



Front cover: The Striders Group recently organised a First Aid training session led by two members of St John Ambulance. Here, they are checking signs of breathing in patients. They then moved on to practising the recovery position and performing chest compressions on a dummy.



Above: Students from Chesham Grammar School gave magnificent presentations at the History Group's November meeting on *Hitler's Rise to Power*. They stayed afterwards to field questions.

Top right: The MOTO 2 Group meet up monthly for lunch on a Saturday. 'The Swan' in Old Amersham and 'The Blue Ball' in Asheridge are recent venues.

Centre right: Tom Beeston, Chief Officer of The Chiltern Society, heroically stepped in at the eleventh hour to replace the scheduled speaker for November's *General Meeting* who was unavailable. His presentation on the work of the organisation was very well received.

Right: Despite the weather, the Walks into History: Country Group enjoyed their walk around Cassiobury Park in November. They came across this dead tree, magnificently carved with depictions of woodland animals.



# Speakers for General Meetings

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



**Emily Yarrow**

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

## *My Life as an Opera Singer*

Emily has recently moved back to Chesham and has been a professional singer for over 20 years. Her talk is an entertaining one about her background and training and the various jobs she has had over the years, all illustrated with the appropriate songs. Emily recently had a show on a Saga cruise ship which can be seen on YouTube; most entertaining.

**Dr Peter Ross**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January**

## *From the Saxons to Mary Berry: A visual History of the English Cookbook*

Peter has a History of Art degree, an MA in London's History and a PhD in the cultural history of the English criminal. He is currently Principal Librarian at The Guildhall Library in the City of London. He has lectured for 20 years, has appeared on TV and radio talking about the history of food and as a consultant on the 18<sup>th</sup> century criminal Jack Sheppard. Peter's talk will show how English recipe books have reflected the eating habits of kings, courtiers, innkeepers, cooks and even paupers.

**Dr Steven Brindle**

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February**

## *Charles III and the English Kings who Shared his Name*

Steve has been with English Heritage since 1989, as Historian of the London Region and Inspector of Ancient Monuments. He has also written extensively especially on restoration work after the fire at Windsor Castle. His books include *Brunel: The Man Who Built Britain* and, just published, *Architecture in Britain and Ireland 1530-1830*.

**Simon Keable-Elliott**

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March**

## *Utterly Immoral: Robert Keable and his Scandalous Novel*

Simon is the grandson of Robert Keable, who was a chaplain in World War One and wrote about life behind-the-lines, the story centred on an affair between a chaplain and a nurse. It was slated as 'utterly immoral' by F Scott Fitzgerald and was mocked in *The Great Gatsby*. Robert Keable also worked as a missionary in Africa and, having left the church, fled to Tahiti where he lived in Gauguin's house and married a Tahitian Princess.



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



# Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our latest newsletter. Winter seems to be getting a grip now, with cold and often wet conditions prevailing outdoors.

I would like to thank the new Convenors who have stepped forward to take over Gardening, Knitting & Other Crafts and Walkers 3 and also to those getting Music Appreciation (formerly Eclectic Music) going again. And, as it's that time of year, to thank all other Convenors for keeping your Groups thriving.

Finally, I offer my season's greetings to everyone in Chess Valley u3a and my wish that 2024 is an even more successful one for us.

*With best wishes*



**James Cadle**  
chair@cvu3a.uk

## New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Caroline Adams	<i>Amersham</i>	Therese Havard	<i>Amersham</i>
Caroline Adie	<i>Amersham</i>	David Hillas	<i>Prestwood</i>
Alice Averill	<i>Chesham</i>	Roger Lane	<i>Holmer Green</i>
Graham Averill	<i>Chesham</i>	Ann Sharman	<i>Prestwood</i>
Carol Brown	<i>Ashley Green</i>	Graham Stone	<i>Amersham</i>
Anne Fellingham	<i>Chesham</i>	Mary Upward	<i>Amersham</i>

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

## Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle	chair@cvu3a.uk	07889 732291
Vice-Chair	Helen Barnard	vicechair@cvu3a.uk	01494 715588
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor	treasurer@cvu3a.uk	01494 434918
Business Secretary	West Marshall	secretary@cvu3a.uk	07931 433382
Membership Secretary	Jim Wilkie	membership@cvu3a.uk	01494 782081
Groups Coordinator	Helen Barnard	groups@cvu3a.uk	01494 715588
Web Editor	Valerie Garrood	webmaster@cvu3a.uk	01494 433585
Newsletter Editors	John Bunyan	newsletter@cvu3a.uk	01494 778858
	James Cadle		07889 732291
Speaker Organiser	Michael Cohn*	speakers@cvu3a.uk	01494 763542
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb	eventscoord@cvu3a.uk	01494 773718
Committee Member	Peter Windsor	pwindsor@cvu3a.uk	07595 776473
* indicates a non-voting member			

## From the Groups Coordinator

This time I am pleased to report we have a new Group starting or, rather, re-starting. After its closure last year, Eclectic Music is hopefully getting going again but re-branded as Music Appreciation so if you are interested in joining please contact the Convenors for further details on [music@cvu3a.uk](mailto:music@cvu3a.uk).

I am also pleased that as various Convenors have retired from their Groups new ones have come forward and we thank the new Convenors of the Gardening Group, Walkers 3 and the Craft Group.

Otherwise as usual if you have any ideas for new Groups, please do let me know

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

## Inflation isn't confined to money...

Inflation seems to be back with us alongside its friend conflation, not only in a financial sense but also in the sheer volume of comment and contradictory commentary in general circulation. Some of this is probably due to extreme wokeness stalking the earth, where more explanation is needed even for the simplest of things. I do accept that in a gender-fluid world some help is needed if one wishes to present oneself as a cat or a cheese sandwich. But, for example and more prosaically, speed limits are down to 20mph. This requires re-signing in even more detail whereas research shows that reducing the profusion and confusion of the road furniture littering our roads would do a much better job; but sadly not at keeping the 'meedja' pot boiling.

Comment, explanation, repetition and interpretation are all in the ascendant. Endless and chatty weather forecasts have replaced the only ones needed in our temperate country, either 'wet and windy' or 'warm and sunny'. And is the oft-times-a-day news of the exchange rate of the pound to the dollar and to the Euro (and in the latter case the value of a Euro in fractions of a penny) really necessary? In most cases, the change is at most a decimal point of one iota and the info is only of value to the professional expert who is already directly linked up.

But if that expert is then invited onto a morning radio slot, it appears that he or she is required to say 'thank you for having me', like a house guest. And his or her contribution will then usually be ended with the equally compulsory 'thank you very much indeed'. Where did that come from?

So while political correspondents weave questionable info-webs out of demi-truths, and sports commentators ramble on with their daily regurgitations of their 200-word vocabulary (often and oddly featuring a sound-only recording of a goal, which is really a bit like a radio ventriloquist), there remain a few examples of the Bard's stricture that brevity is the soul of wit: Christies' recently naming the owner of a book collection as 'Charlie Watts, Gentleman, Collector, Rolling Stone.' Is an example, as is, on a blue plaque outside Waitrose in Beaconsfield, the legend "he last Earl Beaconsfield, 1940-1982. Never entirely sober. Never completely drunk".

'Nuff said?

