



**SEASON'S GREETINGS**  
Singing for Pleasure Christmas Concert  
Possible new Folk Music Group  
Fun Quizzes return





Front Cover: Amblers couldn't miss this display of knitted and crocheted Remembrance Day poppies around the beacon at Ley Hill, made by local villagers.

Left: The Walks into History Group found themselves in Cookham in September and paused for a picture outside the home of artist, Stanley Spencer.

Centre: An entrancing talk was given at November's General Meeting by the Queen's Royal Swan Marker, David Barber. Elizabeth Gowring (bottom left) shows the Eagle hand position. Her demonstration of various Yoga positions amazed everyone at October's meeting. Earlier, at September's meeting, Colin Smith, MD of Smith's Coffee Company, hands out sachets of coffee beans at various stages of roasting (bottom right).



# Speakers for General Meetings

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



**Paul Robbins**

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

## ***Great British Eccentrics***

Have you ever wondered why Britain has had so many eccentrics over the centuries? Paul Robbins is an author and an historian, who gives a wide variety of talks. This one is an amusing, entertaining and light-hearted journey looking at some of the great characters from our past.

**David Callaghan**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January**

## ***Cometh the Day, Cometh the Jewel***

David joined the West End firm of jewellers Hancocks as an apprentice in 1955, and retired in 1997 as their Senior Director. He is a past president of the Society of Jewellery Historians and is a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths. David's talk presents some of the extraordinary tales behind notable pieces of jewellery.

**Bobbie Darbyshire**

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

## ***Where Do Novelists Get Their Ideas From?***

Bobbie is an author and won the 2008 fiction prize at the National Academy of Writing. Her works include *Truth Games*, *OZ*, and *Love, Revenge and Buttered Scones*. She has also worked as a barmaid, film extra, cabinet minister's private secretary, care assistant and adult literacy teacher. In this talk she will discuss the perennial issue of inspiration versus perspiration.

**Colin Pawson**

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

## ***Coaches and Coach-horns***

Colin is also known as 'The Tootler', and has been driving ponies and horses for over 30 years. He is an expert in four-in-hand coaching, as well as blowing the coach-horn! Colin also works with the driving section of the Riding for the Disabled Association, and has many adventures to relate as a guard on the coaches that are still on the road today.



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



# Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our Winter 2021/22 newsletter.

## Return of the Fun Quizzes

Our Fun Quizzes on Zoom, paused during the summer months, are back! The first one was on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November and was well attended. The next quiz (actually no. 11 in the series) will be on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December, starting at 7:30. For those who haven't attended before, there are no teams, no points and no prizes; you are just pitting your knowledge against the question-setters, mainly Helen Barnard and me. I will email the Zoom link to all members on the Friday before the quiz.


## Assistance at the General Meetings

I know I sound like a stuck record but we still need some more help to run our monthly General Meetings. We now have a few people willing to take over the A/V desk from Liz Stoelker but we could still do with one or two more. And the four volunteers we have for tea-making duties don't give us a big enough team to put together a workable rota. It really is very simple – no tea team, no tea (or coffee even). Please, please contact me if you can help out, even if only occasionally.

## Season's Greetings

Finally, as this is our last newsletter of 2021, your Committee would like to wish you the compliments of the season and express the hope that, this year, you can enjoy proper festivities with your families and friends.

*With best wishes*



**James Cadle**  
chair@cvu3a.uk

## New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

|                 |                          |                         |                        |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Alison Ayer     | <i>Chesham</i>           | Maria Lorkin            | <i>Chesham Bois</i>    |
| Joan Barton     | <i>Bellingdon</i>        | Hardeep Mangat          | <i>Amersham</i>        |
| Lindsay Biggin  | <i>Bovingdon</i>         | John Munns              | <i>Chesham</i>         |
| Mike Brookes    | <i>Amersham</i>          | Sylvia Pendleton        | <i>Hazlemere</i>       |
| Ron Dodd        | <i>Amersham</i>          | Richard Skepper         | <i>Chesham</i>         |
| Derek Heathcote | <i>Chesham</i>           | Barrie Spencer          | <i>Chesham</i>         |
| Jane Holder     | <i>Great Missenden</i>   | Christine Stillingfleet | <i>Chesham</i>         |
| Gina Houston    | <i>Chalfont St Giles</i> | Nicholas White          | <i>Great Missenden</i> |
| Margaret Irvine | <i>Chesham</i>           | Peter Windsor           | <i>Bovingdon</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.

**Copy date for the next newsletter is 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022**

# Singing for Pleasure Group Christmas Concert

**Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 6pm**

The SFP Christmas Concert is back!. It's at 6pm on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December in the Albert Ellis Room at the Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham, HP6 6AJ. There is free parking at the Church but, if that is full, the Sycamore Road public car park is very close.

So, come along, enjoy yourselves and support our enthusiastic songsters!

## From the Groups Coordinator

First, some good news! One of our new members, Richard Skepper, is kindly offering to convene a Folk Music Group and a brief outline of what he is proposing is set out on page 8. If anyone would like to join or would like more information please contact me and I can put you in touch.

I am pleased to report that Linda Hepworth and Sue Hawksley have agreed to become joint Convenors of the Canasta Group and they will be getting it going again in the New Year. They could do with some more members so, if you would like to play, please contact them on [canasta@cvu3a.uk](mailto:canasta@cvu3a.uk).

Also if anyone else is interested in setting up any other group or simply has an interest they would like to put out there please do let me know.

I am contactable on [groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk).

**Helen Barnard**  
**Groups Coordinator**  
[groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk)

## Chess Valley u3a Committee

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

# Chess Valley u3a Convenors

| Group   | Convenor/s                 | 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><br><i>(currently dormant)</i> | Helen Barnard              | artdiscuss3@cvu3a.uk    |
| <b>Book Group 1</b>                                   | Gillian Eastmond and Mavis | 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>                              | Sue Spalton                | shortbowls@cvu3a.uk     |
|   | Peter Williams             |                         |
| <b>Bridge</b>   | John Curtis                | bridge@cvu3a.uk         |
|   | Patrick Clarke             |                         |
| <b>Bus Pass Adventures</b>                            | Anne Muir                  | buspass@cvu3a.uk        |
| <b>Canasta</b>  | Linda Hepworth             | canasta@cvu3a.uk        |
|   | Sue Hawksley               |                         |
| <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>                                | Pippa Greensmith           | digimaging@cvu3a.uk     |
|   | David Hurd                 |                         |
| <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>                                 | Sue Broad                  | familyhist@cvu3a.uk     |
| <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><br><i>(currently dormant)</i>          | Joanna Hughes              | newitalian@cvu3a.uk     |
| <b>Jazz Appreciation</b>                              | Danny Robins               | jazzmusic@cvu3a.uk      |

