankhead: *Forbes*)

"A peacock that rests on its feathers is just another turkey."

(Dolly Parton: *Knoxville News Sentinel*)

Bus Pass Adventures

Anne Muir



We're hoping to resume our adventures as soon as possible, firstly to St. Albans, bus timetables allowing, as it's such an interesting city. We hope that masks will no longer be compulsory on public transport and in cafes etc. by then, as socialising is one main aim of the group.

The sun is shining this morning, giving a little hope after all the gloomy days.

Canasta

Julie Wolstenholme



Members of the Canasta Group are managing to keep their spirits up by staying in touch via 'WhatsApp' with messages and jokes.

Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



When not in lockdown, 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. We have continued to have our monthly meetings on Zoom and will do so for the foreseeable future. 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.

Digital Imaging

Liz Stoelker & Neil Lynch



We have continued with our lively Zoom meetings and Neil Lynch has become Co-Convenor of the Group. Neil conceived and organised the 2020 Challenge, which gave us plenty to do last year. The results were quite amazing. Given that we all started with the same set of images, it was intriguing how differently members used all or parts of the original images. The results can be seen at <https://digimaging.myportfolio.com/>. You will see some things appearing several times, especially the pitcher plant. Throughout last year, the Challenge resulted in a variety of "How do you do..." questions. In January, contributors answered these "How did you do that?" questions.

In December we joined the Photography Group (online) for their Christmas Party, but we had to provide our own refreshments. February's meeting was so hilarious at the beginning (how on earth did we get on to talking about false eyes?) that the Convenor had to call the members to order so that David could give us his really informative talk on *Using the RAW Editor in PhotoShop Elements*.

These are our plans for the next three months, which may be subject to change:

March 22nd: File Sizes, the DI page on the new website, and results of the Animal Challenge.

April 25th: Ray Higginbottom from Chalfonts & Gerrards Cross Camera Club: *Visual Art*

May 24th: Pippa: *Artwork*

Eclectic Music

Danny Robins & Rod Stevens



Dear Members: Firstly we must thank Juliet Crussell and Ron Hartwell for their work in convening the Group from the outset, keeping things running smoothly and for organising many very successful live events. Juliet and Ron will remain as members and contributors to the group and Ron will continue to give concerts at his home on his collection of pianolas. As a start and to get to know the Group, we would like to invite members to contribute an item from YouTube that they particularly enjoy and supply a few lines of explanation. The choice is yours, from Eric Coates to Erich Korngold, André Previn to Andre Kostelanetz, Ennio Morricone to Felix Mendelssohn.

Meetings of the Eclectic Music Group have been suspended until further notice. In the meantime, hopefully with your contributions, we will continue to issue programmes of YouTube clips or related online performances and information. We look forward to hearing from you.



We are continuing to meet monthly via Zoom, starting at 2.00pm on the first Tuesday of the month and we are pleased to say that, as the word spreads, more members are joining us. We don't usually meet in January but this year, as no one was likely to have a 'hangover' from the New Year's Eve celebrations, we decided to book a speaker for January 2nd:

Dr Nick Barrett, author and broadcaster, was our choice of speaker. Nick was involved in the original programming of *Who Do You Think You Are?* He told us that originally celebrities were hesitant to take part in the programme, either because of the possibility of what the researchers might find or because they didn't think the programme would be successful. How wrong they were! Nowadays celebrities are lining up to take part in the show. Thankfully the make up of the show has changed slightly and the behind the scenes researchers (of which there are many) at least get to send their prodigies off to do some of their own research. Not that any of us get to meet the head of research in the various establishments, or are presented with documents that have been found for us. We all agreed that it was a very interesting session.

On February 2nd, we welcomed Jackie Depelle: Chairman of the Yorkshire Group of Family History Societies and Co-organiser of seminars for the Guild of One Name Studies. Jackie gave us some interesting clues for some of the methods involved in tracing the more current members of our families, from 1911 (the latest census available to us) and forwards. We need to look at newspaper archives, pension records, electoral records (Try local archives first or the British Library, which has the largest collection) and telephone directories. Also there are trade and Trades Union records, and don't forget that not only rich people made wills. There is a need to think "outside of the box": a favourite quote for family researchers.

Our speaker for March 2nd is Les Mitchinson, Dip. Gen. Les has a string of Associations that he is affiliated to; too many to mention here. The title of his talk is *Treasures of the Parish Chest*.

April 6th sees one of our own members, Peter Healy, presenting. He is in the process of finalising his (as yet untitled) talk. Details soon.

We would be pleased to hear if anyone has any ideas to put forward for the May meeting, which we presume will still be on Zoom. Please let us know and we will address them, and welcome you to join in, or talk on the subject yourself, even if you are not a member of the Group, so please contact the Convenor.

We make a small charge to cover the cost of external speakers.

