

u3a
Chess Valley

Registered Charity 1126990

NEWSLETTER

March - May 2025

website: www.cvu3a.uk





Front Cover: February this year has been cold and grey, but Laurence Batten found these cheerful snowdrops during the Ambler's walk around Great Hampden. What a wonderful picture!

Top: Striders came out in force for their January walk around Great and Little Hampden and found a window in the weather to line up for this picture.

Right: It's not everybody who carries a spare leg around with them, but Andy Smith does. Double-amputee Andy gave a light-hearted account at January's monthly talk about the perils of living with prosthetics.



Below: The gate funded by Walkers 2 and 3 in memory of Martin Cooper was visited en-route by Walkers 3 on their February trip around Hyde Heath.

Below right: St Pancras Station and Hotel was the Railway Group's stop in January. Thirty members were split into two groups for guided tours of the hotel, starting at the entrance, seen here.



Speakers for monthly talks

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



Martin Orkin

Thursday 13th March

The Simon and Garfunkel Story

Martin Orkin will tell us the intriguing story of Simon and Garfunkel. Everyone will enjoy hearing their classic hits again, such as *The Sound of Silence*, *Mrs Robinson* and *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. But Simon and Garfunkel's career had more than its fair share of ups and downs, as Martin will explain to us. Prepare to be amazed as well as enthralled by the music and the story!

Rob Brewer

Thursday 10th April

Being a TV/Film Extra

Rob is an ex-soldier and retired police officer and fell into the entertainment industry as an extra in TV and film after a visit to his local library. He has been an extra for six years, on over 40 different features. His work has ranged from Hollywood blockbusters and low-budget films, to TV dramas, soaps and comedies and even a couple of adverts. Rob talks about some of the productions that he's been in, and explains how he became involved in the industry.

John Tyler

Thursday 8th May

The Ridgeway

The Ridgeway is one of the oldest trackways in Europe, stretching nearly ninety miles from Ivinghoe to Avebury and over 5,000 years from the Stone Age to today. This talk describes this ancient chalkland path, including both its prehistory and its rich wildlife. John Tyler has always been fascinated by wildlife; having studied zoology and conservation at university, he worked with the Trust for Urban Ecology, creating and managing urban nature reserves. He spent many years as the Warden of the Sevenoaks Reserve in Kent, a string of flooded gravel pit lakes fringed by woodland.

Helen Fry

Thursday 12th June

'The Walls Have Ears'

Latimer House was once described as 'a very secret place'. In WW2, British intelligence bugged the conversations of German prisoners-of-war, including some of Hitler's generals. Unaware that the place was 'wired for sound', the prisoners spoke to their roommates about some of Hitler's most closely guarded secrets, including the V1 ('doodlebug'), V2 and atomic bomb programme. Historian Dr Helen Fry has written a number of acclaimed history books including Waterstones' recommended lists. She appears frequently in TV documentaries and is a popular and regular speaker to groups including u3as.



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



Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our March – May newsletter.

Chess Valley u3a continues to thrive, as you can see from the longer list of new members on this page. We don't need to grow in size, as such, but we do need a pipeline of new members to replace those who, for one reason or another, are no longer with us and, of course, new members come with new and different ideas. Since word of mouth is by far the best recruiting tool for u3a, I do urge you to continue to tell your friends about the benefits of u3a membership.

In the middle of this newsletter, you will find initial information about our AGM, which will precede our monthly talk in June. Several Committee Members are up for re-election but we do at the moment have a vacancy for the Vice-Chair. This is an important position to fill for two reasons. First, the Vice-Chair provides a back-up for the Chair, able to stand in as necessary. But ideally also the Vice-Chair would be in a position to succeed to the Chair when, in due course, I stand down from the role. If you'd like to learn more about the role, please email me and we can have a chat about it.