*'Timewaster'*

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

# Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
Art	Angela Spittle	art@cvu3a.uk
	Janice Gray	
Art Discussion 1	Angela Bishop	artdiscuss@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 2	Caroline Jenks	artdiscuss2@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 1	Gillian Eastmond Mavis	bookgroup1@cvu3a.uk
	Mavis Earnshaw	
Book Group 2	Liz Howlett	bookgroup2@cvu3a.uk
	Christine Ross	
Book Group 3	Eileen Overton	bookgroup3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 4	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup4@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Green), Outdoors (Chiltern)	Margaret Stickland	bowls@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Short Mat), Indoors (Chiltern)	Sue Spalton	shortbowls@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Williams	
Bridge	John Curtis	bridge@cvu3a.uk
Canasta	Linda Hepworth	canasta@cvu3a.uk
	Sue Hawksley	
Chess	Caroline Jenks	chess@cvu3a.uk
City of London Churches	Jackie Cobb	londonchurches@cvu3a.uk
Current Affairs	Eileen Overton	currentaffs@cvu3a.uk
Digital Imaging	Pippa Greensmith	digimaging@cvu3a.uk
	David Hurd	
Dinghy Sailing	Wendy Barnes	sailing@cvu3a.uk
	Judith Young	
Family History	Sue Broad	familyhist@cvu3a.uk
Folk Music	Richard Skepper	folkmusic@cvu3a.uk
French Conversation	Morag Robertson	frenchcons@cvu3a.uk
French Intermediate	Hilary Alleston	french@cvu3a.uk
Gardening	Jenny Beirne	garden@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
German	Jenny Lee	german@cvu3a.uk
History	Claire Paterson	history@cvu3a.uk
	Ian Hutt	
Keep Fit for 60+	John Bunyan	keepfit60@cvu3a.uk
Knitting & Other Crafts	Jo Biggs	knit@cvu3a.uk
Line Dancing (Chiltern)	Linda English	linedance@cvu3a.uk
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott	mahjong@cvu3a.uk
MOTO	Mo Barnes	moto@cvu3a.uk

(continues on next page)

# Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
MOTO 2	Rodney Newth	moto2@cvu3a.uk
Music Appreciation	Geoff Hayes	music@cvu3a.uk
	Colin O'Rourke	
Patchwork & Quilting	Angela Bratton	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Dee Watson	
Photography	David Hurd	photography@cvu3a.uk
Pilates (1, 2 and 3)	Christine Ross	pilates@cvu3a.uk
	Liz Howlett	
Play Reading	Claire Paterson	playread@cvu3a.uk
	Linda Hepworth	
Poetry	Christine Ogborne	poetry@cvu3a.uk
Railways	Graham Yellowley	railways@cvu3a.uk
	James Cadle	
Singing for Pleasure	Angela Bratton	singing@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
Spanish Conv (Inter)	Hilary Alleston	spanishconv@cvu3a.uk
Stamps & Other Collectables	Steve Epps	stamps@cvu3a.uk
Tai Chi	Sue Broad	taichi@cvu3a.uk
	Meg Brinton	
Theatre	Run by a small sub-committee	theatre@cvu3a.uk
Ukulele	Jeff Naman	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
	Heather Sprake	
Amblers	Susan Osborne	amblers@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 1	Stuart Stanley	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3	Catherine Haridi	walkers3@cvu3a.uk
	Jill Thomas	
Striders 1	Andrew Brown	striders@cvu3a.uk
Striders 2	Ian Lee	striders21@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: Country	Peter Schweiger	walkshist@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: London	Angela Shipley	walkslondon@cvu3a.uk
Wildlife	Harry Howlett	wildlife@cvu3a.uk
	Keith Sonley	
Wine Appreciation 1	Pauline & Tom Hohenberg	wine@cvu3a.uk
Wine Appreciation 2	Graham Hitchener	wine2@cvu3a.uk
Writers	John & Helene Bunyan	writers@cvu3a.uk

# News From The Groups

## GROUP MEETINGS

Groups are now meeting in person. All Groups are open to enquiries from new members and, if full, will hold a waiting list. Groups that are inactive do not have an entry in the newsletter.

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

## Art

Angela Spittle & Janice Gray



Following our palette knife work, we moved on to attempt a work in the style of L S Lowry, which is still proving to be great fun. There's much to explore, from character shapes to the choice of backgrounds, using whatever medium took our fancy! In a couple of sessions, some of us finished previous work and others experimented with other subjects, hence an amazing tiger by Jan Grey. Next term we plan to start by creating a winter inspired scene, revisiting 'Light and Shade'. (See back page for examples, ed.)

## Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



In September we discussed the Pre-Raphaelites, a group of highly academic young students who in 1848 rejected contemporary art and turned to the art of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was astonishing in the light of 19<sup>th</sup> century innovations in art, science and industry. They rejected the Royal Academy, as they considered it promoted unimaginative and artificial art. They advocated a new moral seriousness and sincerity in art and produced a romanticised view of art's mediaeval past. With varying degrees of approval, we examined Leighton, the two Rossettis, Holman Hunt, Burne-Jones, Millais, Waterhouse, etc. who liked their women beautiful and dreamily passive. Nothing changes.

In October our discussion topic was 'every picture tells a story'. Members chose a wide variety of works; a tapestry by Grayson Perry illustrating a dysfunctional family in Sunderland, an almost abstract work by Vanessa Bell of the beach at Studland and an enigmatic work entitled *Office at Night* by Edward Hopper. Most works featured the human form from which it was possible to construct our own story.

In November we discussed three artists who had lived at Speen, near High Wycombe, in the 1930s. They were Claire Leighton, John Nash and Eric Gill. All were remarkably productive. We marvelled at Claire Leighton's intricate woodcut creations of the natural world. We were able to see them reproduced in her book of the seasons entitled *Four Hedges*. We were moved by John Nash's images of the First World War and his delicate English and Welsh landscapes, in particular those that reminded us of our Chilterns. Viewing the wide body of works by Eric Gill, his wood cut illustrations, his typeface creations and his monumental statuary, we could not avoid a discussion about his sexual behaviour and the response of the art world.

Future subjects are to be 'Hands in Art' and Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Angela Bishop and Jude Jones.

## Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



Claude Lorrain painted the journey of Aeneas and fellow Trojans fleeing Troy to start a new life in Italy. From this mythical start, September's meeting covered the topical issue of Migration: paintings which illustrated departures, arrivals or people starting a new life, usually in another country, but also movements from rural to urban life. An era well covered by art is the exodus of British people in the Victorian era, most famously Ford Maddox Brown's *The Last of England*, but also many heart-rending examples of Scots leaving their homeland. A more modern example of the genre was a painter previously unknown to us, the African-American artist Jacob Lawrence with his *Migration Series*. (cont.)



In October our theme was 'Mysticism, Spirituality and Fantasy'. It was a huge topic, which gave rise to a wide variety of picture choices dating from Botticelli's *The Mystical Nativity* (1500) to modern illustrations of *The Lord of the Rings*. We found Joachim Patinir's *Landscape with Charon crossing the Styx* particularly interesting, and we loved the drama of Joseph Wright of Derby: *The Alchemist in search of the Philosopher's Stone*. Other artists included Dali, Chagall, William Blake, John William Waterhouse and Hilma af Klint.

Caroline gave a talk in November on *The History of Western Painting*: an overview of art from ancient Greece to the modern day covering all the major art movements and developments. It was a lot to pack into a one-hour illustrated lecture, but we did it! Technical innovations, such as the invention of paint in tubes for use en plein air, or mathematical understanding, such as the rules of perspective, enabled improvements to be made. But perhaps our final feeling was that human artistic skill has been equally sublime for thousands of years; all that changes over time is the pressures on artists to conform to the cultural, political or religious demands and interests of their patrons and public.

### Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



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

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

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

### Book 2

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Book Group 2 meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm in Amersham Library. Over the past months we've tackled three books that have centred round the activities of three very different female characters. The first, *The Adventures of the Yorkshire Shepherdess*, describes the lifestyle of Amanda Owens, juggling the needs of her nine children, her husband and a sheep farm. Life in the beautiful countryside was often idyllic, which contrasted sharply with the setting for our second read, *The Clocks in This House All Tell Different Times*. Set in a menacing forest, it was a somewhat twisted and dark fairy tale describing the plight of Lucy, a 14 year old child prostitute. Our third book, *The English Girl*, set in distant Arabia in the 1950s, was a novel of love, loss, secrets and betrayal for its heroine, Joan. Three very different reads, three very different discussions!

### Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Our Group's size is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham library. However, due to members moving away, two vacancies have occurred. Please contact the Convenor if you are interested in joining us. The books we read are very varied; September brought us *The Other Queen* by Phillipa Gregory, followed by *The Librarian of Auschwitz* by Antonio Iturbe, which we discussed in October. We finish the year with *The Beekeeper's Daughter* by Santa Montefiore and *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell. We have put in our preferences for 2024 and it is a lottery as to what we get offered, dependent upon Bucks Library's ability to provide. We hope to receive the list shortly.

"Nobody could find the books they wanted: The Librarian had no shelf control." (anon)



We have read *Suite Française* by Irene Nemirovsky and *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt. We are not meeting in December as our meeting date is too near Christmas. In January we will resume and read *The Millstone* by Margaret Drabble.

We would be happy to have another member join our Group. If interested, please contact the Convenor

### Bowls (Green Outdoors)

Margaret Stickland (Chiltern u3a)

Outdoor Bowls runs from May to September. CVu3a members can join Chiltern members for the season of weekly sessions on Mondays at Amersham Bowls Club, Hervines Park, from 10.30 to 12.30. Contact Margaret to check on the availability of places, on [bowls@cvu3a.uk](mailto:bowls@cvu3a.uk).

### Bowls (Short Mat)

Sue Spalton & Peter Williams (Chiltern u3a)

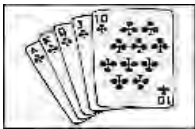


Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. The cost is £4.00 including a cup of tea per session. The winter season runs on Fridays from 13:15 to 15:30 weekly at the White Hill Centre.

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

### Bridge

John Curtis



The Bridge Group continues to meet at Chartridge Park Golf Club on a Wednesday afternoon to play duplicate bridge to a reasonable standard in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Our last session of 2023 will be on 13<sup>th</sup> December and the first meeting in 2024 will be on 10<sup>th</sup> January. Please contact the Bridge Convenor for more information.

### Canasta

Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley



The Canasta Group has been rather lacking in numbers throughout the summer. We always welcome new members, if only initially to see how the game is played, so do come along! We would love to see you.

### Chess

Caroline Jenks



Our Chess Group is growing in numbers. We have been delighted to welcome some new players, but still have space for more. Do consider joining this small friendly Group, even if you've never played before and just want to give it a go.

### City of London Churches

Jackie Cobb



Unfortunately things didn't go to plan for our visit as the Guide had got confused as to the time to meet us. An hour later we finally started our short tour and found several churches closed, having lunchtime concerts or a service. We did get in to see St Mary's Lothbury. Our Guide was very knowledgeable and quite a character.

Hope to do a much better tour next spring with a more efficient guide.

### Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We discuss all sorts of topics that are in the news and we listen to everyone's point of view. We learn so much from our fellow members who have a variety of skills and knowledge. We are a small but very friendly Group; this means that everyone has a chance to speak which is not always possible in a larger group. Come along and join us for a fun discussion. If you are interested please contact the Convenor for details of our next meeting.

## Digital Imaging

Pippa Greensmith & David Hurd



The Digital Imaging Group is at present discussing topics to be looked at in 2024. After a creative year of making stars and bursts, creating bokeh, making new brushes and generally polishing our 'tool skills' in Photoshop Elements, we plan to return to the most important function of the software: improving and enhancing our own photographs. We will be using Photoshop Elements, Lightroom and, for some, Affinity.

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

## Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



Our Sailing season has now finished, and we plan to restart at the end of April 2024. This activity is very weather dependent and this autumn we have had it all, from very little wind to the other extreme with some really good days in between. Numbers too have varied with some of the good weather days sadly having poor attendance.

At the most we have had four boats on the water and we always ensure that there is a competent helm in each one. Novices are encouraged to have a go when conditions are suitable.

In November we had our annual work party cleaning the boats we have used and leaving them covered for the winter. After the work we had a convivial lunch in the renovated clubhouse. There is a lovely new kitchen to work in but it had its problems; there was so much packaging left on top of the new hobs that we couldn't use them. So we heated up the soup in two slow cookers! By next spring it should all be sorted!

A big thank you must go to Judith Young who has kept up all the secretarial work, despite three family funerals, and to John Byrne who has sorted out the safety boat rota for us.

We normally sail on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month from April to October. No experience is required but we do ask that you can swim 10 metres. For more information please contact either of the Convenors.

## Family History

Sue Broad



At our last meeting we had a Zoom session with Jackie Depelle who is an experienced Family History speaker. The title of her talk was *From Cradle to Grave* where she described her experiences tracing the life story of one of her relatives. She explained the various resources that she used that we might not have thought about.

Booking speakers is getting very challenging since Covid. Many of them won't travel very far and are concentrating on Zoom.

Our next meeting on Tuesday 5th December is a Christmas social. All welcome at Chesham Town Hall, starting at 2.15pm.

## Folk Music

Richard Skepper



We continue to enjoy having a singsong in friendly company. However, afflictions and distractions limit our musical progress so we could do with a few more singers and instrumentalists to boost the Group. Please get in touch if you are interested. We meet at the Amersham Free Church. The rooms there have better acoustics than the previous location.

## French Conversation

Morag Robertson



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

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

## Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell &amp; Jenny Beirne



A good number of the Group attended our September meeting, which was a trip down memory lane for most of us. Our speaker, Terry Cann, told us about the life and work of Geoff Hamilton who was a long-time popular presenter of the television programme *Gardeners' World*. Geoff tragically died relatively young, but his legacy still lives on in his garden, which is open to the public.

In October we welcomed Tom Cole, a regular speaker at our Group. Tom took us through the gardening year, reminding us of the relevant tasks which needed to be done each season to maintain healthy and flourishing gardens.

November's meeting is the last of the year, the fourth Wednesday in December being too near to Christmas. Traditionally, in place of a speaker and to create a more informal meeting we organised a pre-Christmas social, which provided members with an opportunity to mingle and chat while partaking of festive fare. With a gardening-related quiz, it promoted a good discussion around the tables!

Details of the Group, along with next year's programme, can be found on the Gardening Group page on the CVu3a website. Jenny Beirne has very kindly offered to be Co-Convenor with me from January 2024.

Stephanie

## German

Jenny Lee



Our friendly German Conversation Group continues to meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month in each other's houses. We cover a wide range of topics, for example this month we talked about two German traditions:

Fasching, which is Germany's carnival season starting at exactly 11.11am on November 11th and ending at midnight on Shrove Tuesday. It is a time of festivity and merrymaking,

Also Allerheiligen (All Saint's Day) for which there are many regional customs. For example in the Mosel it is customary to eat millet porridge in the evening, which releases as many souls from purgatory as there are grains in the bowl!

## History

Claire Paterson &amp; Ian Hutt



Briony Hudson, Director of Amersham Museum, visited in September to give her talk on *Sickness and Health in Amersham*. Briony has a Medical Museums background and her overall chronological approach to the subject was fascinating and quite enlightening.

