

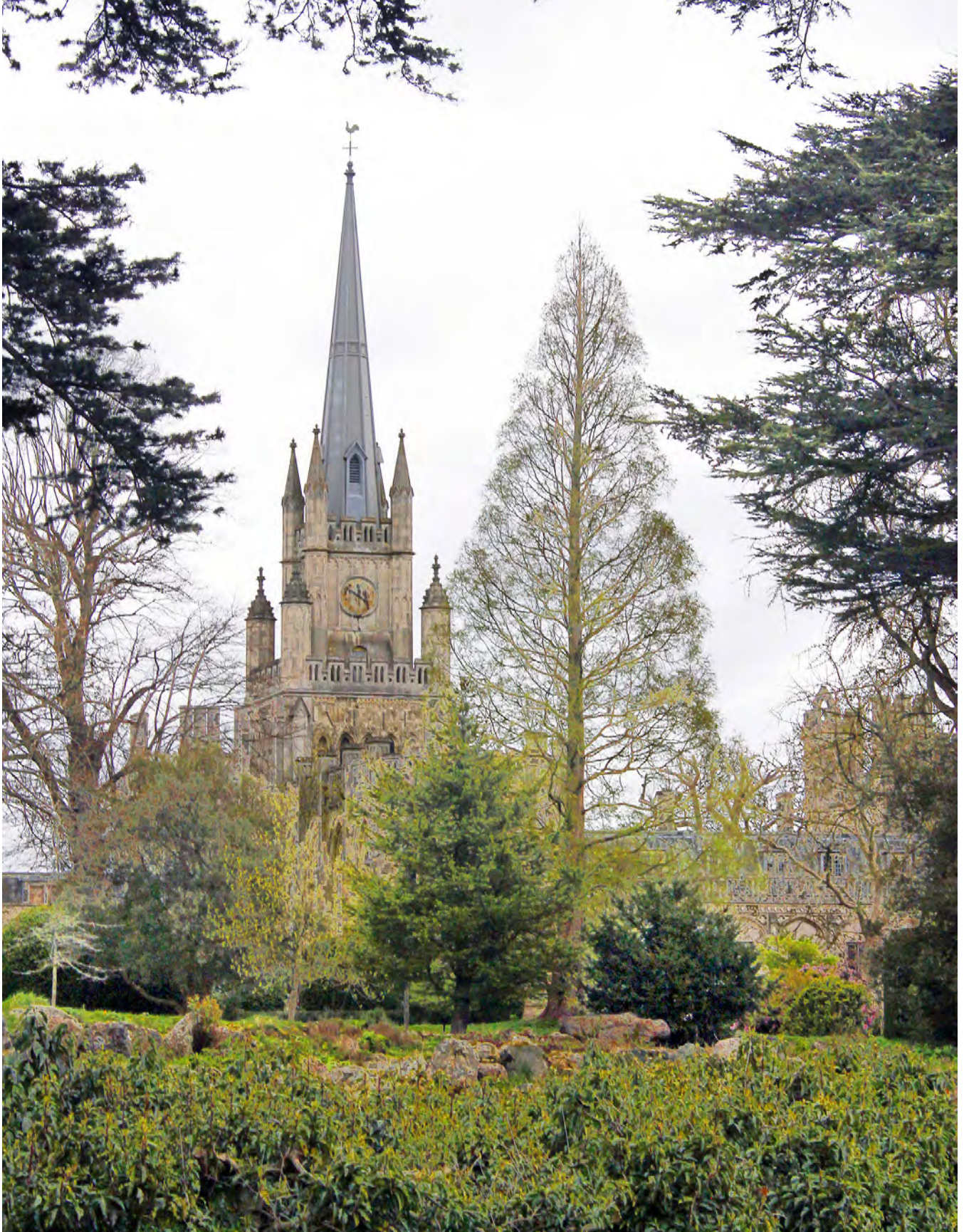
u3a
Chess Valley

Registered Charity 1126990

NEWSLETTER

June - August 2024

website: www.cvu3a.uk



Front Cover: The Chapel at Ashridge House (now the Management College) was captured in this picture by David Hurd on a recent field trip, where the Photography Group were joined by Digital Imaging. From June, the two Groups are combining.



Top left: A sunny morning for Striders at Wilstone Reservoir near Tring, in April.

Top: The Walks Into History Country Group with the famous 'Banksy' at Reading Prison, depicting the 1979 jail breakout.

Left: The magnificent Painted Hall at Greenwich Royal Hospital dwarfs our members, on their visit during April.

Above: Walkers 3 find themselves amongst bluebells at Little Missenden during their walk in May.

Speakers for monthly talks

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



Jem Duducu

Thursday 13th June

History of the Ottoman Empire from 1299 to 1922

Jem Duducu has loved history for as long as he can remember. He read Archaeology and Medieval History at Cardiff University and is the author of several history books from the *100 Facts* series for Amberley along with *Deus Vult* and *The Sultans*. Jem charts the rise and fall of the Ottoman dynasty, from the forgotten Sultan Murad IV to the most famous rulers such as Suleiman the Magnificent. Jem covers world-changing events such as the fall of Constantinople.

Nick Cook

Thursday 11th July

Baked Alaska or Mexican Chilly

Nick was a research scientist and health and safety consultant with Kodak. His talk delves into climate change, and what it does to the weather. The title refers to a July day in 2019 when Alaska was hot and Mexico cold. Also included is the fascinating history, science and politics of climate change, as well as what climate change does to the weather

Don Mobley

Thursday 8th August

Supersonic Travel, Past and Future

Don was brought up in Colorado and his father, a retired US Air Force fighter pilot, taught him to fly aged 12! He also flew in the USAF, from RAF Lakenheath, as well as for American Airlines, and he has now retired to Suffolk, where he is very active in u3a and leads a national Zoom Aviation Group. Don's talk reviews the Concorde flight programme, including its fatal accident in Paris in July 2000, and looks at the possible next generation of supersonic planes being developed.

Lucy Moore

Thursday 12th September

Maharanis: The Tale of Four Indian Queens & their Journey from Purdah to Parliament

Lucy was educated in the UK and USA before studying History at Edinburgh University and was voted one of the top twenty young writers in Britain in 2001. She is a Fellow of The Royal Literary Fund and, as well as being a prolific author, she has presented several series on Sky, BBC, Channel 4 and PBS. Lucy's talk paints a portrait of the rare and exotic matriarchs of a brilliant Indian family, recreating events from the final days of the Raj and the British Empire to present day India, through the sumptuous and audacious lives of four ravishing and influential women.



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

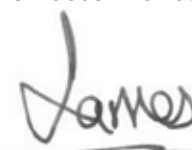


Notes from the Chair

I am writing this at the end of May when, I suspect like others, I am still waiting for the summer to put in an appearance. We have had the tantalising odd day of decent weather and then the rain comes back again. I note that our Gardening and Walking Groups have all made reference to the challenge of mud and rain in recent months. Has anyone started taking bets I wonder on whether we will have a hosepipe ban later in the year?

I need to remind you that we have our 16th Annual General Meeting on Thursday 13th June, starting at 2pm in the Broadway Baptist Church in Chesham. We need around 60 members present to have quorum so please come along and contribute to the running of our u3a. I promise to dispatch the business as quickly as I can so we can then listen to what should be an excellent talk on the Ottoman Empire from Jem Duducu.

With best wishes



James Cadle
chair@cvu3a.uk

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Heather Adams	<i>Chesham</i>	Christopher Longhurst	<i>Chesham</i>
Chris Carleton-Smith	<i>Great Missenden</i>	Roderick McCulloch	<i>Chesham</i>
Patrick Dunphy	<i>Chesham</i>	Martyn Read	<i>Hyde Heath</i>
Christopher Hailey	<i>Chesham</i>	Linda Walker	<i>Chesham</i>
Philippa Joyce	<i>Little Chalfont</i>	Rosamund Warren	<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 Garrod	webmaster@cvu3a.uk	01494 433585
Newsletter Editors	John Bunyan	newsletter@cvu3a.uk	01494 778858
	James Cadle		07889 732291
Speaker Organisers	Michael Cohn*	speakers@cvu3a.uk	01494 763542
	Peter Windsor		07595 776473
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb	eventscoord@cvu3a.uk	01494 773718
* indicates a non-voting member			

From the Groups Coordinator

We have an amalgamation of the Photography and Digital Imaging Groups and the Family History Group is sadly closing after 15 years. Otherwise, I have no changes to report.