*(continues on next page)*

## Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

| Group   | Convenor/s                                  | u3a e-mail                           |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Keep Fit for 60+</b><br><i>(currently dormant)</i> | Vacancy                                     | keepfit60@cvu3a.uk                   |
| <b>Knitting and Other Crafts</b>                      | Sue Rawbone                                 | knit@cvu3a.uk                        |
| <b>Line Dancing</b>                                   | Lynne Benes                                 | u3alinedance@chiltern-<br>u3a.org.uk |
|   | Linda English                               |                                      |
| <b>Mah Jong</b>                                       | Ed Perrott                                  | mahjong@cvu3a.uk                     |
| <b>MOTO</b>   | Mo Barnes                                   | moto@cvu3a.uk                        |
| <b>MOTO 2</b>   | Peter Page                                  | moto2@cvu3a.uk                       |
| <b>Patchwork &amp; Quilting</b>                       | Mary Thompson                               | patchquilt@cvu3a.uk                  |
|   | Angela Bratton                              |                                      |
| <b>Photography</b>                                    | David Hurd                                  | photography@cvu3a.uk                 |
| <b>Pilates (1, 2 and 3)</b>                           | Christine Ross                              | pilates@cvu3a.uk                     |
|   | Liz Howlett                                 |                                      |
| <b>Play Reading</b>                                   | Claire Paterson                             | playread@cvu3a.uk                    |
|   | Linda Hepworth                              |                                      |
| <b>Poetry</b>   | Christine Ogborne                           | poetry@cvu3a.uk                      |
| <b>Railways</b>                                       | Graham Yellowley                            | railways@cvu3a.uk                    |
|   | James Cadle                                 |                                      |
| <b>Science &amp; Technology</b>                       | Mike Christianson                           | sciencetech@cvu3a.uk                 |
|   | Peter Twist                                 |                                      |
| <b>Scrabble for Fun</b>                               | Tony Muir                                   | scrabble@cvu3a.uk                    |
| <b>Singing for Pleasure</b>                           | Angela Bratton                              | singing@cvu3a.uk                     |
|   | Stephanie Rothwell                          |                                      |
| <b>Spanish Conv (Inter)</b>                           | Hilary Alleston                             | spanishconv@cvu3a.uk                 |
| <b>Stamps</b>   | Brian Feakes                                | stamps@cvu3a.uk                      |
| <b>Tai Chi</b>  | Sue Broad                                   | taichi@cvu3a.uk                      |
| <b>Theatre</b>  | This Group is run by a small sub-committee. | theatre@cvu3a.uk                     |
| <b>Ukulele</b>  | Jeff Naman                                  | ukulele@cvu3a.uk                     |
| <b>Amblers</b>  | Susan Osborne                               | amblers@cvu3a.uk                     |
| <b>Walkers 1</b>                                      | Stuart Stanley                              | walkers1@cvu3a.uk                    |
| <b>Walkers 2</b>                                      | Sue Rawbone                                 | walkers2@cvu3a.uk                    |
| <b>Walkers 3</b>                                      | Jane Towers                                 | walkers3@cvu3a.uk                    |
| <b>Striders 1</b>                                     | Andrew Brown                                | striders@cvu3a.uk                    |
| <b>Striders 2</b>                                     | Ian Lee                                     | striders2@cvu3a.uk                   |

*(continues on next page)*

## Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

| Group                              | Convenor/s              | u3a e-mail           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Walks into History: Country</b> | Tony Biddle             | walkshist@cvu3a.uk   |
|                                    | Peter Schweiger         |                      |
| <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>         | Muriel Gray (acting)    | wine2@cvu3a.uk       |
| <b>Writers</b>                     | John & Helene Bunyan    | writers@cvu3a.uk     |

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

If you have moved, changed your phone number or have a new email address, please make sure you update your information via the Chess Valley u3a website ([www.cvu3a.uk](http://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.

## Proposed Folk Music Group

As mentioned on page 5, here are Richard Skepper's initial thoughts about a new Folk Music Group:

- A participative Group – singing and/or playing – rather than a 'listening-to' group
- Aimed at those with at least a rudimentary skill on an acoustic instrument or some singing experience. Reading music not essential as long as some knowledge of basic chords.
- All traditional instruments welcome - guitar, whistles, fiddles, flutes, various accordions etc.
- Singers with no instrument welcome
- Repertoire to be centred on British/Irish traditional folk to be selected/provided by the Convenor and any others who wish to do so
- Aim is to work on a selection of pieces/songs for the enjoyment of playing in the sessions
- The Group will be tolerant and supportive of varying skill levels
- The direction of the Group would be flexible depending on the wishes of members
- Time will be made available for members wishing to entertain the Group with a solo spot
- Venue, frequency and time subject to wishes of initial members.

If you are interested in such a group, please contact Helen Barnard to let her know – [groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk).



# News From The Groups

## GROUP MEETINGS

Groups are returning to normal activities as far as they feel it's safe to do so. On-line conferencing is still proving useful to some. All Groups that have vacancies, whether active or dormant, are open to enquiries from new members. The few Groups that remain inactive do not have an entry in the newsletter.

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

## Art

Mo Barnes & Angela Spittle



Themes for our Art Group sessions have included *Autumn in Pastels*, *Bonfire Night* and *Christmas*, in any media. Individual interpretations produced some lovely work. Several sessions have been taken up trying to reproduce an abstract Kandinsky poster, which had been cut into sections. We each copied and painted a section of the poster using acrylic paints, which severely tested our copying and colour-matching skills. The sections were finally reassembled resulting in an exact reproduction of course! Great fun! Our last session will be finishing off work and enjoying a special festive coffee break with Christmas treats. The group is currently full.

## Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



We were able to meet together in person in the garden of one of our members in August. Unlike the previous year, the sun shone and we enjoyed a companionable lunch outside. In September the subject was *Wall Art*; a medium often used for political messages, more visible to the public than an interior gallery. Several members chose Banksy. Another chose Vhils, Portugal's answer to our 'unnamed' exponent. The mosaics dating from 500AD in Ravenna and frescos from Pompeii 78AD reminded us of the wide variety of wall art on offer.

The subject for our meeting in October was *Black in Art*. It produced an enormous variety of works often portraying persons of colour, which dated back over several centuries. The use of charcoal by Durer in his 1514 portrait of his aged mother, was most engaging.

Several of our Group travelled to take in the Laura Knight exhibition in Milton Keynes. She was a prolific painter, her works ranging from idyllic beach scenes in Cornwall early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to gloomy sketches of the post-war Nuremberg Trials. As a commissioned WW2 artist, very few of whom were women, she pictured war industry as well as rural life. She is perhaps best known for paintings of the theatre including the ballet, and her great interest in the lives of gypsies; well worth the journey and enjoyed by all.

*Everybody has an opinion about art. Here are some perceptive comments from famous artists:*

*"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up" (Pablo Picasso)*

*"Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time" (Thomas Merton)*

*"We don't make mistakes, just happy little accidents" (Bob Ross)*

*"Painting is easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do" (Edgar Degas)*

*"A work of art which did not begin in emotion is not art" (Paul Cézanne)*

*"If I could say it in words, there would be no reason to paint" (Edward Hopper)*



We had our first hybrid meeting in September, enabling our members to either attend in person or log on to our session. The theme was *Maritime Art*, portraying life on or beside the sea. Maritime art became a recognized figurative genre towards the end of the Middle Ages. The contrast between pictures of stormy seas where life is in danger, and gentle beach scenes with children playing in the shallows was the focus of our Group. A particularly poignant picture was *The Withdrawal from Dunkirk* by Charles Cundell, chosen by one of our members whose father had been evacuated from Dunkirk.

October's meeting subject was *Narrative Art*, work illustrating an historical, religious moral or mythical event. Some of the earliest evidence of human art suggests that people told stories with pictures. A work by Hubert Herkomer graphically depicting life in a London workhouse and the disturbing *Judith Slaying Holofernes* by Artemisia Gentileschi, contrasted with the ethereal depiction by William Holman Hunt, *The Light of the World* and the realistically painted *The Finding of Moses* by Lawrence Alma-Tadema. These, combined with many other works, made for a varied and enjoyable afternoon's discussion.

In November we discussed Living Artists working in any media. Royal Academicians were well represented; Paula Rego, David Hockney, Anish Kapoor, Grayson Perry, Maggi Hambling and Anthony Green.

A remarkable young artist Kieron Williamson, aged 19, also featured in our choices. Already internationally known, he had his first exhibition at the age of six. Although we selected mostly British artists, we also had representatives from China, Africa and the USA to widen our artistic horizons.

### Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



This smaller friendly Book Group meets about every six weeks on a Friday morning. In the past we met in a member's home, but for the time being we meet on Zoom. We bring with us a book, fiction or non-fiction that we have found interesting. After a very brief description of the book's content, we say why we thought it worth reading. Often other people have also read the book and can give their comments, or we just ask further questions about it. We might sometimes progress to have a lively discussion about the theme of the book, or we add other worthwhile books on the theme that we have read. In normal times the book owner can often lend the book to anyone in the Group who wants it.

We have found our discussions are better with up to nine people at most, so you would be put on a waiting list if you want to join the Group.

### Book 2

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Book Group 2 has resumed face-to-face meetings in Chesham Library at 11.45am on the first Wednesday of the month. This autumn has found us reading *How It All Began* by Penelope Lively (a tale of how one random act can affect so many lives) and *Tall Oaks* by Chris Whittaker (an American crime thriller). However, the thought-provoking futuristic book that made the most impact on us was *Vox* by Christina Dalcher. Imagine that you are allowed to speak only 100 words a day; a restriction imposed on all women in America! This rule is brutally enforced by permanent metal bracelets attached to their wrists, which deliver a massive shock of 1000 volts of electricity if the limit is exceeded... For our current book, the library has presented us with a bit of a challenge; they have supplied *The Other Hand* by Chris Cleave, as a flip back book! This is a mini pocket book that apparently originated in the Netherlands. Designed for easy carrying in a back pocket, it looks like a large box of matches. Although the print is not tiny, the pages are like tissue paper. So the format is likely to give rise to as much discussion as the story content.

*"Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us dragons can be beaten." (Neil Gaiman)*

*"A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there." (Anon)*

**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 as we may have a vacancy occurring shortly. We are now back to meeting inside, following government guidelines. We are currently reading *Three Things about Elsie* by Joanna Cannon and our next book is *Troubles* by J G Farrell. December's book is currently a surprise but it will be from our wish list. We anticipate receiving our 2022 reading list from the library shortly.

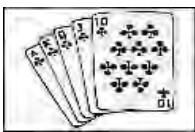
**Book 4****Jackie Cobb**

Members of Book 4 are meeting in each other's homes and reading the books chosen by individuals. We have read *A Single Thread* by Tracey Chevalier in November. In December we are having a Christmas meal. Our book for January is *The Island* by Victoria Hislop. We will then have a new book programme in 2022 selected by our members.

**Bowls (Short Mat)****Sue Spalton & Peter Williams (Chiltern u3a)**

Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. Meetings during winter months are at the White Hill Centre in Chesham each Friday from 13:15 to 15.30. If you wish to 'try your hand', tuition is given. Bowls are available. The cost is £3 per session.

Interested members should contact the Convenors using: [shortbowls@cvu3a.uk](mailto:shortbowls@cvu3a.uk).

**Bridge****John Curtis & Patrick Clarke**

The Bridge Group meets on Wednesday afternoons at Chartridge Park Golf Club. We started back on the 15<sup>th</sup> September with buoyant attendance and everyone agreed that it was really good to be back. Our final meeting of the year will be on the 8<sup>th</sup> December and we will resume afresh in the new year.

**Bus Pass Adventures****Anne Muir**

The past two years have not been ideal for bus travel as the service was disrupted. We should recommence our outings next March when COVID and the worst of the weather will be, hopefully, a distant memory. We look forward to meeting old friends again, and maybe some new ones.

**Canasta****Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley**

The Canasta Group is lucky in having two new Convenors: Linda Hepworth and Sue Hawksley. We are seeking to increase our membership so, if you are interested, please contact us on: [canasta@cvu3a.uk](mailto:canasta@cvu3a.uk)

**Chess****Peter Schweiger**

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

*At the weekend I like to play chess with elderly men in the park. But it's becoming increasingly harder to find 32 of them.*

*I got a job at a chess piece factory recently...Next week I'm on the knight shift. (upjoke)*



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We are now meeting inside following government guidelines. We give our opinions on how to sort out the world's problems in a spirit of mutual respect and friendship. Come along and join us for a fun discussion when we all learn so much from others. If you are interested please contact the Convenor for the next meeting details.

## Digital Imaging

Pippa Greensmith &amp; David Hurd



After sterling service for many years as Convenor of the Digital imaging Group, Liz Stoelker has handed over the reins to Pippa Greensmith with David Hurd as Co-Convenor.

Over the lockdown period the Group met on Zoom sessions, which worked quite well with demonstrations by members and lots of discussions: some entirely devoid of any digital imaging relevance but nonetheless enjoyable. When we started meeting again back at the Village Hall in Little Chalfont, it was decided to alter the format as an experiment. Members did not bring laptops to the meeting and concentrated instead on the demonstrations. This will be reviewed for the future.

The Group has recently looked again at selection techniques, particularly for difficult subjects such as hair, and members have practiced this at home and shown their work for discussion. We also had a session on adding text and the various tools Photoshop has for this process. This led to a Christmas-themed project, which incorporated text, and members' work was again shown at the November meeting.

The Group is keen to attract new members and to look at other areas where knowledge of digital image use and manipulation would be useful: all ideas welcomed!

## Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes &amp; Judith Young



We have come to the end of our sailing season, shortened this year because of Covid restrictions, but we were fortunate in that we had good weather for every one of our sailing days from June to October. We are very grateful to those volunteers who man the safety boat to ensure that crew members can be brought to shore quickly in the event of a capsize or other emergency, but we are pleased that there were very few incidents this past year. Our sailing season will start again at the end of April 2022, and we welcome anybody who is a member of a u3a, wherever they are based. Currently we have members from eight u3as, including Chiltern, Chiswell Green and Sarratt, as well as Chess Valley. For more information, please contact one of the Convenors.

## Eclectic Music

Danny Robins &amp; Rod Stevens



We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 2pm in the Owen Room, Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 6AJ.

The Eclectic Music Group is for music lovers of all genres who like to meet informally and explore their likes and dislikes: listening to live instrumentalists and talks on various musical topics, often with video clips. New members are always welcome, to either sit back and enjoy, or make their own contribution.

Our schedule of meetings for the start of 2022 looks like this:

January 11: *Strands of Folk Music: It'll be better than it sounds.* Presented by Richard Skepper.

February 8: *A Second Look at the Light Programme: Robert Farnon to Lionel Monckton.*

March 8: *Youthful Memories: Songs and Heartthrobs from our Youth.* Presented by Juliet Crussell.

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

We look forward to seeing you.

Rod and Danny





In September a representative from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Eugenie Brooks, a very efficient ex-police officer, came to visit us and gave us a fascinating and very detailed talk on the background of how the Commission works. She was very happy to answer the many questions from the audience. The Commission is still being notified by farmers who have found the remains of soldiers from World War Two. They visit the site to search for any identifying objects so that they can inform any living relatives of their discovery. The remains are then taken to a War Graves cemetery to be looked after.

In October, CVu3a Family History Member Peter Healy gave a talk on his father's late entry to WW2. What an interesting and long tour of duty he managed to complete, including his ship being commissioned to sail to Normandy to take part in the safe evacuation of troops from the heavily booby-trapped beaches along the coast on 'D' Day. Peter's father continued to serve and thankfully safely returned home.

In November Jackie Depelle from The Federation of Family History Societies gave a talk entitled *Which Website and Why* and kindly agreed to be a guinea pig and take part in our first semi-hybrid Zoom meeting. After a couple of hiccups we managed to connect her remotely from her home to the smart TV in Chesham Town Hall so that members in the hall could see and hear her talk and those members who were isolating at home could also join in. We had an iPad facing the audience so that Jackie could see us in the room; all agreed, a great talk.

Our next meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec will be a return visit from Genealogist Ian Waller and his talk will be *What Happened to Lucy*.