Healing herbs have formed the basis of medicines from the beginning of time and Briony mentioned a few: Arnica for healing bruising, Apothacary Rose from the Middle East for soothing inflammation and wounds, Evening Primrose from North America, its stems and leaves used for skin inflammations, and Sneezewort, yielding an oil used in herbal medicine.

The root can be chewed to ease toothache as it has a numbing effect.

The Black Death during the 1600s was an incredibly infectious disease. It claimed many deaths in Buckinghamshire, though Amersham was mainly free of this plague during that time, possibly due to Gore Hill House, a Pest House at a settlement on the outskirts of Amersham, which restricted its spread. It became crucial again in the 1700s as an isolation hospital for cases of smallpox.

The poor and sick were housed in workhouses and in the 1800s a new workhouse was built in Whielden Street. Imposing and beautifully designed by the famous architect George Gilbert Scott, it eventually became The Infirmary and later the foundation of Amersham Hospital. (cont.)

Many distinguished people in the field of healing made their homes in Amersham. There were several London Consultants together with Caroline Richardson, an artist who also took in wounded soldiers for the Red Cross during the First World War. Maud Grieve founded a herb garden and wrote about their healing properties, and Beatrice Turner nursed on the Western Front.

Shardeloes, the family home of the Tyrwhitt-Drakes was requisitioned and became a maternity hospital in the Second World War. Its Drawing Room and Library were converted within 24 hours, giving London women a safer environment in which to give birth. It saw 5,000 babies into the world over that period.

In modern times, White Lion Road was the home of the prestigiously important Radiochemical Centre, which became Amersham International, then GE Healthcare. It was named by the Royal Society of Chemistry as an historic chemical landmark in the fields of industrial and medical applications.

At our October meeting, Ross Panter, a retired teacher at Watford Grammar School, posed the question, *Elizabeth I - Was it Really a Golden Age?*

Ross put forward the hypothesis that it was Elizabeth's easy-going acceptance of people's ideas, attributes and energies that made it such a great era. Having been brought up under her father's irrational behaviour and her sister's religious prejudice, to an extent she adopted an open approach to plans, schemes and ideas. She had an exceptional education, was gifted in maths and spoke Greek, Latin, and French. She was very aware and thus enabled many people to come to prominence in their different fields for the benefit of the Nation and her own prestige: John Napier in maths, William Byrd in music and William Harvey in anatomy and physiology. In arts and culture there were the miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard, while in theatre there was Richard Burbage and *The Globe, The Rose and The Swan*. We have playwrights William Shakespeare and Kit Marlowe. Elizabeth was particularly interested in fashion. Education grew, particularly for boys, and grammar schools were founded.

English expansion occurred with Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh and the successful defeat of the Spanish Armada. At last Elizabeth had a functioning government and made them take an interest in the poor: a Golden Age indeed.

In November we again welcomed five history students from Chesham Grammar School, continuing a tradition going back around ten years. The students Antosh, Poppy, Freddie, Elly and Mali presented individually their research on *Hitler's Rise to Power*. Each student covered a specific topic: *Hitler the Man, The Great Depression, Propaganda, Terror and Political Factors*.

Verbally and visually, they were extremely well researched and presented. These youngsters have never presented to an audience before and it is an awesome experience for them, which they negotiate with some confidence.

From their topics, we learned and understood a lot more of the background to Hitler's rise to power and the devastating effects it had on the German people. It was very well received as usual.

Our speaker in December will be Anne Fletcher who will tell us about the lives of the *Widows of the Ice*, the wives left at home by the polar explorers.

### Keep Fit for 60+

John Bunyan



The Keep Fit 60+ Group has proved difficult to get started this term. A pilot session in September saw very few attendees and it was not viable to continue. Another attempt will be made to restart the Group in the new year. If numbers permit, the class will take place. If it is cancelled, any pre-payments will be refunded. If you are interested please contact John on [keepfit60@cvu3a.uk](mailto:keepfit60@cvu3a.uk) No payments are being sought at this stage.

### Knitting & Other Crafts

Sue Rawbone / Jo Biggs



The Group meets in members' homes on the first and third Monday afternoons of each month. We are mostly knitting warm items for the winter season but we do have one member who has become an expert at crochet, producing some lovely work.

If anyone is interested in joining the Group, there is one place available so please get in touch with the Convenor, currently Sue Rawbone, but Jo Biggs is kindly taking over in January.

## Line Dancing

Linda English



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

Email: [u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk](mailto:u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk)

## Mah Jong

Edward Perrott



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

## MOTO (Members On Their Own)

Mo Barnes

The MOTOs have continued to meet for their convivial fortnightly Sunday lunches at local pubs and restaurants. These include 'The Boot and Slipper', 'The White Hart', 'Amersham House', 'Zsa Zsa', 'Barracuda' and 'The Gate'. Monthly planning meetings are held over coffee and cakes, always a welcome addition!

## MOTO 2

Rodney Newth

We continue to meet for lunch on the second Saturday of each month and also at 3.15 (about) for tea/coffee/chat after the monthly General Meeting. Our next chat in December will be in 'The Drawing Room', Francis Yard. Recent lunches have been at 'The Swan' in Old Amersham and 'The Blue Ball' in Asheridge.

In December we meet at 'Amersham House', again in Old Amersham. We have a programme for the first four months of 2024. We are able to accept new members to the Group.

## Music Appreciation

Geoff Hayes & Colin O'Rourke

Two new Convenors have now stepped up to the mark, filling the gap left by the closure of the previous Groups, and Music Appreciation will encompass a wide variety of genres. We are lucky that there is already a full membership, and we will place any other interested CVu3a members on our waiting list. Group members will be informed of the arrangements for our meetings. For more details, contact the Convenors on [music@cvu3a.uk](mailto:music@cvu3a.uk)

### *Carry On Cruising:*

*"The cruise company we went with contacted me; wanted to know whether we would be sailing with them next year. I think they want their towels and cutlery back."*

*"On my last cruise, the cabin they gave me was so small I couldn't brush my teeth sideways."*

*"It was a wonderful romantic evening. My wife and I were on deck. She turned her head and looked deep into my eyes and said: 'We have to go back to Malaga. I've left our passports there.'"*

*(Brad Ashton)*



Our Group has been busy with individual projects, quite a few of which have been made specifically for Christmas, such as wall hangings, table mats, advent calendars, bags, bunting and gifts for adults and children. These are in addition to making traditional patchwork quilts, some of which will be donated to local charities early in the new year.

We continue to be inspired by different techniques and what we can make with new fabrics, but, as a group, we do not lose sight of the global need to re-use and recycle what we accumulate over time, thereby reducing what is needlessly sent to landfill. We even use up very small leftover scraps to make new panels of fabrics that are turned into new items. Any surplus goes to a local charity shop to boost their funds. You would be amazed at what we can do with 100% cotton shirts or dresses (quilts, mats, bags) and also denim jeans, or linen fabrics which emerge as something else. We have all got boxes of buttons and other haberdashery handed down from our mothers / grandmothers and, along with some of the fabrics, they evoke strong family memories. Nothing is wasted. Recycling and reducing waste is high on our agenda.

Sewing is a lovely pastime and it is good for our general wellbeing. We love getting together to sew and chat; time well spent and a chance to wind down. As always, we would be pleased to welcome any like-minded stitchers. Contact us to arrange to visit one of our sessions. So it's a merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful 2024 from all of us in the P&Q Group.