If you have an idea for a new group please do let me know and I will see what I can do to get it started.

Finally if you have a change of address, phone number or email address, please update it on the Simple Membership system and, as ever, if you have any queries on this please let me know.

Helen Barnard
Groups Coordinator
groups@cvu3a.uk

From the Events Team

Visit to Hatfield House Friday 14th June 2024

There are still some places available on this visit. The cost is £48 per person, which includes the coach travel, tea and coffee and guided tours of Hatfield House and the Old Palace.

For more details, contact alan.gray177@ntlworld.com.

Alan Gray

Rochester Kent (early September)

I am trying to organise a visit to Rochester in Kent. The High Street is full of interesting buildings such as the Cathedral and the remnants of a castle. At Eastgate House, in the gardens, stands Dickens' Swiss Chalet used by the author as his study at his home at Gads Hill where he wrote many of his books. There are also the Guildhall with its museum, a Huguenot hospital and museum and the Six Poor Travellers' House, to name but a few. There are so many historic buildings in the High Street that it is impossible to see all of them in one visit, but a day trip will give us a taster of what is on offer. Then perhaps you will return another day to see what you missed.

Should you be interested and able to go in early September, please register your interest to me using eventscoord@cvu3a.uk.

Jackie Cobb

South Portal of HS2, Friday 4th October 2024

We have arranged a visit to the South Portal, Colne Valley Viaduct, and the surrounding area of the HS2 site in West Hyde, WD3 9XN, just off the M25.

This is a two-hour guided tour in a minibus (12 passengers) organised by HS2, and is free!

The date is Friday 4th October; one tour is at 09.30 and the other is 13.30.

As we need to give names well in advance, please advise if you would like to come and which tour you prefer.

Further details regarding parking etc. will follow.

As we only have 12 tickets per tour, they will be allocated strictly on a first come, first served basis.

Please email to events@cvu3a.uk.

Michael Cohn

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd August 2024

Visit to Greenwich, Tuesday 16th April 2024

Despite storm damage on local roads, the start of the new school term, and inclement weather, 44 members including five from Chiltern u3a set off from Chesham and Amersham on time and, after a somewhat chaotic coffee stop at a local hotel, were met by our three Blue Badge Guides who led us to St Alfege, the first London Church designed by Nicolas Hawksmoor, and the local covered market. Pausing to give a brief history of the 18th century tea clipper *Cutty Sark*, we then proceeded to the Old Royal Naval College, the heart of old Greenwich.

Founded over 300 years ago as a Royal Hospital for Seamen by King William III and Queen Mary II, and designed by two of Britain's leading architects, Christopher Wren and Nicolas Hawksmoor, the College served several functions and from 1869 to 1997 was a training base for naval cadets; one of our members remembers his time there.

The College has recently been beautifully restored, and our highlights were the visit to the Chapel and the Painted Hall, decorated by James Thornhill and completed in 1726.

After a lunch break, the guides continued the tour across the road to the National Maritime Museum where we were given a brief whistle-stop tour of some of the highlights including the fascinating Nelson Room where we saw the tunic worn by the naval hero at Trafalgar, including the hole made by the fatal bullet. This is definitely a museum to be revisited at leisure

Next, we took a short walk along what was once the main public road from London to Dover, which brought us to the Queen's House, designed by Inigo Jones and built for Queen Anne of Denmark who unfortunately died before its completion in 1635.

Today, the Queen's House is one of the finest museums of naval and nautical art, including several royal and historical portraits. One in particular we studied was the famous Drake Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I which, at one stage in its history, adorned the walls of Shardeloes in Amersham when in the ownership of the Tyrwhitt-Drakes. The variety and quality of the nautical paintings was remarkable, as was the architecture of the building, especially the famous Tulip Staircase, which was the first spiral self-supporting staircase in the world, and the reception hall.

Our excellent guides Wendy, Brenda and Nigel then returned us all in good time to take our leave of Greenwich, and a weary group boarded the coach after a very interesting and enjoyable day.

Michael Cohn

Living in a vacuum

We seem to live in an age where "what isn't" is more important than "what is". This was neatly summed up by John Betjeman's lament about restored buildings:

"The Church's restoration of 1883
Has left for contemplation not what there used to be".

So, it's been a feature of life for some time, notably with every politician and their journalist wannabees who have always homed in on the sizzle and not the steak.

More recently, the world of smoke and mirrors has spread to the world of the usually mis-titled "Reality TV" and, improbably, to gardening where television programmes are broadcast from a fantasy world where garden soil is so friable that it resembles quicksand as forks disappear into it so effortlessly that it's surprising Monty's dogs don't sink out of sight.

(continues overleaf)

Television also offers us travel programmes usually hosted by a celebrity (nowadays defined as someone known by just one other person) who are often shown in some perilous location and importantly, alone. That is, apart from the sound, light and camera folk plus the producer, editor, continuity and make-up person and whoever else makes up the full crew and already in situ to film his or her survival.

Another lacuna is comedy with attitude but no humour. "Wokeness" plays its full part in this, but comedy is usually and usefully defined as "amusing entertainment" as distinct from unfunny rant. A recent example of what there isn't, is work attendance. This appears to be a post-COVID pandemic among many institutions, including the Civil Service, but doesn't yet extend to emergency and military services or airline pilots, where working from home might prove a tad more difficult.

And finally, the gift that keeps on giving. The good folk who make road signs have their own contribution to the un-present with the intriguing "Some of our workforce is out of sight". But this and many of the more incomprehensible signs such as a direction to "Secret Nuclear Bunker" are not mentioned in the D of T's comprehensive 172-page publication "Know your Traffic signs". Well, some of them anyway.

'Timewaster'

Chess Valley u3a equipment

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

Equipment	Custodian	Contact details
Data projector 1 (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
Portable PA systems	James Cadle	See above
Projection screen 2 (6 ft)	Ian Hutt	See above
Pinboards x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	Keith Hoffmeister 01494 766990
Easels x 3		
PAT-tested 6-gang 2-metre extension leads (x 2)	David Hurd	David Hurd photography@cvu3a.uk
PAT-tested 4-gang 5-metre extension lead		
PAT-tested 4-gang 8-metre extension lead		
Rubber mats to protect extension leads (x 2)		

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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	bookgroup1@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 2	Alison Pullinger	bookgroup2@cvu3a.uk
	Sarah Organ	
	Georgina Mead	
Book Group 3	Eileen Overton	bookgroup3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 4	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup4@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Short Mat), (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
Dinghy Sailing	Wendy Barnes	sailing@cvu3a.uk
	Judith Young	
French Conversation	Morag Robertson	frenchcons@cvu3a.uk
French Intermediate	Hilary Alleston	french@cvu3a.uk
Fun Quizzes	James Cadle	quizzes@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
MOTO 2	Rodney Newth	moto2@cvu3a.uk
Music Appreciation	Geoff Hayes	music@cvu3a.uk
	Colin O'Rourke	

(continues on next page)

Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
Patchwork & Quilting	Angela Bratton	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Dee Watson	
Photography with Digital Imaging	David Hurd	photography@cvu3a.uk
	Pippa Greensmith	
Pilates (1, 2 and 3)	Christine Ross	pilates@cvu3a.uk
	Liz Howlett	
Play Reading	Joan Barton	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	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	Catherine Haridi	walkers3@cvu3a.uk
	Jill Thomas	
Striders 1	Andrew Brown	striders@cvu3a.uk
Striders 2	Ian Lee	striders2@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

Our Groups all meet 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 to the building. Also, make sure you know where the fire exits are.