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



Bonjour! Eh bien ..

We are continuing to chat as usual, sharing views on recent television programmes, books and films. Some are even in French, for example *Call my Agent* (Dix pour cent) and *Lupin* on Netflix.

Omar Sy stars in *Lupin*. He was in the French film: *Intouchables*, which is another recommendation and something to cheer us up during this challenging time.

New members who are interested in conversing in French are welcome to join us.

"My Uncle used to say, 'When one door closes, another opens.' He was a good philosopher, but a lousy cabinet maker."

"My grandfather started walking five miles a day when he turned 60. He's 87 now and we have no idea where he is."

"After nearly 50 years, my grandmother finally got my grandpa to stop biting his nails. She hid his teeth."

Q: "What do you call an angry French aunt?" A: "A crossaunt" (scarymommy.com)



Pentire
Cross Oak Road
Berkhamsted
Hertfordshire
HP4 3NA

1 March 2021

Dear Member(s)

I wish to inform you that the 13th **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** for Chess Valley U3A will be held on **Thursday 10 June 2021 at 2.00 pm via Video Conference**. The purpose of this advance notification is to enable you to:

- Make nominations of candidates for election at the AGM, and
- Notify me of any motions you wish to be dealt with at the meeting.

You may wish to nominate someone to become a member of the Committee. To assist you in making a nomination I enclose (a) information about the election and (b) a nomination form which you should complete and return to me by 29 April.

If you wish to propose any other matters for discussion these must be put in writing, proposed and seconded, and forwarded to me (via email at secretary@cvu3a.uk or via post to the above address) by 29 April.

We look forward to you participating at our AGM on 10 June! The meeting will be followed by a talk via video which will be by Ian Keable. His subject is Charles Dickens: 'Conjurer'.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kinsley

Business Secretary



The Thirteenth Annual General Meeting

of the

Chess Valley U3A

held

via Video Conference

on Thursday 10 June 2021 at 2pm

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence**
- 2 Minutes of the 12th AGM**
- 3 Reports from (a) The Chairman**
(b) The Treasurer
- 4 Appointment of an Examiner for the Accounts**
- 5 Election of Officers and Committee Members (and Trustees); see notes below**
- 6 Any other Business**

Note 1: James Cadle, Chairman and Helen Barnard, Vice-Chair, have offered themselves for re-election in their current positions.

Note 2: Chris Kinsley, Business Secretary, will stand down at the AGM.

Note 3: Colin O' Rourke, a co-opted Committee member, has expressed an interest in being appointed Business Secretary.

Note 4: Valerie Garrod, Webmaster, and Jackie Cobb, Events Coordinator, have both offered themselves for re-election in their current positions.

Note 4: Other Committee Members were elected in 2020 and are willing to continue to serve until they are up for re-election in 2022.

Chris Kinsley, Business Secretary

Nomination Form (tick the appropriate box for this nomination)

- Chairman
- Vice-Chairman
- Hon Secretary
- Hon Treasurer
- Committee Member

Nominee's Name
(print in capitals)

Nominee's
declaration and signature

Proposer's Name
(print in capitals)

Proposer's signature

Seconder's Name
(print in capitals)

Seconder's signature

Nomination Form (tick the appropriate box for this nomination)

- Chairman
- Vice-Chairman
- Business Secretary
- Treasurer
- Committee Member

Nominee's Name
(print in capitals)

Nominee's
declaration and signature

Proposer's Name
(print in capitals)

Proposer's signature

Seconder's Name
(print in capitals)

Seconder's signature



A roundabout way of looking at things

I was, I have to admit, surprised to discover that the roundabout (the traffic one not the fairground variety) was invented by a Frenchman by the name of Pierre L'Enfant in the 1700s. It was later adapted for use in New York in 1905 only reaching Letchworth, where there must have been a chronic need, in 1909.

By the by, I had always assumed that the roundabout was a peculiarly British thing, observing that French and American drivers seem to be totally confused by its need for a subtle mix of tact and assertion and therefore psychologically unable to use them properly.

British pride (envy of the world and all that stuff) was however restored by the invention of the mini roundabout in 1966 by Frank Blackmore who, as an eccentric throwback to the man with the red flag, positioned himself on the very first one in order to direct drivers as to its correct use. (A lesson that could perhaps be repeated usefully today!)

My very first roundabout challenge was driving a very old and very slow Austin Seven Ruby around Hyde Park corner, only managing to exit towards Kensington after three laps, when I had achieved sufficient speed and road position to do so. Very sadly, the introduction of traffic lights has since vacuumed all the fun out of that particular experience.

But from that time on, the roundabout has remained in my mind as probably the most interesting and versatile piece of road 'furniture'.