### Photography

David Hurd



The Photography Group had its first meeting after the summer break on the 20<sup>th</sup> September, where the 14 members present were treated to an excellent presentation by Michael King. Entitled *My Photography - A Game of Four Quarters*, it showed four aspects of his photography, including street photography and close up macro work. The Group also looked at members' photographs taken over summer.

There was no meeting in October as the Convenor was away. The next meeting was held on 15<sup>th</sup> November, when the Group looked at abstract photographs taken by members, and a presentation on *Famous Photographs and Photographers*.

We will hold our usual *Five minutes of fame* session at our next meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> December when we will be joined by the Digital Imaging Group. The future programme for 2024 has yet to be finalised but the January meeting will look at members' prints of photographs taken during 2023.

### Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Our three Pilates classes are as popular as ever. After our holidays, grandparenting duties etc., we are back to the Scout Hut on Rectory Hill every Monday. We are striving to build up our core strength and stamina in preparation for this term's big event. No, it is NOT a Pilates end of term display that you might be hoping for, but our Christmas lunch party on 18th December!

### Play Reading

Claire Paterson & Linda Hepworth



In September we read *Someone Waiting*, a play based on a real murder case, by Emyln Williams. The plot sees a father attempting to inveigle his way into the household where a murder, for which his son was hanged, took place. Walter Fenn, the father, procures employment as tutor to the adoptive son of the wealthy homeowners. The son Martin is a university student who has failed his law exams. The victim was a maid working in the family's home and the young person accused and hung was Martin's best friend. Martin and Walter believe they know who the true murderer is and between them try to uncover their identity: A gripping psychological thriller that takes numerous twists and turns with well-fashioned suspense. Performed in 1953 at what is now the Geilgud Theatre (but then, The Globe), Williams was a cast member. In 1957 it was adapted for the film *Time Without Pity* directed by Joseph Losey. (cont.)

*The Astonished Heart*, described by the author Noel Coward as "a tragedy in six scenes" is a one-act play, part of ten in a cycle written to be performed across three evenings. He wrote the plays as vehicles for himself and his close friend Gertrude Lawrence. It was first performed in 1935 at the Opera House, Manchester: Christopher Faber is a leading psychiatrist happily married to Barbara. When her old school friend Leonora visits, his attitude to her is vague and uninterested. Very soon he is passionately in love with her and she admits that she has encouraged him in revenge for his dismissive manner at their first meeting with no awareness of the disastrous results her actions might cause. Despite his affair with Leonora he loves Barbara as he says, "deeply and truly and forever". Increasingly his mental state becomes unhinged due to the stress of the affair, which affects his work and his life. Eventually Leonora and Chris quarrel bitterly, culminating in his violence towards her and the taking of his own life.

Easily recognised as a Noel Coward, this play has his characteristic clipped dialogue and barely restrained passion. As to the title? Christopher needs a title for his next lecture on psychopathology and finds the passage he wants in the Bible: "The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of the heart". We were puzzled by this.

Our November play is *Mr Peters' Connections* by Arthur Miller. Presented in America in 1998 and the UK in 2000, it is new for us. *The New York Times* described the play as "a numbing experience". We will prepare to be numbed.

## Poetry

Christine Ogborne

Meetings are held in members' homes on the fourth Thursday each month. We enjoy reading and discussing our chosen poems and the poets who wrote them. In September our subject was 'Animals and Insects' and members chose such gems as *The Midge* by Edwin Morgan, *The Donkey* by G K Chesterton, *At Grass* by Larkin, *Diary of a Church Mouse* by John Betjeman and *Lone Dog* by Irene McLeod. October saw us delve into the world of Poets Laureate and we read some of the works by those poets who had held the post for many years (before the ten year Laureateship was introduced); Tennyson, Masfield, Austin, Betjeman and Duffy were enjoyed. In November our poet was Clive James and his, sometimes satiric, views on life!

Future meetings will be:

December: Christmas Meeting

January: W H Auden

February: London

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

## Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



The last quarter gave us another set of interesting meetings and there are plenty more to come...

September 15<sup>th</sup>: *Fire & Steam* DVD (Christian Wolmar): James Cadle:

Based on Christian Wolmar's book of the same name, this was a fascinating insight into the history of UK Railways. It was such a complex and interesting history that the meeting ended with still half of the history to be unfolded. We will have to find a slot

for the rest of it in the packed Programme.

October 20<sup>th</sup>: *The District Line*: James Cadle:

A great talk by James on the District Line, 40 miles long, 60 stations and built in many sections. There was a lot of ground to cover (no pun intended). James made it really interesting; who knew about the District Line reaching Southend? Who knew about the peat bases being used to protect Westminster Abbey? Who knew about Windsor Station being on the District Line and how did they move Aldgate East station up the road to smooth out a big curve? And, when moving Aldgate East station, the track was dropped by seven feet with 900 men doing the work in one night!

(cont.)



November 17<sup>th</sup>: *HS2*: Bernie Rowell, Head of Delivery, HS2 Rolling Stock Projects:

This was an extremely informative talk by Bernie Rowell who carries a lot of responsibility on his shoulders. Not just with the train itself (doors flush with platforms, passenger sign information, space between seats, type of seats and materials used, colours to be used, position of café etc.) and that is just above the floor! Underneath is another world with traction, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, electrical supplies, bogies, braking etc. and then he has to contend with signalling, cab instrumentation and pantographs. Then there is compatibility with CRN (Current Rail Network): Bernie has a lot of projects to oversee and integrate. He explained all of this in a very interesting way and answered all questions posed to him. We hope he can come back in 18 months time with an update for us.

Our next meetings are:

2023

December 15<sup>th</sup>: *Swiss Railways in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*: Robin Addison and Denis Weller

2024

January 19<sup>th</sup>: *HS2 in Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire*: Keith Hoffmeister

February 16<sup>th</sup>: *The Metropolitan Line*: Ian Arthurton

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

### Singing for Pleasure

Stephanie Rothwell & Angela Bratton



Rehearsals are well under way for our forthcoming Christmas Concert on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> December at Amersham Free Church, from 5.45pm to 6.30pm. The programme will consist of a mixture of seasonal songs and carols as well as some secular pieces. Please come along and support us.

On the same day, during the afternoon, some of the choir will be entertaining members of Totteridge Stroke Group at Cricket Club. We performed for this group earlier in the year and it was greatly appreciated. It is a rewarding experience for us, too.

During this term we have welcomed new members to the Group but still have room for more. Further information about the choir can be found on the Singing for Pleasure page on the CVu3a website.

As always, we say a huge thank you to our choir leader Ali, who manages to work wonders with us, always with good humour and enthusiasm. Many thanks too to our accompanist Gwen, without whom we would never find the right note at the right time!

### Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



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

### Stamps & Collectables

Steve Epps



The scope of what was the Stamps Group has been widened to incorporate Collectables to cater for other interests and hopefully to attract new members to the Group. Other collectables could include postal history (old letters etc.), postcards, cigarette cards, coins, even china.

The breadth of collectables was well demonstrated at our recent meeting where Brian Feakes talked about and showed pictures and a video of one of his collecting passions; buying and restoring old cars. These included a 1902 Renault, which he drove for several years in the London to Brighton Rally.

We meet every two months with a mixture of Group members showing some of their collections and outside speakers. Another activity has been advising people who have inherited collections on their value and the best way of disposing of them.

Our next meeting will probably be in January, details to be decided.

## Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton



Tai Chi is a Chinese martial art that has gained immense popularity worldwide due to its health benefits. It is a form of low-impact exercise that involves slow, flowing movements, and deep breathing techniques that improve overall health and wellbeing. In recent years, many people have become interested in learning Tai Chi, and one common question that arises is; how long does it take to become a master of Tai Chi?

The answer is longer than we have been practising, perhaps another 10 years we MAY have mastered the basics. But we enjoy being with our tutor who has 30 plus years of experience.

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

## Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



Everyone seems to have enjoyed the recent trip to *Guys and Dolls* and by the time you read this we will have been to see *Hamnet*, with both *High Society* and *Crazy for You* fully booked. More visits are in the pipeline!

As ever if anyone has suggestions, please do let us know and the Group is able to accept new members, so please do email us on: [theatre@cvu3a.uk](mailto:theatre@cvu3a.uk)

## Ukulele

Jeff Naman & Heather Sprake



We have a potential new member, never played the ukulele before, who is being nurtured on a one to one basis to learn the basics. Hopefully he will enjoy playing as much as the rest of our Group.

In October we held a family, friends and U3A members sing along afternoon in the hall. It was very well attended and enjoyed by all. We will definitely be repeating this activity in 2024.

Our fortnightly meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of each month are at the Methodist Church in Bellingdon Road, Chesham, starting at 2.30pm. If you want more information on the group and our activities, please contact me for a chat. Jeff Naman 07976 633798

## Walking Groups

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

## Amblers (3 - 4 miles)

Sue Osborne

The weather forecast was not promising for our November walk around Holmer Green. Nevertheless, a small group of us set off from 'The Bat and Ball' for a circular amble through woods and fields. For those who don't know it, Holmer Green is a surprisingly large village with varied properties, an attractive duck pond and a small parade of shops. Rain started as predicted so we arrived near our end point in a rather soggy state.

A very select group of three of us headed for the café / deli, 'The Square'; the remainder voted with their feet to dry out at home!

## Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

### Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

Walkers 1 meet at various locations on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10:00. Walks are usually between four and five and a half miles long and are led by members. We usually meet for a picnic or pub lunch (optional) after the walk. Walks are planned with walk leaders and published every three months. Members advise the walk leader if they wish to participate. (cont.)

In the third quarter this year, we held walks in Frithsden, Little Marlow, Wigginton, Skirmett, and Lacey Green. We then had walks in Hawridge, Little Gaddesden, Ley Hill and Sarratt. Further walks are to be arranged.

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

### **Walkers 2**

**Sue Rawbone**

We walk on the fourth Thursday of the month and also have the possibility of joining Walkers 3 on the first Wednesday of the month if there are spare places.

Our October walk took us over the border from Buckinghamshire into Hertfordshire and the lovely village of Wigginton. Our December walk is a combined one with Walkers 3 and will be around Hazlemere, which I believe will be new to the Group, although it is not too far away. We always hope for good dry weather, but still walk unless conditions are really too bad.

New members are always welcome but please get in touch with the Convenor first.

### **Walkers 3**

**Jane Towers**

September's walk took the Group to Cassiobury Park in Watford, which was led by John B.

October's walk was around Chesham, led by Libby and November's was a circular walk, led by Catherine and Jill, of around five miles, picking up the Chess Valley walk in places and passing in front of Chenies Manor. The mud season has well and truly begun!

December's walk will be with Walkers 2. We still need leaders for walks in 2024 when Catherine and Jill will be joint Convenors, taking over from me in the new year. Many thanks go to all who have led walks for me in the time that I've been the Group's Convenor.

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

**Andrew Brown & Ian Lee**



The last three months have seen Striders tackling walks of up to 13 miles in length in a wide variety of weather and conditions underfoot. We are always able to adapt and rarely find it necessary to cancel scheduled walks. We have even ventured beyond our usual stamping ground in the Chilterns, to Hertfordshire in one direction, Berkshire in another, and as far as Oxfordshire for longer all-day walks. On occasion some walkers have resumed visiting local hostelrys for lunch following walks or even for a recuperative beverage en route. On

our long summer walk from Streatley in Oxfordshire, the Group enjoyed a Thames-side drink at 'The Beetle and Wedge' in Moulsoford, illustrating this very point. (Picture in colour pages; ed.)

Our next project will be the joint Christmas walk and lunch, the organisation of which is already underway. This year it will be a round walk from Cholesbury with a halfway stop for mince pies and mulled wine in Bellingdon, followed by lunch back in the village hall at Cholesbury. We will have our customary raffle organised by Jeremy Wyman with donated raffle prizes from our members. As usual all funds generated at the event will be donated to charity; this year our chosen good cause will be the Chiltern Food Bank which CVu3a members help to run.

Finally, we have recently held an excellent First Aid session in Amersham, conducted by St John Ambulance volunteers. It was not only very informative for our members but highly entertaining as members of both Groups found themselves deliberately falling to the floor as opposed to trying to stay upright on slippery mud! (See front cover picture, Ed.)

Our numbers continue to grow, and we are delighted to report that younger CVu3a members are both joining and leading walks regularly, which augurs well for the future of Striders. We do not operate a waiting list for either Group and will welcome more CVu3a members who wish to join our friendly walkers. Please contact one of our Convenors: Andrew Brown (Striders 1) or Ian Lee (Striders 2). Striders 2 walk on the first and third Tuesdays of every month; Striders 1 walk on the second and fourth Tuesdays. Walks are usually 7-10 miles in length but, during summer months, we usually offer a programme of longer all-day walks with a picnic lunch in locations further afield on any fifth Tuesday in the month. Andrew or Ian can provide more information about either Group.



### *Cassiobury Park: Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November*

The Walks into History Group numbered just five hardy souls on a wet November 8<sup>th</sup> at Cassiobury Park near Watford. Thankfully the park had two pleasant cafes, one for coffee where we started, and a more modern one called 'The Hub', for lunch.

Cassiobury Park has been owned by the Council since 1909, when it included a 62 bedroom mansion that, due to disrepair, was demolished in 1927. It had belonged to the Earls of Essex for 300 years and would have originally retained an army of servants, similar to those in the television series, *Downton Abbey*.

We walked along magnificent avenues of trees and saw a huge hollow London plane by the river Gade. There was a beautiful bandstand and a wonderfully carved dead tree with the front and back of a bear going through it. (See picture on colour pages, ed.)

### *Seven Deadly Sins: Wednesday October 11<sup>th</sup>*



#### **LUST ENVY WRATH PRIDE GLUTTONY GREED SLOTH**

We all know something of the Seven Deadly Sins and, as frail humans, are no doubt guilty of some of them in our three score and ten years' lifespan. But where did it all start and what are they? Walking from Covent Garden to The Mall via Trafalgar Square, we went in search of them all and found them in shocking abundance. One group were promised the name of a character who possibly was guilty of them all but there we remained ignorant as our guide was taken ill and the two groups were merged when all 49 of us were ably escorted round this area of vice by Adam. Pope Gregory VIII was the one who started it all, classifying immoral behaviour into a list and sending it around every Christian country in the sixth century. If it helps in your self-analysis; women are more prone to pride leaving the men to freely indulge in lust and in case you are confused, gluttony applies to food and greed to money; they are not the same.

Early on we met Edward VII at Rules restaurant where he is accused of lust for his favourite mistress, Lily Langtry (the horizontal queen), gluttony because he frequented this expensive eatery to the extent that he insisted that his tuxedos only had one button and envy because he wanted what everyone else had. We have met Richard Prince before at the Adelphi Theatre, understudy to William Terrace, whom he stabbed in a fit of envy and spent the rest of his life in an asylum pleading criminal insanity. Then there was Leopold Mozart, father of Wolfgang and the lesser known but equally talented Maria Anna. Outside one of his dwellings we learned how greed caused him to put his children to work relentlessly playing at recitals to keep them from poverty. Mozart wrote his first symphony aged nine while living there.