Art

Angela Spittle & Janice Gray



Our Group continued to enjoy finishing facial features, progressing to full portraits. We had a couple of 'free choice' sessions for everyone to choose what they worked on. This was followed by some attempts at 'abstract', which can be interpreted in many ways and with varying effects using different mediums!

Moving forward, and depending on the weather, we will explore 'en plein air'! Sometimes we feel the need to go back to basics and learn techniques with different tools, shapes and sizes of brush!

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



In March, our subject was Marcel Duchamp and the Dadaists. It proved to be a challenging subject where our individual perceptions of art were aired. The Dadaists were an anti-art movement, which grew up in Germany just after the First World War. It flourished across Europe and had a profound influence upon the art that followed in the '20s. We looked at a work by Man Ray entitled *Ingres's Violin*, a black and white photograph of the back of a woman. We puzzled at the symbolism of Max Ernst's painting from 1913, *Immortality*. We

studied a collage by Raoul Hausmann, entitled *Art Critic*, with its besuited individual, his barbed eyes and mouth. Two members chose women artists associated with the movement: Briton Laura Carrington, and the multi-talented Swiss artist Sophie Taeuber Arp, whose work encompassed textile design, puppetry and painting.

Our April meeting featured North American artists from around the turn of the 20th century. It proved an enormous subject with several previously unknown artists emerging, and a wide variety of artistic techniques. We were introduced to the subject by two figurative artists, George Bellows from New York and Thomas Eakins from Philadelphia, with scenes and people from their individual cities. One member introduced us to Florine Stettheimer and her surreal self-portrait. She was a contemporary of Georgia O'Keefe, a prolific artist during her long life, and we looked at her surreal depiction of New York, entitled *New York Street with Moon*, rather than her widely known images of flowers. Our meeting would not have been complete without Edward Hopper and his enigmatic images of American life.

In May, we had an outing to Compton Verney in Warwickshire. It proved a most enjoyable day, taking in the exquisite setting of the old mansion lovingly restored by the John Moores Charitable Foundation. We visited *A Spirit Inside*, an exhibition celebrating over 100 years of works by women and non-binary artists. In another gallery was the exhibition *Landscape and Imagination: From Gardens to Land Art*, a gentle collection of works ranging from grand 17th century gardens to contemporary land art. When the showers cleared we were able to walk around the sculptures in the grounds, the highlight of which was *Spider*, the iconic work of Louise Bourgeois. We ended the visit at a most welcoming café and shop.

Future subjects will be Tracey Emin, Bridget Riley and Abstract Expressionism.

"If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you."

"Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else."

(quora.com)



Our March meeting was on Fashion and Textiles: how artists were able to accurately represent the textures of fabric, and how fashions changed through time. Our earliest example was the famous *Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck painted in 1434, showing a lavishly outfitted man and wife dressed in enormous quantities of fine woollen fur-lined fabrics, rather outmoded for the 15th century Low Countries, where the conspicuous use of fabric was considered wasteful. In other words, the Arnolfinis were showing off! Elizabeth I was also showing off in her fabulous *Rainbow Portrait* by Marcus Gheeraerts (1602). In this portrait, which is filled with symbolism, she looks every inch a monarch, dressed in enormous amounts of brocade, silk, gossamer-like lace and draped in pearls. She stares out at the viewer, looking radiant, considering she was almost 70 years old at the time of the painting. Hyacinthe Rigault's *Portrait of Louis XVI* (1701), was a tour-de-force in fabric painting. Dressed in prodigious amounts of fur and satin emblazoned with the fleur-de-lis, Louis posed, beautifully coiffed and with surprisingly dainty feet and ankles, surrounded by a frame of silk curtains and carpet. We looked at society portraits by Gustav Klimt, James Tissot, Ingres and John Singer Sargent, all beautifully representing the upper-class fashions of their time.

There was no meeting in April as it coincided with a bank holiday.

Our May meeting was scheduled to be on Caravaggio but for various reasons the Group was rather diminished, so we decided that we would have a re-run of a previous talk about Georgia O'Keeffe, and save Caravaggio for later in the year. Dubbed "The Mother of American Modernism", O'Keeffe grew up in the American Midwest on her parents' farm surrounded by expansive landscapes, which influenced her artistic output. She is best known for her close-up, rather intimate, pictures of flowers and plants, which are immediately recognisable as her work. When she moved to New York she painted a series of skyscrapers, again influenced by her immediate surroundings. When her relationship with her husband broke down, she moved to New Mexico where she lived until her death. Again, her surroundings had a profound effect on her work; her colour palette adapted to the desert tones of New Mexico.

Book 1

Gillian Eastmond



This informal, friendly Book Group meets at 10am on the Third Friday morning of the month at one of our member's houses in Chesham, Amersham or Great Missenden. This evens out the distance anyone must drive. We don't usually meet in August.

We each bring a fiction or non-fiction book to the meeting, which we wish to recommend to the Group. After giving a brief description of the book's content and saying why we recommend it, we have a lively discussion about the book and its themes.

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.

Our meetings last two hours because people have other commitments and so must leave. However, they could last longer. You will never be forced to read a book you really do not like but you will have heard about books that you otherwise would not have read, but are now tempted to try.

If you wish to try us for a session to see if we are what you are looking for, please email Gillian Eastmond at bookgroup1@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

Book 2

Alison Pullinger, Sarah Organ & Georgina Mead



The books we read are chosen by us from a list provided by the library. Our Group has just welcomed a new member and is currently full.

This quarter we have read three very different books which have all provoked plenty of discussion: Two of them were debut novels: *Golden Child* by Claire Adam and *The Lido* by Libby Page. We also read *The Silkworm* by Robert Galbraith (aka J K Rowling).

Golden Child is set in rural Trinidad and is an emotional story of scarcity, sacrifice and betrayal. The title sets the scene as a golden child is "one who is the favourite and often held in high esteem by others and for whom there are high hopes". This book made it into the BBC list of The 100 Most Inspiring Novels. (cont.)

Our next book, *The Silkworm*, is a gripping mystery full of twists and turns. The private detective Cormorant Strike may be familiar to many from the TV series. His task is to investigate the disappearance of a controversial author; definitely a page-turner that we all enjoyed, and by the end we knew a little more about 'bombyx mori'.

Our final book was *The Lido*, which is based around two female characters, Rosemary and Kate. It is written with great sensitivity and celebrates the importance of community and relationships. *The Lido* is set in Brockwell Park, Brixton, which is a real location. One of our members told us that she used to visit there many years ago. It was then closed as lidos became unfashionable, however it has re-opened and is now thriving. We felt that we might like to visit it one day, having read and enjoyed the book.

Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Our membership is limited to ten, since that is the number of copies provided each month by Chesham Library. We currently have a full complement of members. Our May reading is *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie and we look forward to forming our own opinions on this book. In June we have *Milkman* by Anna Burns followed by *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal* by Jeanette Winterson. These choices should lead to some lively discussions.

Book 4

Jackie Cobb



Book Group 4 meets in members' homes, and the books we read are chosen by each member in turn. As the book choices are varied, it makes for a good discussion each month. We would be happy to have two new members, so do get in touch, should you wish to join us.

In May we read *Dog of the North* by Elizabeth McKenzie. In June we will read *All The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doer.

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 £3.00 including a cup of tea per session. In the summer, we meet each Monday from 13:50 to 16:00 at Holmer Green Sports Association for Outdoor Short Mat Bowls.

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.

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. Please contact the Bridge Convenor for more information.

Canasta

Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley



We would still like to see more members with an interest in playing canasta. We play once a month in one another's houses. It is great to have Sue back after her unfortunate accident.

Chess

Caroline Jenks



The Chess Group is keen to attract new members. None of us are expert players and some of us are beginners, so any ability level is welcome. The emphasis is on having a go, improving a bit and having a good chat over tea! Just come and have a try: no commitment or cost.