With best wishes



James Cadle
chair@cvu3a.uk

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Stephen Addley	<i>Chalfont St Giles</i>	Jane Livesey	<i>Amersham</i>
Chris Burke	<i>Chesham</i>	Eric Madrasek	<i>Prestwood</i>
Paul Campbell	<i>Chesham</i>	Sue Madrasek	<i>Prestwood</i>
Julie Cassin	<i>Prestwood</i>	Shirley Nicholls	<i>Great Missenden</i>
Paul Cassin	<i>Prestwood</i>	Florence Orban	<i>Chesham</i>
Kelvyn Darvill	<i>Hemel Hempstead</i>	Sandra Rooney	<i>Rickmansworth</i>
Edwin Deason	<i>Chesham</i>	Michael Shrive	<i>Chesham</i>
Alec Douglas	<i>High Wycombe</i>	Rowena Sims	<i>Chesham</i>
Myriam Douglas	<i>High Wycombe</i>	Barbara Spalding	<i>Amersham</i>
Dorothy Fotherby	<i>Chesham</i>	Penelope Anne Tenison	<i>Amersham</i>
Jill Hale	<i>Amersham</i>	Gillian Turner	<i>High Wycombe</i>
Catherine Hinds	<i>High Wycombe</i>	Elaine Wilkes	<i>Chesham</i>
Lilianne Kilshaw	<i>Amersham</i>	Jacqueline Willott	<i>Bovingdon</i>

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

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd May 2025

From the Groups Coordinator

We held our first lunch and Convenors meeting of the year on the last Friday of January which was very well attended by 36 Convenors. Sadly, none of the new members invited to join us for lunch were able to attend. The Convenors were introduced to the newest Committee Members and a demonstration on how to use Simple Membership was given by Valerie Garrod, our Webmaster. A short questionnaire was handed out and the committee were very pleased to see that almost everyone thought the meeting was interesting, although our request about how to attract new members or how to encourage more members to start new Groups was short on ideas. If you have any suggestions, I and your Committee would like to hear from you.

Sue Broad
Groups Coordinator
groups@cvu3a.uk

Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle	chair@cvu3a.uk	07889 732291
Vice-Chair	Position vacant	vicechair@cvu3a.uk	
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	Sue Broad	groups@cvu3a.uk	01494 718128
Web Editor	Valerie Garrod	webmaster@cvu3a.uk	01494 433585
Newsletter Editors	John Bunyan	newsletter@cvu3a.uk	01494 778858
	James Cadle		07889 732291
Speaker Organiser	Peter Windsor	speakers@cvu3a.uk	07595 776473
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb	eventscoord@cvu3a.uk	01494 773718

News from the Events Team

The programme of visits for 2025 has now been designed and here are details:

Wednesday 7th May 2025, Ely Cathedral and Anglesey Abbey

This visit starts with a guided tour of Ely Cathedral. There will be an opportunity to visit the stained glass museum for an extra on-site cost. This entails a 30 step climb up a spiral staircase!

We then move on to the National Trust property, Anglesey Abbey, for lunch (not included) and a walk around the extensive gardens.

The price is likely to be about £45 depending on numbers. Full details will be provided later.

At this stage I am looking for expressions of interest so please email alan.gray177@ntlworld.com. Please don't send any money yet.

Organiser: Alan Gray

Wednesday 25th June 2025, Military Intelligence Museum and the Shuttleworth Collection

Please note the date and advise events@cvu3a.uk if you might be interested in going.

Organiser: Michael Cohn

(Programme continues overleaf)

News from the Events Team (continued)

Wednesday 16th October 2025, Westonbirt Arboretum

This visit to the Westonbirt Arboretum has been timed to see the autumnal colours.

Further information will follow later.

Organiser: Alan Gray

Thursday 6th November 2025, *The Secrets of the Thames*

The Secrets of The Thames is an exhibition at The London Museum of Docklands; a major event that showcases fascinating finds from the Thames foreshore and explores the role of mudlarks in uncovering thousands of years of history.

Further information will follow later.