We don't usually meet in January but the Group have agreed that they would like a Zoom talk to be arranged, details to be confirmed. Any members of CVu3a are welcome to attend. Meetings start at 2.15pm on the first Tuesday of the month in Chesham Town Hall. A fee is charged to cover the cost of the speaker. Tea and coffee are available on a help yourself basis, kindly organised by Hilary Povey.

### French Conversation

Morag Robertson



The French Conversation Group has continued to meet regularly twice a month. The good news is that some of our members have managed to escape to France and practice their language skills. The rest of us have tried to maintain our skills by watching films or the occasional television programme and sharing our opinions with the Group. Sadly one of our Group is moving out of the area. Liz Stoelker has always been supportive and a great participant in the Group and we wish her good luck with her move and bid her au revoir.

### French Intermediate

Hilary Alleston

We are really enjoying meeting normally again and are looking forward to a small celebration in December. There is still room for a new member or two, so come and try your French some time, even if it's been a while.

### Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell & Camilla Plummer



In September we managed to resume our live meetings again and for the first time in more months than we care to remember we welcomed our first speaker, Russell Bowes, to the Amersham Free Church. Russell's talk was entitled *Food Of The Gods* which was nothing to do with Ambrosia Creamed Rice, but a fascinating insight into the many aspects of chocolate. Russell cleverly invented a dialogue between the characters of Charlie and Mr Wonka to explain about the discovery of chocolate and the various stages of its manufacture. He ended his talk with interesting facts about the different types and qualities of chocolate. Margaret Dale was sitting on the lucky seat under which were some bars of chocolate!

In October Chris Day's talk *Houseplants Made Easy* was an interesting overview of the history of houseplants and the rise and fall in their fortunes. (cont.)

He reminded us of the popularity of particular houseplants in the sixties, evoking many memories, good and not so good, of our own experiences with these plants. Chris also had some handy hints on how to ensure our houseplants are healthy and thrive. He brought along a wide selection of houseplants and explained to us how best to look after them, to make sure they flourish.

The November meeting was our annual social event, preceded by a short demonstration by local florist Rachael Ashton. Rachael showed us how easy it is to make a small posy-style Christmas table decoration. This was followed by seasonal refreshments. There is no December meeting.

Further details about our Group can be found on the CVu3a website. The 2022 programme will be available from December 2021.

## German

Jenny Lee



Sprechen sie Deutsch? If so, why not join our friendly group?

Learning to speak German is no easy task. Every noun has a gender. There are three genders for German nouns: masculine, feminine and neutral. German doesn't necessarily comply with the gender of the object it is naming, so it's purely grammatical. Mark Twain famously said of the German language: "In German, a young lady has no sex but a turnip does!"

We meet in each other's houses and have lots of fun.

## History

Claire Paterson & Ian Hutt



It was so good to be back in the Council Chamber of Chesham Town Hall in September for our first meeting face to face since May 2020 and to see everyone. Numbers were a little down but that was to be expected. We welcomed Alan Kell who gave us a short history of Seer Green, his village: *A Little Paradise*.

It was known as La Sere in the 1200s, which is Norman French for dry or arid place. Previously a hamlet of the parish of Farnham Royal, it became a separate parish in 1866. Prior to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was mainly an agricultural village known for its cherry orchards. A Cherry Pie Fayre is still held in the summer, by the local school.

In the 1300s, Edward the Black Prince hunted in the large forests around the village and built a hunting box nearby, now Hall Place, which is the oldest and best preserved building in the village and in private ownership.

After enclosure in 1831, there was rapid development over the next 20/30 years. Agriculture was the main industry but there was also chair bodging, tile and brick manufacture and lace making for which the village was renowned, identified by its Seer Green pattern. As with many villages, the coming of the railway in the 1900s brought irrevocable change, though the village atmosphere remains and is jealously guarded today. It was an enjoyable and informative talk, as many of us had never visited La Sere.

Our October meeting saw the return of Jo Laurie who had spoken before about her relation, Birdie Bowers who had been with Scott on his ill-fated Terra Nova expedition. On this occasion her talk was about her mother, born in 1908, who grew up to have a compelling desire to become a nurse. She became firstly an SRN, then a midwife, then trained as a fever nurse, while waiting to be posted to Shanghai in 1934. After three years and exposure to cholera, rabies, smallpox and Japanese bombing when thousands were killed, she returned to England in 1937. She trained again as a health visitor and then sailed to Africa, meeting her husband-to-be on the boat. After returning to England via a cargo ship, she left again for West Africa from Liverpool, where the ship suffered a wartime attack. From there it was on to South Africa and Cape Town in 1941 and Lagos in 1944. It was good to hear about this extremely interesting and feisty lady who loved travel and nursing, and met all challenges with gusto.

As has become a bit of a tradition, five history students from Chesham Grammar School came to speak at our November gathering. All of them presented very well and were not fazed by questions from members.

(cont.)

Their subjects were:

*The Weimar Constitution And The Extent To Which It Was Doomed From The Start:* Tom O'Reilly

*The Golden Years of the Weimar Democracy:* Izzy Gardner

*Why Was Hitler Appointed Chancellor In 1933?:* Aidan Hannan

*Hitler's Consolidation of Power:* Lola Bailey

*Gestapo, Myth and Reality:* Hope Wise

It was a complex topic, which they had certainly studied and researched in depth, showing a great understanding of the ramifications. We really enjoy seeing and listening to these young students, and were, as always, impressed by their confidence and manner. It is also a great benefit to them to be able to talk to a friendly audience.

For a little light relief, our December meeting will see Jeff Rozelaar, whom we have welcomed before, undertake a one-man play entitled *Disraeli, Queen Victoria's Favourite Prime Minister*; the mind boggles! Together with Christmas mince pies, nibbles and mulled wine, it should be an entertaining afternoon.

### Jazz Appreciation

Danny Robins



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

Our schedule of meetings for the start of 2022 is as follows:

January 25: *The Song that Made Britain Rock*. Presented by Colin O'Rourke.

February 22: *Your CD Choice*. Choose one track on a CD and tell us why you enjoy it.

March 29: *Swinging with Change*. Plus *Dedicated to Chaos*.

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

I look forward to seeing you.

Danny

### Keep Fit for 60+



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

### Knitting & Other Crafts

Sue Rawbone



Our Group had its first meeting in September and now has 11 members. At the time the Group was called 'Knitting & Crochet' but it was felt that this was too restrictive and it is now called 'Knitting & Other Crafts'. We meet twice a month in each other's houses and so far the crafts have included knitting, crochet and cross-stitch. We have been asked to point out that we do not cover Patchwork and Quilting as they have their own Group and are producing some wonderful creations.

As we meet in our own homes, we are currently not able to accept new members but you are welcome to join a waiting list - please contact the Convenor.

### Line Dancing

Chiltern u3a



The Line Dancing Group is run by Chiltern u3a, but we also welcome members from Chess Valley u3a. We normally meet in the Methodist Church, Bellingdon Road, Chesham, HP5 2HA on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 10am. Meetings last one hour and we pay our teacher each time we attend a class. No experience is necessary and the emphasis is on enjoying ourselves, exercising body and mind and having fun. There is parking available at the venue.

We currently have a waiting list. Please contact the Convenors if you want to come along or would like more information.

(cont.)

## Mah Jong

Edward Perrott



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

## MOTO (Members On Their Own)

Mo Barnes

The MOTOs have continued to enjoy their convivial fortnightly Sunday lunches at several local hostelries which include 'The Gate', Chorleywood, the 'Nags Head', Missenden, the 'Boot and Slipper', Amersham, 'The Plough', Hyde Heath and 'The Bell', Chartridge. Members have also met up at some of the several Art and Craft Shows available in our vicinity, exhibiting the many great local talents. After visiting a really enjoyable fair held at the Elgiva Theatre, we enjoyed a really tasty fish and chips lunch in the Elgiva Café; definitely recommended!

