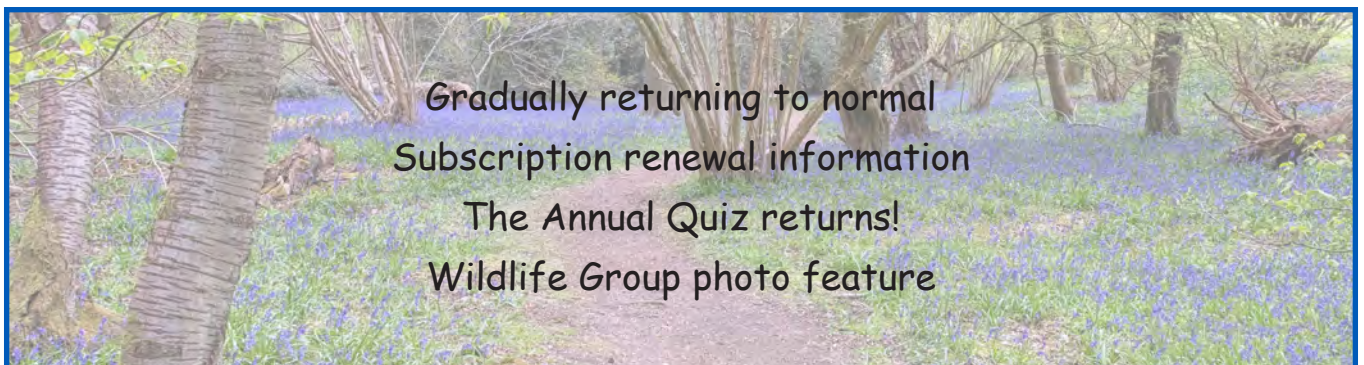




Five Striders, one photographer (Ian Lee) and one magnificent magnolia. Right at the end of March, the Group was finally able to get out in the open again, and managed a walk in Henley as a group of six. Social distancing was maintained by all (apart from the magnolia, that is).



(Right): Known more for his voice than his face, Patrick Lunt gave a fascinating account of his life as a broadcaster and voice artist at May's General Meeting via Zoom.



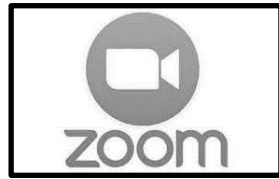
(Centre): Under current rules, a small group of Amblers trod the designated Bluebell Walk at Ashridge in May and were rewarded with stunning displays of these blooms.



(Bottom): You can't keep a Patchwork and Quilting Group member down. Here are two wonderful recently completed works from Mary Thompson (left) and Dee Watson (right).



# Speakers for General Meetings



or



**Ian Keable**

**NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING VIA  
ZOOM**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Dr Barrie Cook**

**NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING VIA  
ZOOM**

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

***Money in the English Countryside Hoards, 1180 - 1560***

Barrie is the Curator of Medieval and Early Modern Coinage at The British Museum. He is responsible for cataloguing new hoards discovered in England, and was a close collaborator of Neil MacGregor on his four groundbreaking radio series that began with *A History of the World*. He also curated major exhibitions shown in London as well as Berlin and Copenhagen.

**William French**

**NOTE: LIVE MEETING**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August**

***Butler to Royalty***

William French (also known as 'William the Butler') started his career in the Royal Navy at the age of 16. He served on the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, as well as going to the Falklands War aboard HMS *Battleaxe*. After leaving the Navy, he worked as a butler for several families, including the Rothschilds, for Lord Rothermere, for a Saudi Prince, for Nicole Kidman and several others. William will donate his fee to Medical Detection Dogs.

**Note: We hope to hold this meeting 'live' at the Broadway Baptist Church and we will confirm closer to the date.**

**Colin Smith**

**NOTE: LIVE MEETING**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

***Coffee***

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

**Note: We hope to hold this meeting 'live' at the Broadway Baptist Church and we will confirm closer to the date.**



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



# Notes from the Chair

Well, we seem to be making progress in emerging from our enforced isolation and some of our Groups have now resumed in-person meetings. For example, the Striders are striding again, the Dinghy Sailors are getting back on the water and Tai-Chi is back at the White Hill Centre. Our two Zoom accounts have been invaluable over the past year but I am sure that we have all missed face-to-face contact. I wonder if there will be a vast outbreak of hugging now that the government has permitted it again?

There is, of course, 'many a slip betwixt cup and lip' and I guess we need to keep our fingers crossed that the unlocking continues in accordance with the government's road map.

## **Thank you Chris**

Chris Kinsley came to our u3a in 2011 with another member of the Buckinghamshire bench to give us a talk about being a magistrate. He joined Chess Valley u3a and became our Business Secretary at that year's AGM. Now, after 10 years, he has decided relinquish his role as Business Secretary at our forthcoming AGM. I am grateful for all his hard work on our behalf and I will greatly miss his humour and support. Thank you Chris for all you have done for us.

## **Annual quiz night, Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September**

Loose inside this newsletter is a form for booking a table at our annual quiz night, which we plan to hold at the White Hill Centre in Chesham on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> September. Of course, this depends on the COVID-19 restrictions having been lifted by then but we are hopeful that will be the case. Brin Harvey has kindly agreed to collect the applications and organise the tables. Teams can have up to six members. If you would like to take part but can't muster a full team, please contact Brin and he may be able to help you join up with another smaller group.

## **Annual General Meeting, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2pm**

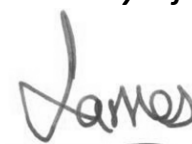
In mid-May, I emailed most members with information about our 2021 AGM, and I also posted information to those members without email. The meeting will be held using Zoom and will precede our regular General Meeting.