Organiser: Jackie Cobb

The joy of lists

Much of our everyday lives involve the making of and reference to lists. These are many and varied and include shopping, bucket, packing, to-do (or not to do – that is the question), play, top ten (of anything you care to name), and not forgetting lists of lists and lists of lists of lists. They can be alphabetical, thematic, numeric, chronological, geographic, compiled by merit, or totally random. All of us make them even if only mentally and, with ageing, just as often forget them.

Until recently, many lists possessed a degree of built-in obsolescence in that by the time a list had been researched or its source found in reference books or documents and then created, it would often be out of date. But now we have immediate access to a usually more accurate and current universe of data, available with the flick of a soon-to-be AI switch or, more probably, in the near future AI will press its own virtual button.

Lists, however, remain a useful fall back for idle meedja folk, who often publish them with 'controversial' omissions and inclusions in order to promote the inevitable flood of manipulated outrage and contention.

However, one list that survives the test of time is the now 83-year-old radio programme *Desert Island Discs*, which retains its original format despite a couple of attempts at sabotage. These were by the soprano Elizabeth Schwarzkopf who chose seven of her own performances out of the regulation eight discs. And then, not to be outdone, the pianist Moira Lympny went one better with a full house of eight of her own recordings.

However, another list takes so long to update that it is practically unusable. I speak of course of the *Dictionnaire de l'Academie Francaise*, the official French dictionary. Its latest full version appeared last year, 66 years since the previous edition and a mere 40 years after work on it started and is only the ninth complete edition since 1694. The gods of AI must surely have their eyes on this particular list.

'Timewaster'

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

Group	Convenor/s	Phone	u3a email address
Art	Angela Spittle	715318	art@cvu3a.uk
	Janice Gray	07444 237729	
Art Discussion 1	Angela Bishop	786749	artdiscuss@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 2	Caroline Jenks	772090	artdiscuss2@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 1	Gillian Eastmond	433003	bookgroup1@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 2	Alison Pullinger		bookgroup2@cvu3a.uk
	Sarah Organ	07393 493677	
	Georgina Mead	583544	
Book Group 3	Eileen Overton	01895 831984	bookgroup3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 4	Jackie Cobb	773718	bookgroup4@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Short Mat), (Chiltern)	Sue Spalton		shortbowls@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Williams		
Bridge	John Curtis	07803 347319	bridge@cvu3a.uk
Canasta	Linda Hepworth	07963 166087	canasta@cvu3a.uk
	Sue Hawksley	07773 877108	
Chess	Caroline Jenks		chess@cvu3a.uk
City of London Churches	Jackie Cobb	773718	londonchurches@cvu3a.uk
Current Affairs	Eileen Overton	01895 831984	currentaffs@cvu3a.uk
Dinghy Sailing	Wendy Barnes	783790	sailing@cvu3a.uk
	Judith Young	580912	
French Conversation	Morag Robertson	772236	frenchcons@cvu3a.uk
French Intermediate	Hilary Alleston	581934	french@cvu3a.uk
Fun Quizzes	James Cadle	07889 732291	quizzes@cvu3a.uk
Gardening	Jenny Beirne	727075	garden@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	729416	
German	Jenny Lee	863970	german@cvu3a.uk
History	Claire Paterson	712736	history@cvu3a.uk
	Ian Hutt	583955	
Keep Fit for 60+	John Bunyan	778858	keepfit60@cvu3a.uk
Knitting & Other Crafts	Jo Biggs	07704 482515	knit@cvu3a.uk
Line Dancing (Chiltern)	Linda English	721366	linedance@cvu3a.uk
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott	765141	mahjong@cvu3a.uk
MOTO	Mo Barnes	786766	moto@cvu3a.uk
MOTO 2	Brian Harding	813633	moto2@cvu3a.uk
Music Appreciation	Geoff Hayes		music@cvu3a.uk
	Colin O'Rourke	07870 778936	

(continues on next page)

Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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