Our monthly planning meetings are held over coffee and biscuits at the Convenor's home and we are looking forward to many more social gatherings to come, including a Festive Christmas lunch at the 'Boot and Slipper'. The group is currently full.

## MOTO 2

Peter Page

We have had our first planning meeting on Saturday 20th November at a Member's house. There were five of us in attendance out of a membership currently standing at nine. Three apologies were submitted. This was the first time we had met since lockdown so we were keen to explore future strategy.

Discussion took place regarding potential local outings, but due to the ongoing restrictions and winter closures it was agreed that we should veer towards having regular meals out at local hostelries/restaurants for the time being. Come springtime we should be in a position to map out a more varied list of activities.

## Patchwork & Quilting

Mary Thompson & Angela Bratton



We are delighted to have resumed our monthly meetings at Hyde Heath Village Hall where we socialise, sew and share a wealth of experience within the Group. In addition to sewing we also enjoy homemade cakes, which aid concentration on the task in hand!

Since reconvening, a couple of new members have been welcomed who enjoy the luxury of spending a day sewing with likeminded people. They have been a breath of fresh air and we have room for additional members if anyone would like to join.

## Photography

David Hurd



In September we returned to live meetings. A field trip had been arranged to Cliveden and we looked at images submitted by members who had taken part. It was our first trip since 2019 and was not particularly well attended nor indeed was the meeting.

For the October meeting the theme was *A Moment in Time*. The challenge was to take pictures locally showing things relevant to our current time. Needless to say, there was a wide-ranging, and interesting, approach to the subject.

The theme for the November meeting was *Autumn Colours*. Rather than a field trip on a specific day, members took pictures at a time and place of their choosing. (cont.)



We now meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 2.00 in Little Chalfont Village Hall. We aim to cover a range of topics of interest to members as well as occasional talks. We hope to recommence our programme of field trips in the spring. New members are always welcome regardless of experience and ability, so why not come along and join us.

Our diary for the next Quarter:

- Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Meeting: Members can have their *Five Minutes of Fame*.  
Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>: Monthly meeting with the theme *Winter*.  
Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>: A Talk by Gill Ferguson: *Photographing Birds, Insects and Fungi / Slime Mould*.

## Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



All three Pilates Groups were delighted to start up again in September at the smart new Jubilee Hall. After almost two years of Zoom classes it was a joy to meet and have live interaction with Sue, our lovely Instructor.

Pilates One had a surprise when ten minutes into the class the fire alarm went off! Having ascertained there was no fire, the class valiantly carried on outside whilst the powers that be worked out how to turn the alarm off. Fortunately it was a nice day, which made it fun. Classes Two and Three were less eventful, but very enjoyable.

We will soon be at the end of our first term, which ends with a Christmas Party. We then have a break before starting again in January 2022.

We currently do not have any vacancies and we have a waiting list, but please feel free to contact us and join the list if you think you would like to attend Pilates in the future.

## Play Reading

Claire Paterson & Linda Hepworth



*The Reluctant Debutante* by William Douglas Home was the play for our September meeting. First performed at the Theatre Royal, Brighton in 1955, the title role was played by the then untrained 17 year-old Anna Massey. It was a great success and ensured her acting career.

Jane, the debutant of the title, has to be found a well-connected suitor, which is the whole purpose of the organised round of parties thrown by aristocratic parents during the debutante season. Jane's mother is terrified that her daughter will lose the chance to meet a good husband if there is a scandal, which she may unwittingly have created, due to her confusion over two men, both named David, whom she has arranged for her daughter to meet. It is a light-hearted, almost farcical comedy with some witty lines.

*Billy Liar*, our October read, was a 1959 novel by Keith Waterhouse adapted into a play in 1960. Billy, a lowly clerk, spends his time indulging in fantasies and dreams of life in the big city as a comedy writer. He bigs himself up constantly with stories, to hide his working class background. He is engaged to two girls at the same time and in love with a third. There is quite a convoluted back-story and it's very much a tale of its time, but a bit passé now and certainly not politically correct; not very enjoyable.

Our November meeting has had to be delayed until the beginning of December. The play we have ready is *The House on the Cliff* by George Batson. Described as a mystery play, it revolves around the occupants of the house and begins with a sudden, violent murder and ends with a chilling, surprising climax. We wait to find out the mystery.

*Ever wondered where some everyday phrases come from? It's often Shakespeare:*

*"The Green Eyed Monster" (Iago in Othello)*

*"Break the Ice" (Tranio in The Taming of the Shrew)*

*"All of a Sudden" (Katherina in The Taming of the Shrew)*

*"One Fell Swoop" (Macduff in Macbeth)*

*"Too Much of a Good Thing" (Rosalind in As You Like It)*

Our Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month in each other's homes. In September we enjoyed reading the poetry of Seamus Heaney. October saw us delving into the large subject of poets who had won the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry and the latest winner David Constantine was a favourite choice, as well as Peter Redgrove and Douglas Dunn.

Our meeting in November covered the topic of *Railways and Train Journeys* and we read poems by John Betjeman, Katherine Pierpoint, Edward Thomas and others.

We still have a couple of places available for new members; please contact the convenor for details.

Future meetings will cover Recitals in December, Ted Hughes in January and Shakespeare in February.

## Railways

Graham Yellowley &amp; James Cadle



We have been extremely fortunate to keep having interesting speakers each month.

Our September speaker was Ted Cooper, on the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. This was our (hopefully) final Zoom session. Ted has been with Buckinghamshire Railway Centre for quite some time and has an excellent knowledge of its history, which was portrayed in a very interesting talk. From descriptions of the interconnected lines in the area to specific locomotives, carriages and other interesting artefacts, we could have listened to Ted for hours: A very good talk and we hope to be able to visit Buckinghamshire Railway Centre in the near future.

In October John Laker covered Swiss Railways. We met back in the Church Hall for the first time since the start of the pandemic and it was so good to see everyone in person. John had an excellent setup comprising a high definition projector and big speakers. The video (and audio description) was excellent and brought back many happy memories for a lot of the group. The scenery looked fantastic and the sounds of the Swiss Railways were very evocative; you felt as though you were transported there from Chesham!

Our November meeting was on 'The Spirit of Sandringham'. John Pearson and Larry Sampson gave an interesting talk on the project to build a B17 Locomotive 'Spirit of Sandringham'. This is a long-term project (planned completion, 2029) and a costly one: In excess of £3.5 million pounds. But the Project team are well on their way. It was very interesting to hear about the journey so far, the engineering challenges and the parts that are being built at present. In addition, they have successfully engaged with educational establishments including the University of Sheffield.

For our December meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>, James Cadle will be talking about the Docklands Light Railway.

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

## Science &amp; Technology

Mike Christianson &amp; Peter Twist



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

20 December: *Christmas Science Quiz*: Mike Christianson and Peter Twist

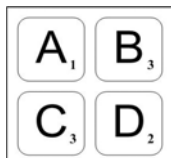
17 January: All members discuss the Schedule for 2022 talks, plus a video, if time.

21 February: *Getting To Net Zero Emissions*: John Ingold

Our meetings will continue on Zoom and a return to the Church Hall will be discussed with our members.

## Scrabble for Fun

Tony Muir



The Scrabble for Fun Group in November welcomed two new members, who seemed to enjoy the competitive but friendly afternoon. After all the lockdown scenarios it was nice to return to some semblance of normality, albeit with some members still a little wary of attending in a closed community. Hopefully when the situation improves, we will welcome back our other members.

For all you Scrabble buffs, the highest individual score was from one of our new members, who totalled 73! The next meeting will be on Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> December, usual time, usual place.