Legends abound, for example Innes Ireland test piloting a Lotus in Norfolk and driving straight over one, pursued by optimistic policemen. But my favourite is one of a Belgian motorcyclist who disappeared without trace just outside Brussels. Many years later he, or rather his leather-clad skeleton and motorbike were found in the centre of a large overgrown roundabout. It seems that after hitting the kerb, both bike and rider somersaulted into the depths of closely planted Rhododendrons which closed over them until their discovery many years later.

I also like to think that some of the larger estate-sized roundabouts, like the one onto the M40 at Handy Cross, conceal lost tribes, sects, travellers, possibly a very old Japanese POW or maybe some species of bat as yet undiscovered. I foresee a TV series on British roundabouts for Joanna Lumley or some other under-employed and needy 'personality'.

Perhaps journalists could also adopt the word as a more accurate description of what they generally call a U-Turn. Because it seems to me that politicians don't execute that particular manoeuvre. They do enter a roundabout with no clear idea of their intended exit, but then find that they can then comfortably stay on it for some considerable interval of time, or until an enquiry into roundabouts comes around.

'Timewaster'

We are still meeting monthly on Zoom and keeping our French going with general chat, book recommendations and France-related topics. When we are finally allowed to meet in person, we shall have our much-delayed annual lunch to celebrate. We have nearly all had our first vaccination, so are feeling positive about seeing one another again.

Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell & Camilla Plummer



We hosted our first Zoom meeting as new Co-Convenors in January, with some prior training from James Cadle, our knight in shining armour!

Our Speaker was George Lockwood, who talked on *Flowering Bulbs from January to May*. George gave a very entertaining and knowledgeable presentation, which included many tips for successfully growing and nurturing bulbs. His colourful slides of a wide variety of bulbs raised everyone's spirits on a dreary, grey afternoon.

Brian Fisher, a regular visitor to Garden Group, presented in February via Zoom. He talked on *Gardens of the Azores and Canaries*. He transported us to the sunnier climes and exotic flora of these islands!

Finally, we wish to express our thanks to Janice Cross, who has been an enthusiastic and dedicated Convenor for the last twelve years. During this time she has organised a wide variety of talks and visits which members have enjoyed.

Janice has agreed to be our Speaker in March, via Zoom of course. Her talk will be about the National Garden Scheme; a charity close to her heart and in which she is heavily involved. The scheme raises money for nursing charities by assisting gardeners to open their gardens to the public for a small entrance fee. The proceeds of all garden openings are donated to the NGS.

German

Jenny Lee



The German Conversation Group continues to meet via zoom twice a month and it's hard to believe nearly a year has gone by since we were all able to meet face to face! So here are a few more Deutsche Motivationsprüche, ie Motivational Sayings to help us all through lockdown:

“Wir müssen ja sowieso denken: Warum nicht gleich positive?” We need to think anyway:

Why not think positively straight away?

“Wer lächelt, statt zu toben, ist immer der Stärkere.” The person who smiles rather than rages is always the stronger one.

“Gib niemals auf!” Never give up!

History

Claire Paterson & Ian Hutt



To commence our own Christmastime, we were pleased to watch and listen to Keith Spencer from Wycombe Museum, who explained how Christmas was celebrated in Tudor times. Not a great deal different from our own, though 'minst pyes' were made with a filling of mixed meats and certain fruits, not quite the sweet offerings we like today. Though the Tudor palate did like sweets and many were made using marzipan and sugar, meat was the main pleasure, so food storage and preparation would have been undertaken for weeks beforehand. Henry VIII popularised the turkey and large birds were stuffed with several smaller birds before being roasted. Christmas itself was celebrated for twelve days from Christmas Eve until January 6th (Epiphany). No work was undertaken during this time. Greenery was brought in to decorate the home, much as we do today and generally, we certainly seem not to work until after New Year's Day these days!

Peter Healy gave a very well researched presentation on *The Revolution that Nearly Was*. After WWI, 1919/20, unrest was present throughout Europe. The Bolsheviks took over in Russia deposing the Tsar, and hoped eventually to impose Communism throughout Europe, creating a new society. (cont.)

Many countries were suffering strikes and unrest from workers. The slow repatriation of foreign servicemen in Britain caused much frustration.

The military wanted to hang on to them in case what was happening in Russia necessitated military intervention at home. Throughout many cities in England there were riots and strikes due to this and the lack of help for unemployed servicemen.

The Easter uprising in Ireland resulted in the execution of 15 men. Germany was punished for the war. Hungary experienced a Communist uprising. Austria was broken up with none of the country being incorporated into Germany. There was conflict in Italy between the socialist left and the fascist right led by Mussolini. Spain suffered labour strikes, unemployment and poverty. In France, pacifism gained momentum, the majority of workers wanting a fairer society with a living wage, and to no longer be cannon-fodder in wartime, which had been their lot. In Switzerland there was a feeling that a small minority had made massive war profits while a large proportion of the work force was impoverished. None of this was surprising after the carnage, massive destruction and upheavals throughout Europe, resulting from the war.