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 with various 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 large Group. Come along and join us for a fun discussion. If you are interested, please get in touch with the Convenor for details of the next meeting.

Digital Imaging

Pippa Greensmith & David Hurd



From June the Digital Imaging Group will merge with the Photography Group, meeting on the third Wednesday of the month in Little Chalfont Village Hall. The Group will be called Photography and Digital Imaging. We expect this to be a vibrant combination, addressing all aspects of photography. We are looking at the best way to fully exploit the merger and will be giving more details at the meeting in June, which will look at monochrome photography.

So far this year we've had a field trip to photograph the grounds at Ashridge House, but unfortunately our planned visit to the Open Air Museum had to be postponed due to the weather. Our June trip will be to Paddington Basin and Little Venice.

Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



After a few months of cold wet weather it was a pleasure to get out on the water for the first session of our sailing season on 24 April. There was a good turn out of 18 members, half of whom were newbies, so we spent the first half of the afternoon demonstrating the principles of sailing. We then rigged two dinghies and a couple of our experienced helms took the beginners for a quick tour of the lake. For the second session on 7 May we had 13 attendees and were able to rig three dinghies, so everyone was able to enjoy a more extended sail around the lake. We normally sail on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month and the sailing dates are posted on the Dinghy Sailing page of the website. You can also contact either of the Convenors for more information.

Family History

Sue Broad



This is the last newsletter from the Group as we are closing after the final meeting on 4 June 2024. Family History started in January 2009, meeting in Chesham Scout Hut, which was freezing cold and we all sat around with our coats on until the under-floor heating kicked in and it was time to go home. Brian Trevette and Sue Rawbone were the original Convenors and led the Group until 2012, when they both decided to step down.

As is the usual situation when the Convenors step down, no one in the Group was prepared to take it over until Marian Bangs and myself offered 'as newbies', if we had help. Sadly the help was not forthcoming and we struggled along, learning as we went. Most of the members from that original meeting have been with us along the way and have now reached back as far as they want in their research.

So after 12 years I will have the first Tuesday in the month free so that I can wipe the dust off my own research and continue what I started 12 years ago.

If any members from that original Group would like to come along for cream cakes and tea on 4 June at 2.15pm in Chesham Town Hall, we would be pleased to see you. One of our members, Andrew Brown, will be giving a short presentation on GEDCOM files (Genealogy Data Communications), how to use them, why we need them and tips on how to pass your research onto family members who are not particularly interested in Family History but, like us, will be in the future when we are not around to answer questions they may have about their ancestry.

(cont.)

If there are any members who would like help on how to start work on their own Family History, we have members who are willing to set a small Group up and help them on their way. Email Helen Barnard, Groups Coordinator at groups@cvu3a.uk

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



The French Conversation Group continues to meet regularly. We discuss many topical subjects, for example: the preparations for the Olympics in Paris. Recently we looked at technology and the growth of Artificial Intelligence. In fact one of our members prepared her talk using AI, prompting many questions. We take it in turns to suggest a topic and this has proved very successful. We haven't run out of topics yet...

French Intermediate

Hilary Alleston

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

Fun Quizzes

James Cadle



The Fun Quizzes Group is currently taking its summer break and will resume on Tuesday 12th November 2024. We meet on Zoom during the winter months, from November to April, when the evenings are dark and people are less inclined to venture out. We call them Fun Quizzes because we don't have teams in the usual sense (although several couples take part) and there are no winners and losers; participants are simply pitting their knowledge against the question setters.

Quizzes usually take place on the second Tuesday of the month, starting at 7:30pm, with people being admitted to the Zoom meeting from 7:15 onwards. The Zoom invitations are sent out by the Convenor a few days before each quiz. Each quiz lasts for about one hour and has five rounds of 10 questions each.

Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell & Jenny Beirne



'Amersham in Bloom' was the topic of our March meeting. Most of us living in the area are familiar with the 'Bloom' transformation that the town has seen over recent years, resulting in Amersham receiving the prestigious RHS Gold Award for Britain in Bloom in 2022. Nevertheless, this meeting was fascinating in the detail of how the 'Bloom' movement started, with pictures and even videos of some key moments. The speakers were Michelle Cattanach and two of the longest-serving volunteers, whose enthusiasm was infectious.

The topic of our April talk raised smiles all round: 'Gardening in Dry Conditions', since the meeting occurred following weeks of wet weather. Nevertheless, Terry Cann pointed out that what's good for dry conditions is also good for wet conditions! He then explained the tactics of keeping one's garden healthy when lacking water. There was a lot of interest and helpful information; hopefully we shall need to use his advice over these next summer months.

Our May meeting was a visit to the Herb Garden at Amersham Museum, where we received a guided tour from the curator. *Skulduggery in the Shrubbery* is the intriguing title of our June talk, to be given by Steffan White, and of interest to History Group members as well as gardeners.

We still welcome new members so if you would like to join us, please contact one of the Convenors. Details of the Group, together with this year's programme, can be found on the Garden Group page of the CVu3a website.

German

Jenny Lee



Our small but very friendly Group continues to meet twice a month in each other's houses. It is always fascinating to discover how many interests such a small Group has and we enjoy our German Conversation on a wide range of subjects: Certainly a fun two hours.



We had a welcome return from Stephen Barker, Military Historian, to our Group meeting in March. His topic was *The English Civil Wars in Eight Paintings* and how artists had represented it through their artwork.

Stephen explained and discussed the particular event that each painting represented, giving their background story and historical relevance.

We looked at *Attempted Arrest of Five MPs by Charles I* by Charles West Cope and *Charles I with M. de St. Antoine* by Van Dyke, who was a propaganda artist. The painting depicts Charles as Monarch and Ruler of these Islands. *The Plundering of Basing House* by Charles Landseer illustrated the hardships caused by the Civil War, theft, poverty and forcible enlistment in the army. *After the Battle of Naseby* by William Barnes Woollen covered the Parliamentarian New Model Army's defeat of the Royalists under Charles I. *Oliver Cromwell* by Robert Walker was painted in 1649 just before the execution of Charles. Walker shows Cromwell as a strong leader, with integrity and honour. *The Putney Debates* by Clare Melinsky illustrated parliamentarians debating the constitutional proposals drafted by the civilian Levellers ("one man, one vote"). We saw *Opening the Coffin of Charles I* by Hippolyte Delaroche and lastly *Charles II's Cavalcade Through the City of London 22nd April 1661* by Dirck Stoop. This represented events when Charles arrived in London the day before his Coronation, after nine years of exile. This was a great visual history of the Civil War, enhanced by Stephen's extensive knowledge of the events covering the overthrow and restoration of the Monarchy.

The following meeting in April enhanced our knowledge of another great leader, Sir Winston Churchill, and was presented to us by a fellow u3a member, Ross Panter. Ross gave a more in-depth impression of Churchill the man, covering his early years, his political life and the loss of the 1945 Election, most unexpected for him, but maybe just as well for world peace after the devastating upheaval of the Second World War.

The May meeting saw our CVu3a member John Bunyan present us with the story behind the contents of an attic find in Harrow, which were given to him some ten years ago. The lady who had died in her 90s and her husband had been two of the last colonials in Tanzania. Personal effects along with masses of 8mm Cine 'Home Movies' documented this crucial period in the history of East Africa, spanning the Independence of Tanganyika and Zanzibar and their merger to form Tanzania. John gave us an insight into the personal lives of two quite amazing people, both key government officers in Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service, at the time of transition from colonial rule to independence. There were edited snippets from the cine film archive showing the country, its people and a revealing sometimes humorous insight into their personal lives in this remarkable land. John concluded by reading a transcript of court proceedings of an unbelievable witchcraft trial that had happened there in 1967.

Keep Fit for 60+

John Bunyan



An instructor has yet to be secured for this class. Enquiries from members are being taken and the class will be scheduled once an instructor is in place. To register your interest, please contact John on keepfit60@cvu3a.uk No payments are being sought at this stage.