Since we need at least 60 members to form a quorum, I do urge you to come along to the AGM, even if you do not want to attend the General Meeting.

## **General Meeting, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June**

But, pursuing the above thought, why would you not want to attend June's General Meeting? Its subject is an interesting one – Charles Dickens: Conjuror – and our speaker, Ian Keable, a member of the Magic Circle, is very well qualified to tell us about this lesser-known aspect of the great writer's life.

*With best wishes – and stay safe*



**James Cadle**  
chairman@cvu3a.uk

**Copy date for the next newsletter is 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021**

# New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Sue Brown	<i>Widmer End</i>	Tony Miller	<i>Amersham</i>
Jane King	<i>Holmer Green</i>	Linda Wainscoat	<i>Little Missenden</i>
Mike King	<i>Amersham</i>	Kay Wilde	<i>Ley Hill</i>
Myra Lenz	<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

Hopefully all the Groups are slowly coming back to face-to-face meetings again very soon and our recent Convenors' meeting ran through the specific u3a advice in this regard. I, for one, am pleased to see that Pilates will be restarting soon and in a new hall. If you are interested in joining, a few spots are available. Please see the Pilates section in the group reports

We are also fortunate in our new website which our Convenors are now able to keep up-to-date themselves.

These are the pluses but sadly we are still desperate for Convenors. Walkers1 is now unable to meet as it has no Convenor. Walkers 2 and 3 have been temporarily combined thanks to the kindness of Sue Rawbone but this is sadly not a long-term solution. Similarly, Digital Imaging needs a new Convenor to take over from Liz Stoelker. So volunteers, please step forward!

**Helen Barnard**  
**Groups Coordinator**  
 groups@cvu3a.uk



## Anyone for crochet (or knitting)?



A few of us are trying to set up a Knitting and Crochet Group, probably to meet once a month at someone's house. Please email groups@cvu3a.uk if you are interested or indeed if you would be interested in any other new group.

## Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle	chairman@cvu3a.uk	01494 716992
Vice-Chair	Helen Barnard	vicechair@cvu3a.uk	01494 715588
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor	treasurer@cvu3a.uk	01494 434918
Business Secretary	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			

# Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

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

(continues on next page)

# Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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

Group	Convenor/s	Phone	u3a e-mail
Line Dancing	Lynne Benes		u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk
	Linda English		
	Elaine Knowles		
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott		mahjong@cvu3a.uk
MOTO	Mo Barnes		moto@cvu3a.uk
MOTO 2	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	Vacancy		walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone		walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3	Sue Rawbone		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)

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

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

## Membership renewal 2021

Here is a reminder of the information given in the March-May Newsletter:

### Current position

- For 2020-21, some 650 members paid the full £26 subscription, but some 60 people who were members at 31 March 2020 have paid nothing since then.
- Because of all the curtailments in the past twelve months, Chess Valley now has substantial cash reserves.
- Due to the pandemic, subscriptions timing was delayed from 1 April to 1 July.

### Renewal amounts

- For members who paid £26 for 2020-21, renewal is £13.
- For all other members, renewal is £26.
- New members will also pay £26.
- In all cases, a supplementary £3.10 is payable in order to receive the Third Age Matters magazine.

Due date for renewals **for this year only**. Renewals are due by **1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**.

### Payment process

There are two payment options

- A cheque for either £13 or £26 (add £3.10 if TAM required) made out to Chess Valley u3a sent to Membership Secretary, 12 Warrender Road, Chesham, HP5 3NE

**OR**

- Bank transfer for either £13 or £26 (add £3.10 if TAM required) to Chess Valley u3a, sort code 40 17 69, account 51458108.

### Questions

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

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. As the pandemic gradually eases, Groups are now making plans to return to physical meetings where possible.

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 continues to meet via Zoom in the comfort of our own homes. In March our subject was The Nude. Members chose either statuary or paintings. We looked at an image of the tiny statue entitled *Venus of Willendorf*, dating from 25,000 years ago. At the opposite extreme, a member chose a contemporary Swedish artist, Brita Granstrom with her work of a Rubenesque-like naked woman bathing. Artists who are well known for nude painting; Picasso, Manet and Bonnard, were also considered. We also had a spirited discussion on the difference between nude and naked.

In April our subject was Primitive Art. Some participants chose works from primitive cultures, like the wall paintings at Lascaux, France, painted deep into limestone caves. We marvelled at their efforts, with limited light in the most inhospitable of places. Another member showed us the Polynesian statues from Easter Island in the Pacific. These large tufa statues, all with similar facial features, were erected all over the island. Two members chose Folk Art, which we had agreed came under the definition of Primitive Art. There is a wide collection of Folk Art at Compton Verney Art Gallery in Warwickshire.

In May our subject was Domestic Life. Again our choices were wide and variable. Several members chose works by Dutch artists, like Vermeer, Pieter van Hooch, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Jan Steen, all well known for their interior scenes. Monochrome photographs of domestic life chosen by one member were particularly poignant, as they depicted images of underprivileged family life in mid-west USA and the east end of London in the 1930s.

Future subjects chosen by members are to be Art Deco and Gauguin. We hope we may meet in our preferred format in July. Fingers crossed!

## Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



In our March Zoom meeting we discussed the theme of Still Life, with each member contributing one pre-1850 and one post-1850 example. The earliest work was a wall painting from Herculaneum by an unknown artist, suggesting perspective and glassware in a remarkably accomplished way. We travelled through the Golden Age of Dutch Painting with over-flowing arrangements of flowers and food; often painted as a *vanitas* to remind the viewer of the transience of life and futility of pleasure. (The pleasure of a u3a meeting is anything but futile!) We saw trompe-l'oeil paintings from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. We moved on via Impressionism and Realism to Roy Lichtenstein's 1972 work, *Still Life with Palette* and finally to a living super-realist artist: Robbie Wraith.

(cont.)

April's meeting covered Animals in Art. We all choose independently, and our choices are typically varied. We began with some Chinese art by Bian Jingzhao entitled *Three Friends and One Hundred Birds*; a hanging scroll painted on silk from the Ming Dynasty. We looked at horses, stags, Landseer, of course, bulls, dogs and cats, sheep and a tiger; a complete menagerie of art. Many of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> paintings used animals to convey a moral characteristic of the person they accompanied; most of the 20<sup>th</sup> art we studied conveyed animals in their own right, in their own wild environments. We finished with a very amusing work: *Poker Game* by Cassius Marcellus Coolidge.

Our May meeting was on Group Portraits, which could be social or work groups or families. We looked at royalty: Henry VIII's and Elizabeth II's families, some peasantry having a wonderfully joyous knees-up by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, some cheeky bathers by Renoir, as well as a piece by Edvard Munch, which wasn't *The Scream*. Sofonisba Anguissola was a new name to many of us and we loved her *The Chess Game*. On any topic we often each try to choose a linked pair of pictures: An example chosen for this meeting was two paintings of rural Victorian families, one showing the grim reality of poverty, the other an idealised version of well-fed rosy-cheeked children.

We always end with a mini-quiz, such as guess the artist, or look at a painting for a minute then try to recall the details, just for fun, no marks, winners or losers!

We will continue with Zoom for our June meeting and then ... maybe we can meet in person in Caroline's garden.

### Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



This smaller friendly Book Group meets about every six weeks on a Friday morning, normally at a member's home but since last year, on Zoom. We bring with us a book that we have found interesting, fiction or non-fiction. We each give a very brief description of the book and say why we thought it worth reading. We then have a lively discussion about the theme of the book and each member can decide if this is a book they want read. In normal times the owner often can lend the book to anyone who wants it. 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



We continue with our monthly Zoom meetings on the first Wednesday of the month while looking forward to seeing each other in person, once Chesham Library gives the go-ahead for the hiring of their meeting room. In the meantime we've enjoyed reading *The Dry* by Jane Harper; a real page-turner of a mystery set in a parched Australia. This was followed by *The Essex Serpent* by Sarah Perry, set closer to home in Essex, as the title suggests. This complex and beautifully written Victorian novel deals with the workings of life, love and belief, science and religion, secrets and mysteries. Luckily one of our reader's books contained Questions for Discussion by Reading Groups, which helped all of us to unravel the various intricacies of the story: A challenging read!

### Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Availability is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham library. We have our full quota of members at the moment but please contact the Convenor in case a vacancy occurs. Normality is slowly coming and as long as the weather is fine, we will be meeting in a garden on 18<sup>th</sup> May and receiving our book *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead. We are unsure of our future books but we are grateful for whatever we receive.

*Yesterday a book fell on my head... Well, I only have my shelf to blame.*

*The past, present and future walked into a bar... It was tense!*

*(Forreadingaddicts.co.uk)*



We continue to have Zoom meetings to discuss our book choices. We have read a wide variety of titles over the winter / spring. Our next two books are *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen and *The Secret Scripture* by Sebastian Barry. Hopefully we will soon have a new booklist for summer / autumn chosen by our group members.

### Bus Pass Adventures

Anne Muir



Hello, everyone. Things appear a little more optimistic now after an unsociable 2020 and we can look forward to more adventures. I hope you have all survived unscathed. As socialising is one of the main aims of the group, we should be mask free for our first outing on Thursday, July 29th.

Our previous outings have included Marlow, Henley, Oxford and Berkhamsted where we were lucky enough to relax and enjoy the warm weather of 2019 in beautiful surroundings. I welcome any suggestions you may have for destinations and look forward to us meeting up again, but can't guarantee the sunshine.

### Canasta

Sue Wilkie



The Canasta Group is fortunate to have a new Convenor: Sue Wilkie. Meetings will re-start as soon as government rules permit. If you are interested in joining our Group, please contact Sue on [canasta@cvu3a.uk](mailto:canasta@cvu3a.uk)

### Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



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 hope to have our June meeting in a garden and thereafter we should be back to our normal meetings. 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 our next meeting.

### Digital Imaging

Liz Stoelker & Neil Lynch



Our Zoom meetings have been so successful that several members would like them to be a permanent feature, perhaps alternating with meetings in a hall.

March's meeting was a pot-pourri of subjects. We discussed the knotty problem of file sizes, an introduction to the Digital Imaging Group's page on the new website, the requirements for images to be shown on it and took a look at members' entries for the Animal Challenge. Neil asks that we all send him two or three images each month so that he can keep ringing the changes on the website.

In April we much enjoyed a talk by Ray Higginbottom from Chalfont and Gerrards Cross Camera Club. This is Ray's third visit, although this one was on Zoom, and he always comes up with something different and stimulating. His subject was *Is Photography Art?* and several doubters changed their minds by the end of Ray's talk. In May we had confirmation that photographs can be works of art when Pippa showed us how she makes the amazing images that she showed us back in the long ago days when we met in the hall. Pippa uses Photoshop for some of her work but also uses scissors, glue, water and scraping tools; literally Cut and Paste.

The programme for the next three months needs a little adjustment and will be on the website when available.