Peter's presentation was all-encompassing and represented a great deal of research. He asked for and got, a huge amount of interest and concentration from the online audience. The European revolution nearly was, but in the end didn't, happen!

Our February Zoom meeting was presented by Jeff Rozelaar whose interest was TE Lawrence and he gave an excellent snapshot of the man behind the legend. Dubbed 'Lawrence of Arabia', he was an unusual person who didn't quite fit! Even at Oxford, an institution that celebrated the unusual, he was viewed with much disdain, not helped by the constant smirk that he employed when viewing a scene, generally of sport, which he hated.

He was interested in, and had practiced archaeology since boyhood, and spent time in Egypt on digs. He enlisted in the army in 1914. His knowledge of the Middle East, fluency in Arabic and French and an ability to read Greek, made him the ideal person for military intelligence and to help the Arabs overcome the Turks for the war effort. He revelled in the physical aspect, wearing traditional Arab dress and learning to ride a camel. He led skirmishes and blew up railway lines to some effect. He was highly respected by the Arabs to whom he promised, with British backing, an independent state for their peoples. It was a promise that the French, together with the British, reneged on, as it didn't fit with their colonial aspirations over Syria.

He was raised to the status of legend by American publicist, writer, broadcaster and traveller: Lowell Thomas, who staged lectures, oriental dancing and music events: *Allenby in Palestine* and *Lawrence in Arabia*. These were extremely popular in England and 'Lawrence' became a household name.

Returning to England as a full colonel, he worked for the Foreign Office and Churchill. Later he enlisted in the Royal Air Force using the name, Ross, for anonymity. He eventually retired in 1935 to a tiny modest and extremely spartan cottage, Clouds Hill, in Dorset. He loved motorcycles and owned several Brough Superiors. Tragically, whilst speeding through the Dorset lanes, he swerved to avoid two boys on bicycles and was thrown from his own motorcycle. He died six days later from head injuries, aged just 46. There is the possibility that, unable to come to terms with his homosexuality, he committed suicide. We shall never know for sure. Jeff's talk gave us a great insight into this man, and left us wishing to learn more.

On March 8th, via Zoom, Dr David Noy will be telling us about William Lowndes of Winslow and Chesham. Our meeting of April 12th, again via Zoom, will be given by Andy Thomas and is titled *The Story of English Freedom*. On May 10th, we have *40 years of Catching Smugglers* presented by Malcolm Nelson.

Jazz Appreciation

Danny Robins



Meetings of the Jazz Appreciation Group have been suspended until further notice. In the meantime we will continue to issue programmes of YouTube clips or jazz-related online performances and information.

We trust you all enjoyed your Christmas and New Year traditional festivities, as best you can in these strange times...maybe with a traditional jazz accompaniment, that is. Our February event is Jazz from South Bucks: From a friend of the show, Colin O'Rourke, we have some boogie-woogie, jazz on a summer's day and something from Hackney. (cont.)

Our programme for March and April:

March 30: *Music Masters please:* Peter Wakefield will again be preparing a programme of jazz-flavoured works for your delectation.

April 27: *Online programme to be announced:* A selection of jazz-related video clips.

Keep well, keep safe and keep listening.

Danny

Keep Fit for 60+

Chris Orme & Diane Bovington



Very little has changed since the last Newsletter and we need to see what the government says in the coming weeks concerning the pandemic. We will then contact the White Hill Centre and Trisha (our teacher) as to whether there is availability, and if so, times and dates.

Patchwork & Quilting

Mary Thompson & Angela Bratton



Home sewing continues until we get the go ahead to return to our monthly workshops at Hyde Heath Hall. We had a successful Zoom meeting on 27th January, which we may repeat sometime soon.

We will be happy to welcome new members when we are back to normal. Please ring one of us if you are interested. Sewing experience, but not necessarily patchwork, would be an advantage, as is the possession of and familiarity with a sewing machine. (Recent examples of the Patchwork and Quilting Group's efforts appear in the colour pages of this issue: Ed.)

Photography

Keith Hoffmeister & David Hurd



In December we held our usual Christmas meeting where members were invited to show off their work during their 'five minutes of fame'. In January, Miriam Mee showed us her pictures that have been published on the Chiltern Society's 2021 Online Photography Exhibition website. In February we looked at the results of our winter project where members were invited to look back and reassess their

pictures from the past.

We meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 2.00. Because of current restrictions, we meet online via Zoom. We intend to cover a range of topics of interest to members. Our next three meetings will be on March 17th, April 14th and May 19th. Topics for these have yet to be decided.

New members are always welcome regardless of experience and ability.