Knitting & Other Crafts

Jo Biggs



We meet in members' houses on the first and third Monday of the month. The meetings offer an opportunity to share ideas and skills. We cover a wide variety of crafts including knitting, crochet, patchwork and embroidery. There is always lively conversation, cake and coffee involved! We currently have room for one more person so please get in touch with the Convenor if you would like to join us.

"To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research."

"Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine."

(quora.com)



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

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 have included 'Ego' at the 'Pomeroy', 'The Crown', Ley Hill, 'Jasmine Thai', 'Zaza' and 'The Boot and Slipper'. We are looking forward to some outdoor outings to gardens and other places of interest as summer progresses. Monthly planning meetings are held over coffee and cakes at the 'Elgiva' Café.

MOTO 2

Rodney Newth

The MOTO2s continue to meet at different venues on the second Saturday of each month for lunch and chat. Normally about six to eight members make the lunches. We are open for new members.

Music Appreciation

Geoff Hayes & Colin O'Rourke



It's been an interesting few months in the Music Group with plenty of great music to share and enjoy.

For each meeting we choose a theme or two on which to base our individual selections to share. Our themes have included: 'Spring', which saw an interesting mix of Classical, Old, Contemporary, Jazz, and Comic. '50s Rock and Roll' featured, along with some very dated video clips of original songs being performed on TV, which has certainly come a long way in production quality!

In the May meeting, we explored the genre of 'Lindy Hop', delving into Jazz, Swing and Blues from the '20s to the '40s era, and played a great video of competitive Lindy Hop dancing, performed by Karen's son and girlfriend: International Competitors! After tea and coffee we changed the theme to 'May', which encouraged a very diverse mix of music from Rod Stewart's *Maggie May* to *Bonny May* by June Tabor.

For June, we have two themes again, 'Country and Western' and 'The Letter 'D''. So please come and join us for your musical voyage of discovery.

For more details, contact the Convenors on music@cvu3a.uk

Geoff

"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Give him a fishing rod and he will sit in a boat in the middle of the lake and drink beer all day."

(quora.com)



Meeting monthly at Hyde Heath Village Hall, we tend to use it as a workshop. We bring our projects to start, continue or finish off and there's always plenty of help and advice within the Group to make sure we can work on our techniques to produce something of which we are proud. With our sewing machines and cutting mats, a pile of fabric eventually takes on a new life.

In May we have been doing just that, cutting up lots of fabric to make small rectangles, which are pieced together to form new blocks, which in turn are joined together to make cot-sized quilts for the Linus charity. Just cutting out takes time but it is rewarding when the pieces come together to make lovely quilts for us to donate to others.

However we don't just cut out shapes and join them together. There is a great deal of creativity across a lot of techniques. One of our ladies is currently working on a personal family-themed project which, when finished, will be entered into an exhibition. We hope to bring more news on that in a later edition.

The lovely thing is also the camaraderie amongst the members and, fuelled by tea and cake, we keep going, determined to do our work justice. We welcome anyone who would like to take up this hobby or maybe pick up their needles and fabric again and join like-minded people. An ability to do basic sewing is required and familiarity with a sewing machine is even better. We meet at the Village Hall in Hyde Heath on the third Wednesday each month (9.30am - 3.30pm). Do contact us if you would like to come along to one of our sessions (no obligation).

Photography

David Hurd

From June the Digital Imaging Group will merge with the Photography Group, meeting on the third Wednesday of the month in Little Chalfont Village Hall. The Group will be called Photography and Digital Imaging. Please see the current Digital Imaging Group entry for more information.

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Pilates continues to be a great success with sixty CVu3a members regularly attending the three classes.

This term tends to be a strange one as we meet on Mondays, which of course are when the bank holidays are. Most of us seem to keep track and don't turn up to find the hall empty, but there is always one! All three classes are currently full but we no longer have a waiting list, so if you are interested in joining next term, please do contact us.

Play Reading

Joan Barton & Linda Hepworth



Linda had already reported that we were about to read *The Hollow* by Agatha Christie at my house in February. As we hadn't actually read it at the time of going to press, she didn't know there was to be a surprise...NO Hercule Poirot, although there had been in the original story! Apparently Agatha Christie had got so fed up with him by the time she made it into a play that she left him out. I don't know if the men were disappointed not to get a chance to boast about their 'little grey cells'.

Mavis hosted the next play, *Blithe Spirit* by Noel Coward. I usually like his writings but he could certainly have cut this down a bit...it did go on!

We also welcomed two new members, Heather and Juliet, which brings us up to full strength. I hope we will see them again next time.

Janice hosted our April meeting where we read *Cranford*, arranged by Martyn Coleman, one of the many plays based on the original Elizabeth Gaskell trilogy. I think they all retain some of her characters and make short stories out of them. This play was gently amusing and I was sorry to have had to leave early. (cont.)

In May, we went to Linda for a farce, *Pardon me Prime Minister*, by Edward Taylor and John Graham. I was expecting this to be on the lines of *Yes Minister* but it turned out to be a bit of a naughty romp. Like many farces, it would have been funnier in performance, but nevertheless it was a good choice and kept us all amused.

We have not yet selected a play for the June meeting.

Joan

Poetry

Christine Ogborne

The Poetry Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month. We enjoy reading and discussing our chosen poems and talking about the poets who wrote them. In March we chose the poet Robert Graves who was enlisted in the Royal Welch Fusiliers in World War One. His poetry reflected his experiences in the trenches. April saw us delving into poetry written during the 1960s with Sylvia Plath, Brian Patten, Ted Hughes, Derek Mahon and Jon Stallworthy being amongst those featured. For our meeting in May we read the poems of John Betjeman and enjoyed discussing them.

Future meetings will be:

June: Seas and Coasts
July: Louis MacNiece
August: Gardens

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

Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



We have had a complete mixture of events recently, all enjoyable, with lots more to come:

March 15th: *Fire & Steam* DVD:

Our planned speaker, Francis Gomme, was unwell, so we played the second part of the DVD *Fire & Steam*, based on Christian Wolmar's book of the same name. Produced in 2008, it still resonates powerfully with the passion and glory of steam-powered railways. This was preceded by an update and photos of the visit to the Ilford Traction Depot, which was organised by Alan Wallwork on behalf of the National Transport Trust.

April 27th: Epping & Ongar Railway visit: Geoff Frost:

A bit of a trek from one end of the Metropolitan line to Epping, which is at the end of the Central Line, but the Epping and Ongar visit was worth it. Ferried from Epping station to North Weald station by a vintage Routemaster, we were then transported (via a stop at the café) to Ongar and back to North Weald by steam locomotives 'Lady of Legend' (2999) and 'Pitchford Hall' (4953). There was enough time for a few trips up and down the line before departing, either via the Heritage Bus to Shenfield for connection with the Elizabeth Line, or to Epping to reconnect with the Central Line. Well done Geoff for organising a lovely day out.

May 17th: The Ebury Line: Chris Hillier

What an interesting talk on The Ebury Line Chris Hillier's presentation turned out to be. It was quite a fascinating link between Rickmansworth and Watford, with branch lines to the local mills. Chris brought the line to life with references to current buildings (Tesco in Rickmansworth and B&Q in Watford) and their position on the former line. He was so good, we have asked him back next month.

Our next meetings are:

June 28th: Thomas Brassey, Civil Engineer: Chris Hillier
July 28th: (Last Sunday in July); visit to Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway
August: No meeting
September 13th: Reunification Project at the Great Central Railway: Tom Ingall

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.



This term has been punctuated by bank holidays, which mean fewer rehearsal opportunities for our summer end-of-term concert on 22nd July. However, under Ali's tutelage, we'll be in fine voice and as note-perfect as possible by then. We are practising a very varied repertoire of songs for the occasion.

We have another booking to sing at the Tuesday Lunch Break at Amersham Free Church towards the end of July. We always enjoy performing and, hopefully, giving a pleasurable interlude to audiences at local venues. As ever, we are grateful to Ali and our accompanist Gwen, for giving their time willingly to help us to constantly improve our singing.