I cannot continue as Convenor for much longer and am trying to persuade one or two members to take over.

Liz



We seem to be slowly coming out of lockdown and so are taking our first tentative steps towards resuming our sailing activities, having been unable to sail for the whole of last season.

We normally sail on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month, but in these unusual times, we have had to change our usual routine, and we are opening the 2021 season on Wednesday 30th June. The gates will be open from 1pm. If we can get enough people to volunteer to man the safety boat, we will be able to get people out on the water, either in a single handed dinghy, or in a larger boat - where we will be asking you to wear a mask for the benefit of the other members of the crew. You should wear old clothes and non-slip footwear (trainers are fine). You will be able to borrow a buoyancy jacket if you do not have one of your own. You should also bring a change of clothes, in case you get wet.

Rickmansworth Sailing Club has increased its fees, so we will be asking for £10 per session, which covers the hire of the club boats, insurance, fuel for the safety boat, and tea and cake at half time. Members of RSC do not pay hire fees, but will be charged £2 for tea and cake (with free top ups as long as supplies allow).

Please refer to the Dinghy Sailing web page for more information as the lockdown eases. We are all hoping for better days to come!

**Eclectic Music****Danny Robins & Rod Stevens**

Meetings of the Eclectic Music Group have been suspended until further notice. We will continue to issue programmes of YouTube clips or related music performances online.

We must thank Keith Devaney for the April programme. We were treated to a varied selection: The Overture from *Iolanthe* by Gilbert and Sullivan, Mahler *Symphony No 1*, *The Blue Bird* by Charles Villiers Stanford and *Hula Girl* by the Sweet Hollywaiians.

Our selection of YouTube clips for May is presented by Juliet Crussell. We would like to have some recommendations from members on related subjects. Rod and Danny

**Family History****Sue Broad & Marian Bangs**

We have continued to welcome some very diverse and interesting speakers via Zoom in March, April and May, and in June we have a new speaker to the Group, Laurie Page. His talk is entitled *Migration*. Laurie is new to Zoom so the Convenor is having a trial run with him the week before his talk is due, and hopefully it won't be the 'blind leading the blind'!

We have booked the Council Chamber for July in anticipation of a return to some actual meetings, but we will play the 'wait and see' game for now and have not yet booked a speaker. The advantage of Zoom is that we have a very wide choice of speakers and are not restricted to those who are prepared to travel to Chesham. Updates will be emailed to the Group in due course.

We welcome new members and you don't need to be an expert or even tracing your Family History. Just having an interest in social history, on which many of our lectures are focused, is fine. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month in the afternoon. Dates and times are on our new updated website: [www.cvu3a.uk](http://www.cvu3a.uk) Look under the heading 'Groups' and scroll down to Family History.

**French Conversation****Morag Robertson**

The French Conversation Group has managed one meeting outside although we had to dodge raindrops towards the end of the session. We have continued enjoying chatting over Zoom although it was good to escape outside. We will continue to meet outside, weather permitting, and hopefully arrange a lunch session in the future. New members who are interested in conversing in French are welcome to join us.

We are really looking forward to meeting up again for our May session, and will certainly be celebrating. If the weather is kind we shall be outside, but if not, we are happy to resume around the table, if sitting a little farther apart. Masks will not be worn!

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

## Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell &amp; Camilla Plummer



For the time being our meetings continue via Zoom but we hope to reconvene very soon at our usual venue, the Amersham Free Church.

In March we were delighted to welcome back Janice, our previous Convenor, this time wearing her National Garden Scheme hat. Janice gave us an historical overview of the scheme and we learnt that opening gardens to the public for charity is not new. It is amazing how much money is raised by the NGS; all made possible by volunteer gardeners opening their gardens to the public and charging a small fee. This enables the scheme to support many nursing and related caring charities. Janice ended her talk by showing us photos of some of the lovely local gardens, which open for the NGS. In order to support the NGS, a private visit for group members to one participating garden in Chesham Bois has been arranged for June.

In April Mike Seaton gave us a very comprehensive talk about how to care for our lawns throughout the year.

There is a change of programme in May as Edwin Rye is unable to give his talk using Zoom. He is now booked for our 2022 programme. In his place George Lockwood is telling us about different grasses and giving suggestions for companion plants. We are very grateful to George for agreeing to give this talk at such short notice.

## German

Jenny Lee



After a long year of German Conversation Zoom meetings, we were finally able to meet up again in mid May in a member's garden. How strange but how good that was. In the words of Forrest Gump:

Das Leben ist wie eine Schachtel Pralinen- man weiß nie, was man kriegt;

Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you are going to get.

## History

Claire Paterson &amp; Ian Hutt



The History Group carried on Zooming into March with a talk by Dr David Noy, Associate Lecturer with the Open University and author on history. He runs the Winslow History website and is General Editor for the Buckinghamshire Record Society.

His interest is in William Lowndes: the man who transformed the town of Winslow. He gave a fascinating insight into the man who came from a very modest background (his father was in great debt) and was only able to attend a free school in Buckingham. Born in 1652 in Winslow, at age 15 he became a clerk in HM Treasury where he stayed, with much success, for many years, finally achieving the post of Secretary of State to the Treasury.

The four marriages he entered into made him a wealthy man and enabled him to buy the Lordship of the Manor of Winslow. With the end of the open field system and arable farming, enclosure brought fields into dairy production. He purchased considerable land holdings and built new houses for the dairy farmers. His support of a turnpike enabled the journey from Winslow to London to be achieved in a day, which was a huge benefit to the dairy farmers. As the town prospered, it attracted solicitors and bankers, which resulted in the building of quality homes and so the town changed, much to the credit of William Lowndes, an exceptional man.