Our first live rehearsal on 6<sup>th</sup> September was very well attended and there was a lively atmosphere with everyone catching up on each other's news; delighted to be able to sing together again.

Ali, our new choir leader, has quickly licked our vocal chords back into shape after so many months of inactivity and has established an excellent rapport with us all.

Rehearsals are pacy, fun and rewarding.

The Group is rapidly expanding, and we have welcomed several new members already this term, particularly in the male department! We're also delighted that Gwen, our accompanist, has returned to play for us, giving much needed help in finding the all important right notes.

On Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> December we shall be giving our first live performance for nearly two years. It will be held in the Albert Ellis Room at Amersham Free Church at 6pm and is free of charge. Please wait quietly in the lobby until doors open just before the start. We look forward to welcoming a large audience!

If you enjoy singing and would like to join the Group, all details are on the u3a website.

### Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



It's such a pleasure to be meeting regularly again, and keeping up with our highs and lows in ever improving Spanish. If only we were in Spain life would be perfect! We are still full, sorry.

### Stamps

Brian Feakes



With the easing of Covid restrictions, the Stamps Group held its first meeting for nearly two years on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021; nine members were present.

On this occasion, one of the members shared his collection on *British Postal History* with the Group. One area covered was the Free Franking of Letters; a system that was in place between 1764 and 1840 that granted members of Parliament and persons in certain government positions the privilege of posting letters free of charge.

Unlike previous meetings, which were held in members' homes, the Group met on this occasion in the Pavilion in Hervines Park; which will be the venue where the Group plans to meet throughout 2022.

Our November meeting in the Hervines Pavilion focussed on the stamps of India and its postal history. The first meeting in 2022 will be on 24<sup>th</sup> January; the subject for this meeting has not yet been agreed.

Being a stamp collector is not a requirement of joining the Group. Often the social history around the stamps and postal history that we review is as, if not more, interesting than the stamps themselves.

That old stamp collection gathering dust in the loft could be worth a lot of money. Why not bring it along to one of the meetings and show it to the Group? You might be surprised of its value, or just come along and meet the Group, where a warm welcome awaits.

### Tai Chi

Sue Broad



We are continuing to meet on Tuesday mornings in The White Hill Centre. Unfortunately due to COVID safety rules we are still unable to offer spaces to any new members at this time. Our instructor is patiently trying to coordinate us now that we mostly know the movements but although Tai Chi looks like a lot of waving hands, the movements are very precise. We're not quite ready to offer demonstrations just yet!

*My local shop has a sign saying 'Stamps Sold by the Book'. It's good to know they follow the rules.*

*(punsandoneliners.com)*

## Theatre



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

## Ukulele

Jeff Naman



Having previously assisted Alan Bridges, he has now decided to pass the baton on to myself as the new Convenor for our Ukulele Group. Alan, since starting the Group up, has done a great job. The Group is very successful and members have enjoyed Alan's tuition and love playing their ukuleles. We all thank Alan for all his hard work and are pleased he will still be playing with the Group. Recently, we have been able to meet up again face-to-face and are enjoying some new music along with the old favourites. In October we were happy to provide entertainment at the Silver Sunday Afternoon Tea at Ley Hill Memorial Hall.

We continue to meet fortnightly on a Tuesday afternoon.

Jeff

## Walking Groups

Walking Groups are now active 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

### *Ley Hill in November*

On a lovely sunny morning, nine of us met at Ley Hill for our three-mile stroll. Before setting off we admired the poppy display around the beacon. Villagers have knitted or crocheted poppies, which are attached to netting and draped from the beacon, not just to commemorate Remembrance Day, but also to celebrate 100 years of the first village hall.

We set off, walking from the cricket ground and through to the golf club, watching out for flying golf balls. We then walked down to the bottom of the dell and wondered how many balls get lost in the undergrowth instead of landing on the green. One walker remembered doing just that! Up the other side and then on to the recently-made Dilly Dell trail through woodland where there are interesting notice boards explaining some of Ley Hill's history: a wooden doodlebug that had landed nearby and an old well which years ago was the only local source of water! There were some wooded structures for children to play on and some benches. We then walked along a farm track, which took us in to Cowcroft woods, currently with fallen leaves everywhere, but in springtime is a mass of bluebells (we will do it again next May). We managed to avoid all the muddy patches, and walked along Kiln Lane back to our starting point, with surprisingly clean foot ware.

Wendy Barnes

## Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

### Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

Walkers 1 meet at various locations on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10am. Walks are usually between four and five and a half miles long and are led by members. After the walk we usually gather for a picnic or a pub lunch (optional).

Walks are planned with walk leaders and published every three months. Members advise the Walk Leader if they wish to participate. In the last quarter year we have held walks in Prestwood, Chenies, Bledlow, Little Gaddesden, Winchmore Hill and Little Kingshill.

New members are welcome, and members of other walking groups are not disbarred.



After nearly a year without a permanent Convenor, Jane Towers has volunteered to take over as Convenor of Walkers 3 from January 2022. One of the good things about running the two Groups together has been that several people from Walkers 2 have decided to also join Walkers 3 on a permanent basis which means there are more people willing to lead the walks. I would also like to thank all those who have organised a walk, whether in small or large groups this year as without you, we would not be walking and enjoying each other's company.

As from January, Walkers 3 will be walking on the first Wednesday of every month with Walkers 2 walking on the fourth Thursday. The walk information will be circulated about two weeks before each walk then, if there is space, the spare places will be offered to the other Group. The walks are between five and seven miles with a maximum number of about 20 people. At the moment it is up to the leader as to whether to start at a local hostelry but a number of people have recently been making their own arrangements to have lunch after the walk.

If anyone wishes to join either Group, please contact the Convenor.

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

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



Striders have had some spectacular days for our walks this autumn with clear skies, sunshine and good views, as illustrated in the picture elsewhere in the magazine. The Convenors are grateful to everyone who leads a walk and it is good to be able to announce that we have walk leaders for every walk in the first half of 2022. We have begun to make the arrangements for a summer walk along the south coast from Seaford to Eastbourne, with the coach booked for 5th July 2022. Information on how to book a place on the walk will be sent out to Striders in the New Year.

Our gate fund (generated from £1 contributions by each walker) has recently topped £500, so we will be making a donation to Thames Valley Air Ambulance (we alternate this charity with funding the change of stiles to gates, hence the name of the fund).

Unfortunately the numbers who would attend a Christmas Lunch are lower than we had hoped for, so it's not viable for the traditional charity lunch. We are exploring alternative ideas that would still involve a joint walk and a raffle for an excellent Christmas Cake made by our Christmas Lunch cook.

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

### Walks into History: Country

Tony Biddle & Peter Schweiger



The Walks into History Group went on the 1<sup>st</sup> September to Cookham, and met at the 'Crown Inn' for coffee served by a delightful six year old girl. The internet-based Village Guide was so useful in explaining the ancient houses. Most were listed buildings, but one was leaning at such an angle that it was obviously *listing*! One of the most famous inhabitants was the artist Sir Stanley Spencer who has an art gallery dedicated to him in a former Methodist chapel. Sir Stanley used to paint local scenes and went round the village wearing an old raincoat and pushing a shabby pram. He went out to Cookham Dean one day and asked a new resident if he could paint their house. The answer was "No, it was painted last week"

We met a live local resident who told us that he was a musical producer and worked with Elton John, Led Zeppelin and Robbie Williams, to name just a few. We really ought to have a musical tour; well, maybe another day.

The circular tour then took us through the churchyard, past the tower with two timepieces that checked each other and past a relatively small house with four staircases in it.

We lunched back at the 'Crown Inn', enjoying the garden and each other's company, especially Jim Olney who shared his knowledge of bricks and construction, in the way that the u3a excels. (cont.)

