



A detail from one of the magnificent photographs featured in the Photography Group's Exhibition at the Elgiva Theatre during November. This one by Sylvia Walters.

Season's Greetings

Top right: Striders 1 got very lucky with the weather on their late November walk, given the large amount of rain we have had recently. Their circular walk along the Chess Valley started at Ley Hill.



Centre right: More work from our intrepid Patchwork and Quilting Group: An unusual quilt sewn from irregular pieces arranged to resemble basketweave.



Bottom right: A wonderfully patterned runner this time, for another P&Q member to put her sewing machine on.

Below: Bus Pass Adventurers made it to Marlow in late September and came across, amongst other things, the magnificent Akeler sundial created by sculptor Edwin Russell.



Speakers for General Meetings

All meetings start at 2pm
Council Chamber, Chesham Town Hall
Parsonage Lane
Chesham, Bucks HP5 1EP

David Coulton

Thursday 8th December

Gordon Bennett: From a Scottish Crofter to a Multi-Millionaire and Playboy

David retired after 30+ years in corporate finance, bought a company and finally retired at 70 after turning it around. His talk covers the amazing life of Gordon Bennett, his newspaper empire, and the explorations he funded. He has been described as 'a man who nearly changed world history'.

Nigel Lowey

Thursday 12th January

The Social History and Transformation of St Pancras

St Pancras was a 14-year-old Christian boy martyred in Rome in AD304, whereas in Britain he is better known as a railway station! As an amateur, Nigel Lowey has been fascinated by St Pancras Station for over 10 years and he has now become an expert in the history of the building. His talk covers history, world-class architecture and elegant engineering. It is a great story about how the mid-Victorian Gothic railway cathedral came to be built, and how the long-neglected building underwent a breath-taking transformation.

Anthony Poulton-Smith

Thursday 9th February

Salt Routes

Anthony is a freelance journalist and author with 85 books to his name, and he also compiles quizzes. In 2020, he gave us an excellent Zoom talk on *Christmas Unwrapped*. This time, he will be talking about the original trade routes for salt, this precious commodity, why it existed, and why these routes are still used today. Not just a travel history, the talk will also show how salt has found its way into our culture, language and folklore.

Dr Helen Fry

Thursday 9th March

Thomas Kendrick, Spymaster

Helen is another speaker well-known to us, having previously told us about Latimer House and the London Cage. This talk is about the subject of her latest book, and covers the career of Thomas Kendrick, who was regarded by the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) as their most important officer. A charming, music-loving man, who worked in Vienna in the 1920s as a lowly issuer of passports and visas, while scheming to thwart communist agents, and then the Nazis.

Sheryl Roberts

EXTRA TALK

Thursday 30th March

Tax, Care and Toy Boys

Sheryl is an expert in estate planning and her talk will cover subjects such as 'Protecting the family's Nest Egg', Inheritance Tax, and 'Stopping Sideways Disinheritance' (remarriage of surviving spouse). The talk follows and complements one by Gaye Illsley in 2021 on Lasting Powers of Attorney.

Note: We hope to return to the Broadway Baptist Church for our General Meetings in January 2023 but this depends on the completion of their building works. We will keep members updated via the monthly e-bulletin.

Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our last newsletter of 2022, the year when we finally got back on our feet after the trials and tribulations of the pandemic.

Participation in the u3a

One of the key features of u3a is that it is a participative, rather than a service, organisation. People should join to 'do stuff', not just consume things organised by others. That we don't currently fully live up to this ideal is exemplified by two current issues we face.


First, despite asking for a volunteer in the last newsletter, and repeatedly in my e-bulletins since, nobody has stepped forward to take over the role of Business Secretary when Colin O'Rourke stands down next June (see Colin's piece on the next page). I find it incredible that, with 600+ members, there is nobody who feels able to take on this position. Is it just British reticence I wonder? If so, then please get over that and get in touch.

Second, we have lost three Groups recently because the Convenors wanted to stand down after several years in their roles and nobody put their hand up to replace them. Being a Convenor should not be a terribly arduous or time-consuming role, particularly for small Groups that meet in each other's houses. I concede that larger Groups involve more work but the answer there is to have more than one Convenor, and possibly a small 'steering group', to share the planning and organisation. So, again, please come forward to help your Convenors keep your Groups going.

Season's Greetings

Having had my moan, I want to close on a more positive note and wish all of you a Happy Christmas and a successful New Year in 2023.

With best wishes



James Cadle
chair@cvu3a.uk

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Trevor Bingham	<i>Chesham</i>	Paula Hamilton	<i>Chesham</i>
Betty Campbell	<i>Amersham</i>	Stuart Hampson	<i>Gerrards Cross</i>
Kathleen Campbell	<i>Hyde Heath</i>	John Huxley	<i>Chalfont St Peter</i>
Roger Carey	<i>Chalfont St Giles</i>	Michael Lutt	<i>Chesham</i>
Peter Dale	<i>Amersham</i>	Alex Moseley	<i>Chesham</i>
Lynne Delph	<i>Bovingdon</i>	Sandra Pitcher	<i>Amersham</i>
Vivienne Dyer	<i>Holmer Green</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 6.

Copy date for the next newsletter is 22nd February 2023

Who's next?

When a monarch dies, the heir steps into the role immediately. When a prime minister resigns, a hopeful incumbent is waiting in the next room to be invited by HM to take over. Only committee members of u3as are irreplaceable it seems.

Despite several pleas in earlier mails and newsletters from our Chair, no one has thus far offered to replace me as Business Secretary when I step down at the next AGM, having relocated to Milton Keynes. This role only requires a small input of about 4 hours per month, needs no special knowledge or skills, but is crucial to the survival of Chess Valley u3a. This is because it is a legal requirement of the Charity Commission and Third Age Trust to have a named individual in that role as a point of contact. If you think you would be able to give back something to your u3a by undertaking a few clerical and administration tasks each month, please get in touch with either me or James Cadle, chair@cvu3a.uk. 07889 732291 for a chat about how YOU could help.

Without one of our 600+ members stepping forward soon, **there is a serious risk that our u3a will be forced to be wound up.** I'm sure none of us would wish that to happen by default for want of a willing volunteer to join the committee.

Colin O'Rourke
Business Secretary
secretary@cvu3a.uk, 01908 384990

From the Groups Coordinator

It is sad that we have not been able to form any new groups recently as insufficient people have come forward.

The Scrabble group has now been abolished for lack of a Convenor.

In the hope that we are not wasting time, Alan Bridges has kindly offered to start a Cinema Group possibly specialising in Classic British Films from the 40s to the 60s. If you are interested please contact me (details below). If you would like further information, or to discuss this, please phone Alan Bridges on 01494 783098.

The various walking groups do not permit dogs and this cannot be changed. However it has been suggested that some may be interested in a group 'Walking with or without dogs'. Again if you are interested please contact me on the email below.