Group	Convenor/s	Phone	u3a email address
Patchwork & Quilting	Angela Bratton	725312	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Dee Watson	01923 774314	
Photography with Digital Imaging	David Hurd	764093	photography@cvu3a.uk
	Pippa Greensmith	07842 136353	
Pilates (1, 2 and 3)	Christine Ross	431521	pilates@cvu3a.uk
	Liz Howlett	727482	
Play Reading	Joan Barton	07767 124426	playread@cvu3a.uk
	Linda Hepworth	762783	
Poetry	Christine Ogborne	07833 795347	poetry@cvu3a.uk
Railways	Graham Yellowley	07785 114277	railways@cvu3a.uk
	James Cadle	07889 732291	
Singing for Pleasure	Angela Bratton	725312	singing@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	729416	
Spanish Conv (Inter)	Hilary Alleston	581934	spanishconv@cvu3a.uk
Stamps & Other Collectables	Steve Epps	07909 467494	stamps@cvu3a.uk
Tai Chi	Sue Broad	718128	taichi@cvu3a.uk
	Meg Brinton	07802 731523	
Theatre	Geoff Naylor	434918	theatre@cvu3a.uk
	Helen Barnard		
Ukulele	Jeff Naman	07976 633798	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
	Heather Sprake	784269	
Amblers	Susan Osborne	866272	amblers@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 1	Stuart Stanley	07802 408696	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone	713649	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3	Catherine Haridi	07870 638148	walkers3@cvu3a.uk
	Jill Thomas	07966 799829	
Striders 1	Andrew Brown	758601	striders@cvu3a.uk
Striders 2	Ian Lee	863970	striders2@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: Country	Peter Schweiger	729321	walkshist@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: London	Angela Shipley	862699	walkslondon@cvu3a.uk
Wildlife	Harry Howlett	727482	wildlife@cvu3a.uk
	Keith Sonley	712857	
Wine Appreciation 1	Pauline & Tom Hohenberg	727665	wine@cvu3a.uk
Wine Appreciation 2	Graham Hitchenor	07739 084865	wine2@cvu3a.uk
Writers	John & Helene Bunyan	778858	writers@cvu3a.uk

News From The Groups

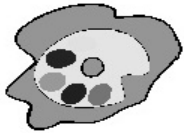
GROUP MEETINGS

Most of our Groups meet in person and are open to enquiries from new members. If full, they will hold a waiting list. Groups that are inactive generally 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



Despite miserable wintry conditions and missing members due to various ailments, we've managed to continue meeting up and trying to perfect our art! So our latest session was loosely based on animals, depicted in a mix of mediums. We had fun and are pretty proud of the results!

The next project we're attempting, completely new to all, is something called 'sgraffito'. This is a layering technique that involves scratching through the top layer to reveal underlying layers! It should be fun, or it could be really frustrating!

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



In December we looked at the Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid. Born into a privileged Iraqi family in 1950, she became a renowned architect with her ground-breaking designs. We looked at her public and domestic creations. We marvelled at her design for the headquarters of BEEAH (2013) in the desert of the UAE, which merges uniquely into its desert location. We were impressed that it was constructed from recycled materials and used solar energy. Nearer to home we looked at the London Aquatic Centre, built for the 2012 Olympics. One member had visited the centre and was impressed by its innovative design. Another member introduced a school in Brixton (2011), which used a design of 'Z' shaped stainless steel and glass. She also designed residential buildings, often incorporating art galleries, museums and retail centres, one such being a Miami tower block. It was a great loss to the architectural world when she died at the age of 65 in 2016.

In January our subject was 'Doorways'. We looked at the 15th century gilded doors of the Duomo in Florence, with their intricately worked panels depicting subjects from the Bible. One member showed us the elegant doorways of Georgian Dublin, painted in bright colours, post an edict from London to paint them black after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. We enjoyed the fascinating perspective of several doorways in Pieter de Hooch's work *A Boy Bringing Bread* (1663). Several members have enjoyed the work of Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershoi, particularly his interiors, such as *Sunlight on the Floor* (1906). Finally we looked at Rene Magritte and his surreal works of open doors set in unlikely situations, as in *La Victoire* (1939) and *L'Embellie* (1962). We considered their appeal.