(cont.)

Our talk in April, again on Zoom, was given by Andy Thomas, an author and lecturer on unexplained mysteries and global cover-ups. It was the story of English Freedoms, commencing with the Roman occupation in 54BC and the battles waged by Boudicca, Queen of the Iceni, against it. This was followed by the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and the Vikings, who introduced the Rule of Law. Then came the Normans, who quashed many freedoms. We learned of the Barons, Magna Carta and Simon de Montford, and the beginnings of democracy. The Civil War, the Peterloo Massacre, the Chartists, the Suffragettes, Margaret Thatcher and Poll Tax followed, right up to our break from Europe, which many people saw as a final erosion of England's freedom to make her own decisions. What a history lesson from a very engaging speaker, sometimes giving an alternative view to our accepted knowledge of historical events!

For May, Malcolm Nelson gave an insight into some of his 40 Years of catching smugglers while working for HM Customs and Excise. After giving us a brief history of smuggling when whisky and tobacco were brought into quiet coves on the coast of Devon and Cornwall, he gave an enlightening talk on those who go through the Green Channel. Though they definitely do have something to declare, they hope to go through unheeded. He told us of the many systems in place that are used to weed out potential suspects and some of the strange, amusing and a little alarming strategies employed by smugglers. Of course, the items that are smuggled have changed over time and today it is mainly drugs. Dogs play a big part in their discovery. The systems in place mean these people very rarely get away with it, but they still try. The potential payoffs are huge and for poorer people, sadly for society, it is worth the risk.

For our June meeting our Chairman, James Cadle, has put together a resume of happenings in the year of 1944, some of which I believe will surprise us.

I hope we are not tempting fate but we very much hope to be back to meeting for real at the Town Hall in July when our member Jennifer Moss will be telling us about the Lowndes Family of Chesham. Fingers crossed.

At the moment, our August meeting is still under discussion.

### Jazz Appreciation

Danny Robins



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

We must thank Bob Thompson for the April selection, which included, Sonny Boy Williamson, Ben Webster, Tony Bennett and Diana Krall amongst others. Dave Bevan will be the presenter for our May selection.

We await the directives from the Government regarding the opening of group events. It reminds me of Balham's fairyland of glittering lights, changing all the time: Red... Red and Amber... Green and back to RED.

Keep well and keep listening.

Danny

### Keep Fit for 60+

Chris Orme & Diane Bovington



We had some new members register their interest in the Group towards the end of last year. Unfortunately, our original group dwindled to about three. Trisha (our teacher) is unsure at present whether she can commit, as she is busy with her private classes. Activities are suspended and we will review the situation again towards the end of the year, or the beginning of the next.

### 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, hopefully in late July.

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.



Because of the continuing restrictions, we continue to meet online. We have been looking back through our personal archives for a fresh look at what caught our eye in previous years. We added *Spring Colours* for a personal project for our May meeting.

We meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 2.00. We intend to cover a range of topics of interest to members. Our next quarter's meeting dates, currently scheduled online, will be on June 16<sup>th</sup>, July 21<sup>st</sup> and August 18<sup>th</sup>.

New members are always welcome regardless of experience and ability.



PILATES IS COMING BACK!

We intend to resume live classes on the 6th September, returning to the new and now very plush Jubilee Hall. We will even have the luxury of under floor heating and a sprung floor, as well as plenty of parking spaces; all things we have struggled with in the past.

Sue, our wonderful instructor, is very excited and looking forward to it as are the members and almost all are returning, which is very encouraging. There are some spaces left, so if you would like to join us, please do contact Liz or myself for further details at [pilates@cvu3a.uk](mailto:pilates@cvu3a.uk)



We have been Zooming for our monthly meetings, but these sessions do not allow us to read a play. Our Group were, at long last, able to meet face-to-face last month and it was good to see everyone.

Our reading was *Bunkered* by Lynn Brittney whose work we have read before. The setting is a Naval Intelligence Cold War bunker, decommissioned in 1991 when staff were made redundant. Somehow, the four personnel are still receiving pay cheques courtesy of the MOD computer. Chief Petty Officer Peter, who has a strong sense of responsibility, decides they should bring the equipment up to full working order. When Naval HQ start receiving signals from a defunct bunker, the alarm is raised and the Marines are brought in. It's a comedy, so, funny in parts and probably much better when performed on stage by good actors.

Our play this month is by Jimmie Chinn: Actor, teacher and prolific playwright for radio and television, including *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street*. *Take Away the Lady* is described as an intriguing glimpse into a cupboard full of family skeletons together with some serious and not so serious detective work. Apparently this is an unusual suspense play; we have yet to find out. We will enjoy indoor hospitality this time, which seems like half a world away.

Our poetry session in March was on the subject of Roads and Paths. Choices included Rudyard Kipling's *The Way Through The Woods* and *The Toome Road* by Seamus Heaney. We also read *Field Ambulance in Retreat* by May Sinclair and exchanged our comments on each poem. April saw us delving into the poetry of the 1950s with familiar poets such as Stevie Smith, Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes being offered as choices, together with *The Listeners* by Walter de la Mare.

In May our choice was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a seminal figure of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century who wrote so well on the natural world; *Frost at Midnight* and *A Sunset* were just two of the chosen works to read and discuss by email.