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Pilates classes continue on a Monday morning at 9.30am via Zoom; a very relaxing start to the week. The 'venue' as always is Sue's kitchen and we are often joined by her beautiful black Labrador Gem, who seems to know the routine and can anticipate the end of the class and therefore the time for her doggy treat! By then we're all ready to log off and put

the kettle on! We book the lessons in six week blocks, each time wondering how many more 'blocks' before we can return to our normal venue!

Play Reading

Claire Paterson & Linda Hepworth



This recent Lockdown has really scuppered our play reading. We do not meet at Christmas anyway and although we had a play for January, we decided it was not a good idea to make unnecessary journeys to deliver play books to everyone to read via Zoom.

We have, however, been Zooming to keep in touch and have general conversations about films or television plays we may have seen. We are doing the same for our February meeting and then in March we hope to read the play *Bunkered* by Lynn Brittney; a playwright we have read before.

Our Group continues to choose poetry each month based on either a subject or a poet, and we email our choices to read and comment on. In December we had Christmas as our theme and we heard *Festive Greetings* from our Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, as well as another popular choice, *Mary, Did You Know?* by Mark Lowry, released as a recording recently. We hope to have our usual Christmas get-together this December!

In January, our very appropriate theme was Winter, a subject beloved by poets over generations. *Tyneside* by U A Fanthorpe, *After Dark* by Keats, *The Snowman* by Wallace Stevens and *Hailstones* by Seamus Heaney were among the many poems we chose. February saw us reading the works of Robert Browning, the 19th century poet whose most moving poetry was written to express the complexities of love and his feelings for his wife Elizabeth Barrett Browning, also a poet.

Future email sessions are:

- 25th March: Roads and Paths
 22nd April: Poetry of the 1950s
 27th May: Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



Thank goodness for Zoom! We have been able to meet every month and have had some very interesting talks while being able to see each other and have a bit of a chat as well. Our recent talks have been:

November 20th: Francis Gomme; *Metroland*. This is our fourth talk from Francis and this was an interesting presentation on the Metropolitan Railway from London to Amersham. Francis will present the second part of *Metroland from Amersham to Aylesbury Vale*, at a future date. He has a great collection of evocative photographs which, when combined with his delivery style, made his talk enjoyable to everyone. The hour disappeared rapidly.

December 18th: James Cadle; *Piccadilly Line*. Another fantastic James Cadle Christmas Special, this time on the Piccadilly Line. An amazing amount of research goes into these presentations and they are wholly engaging; who knew that David Lloyd George opened a section of the line in December 1906 (Finsbury Park to Hammersmith) or that the Queen opened the Heathrow extension in December 1977? The pictures of the trains, carriages and stations were really excellent.

January 15th: Graham Yellowley; *The World's First Solar Train*. The first Solar Train is running in Byron Bay Australia, which is a very lovely place with lots of sun, sand and surfing. There is enough sun in Byron Bay on the vast majority of days for the Solar Train to run all day without having to be recharged. It was interesting to see how the transition to solar power was achieved and how it could be utilised in Railways.

Our February talk was by Mike Bunn: *High Speed Rail in France*

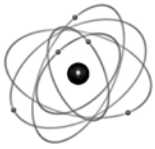
The Programme (so far) for 2021 now looks like this:

- March: Jim Ballantyne: *South American Railways*
 April: John Laker: *Swiss Railways*
 May: Ted Coope: *Buckinghamshire Railway Centre*
 June: Jeffrey Ryan: *The Life & Times of 48773*

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

"A man was trying to decide which of two women he would marry. One made fantastic pancakes and the other was a brilliant poet. He couldn't decide whether to marry for 'batter or verse'."

"Did you hear about the poet who liked to dip his work in moisturiser? It was 'poetry in lotion'."
 (upjoke.com)



Our talks will be via Zoom Meetings until further notice. The link for the meetings will be sent to members close to the proposed date.

Our February talk was by Dr Mike Quinton: *Robert Hooke: Man of Mystery*.

- March 15 Anthony Jenks: *Navigating by the Stars*
- April 19 David Hurd: *Vaccines*
- May 17 Peter Twist: *Exoplanets*

Singing for Pleasure

Stephanie Rothwell & Angela Bratton



About a third of the Group meets for Zoom rehearsals on the first and third Monday of the month. Ali, our teacher, has sent us some new material for this term including Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Moon River*. She has also recorded individual backing tracks for each of the four parts so that we can practise at home.

Although Zoom is not ideal, especially for a singing group as we're all muted, it gives us a chance to chat to each other before the rehearsal begins. It also provides an opportunity to share any difficulties we are experiencing with the pieces.

Now that our age group is top priority for vaccinations, let's hope it won't be long before the whole group can reconvene as before and sing, mask free.

Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



We still enjoy seeing one another on Zoom twice a month and despite a lack of real activity, we seem to find plenty to chat about, with the occasional prepared contribution on a topic connected to Spain or South America. As soon as we are allowed, we'll be getting together for tapas and a glass of Rioja or maybe Cava, to celebrate.