Helen Barnard
Groups Coordinator
groups@cvu3a.uk

Events Team update

This year organising events has been difficult in all sorts of ways. However, we have been to The Museum of Brands, to the Queen's Gallery for the Japanese Exhibition and will have been to Kew to see The Christmas Lights Trail by the time you read this.

April next year we are hoping to have a guided tour of Chelsea Physic Garden and The Royal Hospital Chelsea (home of the Chelsea Pensioners).

In June a visit has been arranged to Syon Park House and then on to The Musical Museum.

We would be pleased for members to register their interest in these forthcoming events.

The Events Team
events@cvu3a.uk

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	Colin O'Rourke	secretary@cvu3a.uk	01908 384990
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
* indicates a non-voting member			

Visit to Japan: Courts and Culture exhibition at The Queen's Gallery

On the 8th November, 35 Chess Valley Members boarded the coach to see the *Japan Court and Culture exhibition*. We had intended to make our own way there but, due to possible strike action on the Tube, we had a coach. We were also originally meant to have a pre-exhibition talk by the Curator but due to the room not being available it didn't go ahead. However we still wanted to see the exhibition on the same day and time. After many traffic delays we arrived in time to enter as per our timed ticket.

We were all given headsets with commentary on the artefacts on display. The wonderful exhibits ranged from an ancient basic metal pot for the tea ceremony, to wonderful china bowls, to Samurai swords and armour.

I think it was well worth the effort of getting everyone there.

Jackie Cobb
Events Coordinator

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

If you have moved, changed your phone number or have a new email address, please make sure you update your information via the Chess Valley u3a website (www.cvu3a.uk). Click on 'Membership Login' on the homepage and then use your ID which is your membership number (from your membership card) prefixed by the first two letters of your first name (for example 'Jo9999'). If you don't have internet access, please let the Membership Secretary know (contact details above). We'd hate for you not to be kept up-to-date with the happenings in your u3a or miss out on events and visits.

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

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

(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
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott	mahjong@cvu3a.uk
MOTO	Mo Barnes	moto@cvu3a.uk
MOTO 2	Rodney Newth	moto2@cvu3a.uk
Patchwork & Quilting	Angela Bratton	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Janet Moore	
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	
Science & Technology	Mike Christianson	sciencetech@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Twist	
Singing for Pleasure	Angela Bratton	singing@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
Spanish Conv (Inter)	Hilary Alleston	spanishconv@cvu3a.uk
Stamps	Brian Feakes	stamps@cvu3a.uk
Tai Chi	Sue Broad	taichi@cvu3a.uk
	Meg Brinton	
Theatre	Group run by a small sub-committee.	theatre@cvu3a.uk
Ukulele	Jeff Naman	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
	Heather Sprake	
Amblers	Susan Osborne	amblers@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 1	Stuart Stanley	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3	Jane Towers	walkers3@cvu3a.uk
Striders 1	Andrew Brown	striders@cvu3a.uk
Striders 2	Ian Lee	striders21@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: Country	Peter Schweiger	walkshist@cvu3a.uk
	Tony Biddle	
Walks into History: London	Angela Shipley	walkslondon@cvu3a.uk
Wildlife	Harry Howlett	wildlife@cvu3a.uk
	Keith Sonley	
Wine Appreciation 1	Pauline & Tom Hohenberg	wine@cvu3a.uk
Wine Appreciation 2	Graham Hitchener	wine2@cvu3a.uk
Writers	John & Helene Bunyan	writers@cvu3a.uk

Worn out warnings

With 'it' or variations of 'it' being the sole topic of conversation among many of the grumbling classes for more than three months now, all one can say is thank goodness the u3a and its illustrious organ are non-political.

So returning to more familiar ground, I continue my quest (an easy one) to find useless information. I have long believed that we live in a world of information overload and a corresponding reduction of intelligence. Much of this hiatus is a result of info which is inappropriate, out of context, out of date or just plain pointless.

The blessed Michael Flanders once pondered how to react to a 'Low-flying plane' warning, offering 'take your hat off?' More ubiquitous nowadays is the barely comprehensible and now utterly worn out 'See it, Say it, Sorted' mantra which is unenthusiastically repeated at almost every station, none more so than at Marylebone, where it is wrapped up with other even more banal messages that we have heard so often they are now merely background noise or audible furniture.

Recent attempts to make messages more focused seem to have the opposite effect as in 'Strive to Arrive' now showing on a motorway near you. It has a close relation to fog warning signs which are usually only visible where there is no fog and with none likely to occur soon.

And don't get me started on the BBC's ongoing project to explain the very simplest of terms in even simpler ones.

Timewaster'

Answers to the September-November mini quiz

- History:** **David Lloyd George** was known as the Welsh Wizard.
Prior to the two Presidents Bush (41st and 43rd), the only other father and son to have been Presidents of the United States were **John Adams** (2nd) and **John Quincy Adams** (6th).
- Geography:** Lake Baikal is in southern Siberia in **Russia**.
The oldest recorded town in the UK is **Amesbury** in Wiltshire.
- Science:** Absolute zero is **-273.15 degrees Celsius**.
The two words in the Linnaean name *Homo sapiens* represent the **genus (Homo) and species (sapiens)**. It's also OK if you answered with the translation 'wise man'.
- Art:** Michelangelo's statue *David* is in **Florence**.
The sculptures that adorn Broadcasting House were carved by **Eric Gill**.
- Music:** The album *Paranoid* was released by **Black Sabbath** in September 1970.
Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto has the nickname '**The Emperor**'.
- Literature:** Dickens 'A Tale of the Riots of Eighty' is **Barnaby Rudge**.
Tolstoy's novel **War and Peace** was published in 1869.
- Sport:** **Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club** plays at Trent Bridge.
The Jules Rimet Trophy is better known as the **World Cup**.

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. Please adhere to any pandemic hygiene rules set for the premises.

Art

Mo Barnes & Angela Spittle



The Art Group is currently engaged in recreating a Hockney poster. Each member blindly selects a cut section of the poster and attempts to copy a same size section using acrylic paint. This exercise tests our copying and colour matching skills and involves the whole Group. The sections will finally be put together and mounted on a sheet of hardboard (with the kind co-operation of a member's husband!)

Our last efforts in recreating a Kandinsky poster proved most successful. In addition, members have produced some lovely freestyle work representing 'abstract' and 'autumn' and 'winter' themes. As usual, we also enjoyed convivial chat during welcome coffee breaks with delicious cookies and biscuits! The Group is currently full.

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



In September our Group agreed to look at the work of Winslow Homer. Little known to many of us, this American artist is the subject of an exhibition at our National Gallery. Residing mostly in the United States, he lived from 1836 to 1910, with a visit to the UK and France late in his career. He proved a most interesting artist, with his dramatic disturbing sea scenes and unusually composed landscapes. He worked as a war artist during the American Civil War as well as depicting the end of slavery. The exhibition in London continues until January and is well worth a visit.