If you would like to join the choir, please contact one of the Convenors. You will be very welcome. Full details about the Group can be found on our webpage on the CVu3a website.

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



At our last meeting, we were treated to a range of different collections from Group members: First World War French army 'stamps', actually labels to be exact, featured. They were made purportedly to raise funds for army charities, but the man who commissioned and published them neglected to pass on the proceeds and finished up in jail!

There were also some medals, including a gold aviation medal from 1910 and an MBE from WW1, and a collection of old books, postcards and Korean stamps.

We saw some Falmouth Ship letters. These have postmarks from mail sent on sailing ships, dating from prior to 1850 when Falmouth was one of the main south coast ports for mail, especially to the Americas.

Our next meeting on June 24th will be on stamps, with a presentation from a leading expert on Queen Victoria Penny Reds.

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton



Tai Chi continues to be popular with the members of the Group and our tutor is introducing newer and longer forms for us to learn. As the 'form' takes some time to learn, our tutor is unwilling to accept new members to the Group.

The Journey...There's an expression: The first 10 years you can say "I've been taught a little Tai Chi"; the second 10 years you can say "I've learned a little Tai Chi"; the third 10 years you can say "I know a little Tai Chi". Tai Chi is a lifelong journey.

Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



I think everyone who came enjoyed *Moulin Rouge*. Our next foray out is to Stratford to see *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This is now fully booked as is *Kiss me Kate*, our subsequent trip. If you have any ideas for future trips please do let us know. If you would like to join the Group to receive notifications of future trips we are always happy to welcome new members. Email theatre@cvu3a.uk

Youngsters have their own texting codes (LOL, OMG etc.) so how about some for us: ATD, At The Doctors. BYOT, Bring Your Own Teeth. FWIW, Forgot Where I Was. GG,GPDA, Gotta Go, Grand Parenting Duties Again. WAMG? Where Are My Glasses?



Our Ukulele Group has welcomed a new member this month and we are always welcoming to potential newcomers; just give me a ring if you would like more details.

We continue to occasionally entertain local organisations with our sing-a-longs enjoyed by all involved! New songs are practised all the time, from all genres including some modern songs: our members come up with great suggestions, which we always try out and practise.

Our fortnightly meetings are at the Methodist Church in Bellingdon Road, Chesham, starting at 2.30pm.

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

Our last walks have been from Weston Turville to Halton Tennis Club, Chorleywood and Hervines Park in Amersham. We have been walking in the early afternoon and this allows an optional stop for tea and cake afterwards. We are looking forward to less mud and, as there are ten regular walkers, we could accommodate one or two more.

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 published every three months. Members advise the walk leader if they wish to participate.

For the first quarter of this year, we held walks in Winchmore Hill, Wiggington and Naphill. For the second quarter our walks were in Ley Hill, Sarratt, Latimer and Dornley. Further walks are to be arranged.

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

Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

Once again we have been trying to dodge the rain on our walks and have been successful mostly, apart from a local walk around the Penn Estate, which was rather windy and wet. However it didn't deter anyone, apart from the Convenor!

We have also walked around Whippendell Woods near Watford, had a circular walk from Amersham Station and our May walk was in the Black Park Country Park near Fulmer.

On each of our walks we collect £1 per person, which goes into a pot for replacing broken stiles with gates, through the Chiltern Society. We now have sufficient money to fund another gate and are looking at a suitable stile near Belsize. Once we send the details to the Chiltern Society it takes about six months before the gate is installed as the Society has to obtain the necessary permissions from the local landowner and the Council.

And lastly, if anyone would like to join the Group, please contact the Convenor first. New members are always welcome.

Walkers 3

Jill Thomas & Catherine Haridi

Our walks are approximately five miles long, on the first Wednesday of the month.

We had a great turnout for a lovely walk around Hyde Heath in March, lead by Libby. After all the rain from February, it was a little muddy in places. However, some of the views were amazing and the sun came out towards the end. Then in April, Antoinette lead us on a fascinating walk 'Beating-the-Bounds': a historical walk around Chesham Bois, with loads of historical information, as we went.

(cont.)

Then on May's walk, the sun finally came out in Little Missenden. The lambs were playing and the bluebells were out; a bit of mud here and there, a slight de-tour, and we made it back.

Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



We are pleased to report that both Striders Groups have completed all of their regular walks, together with two longer all-day walks on fifth Tuesdays in the month, despite often being handicapped by all the mud which our wet winter and spring has bequeathed us. However, on our most recent long walk, which took us on a circular walk led by Ian Barrett from Princes Risborough to Chinnor and Bledlow, we were delighted to find ourselves walking in hot sun on (mainly) dry footpaths. Perhaps that explains our keenness to avail ourselves of refreshment at the 'Lions of Bledlow' pub en route!

During the weekend prior to drafting this Newsletter entry, 17 Striders braved the unpromising weather forecast for the Bank Holiday weekend and went up to the Cotswolds, where we were greeted with hot sunny weather for our walking days, the only rain being en route in both directions! Success, when walking, was matched by a triumph for Jan Weir in the all-comers skittles competition and by one of the Striders' quiz teams too.

At this time of year we are always in the process of planning a Summer Walk further afield from the Chilterns: this year we will be taking a coach from Chesham and Amersham to Petworth in West Sussex, where we will offer two walks of differing lengths, finishing at Petworth House. We hope to fill any remaining seats on the coach with fellow CVu3a members interested in exploring the National Trust property at Petworth House and grounds, or even Petworth itself: Fingers crossed for a full coach and good weather on the day.

Our membership remains at a good level and members of each Group are usually able to fill up places on the other Group's walks. Should any other CVu3a members wish to join either Striders 1 or Striders 2, please contact either Andrew Brown or Ian Lee (see the List of Convenors for contact details) for further information.

Walks into History: Country

Peter Schweiger



Pinner: March 13th

The Pinner walk was very popular with 41 members saying they would come on Wednesday 13th March. Luckily I had the help of Tamar Maciver from the Pinner Historical Society, so we could split into two groups. Starting with coffees at the very ancient café called 'Daisies' in the High Street, we went on and saw lovely old houses, the grave of Horatia Nelson, the adopted daughter of Admiral Nelson, and the grave of Ambrose Heal's wife. Mr Heal founded the shop in Tottenham Court Road in London. Horatia Nelson's house was later lived in by Ronnie Barker and then David Suchet.

The Heath Robinson Museum at the top of the park also had an exhibition about local suffragettes and we had seen some of the houses they lived in. The area surprised and delighted us and had similarities to Chesham and Amersham, being part of Metro-land. Next to the museum was a restaurant also called Daisy's, part of a chain, where there were drawings by Heath Robinson mounted on the walls.

Reading: May 8th

The Group's second walk of this quarter took them to Reading, 'The Biscuit Town' known as such because of the large Huntley and Palmer Biscuit factory there. They were also local benefactors, giving money and land to Reading in the form of Palmer's Park. Gilbert Scott's Gate House was visited along with the abbey ruins and the Bayeux Tapestry. Refreshments were taken at the Station Café.

There was also the Banksy: A famous mural depicting a prison breakout, which appeared on the wall of Reading Prison in 2021. Two of our walkers, Peter Windsor and his wife Sue, had first met while working at the prison, and Peter was able to tell us the story behind the mural: (cont.)

"Before you criticise someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticise them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes." (quora.com)

In 1979 there were building contractors at the prison and a prisoner asked one of them if he could borrow a hacksaw! He said it was for a project he was working on. The prisoner used the hacksaw to surreptitiously cut a padlock securing a long ladder. During the night he and another prisoner who had a long rope, used the ladder to climb to the top of the outer wall and then climbed down on the rope the other side.