In February our subject was 'War and Peace'. We looked at the haunting effects of war as in Kathe Kollwitz's *The Widow 1*, (1921) and the post WW2 bronze statues of Kindertransport by Frank Meisler, one of which stands at Liverpool Street Station in London. We looked at depictions of battles, fascinated by those of Elizabeth Thompson, Lady Butler's images of Crimea and Picasso's *Guernica* (1937). Peace did feature in our meeting, with the memorable photograph of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt at Yalta in 1945. Nearer to home we heard about the history of our WW1 war memorial situated at Chesham Broadway: a sobering subject for our times.

Future subjects will be Frida Kahlo, Gwen and Augustus John and portraiture.

"The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls." (Pablo Picasso)



Our December meeting focused on planning the 2025 programme. We have a diverse and interesting selection of meetings planned, which includes: Russian Art, Joachim Sorolla, stained glass and a full day in mid-summer, lunching in Caroline's garden and discussing our personal views of art and artists.

We finished the year with a light-hearted art quiz and enjoyed some delicious Christmas treats; an afternoon well spent.

We did not meet in January, but in February Caroline gave a talk on Paul Nash, illustrator, Surrealist and War Artist. Nash grew up in Buckinghamshire surrounded by beautiful and inspiring countryside, which engendered his love of landscape painting and illustration. His earliest artistic influences were 19th century Romanticism, but throughout his career he moved with the times, embracing Modernism and Surrealism.

Nash was an official War Artist during both World Wars. He completed "drawings of muddy places", as he put it, working mostly in pen and ink and over-painting with watercolour, then held a post-WWI one-man exhibition in 1918. By his own admission, he was not a competent figure-artist, so his work was mainly uninhabited landscapes depicting the desolation and destruction of Flanders fields. His most famous WWII pictures were also landscapes: *Totes Meer*, a desolate mass of wrecked German planes which appear to be an undulating sea of destruction lit by a watery crescent moon, and *Battle for Britain*, a colourful oil painting of a beautiful hot summer's day and an azure sky with brilliantly painted vapour trails. But then the viewer realises the actual meaning of this title; Britain is fighting for its survival against the menace of the approaching Luftwaffe. Nash died in 1946 from heart failure and is buried in Langley, Bucks.

Book 1

Gillian Eastmond



This friendly Book Group is a little different from other Book Groups in the u3a. We are about nine people and meet on the third Friday morning of the month. We meet alternately in different members' homes: one in Chesham Bois, one in Chesham and one in Great Missenden. We do not all read the same book. Instead, we bring a fiction or non-fiction book that we wish to recommend to the Group. After a brief description of the book's content, we say why we think it worth reading. Often other Group members have also read the book and can give their comments. Otherwise, we just ask further questions about it. We might sometimes progress to a short lively discussion about the theme of the book or suggest other worthwhile books on the theme.

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. I have been to traditional Book Groups and have found that the discussion normally ends after 60 minutes or 90 minutes when comments have run out. Our Group ends after two hours because people have other commitments and must leave. However, it normally could have lasted longer.

You will have learned about books that you now want to read and some that you would otherwise not have heard about. However, you will never be forced to read a book you really do not like.

You can always try us for a session to see if we are what you are looking for. Please email or telephone the Convenor to say you wish to come to a meeting.

Book 2

Alison Pullinger, Sarah Organ & Georgina Mead



Another interesting trio of books this quarter; Our first, *The Wartime Book Club* by Kate Thompson, was chosen by Amersham Library after an impressive talk given by Kate at the library in 2024, shortly after the novel was published. Inspired by true events, it is set in Nazi-occupied Jersey during the Second World War. It is an unforgettable story of everyday bravery and resistance and a tribute to the power of books and reading in the darkest times. Kate Thompson brings occupied Jersey and its inhabitants poignantly to life. The reader is left with the very real perspective of how Jersey's experience of the war was so different to mainland Britain.