Future planned sessions are:

24<sup>th</sup> June: Love Poetry  
 22<sup>nd</sup> July: Longfellow  
 26<sup>th</sup> August: Billy Collins



Another series of really interesting talks have kept the Railways Group informed and entertained. We will continue with Zoom meetings into the summer and review then whether we will be able to all meet up together. Our recent talks have been:

February 19<sup>th</sup>: Michael Bunn: *High Speed Rail in France*; An interesting and absorbing talk on the development and implementation of France's high speed rail network including the TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse: High Speed Train) including technical, social and political aspects: A very interesting talk.

March 19<sup>th</sup>: Jim Ballantyne: *South American Railways*; The second of Jim's excellent talks on South American Railways. Jim mixes amusing anecdotes with real word experiences and took the group on a journey round parts of South America in such a way that we felt we had been there with him: Thoroughly entertaining.

April 16<sup>th</sup>: Francis Gomme: *Railways of the Chilterns; The Metropolitan, Part 2: Amersham to Verney Junction and Brill*. This is our fifth talk from Francis and was on the Metropolitan Railway beyond Amersham. Francis always has a superb set of photographs and this talk reminded us of that, with pictures evoking lots of memories and a lovely talk on the subject. During the talk one of our group recalled seeing a train on the pictured Halton branch, over 60 years ago!

May 21<sup>st</sup>: Richard Stoner: *Crossrail (The Elizabeth Line)*. It was fantastic to get a comprehensive overview of Crossrail. Richard took us on a journey through the route of Crossrail and all the complexities of building track, stations, power and signalling in, often tight spaces in Central London. The animation of how Crossrail interacts with all the other rail lines at Liverpool Street demonstrated the difficulties involved in designing and building the Elizabeth Line. Let's hope we can all take a ride on it in 2022.

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

June: Jeffrey Ryan: *The Life & Times of 48773*  
 July: Michael Bunn: *The History of Paris Railways*  
 August: No meeting  
 September: Ted Cooper: *Buckinghamshire Railway Centre*

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

## Science & Technology

Mike Christianson, Allan Saunders & Peter Twist

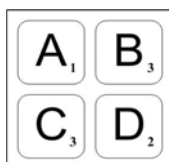


Our talks will be via Zoom Meetings until further notice. The link for the meetings will be sent to members close to the proposed date.

June 21: Derek Pedley: *Medical Imaging*  
 July 19: Gillian Eastmond and Group: *A Popular Science Book I Have Read*  
 August 16: Speaker and subject to be determined.

## Scrabble for Fun

Tony Muir



The day is drawing closer when we can get back to some semblance of normality. I will be emailing you all to get some feedback as to how many of you are still interested in a monthly get together. After being virtual prisoners for the past 18 months, it will do us all a power of good to break free from these dystopian chains and move forward to happier, and more enjoyable times.

*I forgot to renew the fee for my Scrabble membership... Now they're sending me threatening letters.*

*Apparently, stating letters and their Scrabble values is a good idea... I for one agree.*

*I accidentally swallowed a bag of Scrabble letters... My next trip to the bathroom could spell disaster.*  
 (upjoke.com)





A small group of our members has been persevering with our twice-monthly Zoom rehearsals for a while now. If nothing else, it was a chance to see each other and catch up on news, though we all found it difficult to sing without our fellow choristers there to help us to find the right notes!

From now on however, we are holding outdoor sing-a-longs (weather permitting), from Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May. The residents of Winchmore Hill don't realise what delights are in store for them, as we'll be exercising our vocal chords on The Common.

We're hoping to reconvene in our indoor premises in September.

### Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



We will be celebrating a return to something like normal when we meet face-to-face at last. We all feel comfortable indoors if the weather lets us down, and our discussion will be all the more animated for seeing one another away from a screen.

### Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Marian Bangs



WE MADE IT!

On Tuesday 18th May, the regular members that have participated on Zoom over the last year returned to The White Hill Centre. We were able to meet under government guidelines as Tai Chi is classified as an organised sport under the umbrella of Sports England and the 'no indoor' rules do not apply to people who participate in 'your sport with a coach'.

A full risk assessment of the venue was carried out and all participants had to sign that they had read and followed all the rules and regulations and that they would stay in their three bubbles of five in the hall, with no mixing. Before entering, temperatures were taken and hands sanitised before we moved onto the designated spots marked out on the floor.

Our instructor was bemused by the fact that we had legs, as all he has seen over the last year was heads and shoulders.

We hope to open the group to all previous members as soon as possible, but can only take a few more, as we are restricted by the size of the venue. Unfortunately we cannot change to a larger hall as our instructor is fully booked and has no further time slots available.

### Theatre



Nothing is planned as yet but with the theatres gradually reopening, we will resume theatre visits as soon as it is safe to do so. We do not think that currently being in a theatre or a coach is ideal but hopefully, good news is not too far off. Enquiries to: [theatre@cvu3a.uk](mailto:theatre@cvu3a.uk)

### Ukulele

Alan Bridges



We continue to have our practise sessions virtually by Zoom. It's not perfect but it keeps us together as a group and it's nice to chat and see how everyone is keeping. We have been learning new songs and are looking forward to being able to meet up again to see how they sound. Because of the sound limitations of Zoom, we can't sing together, so one person leads the song and we all follow along muted. It will be interesting to hear how these new songs sound when we're all together!

(cont.)

We were hoping that the change in the Covid rules on 17<sup>th</sup> May would allow us to meet up once again indoors, but unfortunately the advice is that non-professional singing indoors should only take place in a single group of up to six people. So as we have sixteen in the group, that's a non-starter. We will have to be patient and wait for the 21<sup>st</sup> June when the next review is due.

### 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

In April the Amblers Group started walking again following government guidelines in a socially distanced group of six. It was great to be back again wandering the woods and fields around Hyde Heath, passing the intriguingly named Bullbaiters Lane!