A select group of 10 enjoyed a walk around the Hughenden Estate in November. Helen Barnard guided us first to the church graveyard where we looked at the blocked-up entrance to the crypt. Inside are buried members of the Disraeli family plus a very close lady friend who gave all of her estate to Benjamin Disraeli on the understanding that she could be buried alongside him. His wife is buried on the other side. Inside the church we found the memorial that Queen Victoria had installed. She was prevented from going to the funeral because Gladstone refused to make it a State Funeral. In contrast to the Queen, he disliked Disraeli.

The memorial is tucked away behind the lectern, so cannot be seen when entering the church. For years I had driven past the church and not gone in, so missing this piece of history.

The drizzle died away as we walked down to the chalk stream in the valley and then made our way back up to the original lime tree avenue that led to the Manor House. There is a middle lodge that we had to walk round. It is let by the National Trust to a private family.

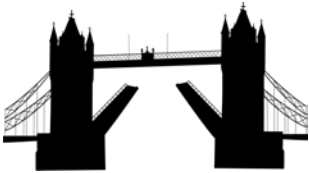
Some of us drove on to 'The Harrow' pub in Hughenden village. It was probably a drover's inn when cattle were driven from the West Country to London. The drovers did 20 miles a day along lanes and had to rest overnight at pubs with open space around them to graze the cattle. Our food was very tasty and we enjoyed the atmosphere so much we stayed a couple of hours.

Peter

## Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell



### *A Visit to Chelsea in October*

It was a real pleasure to spend time in what was originally the Saxon settlement of Chelchehithe, (Anglo Saxon for chalk and landing place). We met at Sloane Square tube station, named for Hans Sloane, an Anglo/Irish physician, collector and naturalist who owned most of this area in the 1600s. His collection of 71,000 items was bequeathed to the nation, providing the foundations of the British Museum, when he died in 1753 aged 92. Today there is still an abundance of affluence and blue plaques, obvious from the off as we made our way down Holbein Place and paused to view, across the road, Holbein Mews, where you pay not a penny less than £16,000,000 for a pavement fronted, terraced residence and would be hard pressed to find anything cheaper in the whole borough. At our backs, behind a high wall, lurked flats belonging to the Peabody Trust founded in 1862 by American financier and philanthropist George Peabody who had more money than he knew what to do with, investing it in homes for the poor. But there was nothing downmarket about these flats.

Inevitably, we soon came to The Royal Hospital Chelsea, where lay the ashes of Margaret Thatcher, behind the bus stop in the male-dominated burial grounds, along with Denis. The word 'hospital' signifies hospitality, rather than an infirmary. It has housed retired soldiers for 326 years. Initiated by Charles II, nowadays servicemen (and women since 2013) of retirement age who are alone and single can reside here. Encouraged to wear the distinctive uniform, they live a military lifestyle in basic accommodation, eating in the Grand Hall and attending parade to a drumbeat. Close by is the National Army Museum, free to enter, which houses uniforms of the great and good, the skeleton of a dead war-horse and evidence of the practice of removing the teeth of dead soldiers to be made into dentures.

We glimpsed the Physick Garden, a valuable resource for research, the plants of which have been used for medicine since 1673. The work continues today in conjunction with University College, London. Then on, past Flood Street, home to the Thatchers, and to Cheyne Walk, where the namedropping really took off.

The rich list is endless: Past and present residents include Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Bertrand Russell, Marc Brunel (Isambard's son), Ian Fleming and Oscar Wilde. When the poet Dante Rossetti lived at number 16, he kept exotic animals in the garden and annoyed the neighbours with the racket the peacocks kicked up. This led to a byelaw, which is still in force today, forbidding residents from keeping them. The armadillo and bull caused less trouble but if I don't take anything else away from this walk, I will not forget the useless fact that the wombat (he kept one in the house) is the only mammal whose poo is cube shaped.

(cont.)

Henry VIII always has the last word. We ended up near the site of his Manor House, now long gone. But a statue to his best mate and neighbour Thomas More is there. They were friends until the king fell out with all Catholics and inevitably More lost his head at the Tower. His body is buried there but his daughter reclaimed the head from its stake and that ended up at St Dunstan's in Canterbury. Angela Shipley

Future Walks:

February 9<sup>th</sup>: Notting Hill and the Portobello Road

April 13<sup>th</sup>: Old Westminster

## Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



The Wildlife Group has now started meeting again after a very long break. We began in October with a visit to Hodgemoor Woods for a fungi forage and were pleased to say that we found some 34 varieties (apparently, although some looked very similar). No one has been reported as having any illness as a result of touching a poisonous one! In November we had an excellent talk entitled *Birds Without Borders* about bird migration, presented by Peter Holden MBE. Coming up in future months we have several talks lined up: from a professional wildlife photographer, a member of the Bucks Owl & Raptor Group and the Landowner Engagement Officer for the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme. So we look forward to arranging a full programme through 2022.

## Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In August, the Howletts were our excellent hosts for an evening of South African wines and food including three types of Biltong from the shop in White Lion Road. We started with a fine Graham Beck Chardonnay / Pinot Noir-blend sparkling wine from Robertson via Tesco, which apparently was that used for President Obama's visit to South Africa.

We then moved on to a Noble Hill Chenin Blanc from Franschhoek, a Journey's End Chardonnay from Stellenbosch and finally a Swashbuckler Pinotage 14% from Western Cape. All were enjoyed to the full, with first class food.

In September, the Clarkes' theme was German wines, which produced a much less homogenous variety of quality. First up was the infamous Blue Nun, 10% and still sold by Tesco at £5. This was less sweet than we remembered from our childhoods. Next was a Sturmwalzen Pfalz Riesling from Strasbourg at 11%, a smooth Kendermanns dry Riesling at 12.5% and a silky Von Reben Pinot Noir Pfalz at 13%. Lovely German food including lots of Wurst was washed down by a 2014 Klostermühle Ockfen / Saar Mosel Spätburgunder, which was smooth, light and dry, contrasting with the Blue Nun. We finished with a real treat of a delicious Lieblich Riesling Spätlese from the Mosel: Altogether a fascinating evening tasting the less familiar wines of Germany.

In October, the Brattons asked members to bring a wine of their choice to discuss with the Group, selected to enjoy with cheese, chipolatas and various nibbles. First up were a couple of bottles of Canti Rose Prosecco followed by a selection of whites; a Louis Jadot Macon Villages Chardonnay at 13%, a Grant Burge Chardonnay from South East Australia and a classic M&S Californian white, which was less liked than the other two. The reds were the always-popular Wave Break Californian Merlot from M&S at 13%, a 19 Crimes blended Australian at 13.5% and a disappointing French Bordeaux at 14%. There was much wailing about the new budget measures, giving lower prices for weak Proseccos and higher prices for 13/14% wines. There is only so much Prosecco you can drink! Whereas...

*Originally, wine was kept in goatskin bags. The dark green wine bottle was invented by Sir Kenelm Digby in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The Largest bottle of wine is the 'Nebuchadnezzar' at 15 litres or 20 regular bottles.*

*Grapes are the most planted fruit in the world.*

*Some people have a fear of wine, which is called oenophobia.*

*(Newsweek.com)*



Unfortunately, Graham Hitchener has had to temporarily step down as Convenor due to ill health. Muriel has agreed to step in until Graham has recovered and we all wish him a speedy recovery.