In October we looked at the artist Johannes Vermeer, one of the artists active during the Dutch Golden Age, when the Netherlands were preeminent across the globe in trade, science, art and the military. As there are so few of Vermeer's works in existence, we decided to compare other Dutch artists with his known works. This proved interesting, as many contemporaneous paintings were as equally attractive and appealing as those of the master. We could not decide why his works became so unique and valued. The most fascinating comparison was that of the Arnolfini Portrait, a work by Jan Van Eyck dating from 1434, some 200 years before Vermeer was producing his world famous works.

In November we looked at the work of Paula Rego, a Portuguese artist who died earlier this year in her 80s. For many years her studio was in London. She proved most fascinating to our Group with works ranging from abstract to representational. Often her works had a political message, on the military regime in Portugal in the later part of the last century, the rights of women and, most dramatically, abortion rights. Her images were most thought-provoking. We particularly liked her portrait of Germaine Greer dating from 1995, for the National Portrait Gallery. Go and see it when the gallery reopens.

We plan a meeting in December with a festive theme and in January will look at an Irish painter Jack B Yates.

"Don't think about making art, just get it done! Let everyone else decide if it is good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art."

(Andy Warhol)



We discussed abstract art at our September meeting. There were some really baffling examples in the genre. We looked at total abstraction pieces such as the *Black Square* by Kazimir Malevich, *Composition VII* by Wassily Kandinsky and *Yellow Islands* by Jackson Pollock. Images by Pablo Picasso and Georgia O'Keeffe did not need to be explained, being examples of figurative abstraction. Like it or loathe it, it was an eye-opening meeting.

Our October meeting was entitled 'Propaganda' and our selections were as diverse as the dictionary definition: "Disinformation, brainwashing, publicity, advertising, promotion, hype..." We saw examples of propaganda from as early as the Reformation, with a disturbing image of the Pope portrayed as a donkey, and through to Napoleonic times, with a magnificent picture of Napoleon on a rearing horse, looking every inch an Emperor leading his troops to victory. We looked at public information posters from WWII, some directed at children encouraging them to be brave evacuees, and another from WWII with particular relevance to today: "Turn That Gas Down!"

With the proximity of Armistice Day our November meeting was 'Paintings of Historical Events' and all were war related. We looked at several examples of the death of Nelson, including an idealised portrayal by American artist Benjamin West, painted a year after the Battle of Trafalgar. We were very moved by *Gassed* by John Singer Sargent: a poignant image of soldiers blinded by mustard gas in WWI being led by a sighted orderly. Sargent is an artist normally associated with elegant portraiture. We looked at work by Evelyn Mary Dunbar, a little-known WWII artist, who recorded the work of women in the war effort. One of her paintings had appeared on The Antiques Road Show and was highly rated by the expert, which led to her family discovering a cache of her non-catalogued works. From the Irish War of Independence, Napoleonic Wars with Spain, skirmishes in 15th century Tuscany to Cossack battles with Turkey in the 17th century, we had a hugely informative afternoon.

Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



This smaller friendly Book Group meets about every four weeks on the third Friday morning of the month. We meet in a member's home (three homes are on rotation, sprinkled around the District) but we are on Zoom for January and February. 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. The book owner can lend the book to anyone who wants it.

If you want to try out our Group, please telephone or email a Convenor to see if there is a vacancy.

Book 2

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



We meet at 2pm in Amersham Library on the first Wednesday of the month. Two of the three books we've tackled over the last three months had a similar theme. *Becoming* by Michelle Obama gave us the background to her inspiring journey to becoming First Lady. *The Durrells of Corfu* by Michael Haag covered the background to conservationist Gerald Durrell's, founding of the world famous Jersey Zoo. In contrast, the third book, *The Stranger in my Home* by Adele Parks, was the tale of two families whose babies had been accidentally swapped at birth. The plot became more and more unbelievable as the pages turned. Despite this, it did keep most of us turning the pages to the very end!

"So many books, so little time."

(Frank Zappa)

"A room without books is like a body without a soul."

(Cicero)

"You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me."

(C S Lewis)



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. Due to members moving away, a vacancy has occurred. Please contact the Convenor if you are interested in joining us. We read a mixture of titles and find we have a good discussion as we can choose books we do not enjoy as well as books we all enjoy. Whatever we read, we always have an enjoyable meeting.



We meet in each other's homes on the third Thursday of each month. This last quarter, we have read several books, which have given us plenty to discuss: *The Light Between Oceans* by M L Steadman and *The Secret River* by Kate Grenville being two. Next year we are going to read a couple of books written by American writers, Edith Wharton and Willa Cather. Then we are reading a novel by Japanese writer, Kazuo Ishiguro.

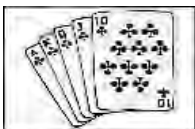
Our tastes are very varied which makes for an interesting programme.

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



Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. If you wish to 'try your hand', tuition is given. Bowls are available. The cost is £3 per session. The winter season is held in the White Hill centre, Chesham, on Fridays from 1.15 to 3.30pm.

Interested members should contact the Convenors using: shortbowls@cvu3a.uk.



The Bridge Group meets on Wednesday afternoons at Chartridge Park Golf Club. Attendances after the summer break have been good and hopefully this will continue. If you are interested in playing Bridge, please contact the Convenors to see if a place is available.



A Trip to Marlow, 29th September

On a sunny day in September a group of us headed for Marlow, a popular destination. On arrival we made our way to Strawberry Grove for a welcome coffee and, suitably refreshed, we ambled along to the Information Centre located in the library, to collect leaflets. We ventured into the small May Balfour garden opposite where we admired the unusual Akeler sundial created by sculptor Edwin Russell FRBS.

We then continued to 'The Two Brewers', the oldest pub in Marlow, which stands near the river where there was conflict between the millers and the boatmen some years ago and where it was said that Jerome K Jerome wrote *Three Men in a Boat*. On our way back to the town we passed St Peter's Roman Catholic Church, reputed to contain the mummified hand of St James.

After a short walk along the river we sat for a while and watched the world go by. It was now time for lunch in 'Zizzi', after which we set off for home after an enjoyable day.

Canasta**Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley**

We are managing to play each month, but could definitely do with more members. We play at one another's houses on the third Monday of each month. Please contact either Sue or myself at canasta@cvu3a.uk if you are interested.

Chess**Peter Schweiger**

The Chess Group expanded by 50% as numbers went from two to three. We need more players so that no one needs to wait for a game. We meet in our homes and get to know one another, possibly even helping each other with non-chess problems.

We meet on the fourth Friday of the month at 2.30pm.

Current Affairs**Eileen Overton**

Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We discuss all sorts of topics which are in the news and we listen to everyone's point of view. We learn so much from our fellow members who have a variety of skills and knowledge. We are living in interesting times, so we try, but haven't managed yet, to solve all the problems of the world. Come along and join us for a fun discussion. If you are interested please contact the

Convenor for the next meeting's details.