Our timing was perfect in May to appreciate stunning displays of deeply coloured bluebells as we made our way on a designated Bluebell walk through the Ashridge estate. Future walks are planned from Wigginton and Hughenden Manor.

### Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

#### Walkers 1

Walkers Group One is currently without a Convenor and is suspended.

#### Walkers 2 & 3

Sue Rawbone

I am now looking after both Groups on a temporary basis. This means that walks will be taking place on all the fourth Thursdays of the month and there will be three months where there will also be walks on the first Wednesday.

By the time this newsletter is published we will be able to walk with a larger Group and our first walk with the more relaxed restrictions will have taken place and will be along the Thames from Boveney to Dorney and the Jubilee River where we hope to see one of the gates to which Walkers Group Two contributed on Dorney Common. At the farmer's request the gate is accessible and the plaque is lower down than normal. Mindful of Covid restrictions, we will be taking care on our walks.

As always, if anyone wishes to join our Groups, you will be very welcome and contact details can be found in the list of convenors at the front of this newsletter.

### Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



Hoorah! Our regular Tuesday walks resumed from 18th May; John Bratton, our stalwart walk leader, took Striders 2 on 18th May and Striders 1 on 23rd May on a favourite walk from Amersham. And we will be on the usual pattern of Striders walks after that. Initially we are restricting walks to 20 people and will review that as the government lockdown restrictions are eased. However, as I write this, the Indian variant is appearing in the UK and everything could change. As always, the Convenors will keep all Striders informed as decisions are made.

So, to our eight mile May walk from Old Amersham via Chesham Bois, Hyde Heath, Little Missenden, and Shardeloes led by John Bratton: 19 walkers joined the walk, 14 from Old Amersham and another 5 from Chesham Bois. We did our best to maintain social distancing throughout, even though it sometimes proved difficult when conversing with people we have not been able to meet up with for many months. The weather was excellent: sunny and hot for the whole of the walk. (cont.)

We have walk leaders for all the Tuesdays to the end of the year, including the two 5th Tuesdays (29th June and 31st August) when the two Striders Groups will join together for a longer walk. However, we decided several months ago that there would be no Summer Walk this year.

Looking further ahead, we have booked our Christmas Lunch for 14th December 2021 when Striders will be raising money again for the Friends of the Belarusian Children's Hospice. Please note the date. If you would like to join either 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 Tuesday 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.

### Walks into History: Country

Tony Biddle & Peter Schweiger



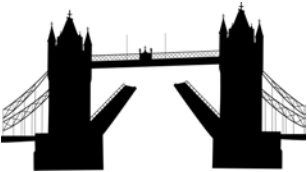
The Walks into History Group had a right Royal walk around Windsor via Zoom, on Wednesday 12th May. We also have a video made by James Cadle and myself, which can be seen on Youtube by using this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn1z76TWZxs>

### Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell



### *A Virtual Tour of the City of Bath: 13<sup>th</sup> April*

Just because we could, the Group went completely off-piste for their April tour, to discover the delights of one of the UK's most fascinating cities. In this world of virtual transportation, we were able to accompany Aaron Hunter, a Mayor of Bath Guide as well as a London Walks Guide, taking in all the familiar features that gave

this city the almost unique status of an Early World Heritage Site in 1987. This put it in the same company as The Vatican and Venice. It has its Roman remains to thank for this accolade but it also has much, much more, as portrayed in the City's Coat of Arms, which depicts walls, water, a crown, a sword and a key:

This walled town (the walls in the Coat of Arms) owes much to its Georgian architecture of classical sash windows, overall symmetry and the placing of urns on the skyline, which appeared between 1714 and 1821 when the city evolved into a centre of entertainment, a place to visit, requiring accommodation and residential buildings and the low arches typical of the Perpendicular Gothic style of the Abbey. The Key and the Sword are the combined symbols of St Peter and St Paul, patron saints of the Abbey.

Of course it has always been a spa town. The Romans arrived in 43AD and loved bathing in the hot springs, which feed three bathing pools, naturally heated to a constant 43°. These are the only hot springs in England, Buxton and Tunbridge Wells, for example, being cold. A sacred shrine of 800AD tells of the legend of Bladud, a Celtic prince who caught leprosy and was banished to keep pigs. They also caught leprosy but he noticed that they were cured when they wallowed in the hot spring waters, so he decided to try it for himself. You could bathe in the springs until 1978 when they became a health risk due to the amoeba, which colonised the water, turning it green. 973AD saw the coronation of the first English King, Edgar, in a ceremony, which forms the basis of that used to this day (the Crown in the Coat of Arms).

We moved on to the Royal Crescent, a Roman-style Colonnade but with the buildings behind it designed by John Wood the Younger. Here, 30 terraced houses give their owners the impression they are living in a palace, while from the outside it looks like an ancient monument. The less familiar Roman Circus is a historic ring of town houses constructed in 1768. Both of these are a must-see on the tourist trail. Finally, to the Avon (the water in the Coat of Arms): Avon means river, so it's not called the River Avon. It is spanned by the Poultney Bridge which, with its shops, is one of only four rare examples, the others being in Italy and Germany. Here, Sally Lunn, of Huguenot origin, sold Brioche buns from her bakery and you can still buy them today.

Angela Shipley



Members of the Wildlife Group have enjoyed the ups and downs of spring, particularly the new life, and are now looking forward to warmer times and summer. Over the last few months, we have seen remarkable photos of all manner of plants and creatures, great and small, sent in by members. (See colour photo feature; Ed.) We are now armed with information to enable us to identify many species if only our memory will serve us well!