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Marian Bangs



We have now expanded our Zoom sessions to one hour, which gives us more time to practice our four different gentle warm up exercises, each one focusing on a different element: correct diaphragm breathing, posture alignment, stretching to remove the toxins from the joints and ligaments, balance, focus and concentration.

We then spend 30 minutes on the eight basic levels of Yang Style Taijiquan that we have been practising for some time now. Our instructor is gradually progressing us onto the next level, which is quite difficult to master over Zoom as our tutor cannot correct our movements. But we are still enjoying the sessions.

Theatre



The group remains locked down at present, but we hope to restart as soon as possible. As the Aylotts have decided to take a step back, we are looking for volunteers to help on a small committee and/or number counting etc. on trips out where we may have no cover. Please do not be bashful! (Please contact our Group Coordinator: Helen Barnard, Ed.)

Ukulele

Alan Bridges



It has been a whole year now since the Ukulele Group last met. It was at the gig we did for the Good Companions in Little Chalfont on the 10th March 2020, and I never thought then, that it would be the last time we would all be playing together for the foreseeable future.

Since then, we've been having our practice sessions on Zoom. It's not perfect, but it does keep us in touch with each other. (cont.)

We've been trying out some new songs and even had two new ladies join us. But the time when we can all meet together again can't come soon enough.

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

Amblers were lucky that in early December our walk went ahead before lockdown number three started. It was a select group of five, walking from Hervines Park and through Weedon Woods on a dry day, though it was a bit muddy underfoot. Unfortunately, most of the autumn colours had disappeared but it was great to wander in company with others.

We wait to see which restrictions will be lifted by the government, and when!

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Wendy Nimmo

Of course we are still unable to meet, even as a small group; something we all greatly miss. Couples are still walking together and some singles are chumming up with other singles for walks. The going has been very difficult in all the mud we have at the moment, so many are walking on the roads and around the houses where they can shout across to friends they pass! Personally I'd rather put on my wellies and ford the mud. It's hard work and you have to wrestle with the mud on your boots sometimes, but I love to get out in the open countryside. Let's hope we can all get vaccinated and get the infection numbers down so that we can all socialise again.

Take care everybody.

Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

We are now approaching a year since Covid restrictions started and what a year it has been! But now the future seems brighter and I am hoping that those who are eligible will have received their first vaccination. The weather should be getting warmer which will bring on the spring flowers and make us all feel a bit better about life in general.

By the time of this newsletter, we should have more of an idea as to when we can start our group walks. As soon as we get the go-ahead, I will be asking for volunteers to lead some walks. In the meantime, keep well and I hope it will not be too long before some of us can meet and, if anyone would like to join the group, you will be very welcome. Contact details can be found at the front of the newsletter.

Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



Last year at this time after a period of wet weather, we expressed the hope that both Groups would soon have better walking conditions for our regular Striders' walks and for the planned Summer Walk on the Seven Sisters' trail. Well, that hope turned out to be 50% correct: the walking conditions for most of the Spring and Summer were excellent; unfortunately, for reasons beyond our control we were unable to use those conditions except when permitted to walk in small groups of up to six; and even that possibility was lost when we were reduced to walking alone or in pairs. However, it is nice that, even on those walks, we bumped into other Striders by chance on very muddy paths somewhere in the Chilterns, and were able to engage in socially-distanced conversation for a while. And thanks to Zoom, which a year ago most of us thought that was just something one did by twiddling a knob on a camera, we have been able to 'meet' more Striders from time to time and discover how we are all coping. At the time of writing, we have just completed an excellent Zoom session with over 30 Striders participating and another is planned for a couple of weeks hence.

(cont.)

Looking further ahead, many of us have now been vaccinated and there is talk of a gradual return to what we used to call 'normality' in the olden days! All of us are looking forward to that eventuality, whenever it may be.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to join one or other of the Striders' Groups, please contact one of the Joint Convenors: Andrew Brown (Striders 1) or Ian Lee (Striders 2). Striders 1 normally walk on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month; and Striders 2 on the first and third Tuesdays. Walks are between seven and ten miles in length and members take turns in volunteering to lead them. In normal years Jill Smith arranges a programme of longer walks, between 10 and 15 miles in length and usually once a month, for all Striders wishing to take part. Whether there will be a summer walk this year and, if so where, will be discussed when the situation becomes clearer.

Striders' Fundraising for Friends of Belarus Children's Hospice in Minsk

The two CV-u3a Striders Groups, apart from holding weekly walks for members, and conducting other walking activities (when not subject to the present pandemic-related restrictions), have taken great pride in fund-raising for various charitable purposes: a Gate Fund generated by members contributing voluntarily £1 per walk has replaced a large number of old stiles in the Chilterns with more user-friendly gates and we have, in addition, made regular sizeable annual donations to the Chilterns Air Ambulance Service.