Digital Imaging**Pippa Greensmith & David Hurd**

In September we looked at members' work on 'Adding a Frame and Inserting a Figure'. Results were good, with some amusing submissions. We all agreed that lighting and perfect selection are some of the most important issues when inserting objects. Other topics covered in the past few months include 'Joiners & Collage', 'Creating a Triptych' and 'How to Blur a Background'. Both subjects honed our Photoshop and Affinity skills.

We are a friendly Group, always keen to share skills and to learn from others. New members or casual visitors are welcome to join us on the fourth Monday of the month in Little Chalfont Village Hall, 10am.

Dinghy Sailing**Wendy Barnes & Judith Young**

We have come to the end of our sailing season and, as is our tradition, our last meeting was a tidy-up followed by lunch in the clubhouse on the ninth of November. The weather in October and November has been unseasonably warm and so sailing conditions have been very pleasant. There was only one occasion when we did not launch the dinghies and that was because there was hardly any wind and it would have taken hours to sail even half way across the lake! Our season begins again at the end of April 2023, so watch out for the dates on our

web pages. We welcome members from any u3a in the area, and normally meet in the afternoon of the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month. For more information, please contact either of the Convenors.

Family History**Sue Broad**

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month, except in January and August. Our next meeting is on the sixth of December when we will be having our Christmas social. New members are always welcome to join us.

Instead of our February meeting, we are hoping to run a coach trip to the National Archives on the seventh of February. Members of the Gardening Club have been invited to join us.

The coach will drop off at Kew Gardens (normal entry charges apply which include entry to the Orchid Show) then will progress to The National Archives. Further details will be released ASAP.

Want to join us? Please contact Sue Broad at familyhist@cvu3a.uk or Jackie Cobb at eventscoord@cvu3a.uk

Folk Music

Richard Skepper



Our repertoire continues to grow and we are now enjoying some seasonal Wassailing. We have struggled a little for momentum due mainly to members' health issues. Although we are now getting back to strength, new members who fancy a singsong, or want to play their acoustic instrument in an informal setting, will be welcome.

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



The French Conversation Group has continued to meet regularly. We chat about numerous topics, whether in France, other Pays Francophone 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 Francophone).

French Intermediate

Hilary Alleston

We are still enjoying our meetings, trying to improve our French and learn a bit more about some of the lesser-known aspects of French life. We are looking forward to a French style lunch in the New Year. We are still open to new members.

Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell & Camilla Plummer



The Group did not meet in August because of holidays and grand-parenting duties during the school holidays.

In September we welcomed back Edwin Rye and his wife, Pam. Edwin is a regular and popular speaker at our meetings. Named BBC Gardener of the Year in 2002, Edwin is an extremely knowledgeable 'plantsman' and a very entertaining speaker. He did not let us down. His talk was entitled *Winter Flowering Plants*, which are a useful addition to the garden during those dreary months. As usual, Edwin brought along a good selection of appropriate plants for sale at very reasonable prices. Many thanks go to Janice Cross and Jenny Beirne for volunteering to facilitate this meeting in the absence of both Convenors.

Alan Clarke, a local gardening expert, was our speaker for October. Alan has many years experience in the construction and landscaping business. His presentation included slides of some of the local gardens with which he has been involved. They were certainly impressive! His talk, entitled *Gardening Essentials*, was wide-ranging and entertaining. Alan was a new speaker to our Group and his website contains details of his other talks based on a huge variety of subjects. He may be back!

November is usually set aside for a more social gathering. This year we held a gardening-related quiz followed by festive fare.

Our 2023 programme begins in January with a talk from the owner of Church Gardens in Harefield. The full programme will be posted on the CVu3a website Gardening Group page shortly.

German

Jenny Lee



Our small friendly German Conversation Group continues to meet twice a month in each other's houses. I am always amazed how many interesting and fun topics we find to talk about. Did you know that the chocolate-filled Advent calendar for children was invented in Germany in the late 1950s?

Here is a quote from Anne Frank's Diary, 7th March 1944:

“Denke an all das Schöne, was in dir selbst und dich herum wächst und sei glücklich”: “Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy.”

Fröhliche Weihnachten: Happy Christmas



Very unfortunately, Alison Bailey, Researcher at Amersham Museum, was unable to be with us at our September meeting. We will invite her back for her talk on *Modernism in Amersham* later next year. Peter Healy, with his museum hat on, was able to step into the breach with a talk and presentation on George Ward: A most interesting character of Old Amersham born in 1860, one of eight children. He was taught to use a camera by the son of the proprietor of 'Kings Chemist' where, as a delivery boy, he visited regularly. By the 1880s he was recording daily life in the town. He became manager of the Gas Works, lighting all the lamps in the Old Town. His interest in photography and engineering grew and he became a watch and cycle repairer. He founded the Amersham Temperance Band in 1892, acting as Bandmaster whilst also being a Town Councillor: A man of many parts, the greatest of which, for local historians, was his photographic capture of the life and times of Amersham 100 years ago.

In September we were pleased to welcome back Ian Waller, whom we last saw in 2016. Ian, a professional genealogist, gave his talk entitled *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A truly fascinating insight into medical advances in the Victorian era*. It was a time of huge disparity in social class with unhealthy living and working conditions, families of 10 or more children, many immigrants and high mortality of mothers and babies. An upper class were overweight, though indulging in sporting activities often resulting in serious injury and it was a society with little knowledge of how to deal with these broader issues. However, as the era progressed, life-changing discoveries were made: Pasteur (germs), Lister (antiseptic), pasteurisation, vaccines and aspirin all emerged. X-rays, together with laughing gas, ether and chloroform to numb pain, made surgery a better and safer experience. Ian showed pictures of some of the grim-looking tools used by surgeons.

Ian spoke of the growth of charity, cottage and specialist hospitals and asylums for the mentally ill, all great improvements. Medical research needed bodies, and funeral directors colluded with hospitals to provide them for a fee. The bodies of executed murderers always went for research. The Anatomy Act of 1832 ended so-called body snatching, giving free licence for the medical profession to dissect donated bodies. A possibly little known fact was that some midwives were given special dispensation by the Church to perform an emergency baptism of babies who were unlikely to survive, thus saving their souls: An absolutely fascinating and absorbing talk.

Our November meeting was special as it was our, now traditional, visit by history students from Chesham Grammar School. Their subjects were *Black Tudors* by Jenna who looked at Africans who were brought to this country in the Tudor era from Spain where they were slaves, but here they were free people and lived as part of the community. *Women in Tudor England* was presented by Ava, who discussed feminism at that time of patriarchy. She spoke about Jane Anger, a key feminist writer who wrote a book *Protection for Women* in 1589. Women at that time had absolutely no control of their lives or their money, everything going to their husbands, and they were viewed as totally unimportant and abused in both words and deeds. Thus Ava felt Jane Anger was the first feminist: A thought-provoking take on the subject, and one she clearly felt passionately about. Millie talked about *Common People* and how the dissolution of the monasteries affected them, as these had been the centres for marketing and society. Commoners were at the lowest level in the hierarchy. They had few possessions and little chance of regular work. Market trading was the basis of their living. Their plight led to a rebellion termed the 'Pilgrimage of Grace'. Rohan spoke on *Henry VII and Royal Authority* and made a good case, with analysis of how Henry VII consolidated his hold on power. Charlotte discussed *Popular Perceptions of Henry VIII: Was He a Tyrant?* A nicely balanced view putting forward the theory that his personality changed due to a jousting accident in which he received a blow to the head.