Gluttony raised its head again at the door of the Honourable Beef-steak Club where in the eighteenth century, supporters of the Whigs filled their stomachs. They still meet once a month! On to Trafalgar Square where generations have expressed their wrath since the 1887 protests concerning Jewish poverty escalated into riots. Since then we have had the Poll Tax, Bloody Sunday, Antiapartheid and to this day, Israeli / Palestinian demonstrations of public anger spilling over in this famous square. We learnt all this standing by the smallest police station in London, telephone box sized. Nelson watches it all from his high plinth. His lover Emma Hamilton left the infatuated George Romney for him; more lust. We ended up by the statue of Charles I, killed in the civil war by Oliver Cromwell. He went to the scaffold dressed in extra clothing because he didn't want to be seen shivering in the cold. Now there is pride for you.

Not much of sloth, but beware the sin of this culpable lack of physical or spiritual effort: laziness in other words.

Angela Shipley

*So, on the subject of London, here's a real groaner:*

*"I taught my dog to play the trumpet on the London Underground today: He went from Barking to Tooting in 15 minutes.*

*(www.beano.com)*



Autumn has arrived with a bang, and the Wildlife Group have given up field visits for the sanctuary of Amersham Common Village Hall. In November we were treated to an excellent talk on Lichens by Martin Butler from Bedfordshire. Not only did he tell us about the habitat preferred by lichens, he showed us how to identify them in the classroom, with examples brought in by some of our members. Topics covered included reproduction, growth rate and ageing as well as photography, as identification can prove difficult due to weathering and predation by snails.

Turning the clock back to September, about 35 of us enjoyed a visit to Rickmansworth Aquadrome in search of bats. Josh Kalms from the Middlesex and Hertfordshire Wildlife Trust proved to be a very able host. Charged with bat detectors, it was not long before we came face to face with Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and the Daubenton varieties. Some 18 varieties are thought to exist in the UK, with the smallest weighing 25g, equivalent to a 20 pence coin! We were told that their appetite is impressive with 3000 insects being consumed per night, just to sustain a healthy body weight. An outing in October to observe bird ringing had to be postponed due to the mild weather and absence of garden birds, but we are hoping to repeat this with Mike Collard in 2024. Our final meeting for 2023 will take place on Thursday December 7<sup>th</sup>. On this occasion, we aim to review and celebrate our activities since Harry and Keith became the Convenors, as well as to outline the programme organised for the first six months of next year (see our Group page on the CVu3a website for more details). Come and join us if you are interested.

### Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In August at the Hohenbergs, the theme was German wines. Unsurprisingly, Riesling wines featured heavily and most participants agreed that the selection of German wines available in the UK was pretty limited. We started with a *Grey Slate Riesling* from Dr L Loosen, available from Waitrose at £9.99. We continued with a *Weingut Schloss Vollrads Riesling* from Tesco reduced from £14 to £10.50. The next Riesling was M&S *Classic Riesling Pfalz* at £10.

Breaking the theme, we had a *Reichensteiner* grown in the Frome Valley of Herefordshire at £10 and finally a *Miltenberger Steingrubler Silvaner Trocken*, personally imported from Miltenberg. As the token red, we had a *Von Reben Pinot Noir Pfalz* from Averys at £11. There were not many converts!

In September at the Howletts, the theme was Portuguese wines. We started with a *Vinho Verde Azevedo* from the North of Portugal via Waitrose at £10. This was followed by a *Porrais Reserva Douro Valley* from the top of the hills from Averys at £10. Next was an *Aluado Chardonnay* from Laithwaites at £12.99. The reds were represented by a *Pinha Ribeiro Santo* from Lidl at £8 and a *Barricas Galodoro Reserva* from Naked Wines at £12. The evening was very satisfactorily concluded with a 10 year old *Warre's Port* at 20%.

October found us at the Brattons for a contest between Old World and New World varieties. After Tesco's *Finest Cremant Blanquette de Limoux* put us in the mood, we tried two Chardonnays: Waitrose *White Burgundy* at £10.99 versus a Chilean *Indomita* from M&S at £12. These were followed by two Pinot Noirs: a *Pays D'Oc* from M&S at £10 versus a New Zealand *Marlborough* from Tesco at £10. Finally there were two Cote du Rhones: *E Guigal* with 50% Grenache from Waitrose at £13.50 versus a *Silenus Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon* from Australia at £20. In each case the old world wines were overwhelmingly preferred: 48.75 to 24.25 points. A very illuminating exercise!

### Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchenor



Jan hosted September's meeting and the theme for the tasting was 'Same Grape, Different Continent'. Jan chose three Sauvignon Blancs and three Pinot Noirs. The differences were amazing and it was hard to believe that they were the same grapes. Whilst the *Loire Valley Sauvignon* topped the whites, the Pinot from Burgundy, which is its birthplace, came last by a distance, despite its hefty price tag, behind the *Albert Road Pinot Noir* from South Africa, sold by Waitrose.

(cont.)

Robert led October's meeting and the theme was 'Red & White, Same Label'. We tasted three reds and three whites from France, Italy and Slovenia (yes, that's right! It's one of Robert's favourite holiday destinations and has surprisingly good wines). The scores resulted in a narrow victory for France in the shape of *La Vieille Ferme*, a good slurping wine for Christmas and available in Tesco and Waitrose; look out for discount deals. This won over the Slovenian pair with the Italian pair a distant third.

The theme for November's meeting hosted by Tina and Michael was 'Quaffable Wines for Everyday Enjoyment'. Most of the wines came from Sainsbury's, which surprised the Group, and were excellent value on the 25% discount deal. The top scoring wine of the evening was *Santodeno*, made from Sangiovese grapes from Romagna in north east Italy, the most expensive wine we tasted, but very closely pressed by the other reds.

Happy slurping to one and all over the festive period and do look out for those 25% discount deals which can mean getting something just that bit nicer to enjoy.

## Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Our Group managed two meetings this last quarter with personal commitments preventing us meeting in October. 'Flying' was the topic of our September meeting, which gave rise to some varied contributions. The subject of 'Clocks' was put back (excuse the pun) from October to November. Again there was an eclectic mix of contributions, all well received. Our December theme will be 'Something I bought'.

The Group currently meets in a member's home at 2:30pm on a day mutually convenient during the second week of the month (currently Friday). We are very keen to attract new members to the Group and extend a warm welcome to any CVu3a member who writes, in any capacity, and would like to share their work. So get in touch at [writers@cvu3a.uk](mailto:writers@cvu3a.uk)

For Christmas:

## The Oxen

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

"Now they are all on their knees,"

An elder said as we sat in a flock

By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where

They dwelt in their strawy pen,

Nor did it occur to one of us there

To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave

In these years! Yet, I feel,

If someone said on Christmas Eve,

"Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb

Our childhood used to know,"

I should go with him in the gloom,

Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy

## 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 (Epson)	James Cadle	<b>James Cadle</b> 07889 732291 <a href="mailto:chair@cvu3a.uk">chair@cvu3a.uk</a>
Data projector 2 (Optoma)	Ian Hutt	
Laptop computer (Windows 10, Office 2016)	James Cadle	
Companion speakers for laptop		<b>Ian Hutt</b> 01494 583955 <a href="mailto:history@cvu3a.uk">history@cvu3a.uk</a>
PAT-tested extension cable/surge adapter		
Projection screen 1 (5 ft)		
Projection screen 2 (6 ft)	Ian Hutt	
Pinboards x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	<b>Keith Hoffmeister</b> 01494 766990
Easels x 3		
Portable PA systems	James Cadle	(See details above)
PAT-tested 6-gang 2-metre extension leads (x 2)	David Hurd	<b>David Hurd</b> <a href="mailto:digimaging@cvu3a.uk">digimaging@cvu3a.uk</a>
PAT-tested 4-gang 5-metre extension lead		
PAT-tested 4-gang 8-metre extension lead		
Rubber mats to protect extension leads (x 2)		

## Christmas quiz

As we have a bit of extra space this month, we have included a longer quiz to keep you occupied over the festive period. Answers will appear with the **January** e-bulletin.