In the last few years, the annual pre-Christmas walk, followed by a three-course lunch and a party organised by the FoBCH trustees, has raised funds for the Belarus Children's Hospice in Minsk. The total of all fund-raising activities by Striders is now well over £15,000, much to the pride of the convenors past and present.

2020 was a difficult year for everyone, including Striders and FoBCH. The usual Christmas walk and party had to be cancelled of course, which the Convenors were aware would take away one of FoBCH's fund-raising activities and would, in turn, affect the children at the Hospice. In previous years, funds generated by the pre-Christmas event had paid for Christmas parties and presents for the children, and contributed to the cost of providing specialist physiotherapy and other aids/equipment. So the Convenors decided, with considerable assistance from fellow Strider Jeremy Wyman, to hold an alternative pre-Christmas event for Striders on Zoom. Over 50 tickets were sold in advance for £10 per head (representing about 60% of the total Striders' membership). 230 raffle tickets were sold with prizes donated by members. A Christmas quiz was compiled and entertainment was provided by members. All prizes, including an enormous Christmas cake won by Michael Cohn, were distributed to the winners without them having even to leave home. The end result was that almost £1,100 was raised for the FoBCH.

The trustees of FoBCH commented afterwards: "Isn't Zoom marvellous!" BCH themselves were amazed that an online Zoom event could generate so much for the benefit of the children in the hospice, the money being especially welcome at a time when a combination of the pandemic and political unrest in Belarus had created many difficulties and restricted the services they could provide for the children. With the funds provided by Striders, the children themselves had Christmas parties and other days out with their carers; and all funds remaining will be used for physiotherapy and other therapies, which will improve the quality of life of the children in the hospice. Photographs sent to us from the Hospice show the evident happiness of the children at their Christmas events. The Convenors of Striders and the FoBCH all say; "Well done Striders, and thank you for your generosity."
Ian Lee

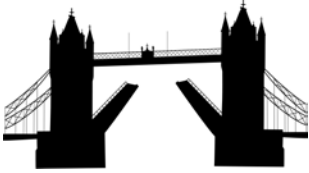
Walks into History: Country

Tony Biddle & Peter Schweiger



On March 10th, we will be transported (via Zoom) to Aylesbury: our county town. This is just six years after we did it for real. On that occasion James Cadle took some wonderful photographs and a few more have been added for this presentation. I will explain how the town got its name and how it took over as county town from Buckingham.

Should other U3A members wish to join us for this Zoom event, please email me to be put on the mailing list.
Peter Schweiger



London Virtual Walk: Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol': December 9th

With most of our own Christmas celebrations watered down this year, what better than to settle in our chairs and let the blue badge guide Richard Burlip lend us, for an hour, his considerable expertise and to puzzle, by clues in the text, some of the places where Charles Dickens' book may have been set. Written in 1843 when

Dickens was 31 years old, the tale is centred on the City Square, home at the time to only 1000 residents, and where CD used to wander at the weekends. He was specifically interested in the area's numerous churches. *A Christmas Carol* was written in six weeks, published by Christmas and is still in print today.

First, we are taken to Fenchurch Street Station, the Clothworker's Hall and the Ragged School where Dickens was appalled by the evils of ignorance and poverty; thus he concocted Bob Cratchit's family and the ailing Tiny Tim, based on his own disabled nephew, who died young.

There were ghosts, of course, four of them, and churches too numerous to remember, or rather their graveyards where, in the day, graves were disturbed and bodies stolen! This gave Londoners a plausible reason to believe in ghosts and hauntings. The Ghost of Marley, his former business partner, comes to Scrooge in a dream on Christmas Eve, seven years after his death, Scrooge having being the only mourner at this tormented soul's funeral. The first of the three spirits, The Ghost of Christmas Past, appears both young and old at the same time and takes him through a series of memories, including a glimpse into his clerk's struggling existence. The Ghost of Christmas Present introduces us to the paucity of the Cratchit's Christmas meal; although there is goose, it is a small one padded out by potatoes and apple sauce which the family of nine make much of. The counting house where Scrooge had his offices is thought to be Newman's Court near to Cornhill, where Bob Cratchit slides down the ice 20 times to celebrate it being Christmas Eve with a day off to come, grudgingly given by his miserly boss. Also nearby is St Michael's Church, the bell of which could be heard from Scrooge's office. The final spirit, The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, takes Scrooge to the "dark and sombre place" where he will be buried if he doesn't mend his ways, possibly at St Peters, Cheapside. We come to the Mansion House and the Lord Mayor's grand meals, which lay in stark contrast to the near starving fare of the poor. Scrooge wakes on Christmas morning to the sound of church bells, maybe those of the Church of Mary le Bow, although it could be any or all of dozens of churches marked on the map of the time. He then chooses a turkey from Ledenhall Market where the iron hooks used to hang the fowl and game still exist.