These were super presentations by all the students, showing confidence and a clear understanding of their topics. We all thoroughly enjoy their visits and this was no exception. The students also gain much from the experience: none had done anything like it before, so for them it was quite a challenge.

December is time for mulled wine, nibbles and a Zoom presentation, *Christmas: A Festive History*, to be given by Andy Thomas, a well-known lecturer and author of unexplained mysteries and global cover-ups.

Keep Fit for 60+



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

Knitting & Other Crafts

Sue Rawbone



We continue to meet twice a month in members' houses on the first and third Mondays of the month.

At the last meeting we had a good mix of crafts such as knitting, cross-stitch, embroidery and crochet. This also means that there is usually someone who can help with queries from those of us who are not so experienced as others!

If anyone is interested in joining, please contact the Convenor. Our numbers are limited to about 10.

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. There is parking available at the venue. We currently have a waiting list. Please contact the Convenors if you wish to be put on it.

Email: u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk

Mah Jong

Edward Perrott



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

MOTO (Members On Their Own)

Mo Barnes

The MOTOs continue to meet for their convivial fortnightly Sunday lunches at local hosteleries and restaurants. These include 'Zaza's', 'The King's Arms' and 'Cote Brasserie' in Amersham, 'The White Hart', Whelpley Hill, and 'The Black Horse' and 'Jasmine Thai' in Chesham. We are looking forward to our Christmas lunch at 'The Boot and Slipper' in Amersham.

MOTO 2

Rodney Newth

So far, since reconvening, we have had three pub lunches on the second Saturday of each month with numbers attending ranging from four (our minimum) to seven. The December meeting has been moved from 'The Black Horse' to 'The Golden Eagle' in Ashley Green. The Black Horse was fully booked weeks before I tried to make a reservation! At the December lunch, we will decide on locations for 2023, possibly including a couple of lunches in members' gardens in the summer.

We currently have eight members and new Members On Their Own will be very welcome to join us.

Patchwork & Quilting

Angela Bratton & Janet Moore



The Patchwork and Quilting Group meets for the whole day on the third Wednesday of each month in Hyde Heath village hall, plus a couple of extra sessions. There are 15 of us, each working on diverse projects and we have supported several charities. I'm a comparative new patchworker and have learned a lot from these talented ladies. Occasionally we have a speaker from one of the charities, or someone to show us another technique or new piece.

The Group is thriving and we look forward to more interesting and challenging opportunities to develop our skills. (The cake is always good: we take it in turns to make one). We can welcome new stitchers.

Janet

Photography

David Hurd



The main event of the year has been our preparation for the photography exhibition entitled *The Chess Valley and Its Environs*, which ran in the 'Elgiva' in November.

The August meeting concentrated on portrait photography and we looked at a video on tips for good photographs and also practised some of the techniques on members posing for photographs, with some great posers!

In September the Group looked at prospective photographs for the exhibition. The members present voted on the 120 photographs submitted, which were not attributed to particular photographers, rating them as unsuitable (0), possible (1), suitable (2) or must show (3). The scores were toted up and the top 42 were picked for the exhibition with the proviso that everyone had at least one photograph in the display and no one had more than five.

On October 14th members and three guests watched a fascinating presentation by Gill Ferguson and Barry Webb who showed a wonderful series of photographs of birds, animals, fungi and slime moulds.

The Group will be having its usual session in December where members have their *Five minutes of Fame* and can take five minutes to present their photographs, or indeed something completely different!

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Although all three Monday classes, which are held at The Jubilee Scout Hall in Amersham, remain fully subscribed, we have had the usual drop in attendees over the first few weeks of the Autumn term as people take well-deserved holidays once again, outside of school term time (and grand-parenting duties!) Most agree that after these self-imposed breaks from the Monday exercise, their muscles have really had to 'work' on their return to Pilates. So our brilliant teacher, Sue, is obviously doing a great job in continuing to help us with our toning and balancing. Our aim is, of course, for us all to be fit and supple for our Christmas party on December 19th.

Play Reading

Claire Paterson & Linda Hepworth



It was good to meet up again after the summer. We had planned to read *Beyond a Joke* by Derek Benfield but due to delivery changes at the library, our order did not arrive in time for our September meeting. One of our members came to the rescue with a play-set tucked away in her loft: *Tons of Money* by Will Evans and Arthur Valentine. It is the story of an unsuccessful inventor who inherits the life interest in a fortune, which is to revert on his death to his cousin George. As cousin George is thought to have died abroad, the hard-up inventor pretends to be his cousin in order to escape the clutches of his creditors: A farce which, needless to say, ends with the revelation that in fact there is no legacy to be had as the money has been annexed by the Mexicans due to cousin George's nefarious activities in that country.

We read *Beyond A Joke* at our October meeting: A comedy, which we all agreed was a very good read, even without the staging:

(cont.)

Jane and Andrew's pleasant country house is accident-prone. Six people have already died there in unfortunate and embarrassing accidents. When daughter Sally's young man Geoff arrives for the weekend unaware of the house's reputation, he mistakenly deduces from conversational confusion that the deaths were due to sinister circumstances. A body is discovered in the cupboard and a visiting vicar passes peacefully away in the garden just as Geoff's parents call unexpectedly. Hilarious attempts are made by the family to hide the bodies, almost convincing Geoff that nothing is amiss, though he is blissfully unaware that one of the bodies has been mistakenly stowed in the boot of his parent's car!

We read another Benfield comedy in November, *A Bird in the Hand*: When Sylvia returns only 24 hours after walking out, her husband Max isn't exactly overjoyed. The question is why?

Poetry

Christine Ogborne

We continue to meet on the fourth Thursday of every month and enjoy reading and discussing a variety of poetry. In September we returned to look again at winners of the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, an award no doubt to be re-launched as the King's Gold Medal, and we read poems by Douglas Dunn, U A Fanthorpe, Simon Armitage and Judith Wright.

October found us researching poetry on the theme of 'Greetings and Farewells', a subject which produced far more farewell poems than greetings! For our meeting in November we chose any poem published in the book *Poem For The Day*, which gave us a very wide choice.

Future meetings will be:

December: Christmas and Limericks
January: The Romantic Poets
February: Charles Causley

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

Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



Another interesting period for the Railways Group: After our annual August holiday we extended that through September and restarted our talks in October.