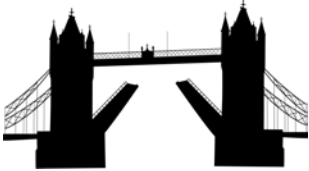
One man went home, and his mother made him go back to prison the next morning. The other was caught a few days later. Peter did not get blamed for the escape. Peter Schweiger

Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell

Greenwich: Wednesday April 10th



Greenwich has always had the advantage, down wind of the capital and down river of the city, of being the first place visitors in ships came across as they sailed up the estuary. Therefore it had to impress. It got the first commuter railway in 1837 and a foot tunnel under the Thames, toll free, in 1902 connecting it with the Isle of Dogs. Now it can be accessed by bus, Uber boat, DLR Rail and, not far away, a cable car. But it is not found on the Underground map. The massive bulk of the beautifully restored Cutty Sark owns the place. Launched in 1869, it is the only surviving tea clipper and regards Greenwich for all time as its homeport. It carried on each journey enough tea to make 200,000,000 cuppas, taking part with other ships in tea races making China to London in 90 days, driven by its many sails and a favourable wind.

On to the buildings linked to 600 years of our royal history: kings, queens and admirals abound, seeing life as Greenwich Palace, the Royal Naval College and the Royal Hospital, not to heal the sick but the navy's equivalent of the Chelsea Hospital for Pensioners. With the Greek influence of colonnades and pediments, precisely lined up to present the best views of the river and surrounds, it oozes elegance and stature. We dipped inside, out of the biting wind, to creep along the corridors of the under-croft to glimpse the only surviving brickwork of the original palace. We also saw the Victorian skittle alley built in 1864 to amuse the resident pensioners, the rich paintings of the chapel of St Peter and Paul and then we were out again to stand staring upwards at the figures on the pediment; these were inspired by the Parthenon and depicted the death of Lord Nelson, who lay in state here in 1806, the queue of more than 15,000 mourners snaking back to Central London.

Birthplace of Henry the Eighth, Mary the First and Elizabeth the First, and home to many more of blue blood, we passed by the impressive white villa of the Queen's House. Building started here in 1616 for Anne of Denmark (wife of James the First) whose death in 1618 brought the project to a halt until Henrietta Marie, wife of Charles the First, had Indigo Jones finish the house around 1635. With Henrietta an art collector herself, this is certainly the place to head to nowadays, if you too are a lover of paintings. Entrance is free.

The rest of the tour gets a bit hazy from here as my fingers were by now frozen, so I put my notebook away and put on my gloves. But I do remember the relief of not having to climb the hill to the Observatory, noting that Greenwich was declared as longitude 0° after an argument with the French who wanted the meridian to go through Paris. So what is new? We ended up in Greenwich Market, established in 1730, which sold mainly food until 1900 when it gravitated towards being the colourful, vibrant and noisy centre for antiques, art and crafts it is today. As Fiona, our guide, put it, "it offers all manner of 'stuff' we don't need, but feel we must have".

Angela Shipley

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



The Wildlife Group continues to flourish with a full programme for 2024 (and even one talk arranged for 2025!)

Following talks about fish and mammals in January and February, March saw Mick Jones, a ranger at Dancers End, giving a really interesting talk about the nature reserve, its connection with the Rothschilds and the founding of the Wildlife Trusts. In April, Adrian Porter, a Rivers Officer from the Chiltern National Landscape, returned to give us another excellent talk about our precious chalk streams, with specific reference to some of the major project work being undertaken on the Chess, and the Hamble.

(cont.)

May saw us welcome back Peter Holden MBE (who was instrumental in developing and promoting the Big Garden Bird-watch) to give us a talk entitled *Good News, Bad News for Birds*.

For the rest of 2024, June sees us follow up Mick Jones' talk about Dancers End with a guided walk by Mick around the Nature Reserve. Then we have visits to Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital, a return visit to Road Farm for a further update on their work to support wildlife, as well as learning about mob grazing and soil structure, followed by a visit from Berkshire Birds of Prey to show us some of their amazing birds. October and November see us greeting two more returning speakers: Alan Jones, a bird vet, talking about birds and animals in Brazil, and Lindsay Engers who will update us on the work at Chiltern Heritage Orchards where they grow and promote heritage varieties, many of which are not grown commercially anywhere else in the UK.

We will finish 2024 with our usual social gathering.

If you are interested in wildlife matters, come and join us. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at Amersham Common Village Hall for talks, and on site, for field visits.

Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In February the Clarkes chose English wines as their theme for the evening. This posed a few problems for members, as the choice is severely limited with Waitrose classifying English wines under the rest of the world. However, we started with an *Ashling Park Rose* at 12% from the South Downs and then moved on to a *Setley Ridge white* from a small vineyard in Brockenhurst in the New Forest, where they produce only six to eight thousand bottles a year, at £17.99. Next up was a Waitrose English dry white from Denbies at £9.99 and a *Chiltern Valley Reichensteiner 2018* from Hambleden at £13. Representing the reds we had a *Frome Valley Pinot Noir 2017* from Herefordshire at £12 and finally an *Oxford Regatta Dornfelder* from the Brightwell Vineyard in Oxfordshire at £13.50. It was generally felt that the wines were OK, but not value for money.

In March at the Hohenbergs, the theme was South Africa, and we opened with a *Graham Beck Chardonnay* and *Pinot Noir* sparkling wine from Tesco and then moved on to a *Chenin Blanc* from Durbanville Hills at 13.5% from the Cape Garden in Cape Town. Another *Chenin Blanc* followed, *Fireflower* from Waitrose at 12.5% and £9.39 less 25%. We then sampled *Gecko Rock*, M&S' own brand Shiraz / Malbec at £7, and a *Vergelegen* Cabernet Sauvignon / Merlot blend from Stellenbosch via Tesco at £11, reduced to £8.

Our April meeting at the Connors had a theme of 'Wines from vineyards we have visited': another challenge! We began with a *Classic Cuvee Three Choirs* from Gloucestershire, a blend of Pinot Noir, Phoenix and Seyval Blanc at £20. Next up was a *Villa Maria Chardonnay* from Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, available from Tesco reduced from £11 to £9. Then we had another Three Choirs wine, *Willow Brook*, an 11% Reichensteiner at £11.50. Moving on to the reds, there was a *Marador Malbec* from Mendoza, Argentina, 14%, available from Sainsbury's for £10, less 25%. Finally, from Paarl, South Africa, a *Fairview Extrano* (The Stranger) so called because it is a Tempranillo, 14%, very unusual in South Africa.

Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchenor



March's meeting was hosted by Jenny and Ian and themed 'Quels Differences?' This showed how the same grape can taste and look completely different. The first grape was Sangiovese, which you normally see in Chianti. Unusually, one of the wines was a white, but along with the two reds, did not score particularly well on the night. One of Ian's favourite grapes fared little better in both red and white guise. The equal winner was the Monastrell in both red and white, which surprisingly were also the cheapest wines.

In April our meeting hosts were Gill and Graham and 'High Society' was the theme as the majority of wines were from the Wine Society's own label. A couple of wines were brought back by the hosts from South Africa and one of these, a Pinotage, scored very highly, although a mention should be made of the Society's *Picpoul de Pinet* which is a cracking alternative to *sauvignon blanc*. (cont.)

May's tasting was hosted by Andrew and was a selection of wines from Sainsbury's, which were on special offer at the time. A *Morador Malbec* triumphed on the night, along with *Gruner Veltliner* (another tasty white to try on my mission to steer people away from sauvignon!) a close second. The most expensive wine, the *Barolo*, which can be fabulous, was last by a distance.

Hopefully we will be in hosts' gardens for the summer meetings.

Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Our small Group has continued to meet for convivial readings and discussions about our writing, in members' homes over the last quarter. Topics have included 'Food', 'Plates or Tiles' and in May, 'A Meeting'. Currently we schedule our sessions for 2.30pm on the second Friday of the month, but we have rescheduled some meetings to fit around our members' other plans and commitments. Our June topic is 'Lost in Translation'.

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

MORE THAN ENOUGH

The first lily of June opens its red mouth.