Having exhausted our reservoir of action packed holiday pictures from far off places, we need members to revisit the UK and exotic countries to provide more interesting stories and photos of their wildlife encounters, but there remains the thorny issue of travel quarantine for overseas destinations. Whilst the Falkland Islands sound the perfect place for exploring wildlife, getting there is not straightforward!

Our latest educational videos covering *Pollinators* and *Wildlife in Motion* have been well received and once more we thank all the contributors who have supported these activities.

The decision has been taken to have a break over the summer months before returning with a bang to a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities starting in early October, when we should be able to meet indoors again, as a group.

If you would like to join the Group, please email the Convenors on [wildlife@cvu3a.uk](mailto:wildlife@cvu3a.uk)

### Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



WAG1 has been transitioning from Zoom meetings to in-person meetings. In March we had a Zoom session where each member produced their own favourite and described it to the others. This produced a wide variety: Chilean Chardonnay, Californian Merlot, Chilean Errazuriz, New Zealand Merlot, Australian Shiraz and French Claret.

In April, after our partial release, we split into two groups of six, al-fresco. At the Broombys we sampled three different Rosés, from Spain, Portugal and France. At the Connors there were three English whites of varying quality. The consensus was that they still have a way to go to match the quality of the foreign stuff.

May will continue with two groups al-fresco and in June, if all goes to plan, we will be reunited in one happy assembly.

### Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Life After Lockdown – Something To Look Forward To: That was the theme of our March meeting, and we finally managed to make it happen (at least partly) in May, with an excellent meet-up in the summerhouse of one of our members, under a perfect late spring sky. Sidetrack was the topic presented there, and sidetracked we were, by the wonderful garden. Our April meeting (on Zoom) had been on the theme of Time. This coming month it's The Plough.

With the introduction of Chess Valley u3a's new website, Writers Group members are taking the opportunity to post their favourite writings on our own page. Why not have a read, and recommend your favourites to your friends? From the main site, go to Groups, Groups Listing, and select Writers. We warmly welcome new members.

*A recent episode of 'John and Lisa's Weekend Kitchen' featured the making of a coffee and walnut gateaux and a strawberry, syrup and meringue cake bake, both of which they tucked into at the end of the show. This was immediately followed by an advert for Diet Coke.*

*A bottle of Mateus Rose: £5.50 (Morrison's.com)*

*An empty Mateus Rose bottle: £119.99 (for sale on Ebay)*

*(anon.)*

# Signs of the Times

I recently noticed a sign warning me that a footpath was closed. As the sign was only a metre from a barrier, it already seemed a bit OTT until I spotted its twin immediately afterwards. These, together with identical signage on the other side of the blockage and on the opposite side of the road, made a total of six signs indicating the blindingly obvious.

This would suggest rather more than a growing trend in support of the Great British sign industry but rather more the setting up of signs for their own sake. There has been a Tsunami of signage lately, a lot due to COVID 19, which perhaps has made us more accepting of it. But there are enough suspiciously redundant examples around to imagine a government Department of the Invention, Production, and Siting of Terrestrial, Indicative, Communicated Knowledge AKA the DIPSTICK.

'Lay-by closed' is one of theirs, almost always placed immediately in front of anti-tank concrete blocks used to emphasise the sign itself. Similarly 'Intermittent lighting' on motorways is long on information but short on usefulness and makes a chocolate teapot seem almost indispensable.

Others are more sinister. 'Cats eyes removed' reads like an advertisement for a demented veterinary, whereas 'No hard shoulder' seems to be an appeal to our better selves.

Added to fog warnings that can only be seen in clear conditions, a sign (admittedly in Oz) that advised motorists of 'Water on Road during Rain', and signs that warn us of warnings as in 'Traffic Lights Ahead' we are being buried even more deeply under an excess of information with little or no content.

Studies tell us that new drivers are confused by the sheer variety and volume of road signs and experiments have shown instances where road safety has improved as a result of the removal of all but the most essential road 'furniture'.

I suppose we will only know what is best to do if we ask a smart motorway.

*'Timewaster'*

## Word and phrase origins

During World War 2, US aircraft were armed with machine-guns which would be used during dogfights and on strafing runs. These used belts of bullets 27 feet long. Thus, if a pilot returned having expended all his ammunition, he would have used the **whole nine yards**.

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but on how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are 'limbs,' and difficult to paint, and therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, **it'll cost you an arm and a leg**.

However, an alternative (and probably more likely) explanation is this. After the American Civil War, the US Congress enacted a special pension for soldiers who had lost both an arm and a leg. The phrase **cost an arm and a leg** begins to crop up in newspaper archives in 1901, referring to accidents and war injuries.

At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint and quart-sized containers. A barmaid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in pints and who was drinking in quarts, hence the phrase **mind your Ps and Qs**.

*(Thanks to Sue Broad for setting us off on this particular line of enquiry. Ed)*

# 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 <b>OR</b> 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)	



(Left & centre): Striders managed a mid-May walk at full strength (with social distancing) going eight miles from Amersham to Shardoles.

(Top two): Wildlife Group photographers are circulating their favourite pictures from pre-Covid times. Here are a beautiful Bee Orchid and a Tulip. A Sparrowhawk (above) feasts on a Pigeon it caught.



Members of the Wildlife Group have been making videos and exchanging photos since September last year. These come from a trip the Group took to Bradenham Butterfly Trail in 2018. (from top left clockwise):

The Adonis Blue Butterfly

The Box Tree Moth

The Small Copper Butterfly

and a Red-Tailed Bumblebee on Allium