Finally there is the question of where Scrooge lived; maybe Fredrick's Place, Cheapside, where a door knocker similar to one described in the book can be seen on the front door of a house that Dickens may have taken as the setting for his character's lonely flat.

Angela Shipley

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



The Wildlife Group continues to function in a virtual world, with much enthusiasm from its members. Many of us are scouring the internet for both educational and humorous material from the animal world for that special and inspiring insight into the lives of others less concerned with Amazon and supermarket deliveries.

That said, we are also rather proud that we create our own wildlife videos to share within the Group. Our last theme was winter, and members were invited to send in wintry photos of the countryside, snowy or otherwise. Failing that, we did not reject photos of scenes further afield, so overseas holiday snaps were also encouraged. Our interest has now turned to watery scenes so we are collecting a collage of photos taken of canals, rivers, lakes and the sea. Everybody is invited to submit and most are keen to help. We put the photos together as a video and look to add a musical sound track to match the theme.

Going forward into March and beyond, hopefully there will be some relaxation of current restrictions on meeting up and we can think towards restoring normal relations later in the year.

If you would like to join the Group, please email the Convenors on wildlife@cvu3a.uk



WAG1 has continued with monthly Zoom meetings, each one organised by a different member, who has chosen wines from a particular country and organised a relevant quiz. The meetings have been very convivial but, obviously, not as enjoyable as meeting in person. We can't wait to return to our old format!

Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Our meet-ups on Zoom continue apace as we turn our writing to more normal times. The River was our December subject and, for the new year, we decided to set a range of topics: January and February saw readings on Symmetry, Thank You Letters, New Year's Resolutions, and Childhood. In March, it's Life After Lockdown: Something to Look Forward To.

We welcome new members.

Some important philosophical questions on life:

"Why don't you ever see the headline: 'Psychic Wins Lottery'?"

"Why is the man who invests all your money called a broker?"

"Why isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?"

"If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?"

"Why are they called apartments when they are all stuck together?"

"You know that indestructible black box that they have on airplanes? Why don't they make the whole plane out of that stuff?"

"Why do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries - and a diet coke?"

(K.H.)

"Somebody asked me the other day what was the proper name for Eskimos. I couldn't think what it was but later I realised Inuit."

From The Church Bulletin Board:

"The Rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing 'Break Forth Into Joy'."

"The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility."

(Max Bowen)

THE HERMIT AND THE BAGS OF GOLD: Answer to the last edition's Brain Teaser

The adventurer takes one coin from the first bag, two coins from the second bag and three coins from the third. He places all six coins on the weighing machine pan. If all the coins were gold, the weight would be $6 \times 20\text{g} = 120\text{g}$. If the single coin from the first bag is false the weight will be down by one gram at 119g. If it is the second bag, two coins are down in weight at 118g. Three false coins from the third bag will result in a weight of 117g. Having eliminated the bag of false coins, he can bid adieu to the hermit and go on his way, laden down with two bags of real gold coins.



Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

Note: This is the normal schedule for face-to-face meetings. Some Groups are operating slightly differently during the COVID-19 restrictions.

FIRST in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Art Discussion 2 (pm)	Walkers 1	Walkers 3	Wildlife	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Pilates Classes 1,2 and 3 (am/pm)	Striders 2	Patchwork and Quilting (am)	Current Affairs (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Italian (pm)	
<i>Monday groups sometimes have their schedules interrupted by public holidays; contact the Convenors for more information</i>	Family History (pm)	German (am)	Keep Fit (pm)	
	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)	<i>The Chess Valley u3a Committee meets on the first or second Tuesday of each month, two days before the General Meeting</i>
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)		
	Dinghy Sailing (pm)	Bridge (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)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Book 3 (pm)	Photography (pm)	Keep Fit (pm)	
	Ukulele (pm)	Play Reading (pm)	#Art Discussion 3 is temporarily suspended	
	Scrabble for Fun (pm)	Bridge (pm)		<i>MOTO (Members On Their Own) have an 'anchor meeting' on the first Saturday morning of each month</i>

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	Opera and Dance# (pm)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Eclectic Music (pm)	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Jazz Appreciation (pm)	Dinghy Sailing (pm)	Poetry (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)	Keep Fit (pm)	
		Bridge (pm)	Wine 1 (eve)	



(Clockwise from above):

Back to July 2019 and the Wildlife Group meet at the river Chess to learn about the health of chalk streams.

Lockdown hasn't held Patchwork and Quilting Group members back. So it's 'Good Gnus' with a remarkable quilt by Jane Towers: On Safari.

Angela Bratton dives deep with her quilt featuring a variety of creatures from the sea.

This beautiful wall-hanging by Jill Collins is entitled simply 'Angels'.