### History:

Which famous pirate was hanged at Wapping on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1701?

Fotheringhay Castle in Northamptonshire was the favoured residence of which man who became King of England in 1483?

Tolui acted as Regent for his brother Ögedei when he succeeded which ruler?

Sir Humphry Davy is often cited as the inventor of the miners' safety lamp but which famous Novocastrian engineer invented one at about the same time?

The Hundred Years' War, although involving many nations at different times, was principally fought between which two nations?

### Literature:

Radon Raskolnikov is the main character in which Russian novel of 1866?

Which novel reaches its climax during the Paris Uprising of 1832?

Gabriel Oak falls in love with Bathsheba Everdene in which novel?

Which literary prize, administered by Columbia University, was established in 1917 by provisions in the will of a wealthy newspaper publisher?

*Death in Venice* is a novella of 1921 by which German author?

**Sport:** Who won the FA Cup in 1966, the year that England won the World Cup?  
The Palio is horse race in which Italian city?  
In what year was the first Cricket World Cup staged?  
In boxing, what weight class comes between Middleweight and Lightweight?  
Which darts player won the World Championship in 1980 and 1981 and regained the title in 1984, defending it successfully in 1985 and 1986?

**Music:** Which famous symphony was commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of London and premiered in Vienna on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1824?  
Wynton Marsalis is a virtuoso performer on which instrument?  
Which English rock band was formed in 1968 and disbanded following the death of their drummer in 1980?  
What musical tradition originated with the Ashkenazi Jews of Central and Eastern Europe and includes dance tunes, ritual melodies and improvisations?  
Whose Third Symphony is subtitled the 'Rhenish'? He was inspired to write it after a visit to the Rhineland with his wife Clara, also a celebrated musician.

**Language:** What does the German word *Schadenfreude* translate as (more or less)?  
What French phrase means seizing control of a country?  
What phrase originating in America means to be caught between two equally unpleasant alternatives?  
What phrase, indicating a substantial alteration in perspective, originated in the song *Full Fathom Five*, sung by the spirit Ariel in Shakespeare's *Tempest*?  
What nickname has been applied to Second World War fire engines, to Liverpool trams, to a crème de menthe cocktail, to a lettuce salad and to a lily?

**Food & drink:** What is the principal ingredient of a panna cotta?  
Broiling is the term the Americans use for what method of cooking?  
What drink, a punch made from red wine, chopped fruits and often other ingredients and spirits, originated in Spain and Portugal?  
The recipe for Fiorentina steak originated in which country?  
What is the name for an English style of pale ale, varying in colour from gold to amber, and with a strength, typically, of between 3% to 5.5% alcohol by volume?



**Art:** *The Night Watch* is a painting by Rembrandt and displayed in which museum?

Which controversial sculptor (and paedophile) made the reliefs that adorn Broadcasting House in London and which have been vandalised several times?

*The Garden of Earthly Delights* is a triptych painting by which Early Netherlandish master?

Which sculptor's works include *Iron: Man* (1993) in Victoria Square, Birmingham, and *Another Place* (1997), permanently displayed since 2005 on Crosby Beach in Merseyside?

Which artistic movement, part of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde, 'consisted of artists who rejected the logic, reason, and aestheticism of modern capitalist society, instead expressing nonsense, irrationality, and anti-bourgeois protest in their works' (Wikipedia)?

**A Christmas miscellany:** In what year did Prince Albert first bring a Christmas tree to Britain, thus starting a tradition. Was it 1835, 1841 or 1862?

Eating what at Christmas was banned by Oliver Cromwell and is still technically illegal?

What was first officially sent by Queen Victoria and first made commercially available by Sir Henry Cole in 1843?

Which Irving Berlin song was written in 1942 for the musical *Holiday Inn*, won an Academy Award for Best Original Song and was later a big hit for Bing Crosby?

In the film *Home Alone*, where are the McCallisters going when they inadvertently leave Kevin behind?

In the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas* what was the gift given on the seventh day?

In which country did eggnog originate?

What is Santa known as in Italian?

What do children in Sweden leave out for Santa?

What Christmas decoration did Johann Hinrich Wichern, a German pastor, invent?



***Merry Christmas!***



# Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

FIRST in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Art Discussion 2 (pm)	Walkers 1	Walkers 2/3 (occasional)	Wildlife	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Pilates Classes 1,2 and 3 (am/pm)	Striders 2	Patchwork & Quilting (am)	Current Affairs (pm)	
Knitting & Other Crafts (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Music Appreciation (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Family History (pm)	German (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
<i>Monday Groups' schedules are sometimes interrupted by public holidays; contact the Convenors for more information</i>	Ukulele (pm)	Book 2 (pm)	<i>Bowls (Green) meets every Wednesday of the month during the season</i> <i>Tai Chi meets in school term-times only</i>	
		Bridge (pm)		
		Wine 2 (eve) (pm)		

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

THIRD in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Walkers 1	Patchwork & Quilting (all day)	Book 4 (am)	Railways (am)
Canasta (pm)	Striders 2	German (am)	Art Discussion 3 (pm)#	Book 1 (am)
Knitting & Other Crafts (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Book 3 (pm)	Photography (pm)	<i>Stamps and Collectables meets in members' houses every two months</i>	
	Ukulele (pm)	Play Reading (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		

FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Digital Imaging (am)	Striders 1	French Conversation (am)	Walkers 2/3	Chess (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	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)	Wine 1 (eve)	
		Gardening (pm)	<i>MOTO (Members On Their Own) have an 'anchor meeting' on the first Saturday morning of each month</i> <i>MOTO2 meets for lunch on the second Saturday of each month</i>	
		Bridge (pm)		
		Folk Music (pm)		

Right: Striders take a break en route for some refreshment during their long walk this summer. Ian Barrett led the walk from Streatley and 'The Beetle and Wedge' in Moulsoford was where they stopped for a drink.

Below: In November, members of the Dinghy Sailing Group clean up the boats and cover them for winter. Then it's off to the clubhouse for lunch.

Centre right: The Ukulele Group held a Family, Friends and Members Sing-Along in October. It went down a storm.

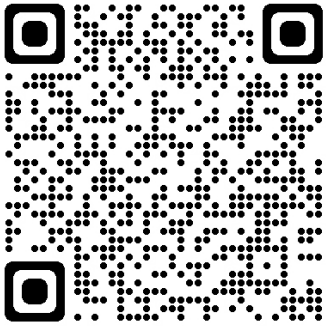


Above: Josh Kalms leads the Wildlife Group in search of bats, during their September visit to Rickmansworth Aquadrome. They successfully identified several species.



More wonderful work was created by our Art Group in the last quarter:

Left: Fun was had, working in the style of L S Lowry and Jan Gray produced this amazing tiger, working in pastels (below).



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