October 21st: Graham Yellowley: *Durango & Silverton Railroad*. This was in place of the scheduled speaker who had advised us a while ago of a clash in his schedule. Graham presented a talk on the Durango and Silverton Railroad, which he rode upon the month before. Both towns are in Colorado, USA and were linked by the railroad to bring gold and silver from the Silverton mines down the Animas River Canyon.

This was followed by a short video from Keith Hoffmeister of the driver's view from the cab for the train ride between Amersham and Aylesbury and we followed this up with a DVD of the train service from Cologne down the Rhine: looks like a very good alternative to driving the route.

November 18th: Christian Wolmar: *Crossrail*. The intrepid journalist Christian Wolmar took us on the Crossrail journey, starting with the early identified issues going East/West through London (the River Thames gets in the way) through to the laboured start to the Crossrail Programme, the political bridges it had to cross and then through the build phase to completion, and an understanding of the reasons behind the delays (initially due to go live in 2018, it actually went live in 2021). We all felt very well informed after Christian's talk and there was quite a demand for his books.

We have an excellent Programme going through to June 2023 at present, and the next few months look like this:

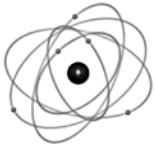
December 16th 2022: *The Abingdon Branch Railway*: Ivan Cadge
2023

January 20th: *Slough & Windsor Railway*: John Coke

February 17th: Visit to the Postal Museum: Graham Yellowley

March 17th: *A Life on the Tube*: 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.



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

December 19 Science and Technology Quiz with drinks and mince pies.

January 16 Meeting about the Schedule for 2023, with video.

February 20 Colin O'Rourke: *Time Measurement through the Ages*.

Meetings are on the third Monday of the month at 2pm at Amersham Free Church. Anyone interested is free to attend.

Singing for Pleasure

Stephanie Rothwell & Angela Bratton



The choir is well and truly in Christmas mode and is busy rehearsing for our end of term concert on 12th December. This will comprise a mix of traditional Christmas pieces (some with a twist!) and a selection of our usual secular repertoire. A final decision on the contents of the programme is yet to be made.

We welcomed new members to the Group this term and are particularly pleased to see the bass section grow in numbers. However, our poor tenors are now a little depleted and would be delighted if more would join them.

Now that we have moved into a larger room at Amersham Free Church, we are able to accommodate more members. If you are interested, then please contact one of the Convenors. All details of the choir are on the CVu3a Singing for Pleasure webpage.

Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



We have enjoyed a year with much travelling so have had plenty to talk about, as well as our usual chat, sharing our daily lives. Sorry, still no space for new members.

Stamps

Brian Feakes



The Stamps Group has not met in the last few months. We have a meeting planned for the 28th November, to be on the Postal History of Somerset and Bath.

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton



There are many styles of Tai Chi and we are very lucky to be studying under Grand Master Peter Warr who has been teaching for more than 30 years. One of his various achievements is that he is President of The British Council for Chinese Martial Arts.

We haven't progressed to the Martial Arts Style or the Sword Style yet. We learn the western Yang style Taijiquan, which was introduced to the western world in the early 1900's. The practice of Taijiquan is not to meet force with force, but to recognise that softness is stronger than hardness and flexibility overcomes strength.

We have a full class and due to the many complicated moves involved, we are unable to accept new members unless you have a good basic knowledge of Yang Style Tai Chi.

"Your quality of life is not based on standards such as time or ranking, but on finally awakening to an awareness of the fluidity within action itself."

(Haruki Murakami)

Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



Our trip to the West End for the musical *Come From Away* sadly did not take place due to a poor sign-up. We aim to return to Sonning for the old favourite *Top Hat*, in late November. We are looking for suggestions from our members for further trips. New members are very welcome and we simply add you to the Group mailing list. There are no other obligations. Enquiries to: theatre@cvu3a.uk

Ukulele

Jeff Naman & Heather Sprake



The Ukulele Group continue to meet up on a fortnightly basis at the Methodist Church in Chesham, Tuesdays 2.30 - 4.00pm. We have a large portfolio of favourite songs from the far and not so distant past which we continue to enjoy playing, along with new songs suggested by members at meetings, allowing us to practice various strumming techniques. If you wish to find out more about our Ukulele Group, beginners welcome, please contact me for a chat.

Jeff Naman 07976 633798

Walking Groups

Walking Groups are now fully active, though still mindful of the current pandemic situation. Individuals from the Groups are also walking individually to scout new routes.

Amblers (3 - 4 miles)

Sue Osborne

The Amblers walk in October followed Amersham Museum's 'Tudor Trail'. Many of the buildings in the High Street have had new brick façades but, by looking through the entrances of former coaching inns, you can see the timber frames. Turning back from Sibley's Mill, we turned south up Cherry Lane, a drovers road, and from there east along the edge of the great fields that lie to the south of the valley. We exited through the courtyard of 'The Crown' into the Market Square. We were lucky to find the church open and then followed the Misbourne east until we turned north up the hill. It is quite a steep climb but from halfway up there are views across the valley to the great fields, the church, the market building, Shardeloes and the Tithe Barn.

We visited the martyrs' memorial and then walked down to the Misbourne and on to the hamlet of Bury End where the Lollards were held the night before they were burnt. Amblers has the millstream passing through the ground floor, which is visible through glass. Our final turn back to the town passed The Bury and Bury Farm Cottages where the Lollards held their conventicles. We were lucky to have a fine dry day, which meant we had great views from both sides of the valley.

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

The Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesdays 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 are published every three months. Members advise the leaders if they wish to participate.

In the last quarter of 2022 we are holding walks in Croxley Green, Henley, Wendover, Wigginton and two locations yet to be announced.

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

Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

As this is the last newsletter of the year I would like to thank everyone who has volunteered to lead the walks, sometimes filling in at the last minute.

(cont.)

The last three months have seen us walking near Rickmansworth and along the canal at Wendover. Our November walk was from Fulmer and the Black Park Country Park: A varied and well thought out variety of walks. Our December walk will be a joint one with Walkers 3 on the first Wednesday.

Our walks are normally five to seven miles long and take place on the fourth Thursday of the month. New members are always welcome, but please contact the Convenor first.

Walkers 3

Jane Towers

September's walk was about five and a half miles and led by Yvonne and John Small. We walked round the Spade Oak Nature Reserve, turning towards Marlow, passing along the edge of Marlow Rugby Club and arrived on the Thames Path, which led back to our cars. It was an easy walk with no stiles.

Our walk in October was a familiar one: Meeting at Gilbey's restaurant, walking up to Coleshill, east on top of the ridge and then back down into Old Amersham. The walk was about six miles and led by John Bratton.

November's was nearly cancelled as it was the only month that nobody had volunteered to lead, but a small select bunch of us walked over the railway bridge next to Jewsons in Amersham, through the woods to Amersham Common, along Finch Lane and over the fields to the back of Amersham College. I have absolutely no idea how long the walk was but it took just over 2 hours.

The dates for walks next year have been circulated to members and volunteers to lead them have been requested. To date, all walks from 7th June till the end of the year are still available to lead.