All over the sand road where we walk
multiflora rose climbs trees cascading
white or pink blossoms, simple, intense
the scene drifting like colored mist.

The arrowhead is spreading its creamy
clumps of flower and the blackberries
are blooming in the thickets. Season of
joy for the bee. The green will never
again be so green, so purely and lushly

new, grass lifting its wheaty seedheads
into the wind. Rich fresh wine
of June, we stagger into you smeared
with pollen, overcome as the turtle
laying her eggs in roadside sand.

Marge Piercy

Mini-quiz

Music: Apart from being a composer, Ludwig van Beethoven was a virtuoso performer on which instrument?

Written by Bob Dylan, *All Along the Watchtower* is strongly identified with an interpretation by which guitarist?

What was Giuseppe Verdi's last opera, premiered at La Scala in 1893?

Geography: The Chagos Archipelago is a British Indian Ocean Territory but which other country, which gained independence in 1968, claims it as its territory?

Cape Agulhas is the southernmost point of which continent?

The Bering Strait separates the Russian Federation from which US state?

Nature and wildlife: In what century were wolves thought to have been hunted to extinction in the United Kingdom?

What is the commonest bird in the United Kingdom?

The cougar (also known as the panther, mountain lion, or puma) is found in what part of the world?

Literature: What is the name of Hercule Poirot's friend and companion, appearing in eight of Agatha Christie's books and as the narrator of several of them?

Of Mice and Men, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Cannery Row* are books by which American author, who died in 1968?

Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky is the lover of the main character in which novel by Leo Tolstoy, first published in book form in 1878?

Sport: Only two English football clubs have achieved 'the double' (coming top of the First Division or Premier League and winning the FA Cup) three times. Name them both.

Who did George Foreman defeat to become World Heavyweight Champion in the 'Sunshine Showdown' in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1973?

Pete Sampras won four consecutive Wimbledon Men's Singles Championships in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. But who was Champion on 2001?

Film: *Duel* (1971) was the second film directed by which director?

The Magnificent Seven is a re-worked and westernised remake of what film by Japanese director Akira Kurosawa?

Which film of 1939 held the record for the highest-grossing film for 25 years and, adjusted for inflation, has earned more than any other film?

Answers will be included with the e-bulletin at the end of June 2024 or, if you aren't on email, call me on 07889 732291 and I'll post the answers to you.

James Cadle

Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

FIRST in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Art Discussion 2 (pm)	Walkers 1	Walkers 2/3 (occasional)	Wildlife	
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)	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Ukulele (pm)	German (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)		Book 2 (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		
		Wine 2 (eve) (pm)		

Monday Groups' schedules are sometimes interrupted by public holidays; contact the Convenors for more information

Tai Chi meets in school term-times only

SECOND in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
History (pm)	Amblers	Walks into History OR Walks into London (alternate months)	Art Discussion 1 (am)	Writers (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders 1		Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Monthly Talk (pm)	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	French Conversation (am)		
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Dinghy Sailing (pm) (April-October)	Bridge (pm)		
	Fun Quizzes (eve) (November-April)			

The Chess Valley u3a Committee meets on the first or second Tuesday of each month, two days before the Monthly Talk

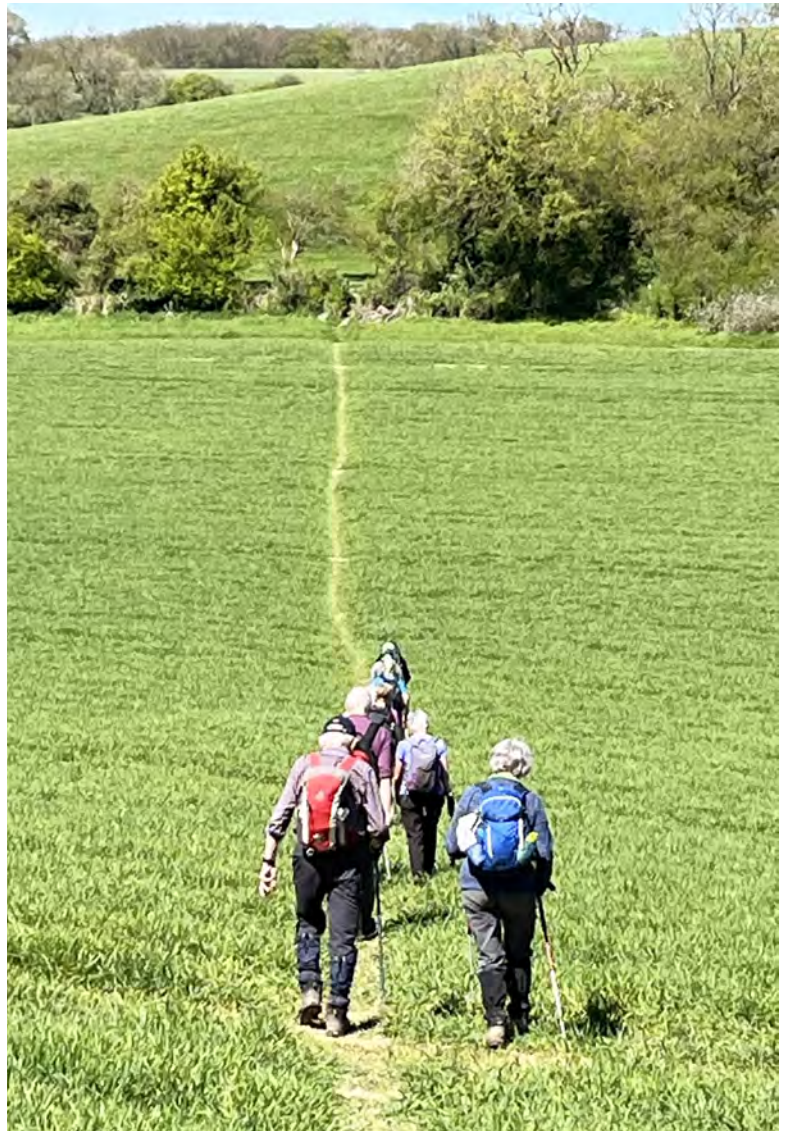
THIRD in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Walkers 1	Patchwork & Quilting (all day)	Book 4 (am)	Railways (am)
Canasta (pm)	Striders 2	German (am)	Art Discussion 3 (pm)#	Book 1 (am)
Knitting & Other Crafts (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Book 3 (pm)	Photography and Digital Imaging (pm)		
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Ukulele (pm)	Play Reading (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		

Stamps and Collectables meets in members' houses every two months

FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders 1	French Conversation (am)	Walkers 2/3	Chess (pm)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Poetry (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)		Dinghy Sailing (pm) (April-October)	Wine 1 (eve)	
		Gardening (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		

MOTO (Members On Their Own) have an 'anchor meeting' on the first Saturday morning of each month

MOTO2 meets for lunch on the second Saturday of each month

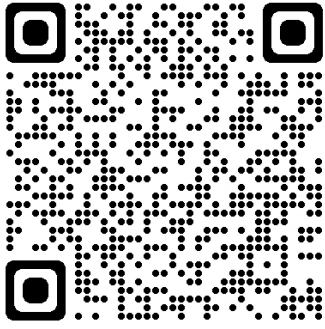


Top left: Striders gather at a new gate in April. It is dedicated to Michael Fogg, one of the Group's valued members who died several years ago. Jayne Fogg, his widow, contributed to the cost.

Top right: More wonderful work from the Photography and Digital Imaging Groups: This study entitled 'Completing the Circle'.

Above: A wonderful piece of embroidery by Christine Standring, a member of the Knitting and Other Crafts Group.

Above: Warm sun and a clear dry footpath ahead; ideal conditions for Striders on their recent walk around Princes Risborough, Chinnor and Bledlow.



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More excellent work has emerged from our creative Groups: Above, another wonderful bird study from one of the Photography and Digital Imaging Group members, and to the left, Janice Gray from the Art Group goes 'Ape' in oil pastels.