In September we managed, with a little difficulty caused by dodgy weather forecasts and inconsistent predictions of rain, to hold a garden tasting at Ian and Jenny Lee's house. The rain tried to dampen our spirits but failed thanks to a multitude of umbrellas being available at short notice! The theme of the tasting was: *Don't blame the Aussies: Wines with silly or weird names started in other parts of the world!* We had six wines: Two white and four red, of which one came from Spain, two from South Africa, and three from France. We heard about the origins of names like 'Fistful of Schist' and 'Goats Do Roam', and the legend attached to the intriguing name 'Pisse Vieille'. The tasters felt that there were no duds in the selected wines but the overwhelming winner by a clear margin, and the best value by a very long street, was a Lidl red called 'Jamaica Renoncer' from Roussillon priced at £5.95, which averaged a score of 8.75 out of 10.

Unfortunately owing to the majority of members being away on holiday, there was no meeting in October, but in November Richard and Fiona Sabido hosted a meeting at the Small Barn in Amersham with the theme of *Viva Espana*. We welcomed three new members, Hardeep Mangat, Daryl-Ann Hardman and Jo Hardman, giving us a full complement of members. Three reds, three whites, a sherry and a Cava later, we came to the conclusion that the red Granache Roble from Lidl was the winner, averaging 7.3 out of 10.

## Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Our Group has, at long last, been able to return to our pre-Covid venue: The Quaker Meeting House in Amersham. We continue to present our writings on agreed monthly topics: Those covered in the last quarter have comprised of 'Luck', 'The Teacher' and 'Letters'. Personal, anecdotal and fictional pieces have been presented on all of these topics. 'Festivals' is the timely topic for our December meeting.

We are a friendly Group, but just six in number, and would very much like to increase our membership. So a warm welcome awaits, if you wish to join us. Please get in touch on [writers@cvu3a.uk](mailto:writers@cvu3a.uk). And don't forget to check out some of our stories on our CVu3a Writers web page.

## Political Insults

Politicians are never so inventive as when they are thinking up rude things to say about each other. Here are some examples from history:

"A modest man with much to be modest about." (Winston Churchill, about Clement Attlee.)

"A sophisticated rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity." (Benjamin Disraeli, describing William Gladstone.)

"So dumb that he can't walk and chew gum at the same time." (Lyndon Baines Johnson describing Gerald R. Ford.)

"A semi-house-trained polecat." (Michael Foot, on Norman Tebbit.)

"Being attacked by him was like being savaged by a dead sheep." (Denis Healey, about Sir Geoffrey Howe.)



## Common Taters

As with the question ‘How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?’, I have always wondered how many political correspondents work at the BBC, to which the usual answer is about half of them. But political journos are different. They adore the limelight, are umbilically linked to politics and politicians, mainly as failed versions of that very breed, and they just lurve being in front of a camera. We aren’t even spared their other presence, as we were in past years when he or she who reads the news was just that, a newsreader and not a journalist. It’s now a closed shop.

The answer to my rhetorical question is probably about 40, which does not include the has-beens who are invited back for added gravitas, presumably a large fee and, in the case of James Naughty, air miles.

Lord knows there is enough fodder for them to disseminate. But most of it appears as repetition, gossip, and hearsay, rarely adding to our knowledge of what to consume or how to act on it. Nonetheless, give them a big blank wall, to display misleading graphics and statements out of context, or better still a ‘live’ commentary position outside a closed government building with civil servants long gone and ministers moonlighting, and they’ll present broadly what they said at an earlier date and time.

Sometime ago I thought it would be a good thing to swap sports commentators around. Like Murray Walker screaming at a snooker match or the clear dulcet tones of Peter O’Sullivan covering Formula One. But now that sports Journalism is a close match for political commentary, where past ‘legends’ are disinterred for their outdated views, perhaps it would be more fun to ask Frank Bruno for his views on Brexit, and Boris Johnson his opinion on the off-side rule. On reflection I think Frank’s views on both would be more entertaining. ‘You know what I mean ‘Arry?’

*‘Timewaster’*

### Chess Valley u3a equipment

We have various items of equipment purchased by Chess Valley u3a. These are held by the groups that requested and mainly use them but are available for use by other groups. If you would like to borrow any of this equipment, please contact the relevant custodian.

| Equipment                                       | Custodian         | Contact details                          |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Data projector 1                                | James Cadle       | <b>James Cadle</b>                       |
| Data projector 2                                | Ian Hutt          | 01494 716992                             |
| Laptop computer (Windows 10, Office 2016)       | James Cadle       | chair@cvu3a.uk                           |
| Companion speakers for laptop                   |                   | <b>Ian Hutt</b>                          |
| PAT-tested extension cable/surge adapter        |                   | 01494 583955                             |
| Projection screen 1 (5 ft)                      |                   | history@cvu3a.uk                         |
| Projection screen 2 (6 ft)                      | Ian Hutt          |  |
| Pinboards x 3                                   | Keith Hoffmeister | <b>Keith Hoffmeister</b>                 |
| Easels x 3                                      |                   | 01494 766990                             |
| Portable PA systems x 3                         |                   | photography@cvu3a.uk                     |
| PAT-tested 6-gang 2-metre extension leads (x 2) | David Hurd        | <b>David Hurd</b><br>digimaging@cvu3a.uk |
| PAT-tested 4-gang 5-metre extension lead        |                   |  |
| PAT-tested 4-gang 8-metre extension lead        |                   |  |
| Rubber mats to protect extension leads (x 2)    |                   |  |

# Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

| FIRST in month   |                     |  |   |                        |
|--|---------------------|--|---|------------------------|
| MONDAY   | TUESDAY             | WEDNESDAY                                | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY                 |
| Art Discussion 2 (pm)  | Walkers 1           | Walkers 2/3 (occasional)                 | Wildlife  | Bowls (Short Mat) (pm) |
| Pilates Classes 1,2 and 3 (am/pm)  | Striders 2          | Patchwork and Quilting (am)              | Current Affairs (pm)  |                        |
| Knitting and Crochet (pm)  | Tai Chi (am)        | Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am) | Keep Fit (pm)   |                        |
| Singing for Pleasure (eve)   | Family History (pm) | German (am)                              |   |                        |
| <i>Monday Groups' schedules are sometimes interrupted by public holidays; contact the Convenors for more information</i> | Ukulele (pm)        | Book 2 (am)                              | <i>Book 1 meets at irregular intervals throughout the year<br/>Jazz Appreciation meets on the last Tuesday of each month (pm)<br/>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          | Line Dancing (am)   | Keep Fit (pm)               |   |
| Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm) | Art (am)            | French Conversation (am)  | <b>General Meeting</b> (pm) |   |
| Singing for Pleasure (eve)      | Tai Chi (am)        | Bridge (pm)   |                             | <i>The Chess Valley u3a Committee meets on the first or second Tuesday of each month, two days before the General Meeting</i> |
|                                 | Dinghy Sailing (pm) |   |                             |   |
|                                 | Eclectic Music (pm) |   |                             |   |
|                                 | Writers (pm)        |   |                             |   |

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

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

Right: Despite some mild drizzle, Helen Barnard guided a happy Walks into History Group around the Hughenden Estate in November.



Centre: With indomitable spirit, Wine Appreciation Group 2 met in the Lees' garden in September's rain. Apparently they had issues with their Australian dry whites. Wine 1, by contrast, met in the convivial surroundings of the Clarkes' dining room for their September gathering featuring wines from Germany.

Bottom: Pilates 1 were keen to start up their sessions again at the new Jubilee Hall in September. 10 minutes in, they were forced outside by a fire alarm, but carried on!





Autumn is a great time for fungus-spotting. Amblers found these two examples on trees at Ley Hill (right). Can you identify them? Let us know on [newsletter@cvu3a.uk](mailto:newsletter@cvu3a.uk) (ed).

The Wildlife Group think they found 34 varieties on their fungi-forage at Hodgemoor woods in October (bottom).

Centre: Bright sunshine, clear skies and a spectacular view overlooking Tring greeted Striders 1 in November during their eight-mile walk from Wigginton.