Walkers 3 meet on the first Wednesday of each month and, as with the other Walking Groups, each walk averages about six miles. We are sometimes joined by members of Walkers 1 and 2 and are, in turn, able to join them if numbers permit.

Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



The last three months have seen huge variations in walking conditions for Striders: from intense heat in August to torrential downpours and even hailstones in October/November, sometimes all in the same morning. For the first time that the writer can recall a walk was cancelled because of the intense heat; others have taken place in very wet conditions for shorter distances than originally planned or with fewer walkers than normal. But, with due credit to our volunteer leaders (without whom Striders could not function), we are flexible

enough to accommodate most eventualities that circumstances and weather conditions throw at us. Perhaps we should now look forward to the challenge of a walk in deep snow! Elsewhere in this newsletter you may well find photographic evidence of a recent walk.

As we head toward Christmas, our attention has turned to organising the traditional Joint Striders' Walk and Lunch on the sixth of December. Circumstances have caused the organising group to change our previous venue and lunch arrangements, but we are expecting a good turnout from Striders for a circular walk from Prestwood, followed by an indoor picnic lunch, entertainment provided by our resident minstrel Nigel Hughes, and a raffle organised by the indefatigable Jeremy Wyman. As a further departure from our norm, the proceeds of the event this year will go to providing walking equipment and clothing for children from the Chiltern Hills Academy in Chesham doing the expeditions part of the Duke of Edinburgh award. We often pass these determined youngsters during our walks at various times of the year and in varying walking conditions, exchanging friendly greetings with them. We are keen to encourage their involvement in this wonderful scheme.

During our December event we will recognise in our traditional way those walkers in both Groups who will receive the accolade of Champion Walker 2022. In addition, we will announce just how many miles Striders have walked during the calendar year 2022: last time we notionally reached from Amersham to the equivalent of Brazzaville; but where will we have reached this time?

That apart, our voluntary contributions on our regular walks of £1 each have now generated £500, enough to purchase two gates to replace old and often decrepit stiles in the Chilterns: so look out for our plaques when you are out walking your dogs!

(cont.)

Both Striders Groups are continuing to grow with new members joining. But there is always space on our lists for more members to join us. If you would like to join one or other of our Groups, please contact either Andrew Brown (Striders 1 Convenor) or Ian Lee (Striders 2 Convenor). Striders 2 walk on the first and third Tuesdays of every month, and Striders 1 on the second and fourth Tuesdays.

Walks into History: Country

Tony Biddle & Peter Schweiger

Sarratt Village in November



On a sunny morning on the ninth of November, the Walks into History Group met at 'The Boot' in Sarratt for coffees in the front room, next to the wood-burning stove. Val Littlejohn then briefed us on the village. We started along the green to what had been the old 'Wheatsheaf Inn', now private houses.

'PIIDLE': Not a strange postcode, but an interesting car number plate that we noticed en-route. Then we met a local resident who was kind enough to take a Group photo of us all around a unique flint-housed Victorian post box. At Dawes Lane, we came across an old cart. Two wheels classify it as a cart. Four wheels would have made it a carriage: Information provided by Jim Olney. On from here to 'The Cricketers' where Brian Harding's friend's mother had been born 100 years ago!

Returning to 'The Boot Inn', we took our cars to 'The Cock Inn' where we ordered lunches, before taking a final walk around the graveyard and notably old church.

Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell



Apparitions, Alleyways and Ale

In keeping with the Halloween festivities that now mark the month of October, the month's London walk took on a ghostly mantle with dark and spooky narrow passages, or they would have been if we had taken this guided walk at night as it was designed to be. Being ladies and gents of a certain age from Buckinghamshire, we opted for the safer option of a bright, sunny autumn morning starting from the Embankment tube station. We also missed out on the Ale part of the walk, as it was too unseemly to be frequenting the pubs so early in the day.

First stop: York Place where the Thames in a former unfettered life used to lap the Watergate and the doorstep of Lord Buckingham. This time we focused on No.12, former home of Samuel Pepys who discovered one night that if he looked straight ahead from his bedroom, he could get a reflection from the window of the Buckingham household opposite, of his next door neighbour's naked female form standing in her upstairs window.

But, if you want to see ghosts, you go to the theatre, and next we stood in the very narrow passageway of 'The Bull Inn' abutting the Adelphi Theatre, scene of many swashbuckling dramas. Here in 1897, in the alleyway, disgruntled actor Richard Arthur Prince stabbed the stage manager William Terriss to death, his ghost appearing ever since there and in the dressing rooms. Prince consequently spent 40 years in Broadmoor. On to the Coliseum, a 2000 seat theatre built in 1905 where in 1917 a soldier on leave took a seat in the second row, and continued to do so many times even though he had returned to France and died in action. At the Garrick Theatre, in 1895, seat D3 in the upper circle was found to be mysteriously wet. Soon a body washed up in the Thames, of a woman with a ticket for seat D3 in her pocket. The Haymarket Theatre, St Martin's Crypt and the National Gallery also had gruesome stories to tell: too many to mention.

By contrast, we paused at the only Nazi grave in Britain right in the heart of British Government and royal residences, just above the Mall. To be found there is the tiny grave of Giro, the pet terrier of the German Ambassador, Leopold Hoesch. They lived a few yards down in the German embassy where, in 1932, Giro chewed through a cable in the back garden and was electrocuted.

(cont.)

We ended up in St James's Park, former plague pit and leper colony where, if you stand on the bridge over the lake, you might find body parts floating by of an officer's wife from the nearby barracks. He killed her, leaving her head in the barracks and the body in the canal. Even now she can be seen sailing past, trying to reunite the two.

The final word goes to Queen Anne and her statue at QA Gate. On August 1st, the anniversary of her death, she climbs down from her plinth, does three laps of the square and silently climbs back up for another year. Believe it if you will!!

Angela Shipley

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



Autumn is here, but the wildlife and flora are confused over daytime temperatures. Following on from a field visit to Hockeridge and Pancake woods, we have taken shelter in Amersham Common Village Hall and been entertained by talks on badgers and chalk streams, in October and November respectively.

Badgers are not so elusive if you know where to find them and our speaker showed us clear evidence of their whereabouts in this locality. Sometimes maligned over the infection risk of TB to cattle, we were informed that no TB has ever been found in badgers sent to Tiggywinkles for recovery from their injuries: so there is a thought!

Our November speaker brought us up-to-date on achievements within the Chiltern Chalk Stream Project. This is a partnership between national, local and voluntary organisations to preserve and restore chalk streams in the Chilterns. It was pointed out that rivers are not just a navigational aid to get from A to B, but are critical to the local ecology.

December is a month for reflection and will be spent reviewing our activities in 2022 whilst planning our programme for 2023. Our first speaker in the New Year will be John Tyler who is well known to the Group. He will give us an insight to the construction and architecture of homes for different species. Who knows, we may get ideas on 'feathering our own nests' to minimise energy expenditure.

If you are interested in wildlife issues, why don't you give us a try? You won't be alone as the membership stands at about eighty.

Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



A raucous August meeting had South Africa as its focus and we started with a Graham Beck sparkling wine called *The Joshua*, made from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir at 12%. This was followed by *Porcupine Ridge*, pale with a copper hue at 12.5% from Franschoek, via Waitrose. Waitrose's own Chenin Blanc from Stellenbosch weighed in at 13% and £8 and the whites were concluded with a Chardonnay from Stellenbosch via Sainsbury's, also at 13%.

Moving on to the reds, we sampled a *Swartland Shiraz* from the Western Cape, which was spicy and peppery and 14%, available from Tesco at £8. We concluded with a *Bellingham Pinotage 2019* from Franschoek also 14% and from Tesco at £9.99.

In September, the theme was Burgundy and this brought forth some memorable wines. We started with a Cremant de Bourgogne: *Bailly Lapierre Reserve Brut*, 12%, which was hard to distinguish from Champagne. This was followed by a very disappointing Chablis: *Moillard* from Yonne in Northern Burgundy, made from Chardonnay grapes. Fortunately this was closely followed by another Chablis of a different ilk: *Louis Jadot*, a Premier Cru from Tesco reduced from £25 to £18.75. This tasted of apples and pears and was highly rated. Then there was a *Macon Lugny Chardonnay* at £14, which was held to have too much tannin and a *Les Charmes Chardonnay* from Waitrose at 13% that was superior.

The reds were represented by a *Beaune de Chateau Domaine Bouchard Pere et Fils* from the Cote d'Or. This was made from Pinot Noir grapes at 13%. Finally we had a *Louis Latour Gamay 2020* from one of the biggest names in Burgundy, founded in 1797 and family owned for 11 generations, available at Majestic for £17 or £12 at Tesco. It pays to shop around!

In October we ventured into antipodean wines, starting with *Oyster Bay Sparkling Chardonnay* from New Zealand. White wines started with a *Burfield Chardonnay* at 13% from South East Australia. (cont.)

The Chardonnay theme continued with *Two in the Bush* from Adelaide, 12.5%, reduced from £14 to £11.50 at Tesco. In contrast there was a *Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc*, 12% from New Zealand. Apparently 70% of the wines produced in New Zealand are Sauvignon Blanc!

We concluded with two red wines: The first was *Vasse Felix Classic Shiraz*, 14%, from Margaret River's founding wine estate in Western Australia, established in 1967. This fine wine was reduced in Tesco from £14 to £12 and then to £7.50 if you bought six. The last wine was a Wynn's Cabernet Sauvignon called *The Sidings*, 13.7%, from South Australia via Tesco at £15 less 25%.

Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchener



Our September meeting was hosted by Muriel and Alan, who had selected quirkily named wines from South Africa. The top white was a fruity Viognier called *Men in White Coats!* The red that topped the votes was one of my particular favourite grapes, the indigenous Pinotage. It's called *Barista*, as the winemaker is renowned for bringing out the coffee aromas from that grape. Apparently it goes well with bangers and mash!

October's host, Jan, showed us all an eclectic group of wines with a 'Lighten Up' theme for the whites and the reds topic was 'Well-known with Wow Factor'. The wow didn't seem to work as well for our Group and the winner was something of a surprise therefore, as it was a Riesling from Sainsbury's called *Riesling Qualitätswein Rheinhessen* (just rolls off the tongue easily!) and a bargain at just £5.25, with 9% alcohol content.

November's host, Robert, showed us six different 'Home and Away' wines. Unfortunately, the English wines didn't fare too well with our members and the winning wine was *19 Crimes*, which is an Australian blend of Shiraz and Grenache.

We are now looking forward to our Xmas bash with Portuguese wines and festive goodies.

Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Sales of Peter's book, *All Ways Walk Cheerfully* are going well. Our small Group has continued to meet successfully, holiday commitments notwithstanding. The selected topics have been: 'The Child Who Was Left Out', 'Life Decisions' and the timely subject, 'Succession'. Our December topic will be 'In My Opinion'.

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at the Quaker House in Amersham at 2.30pm. We are looking to expand the Group and will warmly welcome new members. Please contact a Convenor.

"And numerous indeed are the hearts to which Christmas brings a brief season of happiness and enjoyment. How many families, whose members have been dispersed and scattered far and wide, in the restless struggles of life, are then reunited, and meet once again in that happy state of companionship and mutual goodwill, which is a source of such pure and unalloyed delight: Civilised nations, and the rude traditions of the roughest savages, alike number it among the first joys of a future condition of existence, provided for the blessed and happy! How many old recollections, and how many dormant sympathies, does Christmas time awaken!"

(Charles Dickens: The Pickwick Papers)

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	James Cadle
Data projector 2 (Optoma)	Ian Hutt	07889 732291
Laptop computer (Windows 10, Office 2016)	James Cadle	chair@cvu3a.uk
Companion speakers for laptop		Ian Hutt
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	Keith Hoffmeister
Easels x 3		01494 766990
Portable PA systems		
PAT-tested 6-gang 2-metre extension leads (x 2)	David Hurd	David Hurd
PAT-tested 4-gang 5-metre extension lead		digimaging@cvu3a.uk
PAT-tested 4-gang 8-metre extension lead		
Rubber mats to protect extension leads (x 2)		

Mini quiz

- Art:** What was the principal field in which Dame Barbara Hepworth worked?
Which famous painting by Frans Hals is in the Wallace Collection in London?
- Geography:** Which British mountain has recently been re-named as Yr Wyddfa?
The Arches, Canyonlands and Bryce Canyon are national parks in which US state?
- Music:** Whose 9th Symphony is known as 'The Great C Major'?
Lots of artists have produced versions of the song *Hallelujah*, but who originally wrote it?
- History:** Who was Prime Minister at the time of the abdication of King Edward VIII?
The Monument, in London, records the start of what event?
- Literature:** *Birdsong* is a 1993 novel by which author?
Michael Henchard is the principal character of which novel of 1886?
- Science:** What process is used by plants to convert light energy into chemical compounds?
The modern version of what scientific instrument is generally attributed to Antonie van Leeuwenhoek?
- Sport** Which female player has won the most titles at Wimbledon?
In which sport is the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern calculator used to decide the result of a game truncated by rain?

(Answers next time and in the December e-bulletin.)

Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

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

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

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

Right: In September, members of Walks into History: Country visited Waltham Abbey, through which the Greenwich Meridian runs. Not Father Time spanning the divide, but the walk guide.

Below and bottom left: In October, Amblers walked around Amersham, taking in some great views before visiting the Lollard Martyrs' memorial.

Bottom right: A seasonal pumpkin study recently painted by Art Group member Lesley Bennett.





The Art Group have been creating some magnificent work:

The Pear in Acrylics was worked up by Jan Grey on a theme of 'Autumn'. The Degas ballerina study and amazing fantasy mountainscape are by Angela Spittle.