(cont.)

Our second book was *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink. This book was translated into English from German. It deals with the struggle to come to terms with the past, in particular the difficulties for the post-war German generation and how they approached the wartime generation that took part in or witnessed the atrocities of the Holocaust. We are taken on a journey through the eyes of a then 15 year old boy and his unusual developing relationship with an older woman.

It was a really good read and provoked plenty of discussion. The novel has also been made into a film starring Kate Winslet and some members had seen this prior to reading the book. I will now look forward to watching the film to see how the characters are portrayed.

Our final book was *Bring Up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel. Many of us have by now seen and viewed so many books and films about the Tudors that this could be seen as yet just another one. In the main, our Group enjoyed the novel because of the author's ability to draw you into the story through her attention to detail. It feels as if you are there, living through the situations with the characters.

The title of the book was a legal phrase: It was the command made to court officials instructing them to deliver to trial men who, because they were accused of treason, were regarded as already dead. Although this book is the middle one of a trilogy and covers the time period in which Cromwell colluded with Henry to bring about Anne Boleyn's downfall, it can be read as a stand-alone novel. It is a lengthy work of fiction and needs a reasonable length of time to enjoy and appreciate all the events taking place.

Georgina Mead and Allison Pullinger

Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Availability is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham Library, and we currently have a full complement of ten members. We have entered 2025 with a positive outlook as our book choices are greatly improved from the books we received last year. We are currently reading *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and our next book is *In the Midst of Life*, a great improvement. However sometimes an awful read gives us a lot to discuss, which makes for an enjoyable meeting.

Book 4

Jackie Cobb



We meet in members' homes on the third Thursday of each month, in the morning. 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. Our next meeting is in March and we will read *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante. In April we will read *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. In May, it's *Our Man in Havana* by Graham Greene.

We would be happy to have two new members, so do get in touch, should you wish to join our Book Group.

Bowls (Short Mat)

Sue Spalton & Peter Williams (Chiltern u3a)



Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. The cost is £4.00 per session which includes a cup of tea. In the winter we meet each Friday from 13.15 to 15.30pm at Chesham White Hill Centre for Indoor Short Mat Bowls. Please check the Chiltern website at chiltern-u3a.org.uk for information on, and the start date for the summer season.

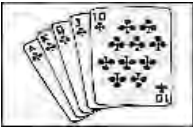
There are vacancies for members who would like to 'try their hand'; experience not needed; tuition given; bowls available. Interested members should contact the Convenors using: shortbowls@cvu3a.uk.

"A book is a garden, an orchard, a storehouse, a party, a company by the way, a counsellor, a multitude of counsellors." (Charles Baudelaire)

"A word after a word after a word is power." (Margaret Atwood)

Bridge

John Curtis



The Bridge Group continues to meet at Chartridge Park Golf Club on Wednesday afternoons, playing ACOL Bridge in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. There is currently a small waiting list to join the Group but, if you are interested, please let us know and we can add your name to the list.

Canasta

Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley



We meet on the third Monday of the Month at a member's house. It would be nice to have a few more members so if you're interested please contact us at: canasta@cvu3a.uk

Chess

Caroline Jenks



Exciting news in the Chess World: the BBC has announced that a new Chess programme is being recorded for BBC2. Twelve amateurs will be followed playing through a series. Chess is apparently the fastest growing sport in the world: come and be a part of it!

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.

Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We discuss all sorts of topics that are in the news and we listen to everyone's point of view. We learn so much from our fellow members 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. We try to solve the world's problems but have failed so far. If you are interested, please get in touch with the Convenor for details of the next meeting.

Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



We are getting ready for the 2025 sailing season and the dates of our sessions have been posted on our web page. Our usual sailing days are normally the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month, from 1pm to about 5pm, but please check the timetable for variations. All are welcome, whether beginners or experienced sailors. We are a friendly Group and although we cannot provide formal qualifications, we are keen to encourage our members to 'have a go' in a safe environment. Our lake is sheltered and shallow but there is always a safety boat on standby, manned by trained volunteers. The first session of the year is on Tuesday April 15th and we look forward to seeing you then.

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



The French Conversation Group meets twice a month. We take it in turns to host a meeting and to suggest a topic for discussion. This allows some preparation of vocabulary before the meeting. Occasionally we meet in a cafe and we have plans to go out to lunch. We often talk about programmes that we have seen on the television (Is *Emily in Paris* better than *Astrid, Murder in Paris*?) or share information on good books.

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. We recently enjoyed our annual French themed lunch; delicious pâté and cheese, with apple tart to follow. We are a very sociable Group.



The last two Fun Quizzes of the 2024/25 Season are on Tuesday 11th March and Tuesday 8th April. We then rest during the summer months, when people have other things to do in the evenings, and we will start the 2025/26 Season on Tuesday 11th November. We call them Fun Quizzes because there aren't teams in the usual sense (although several couples take part) and there are no winners or 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 an hour and has five rounds of ten questions each. If you would like to join in, please contact: quizzes@cvu3a.uk.

Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell & Jenny Beirne



There was a very good attendance at the first meeting of our 2025 programme, including several new members to the Group.

Our first speaker of the year was Briony Hudson, Curator and Director of Amersham Museum: Briony is an expert on medicinal plants and has written a book on the subject. Her talk, entitled *Pharmacy: Plants, Pots and Poisons*, gave us an informative and entertaining insight into the properties and historical uses of many of our native plants. It was particularly interesting to learn how many of our modern day medicines have their origins in ancient remedies. The potions and tinctures made from these plants were stored in beautiful ceramic pots, which Briony displayed on her slides. She also sprinkled her talk with information about Amersham's pharmaceutical past.

At February's meeting, Jaqueline Aviolet told us all about how to prune, feed and care for roses, and presented an historical timeline of roses from ancient to modern. Jaqueline also kindly donated one of her roses as a raffle prize.

David Marsh is our guest speaker in March. We all have pre-conceived images of a typical cottage garden and David's talk, *The History of the Cottage Garden*, will answer such questions as: Where does the phrase 'cottage garden' come from, When was it first used, and What were the original cottage gardens actually like?

For our June meeting we have arranged a visit to Lord Carrington's garden in Bledlow, where we will be given a guided tour of the grounds. This will culminate in the obligatory tea and cakes!

Although our membership is growing, we are still happy to welcome new members to the Group. Details can be found on the Chess Valley u3a Garden Group webpage, together with the programme for 2025.

Stephanie Rothwell and Jenny Beirne

German

Jenny Lee



Our friendly German Group continues to meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Here is a little German to ponder:

"Wenn du glücklich bist, solltest du nicht wünschen, noch glücklicher zu sein."

This quote by German writer Theodor Fontane means "If you are happy, you shouldn't wish to be even happier."

It's a reminder to be grateful for what you have.

"A beautiful plant is like having a friend around the house." (Beth Ditto)

"There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments." (Janet Kilburn Phillips)

"I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden." (Ruth Stout)



In an homage to the approaching season, we enjoyed festive treats and mulled wine at our December meeting, together with a talk by Brian Withington from Chiltern u3a on *A Roman Villa at Yueltide*. He imagined how a family would have lived and performed their daily tasks.

His talk encompassed the design and architecture of Roman villas and their locations, one of which has been identified on the Rye in High Wycombe, built on a quadrangle style with underfloor heating. The Bancroft Villa site between Towcester and Milton Keynes boasted a bath house equipped with a warm room, hot room, sweating room, changing room and pool; what luxury! It was a great introduction to life in Roman Britain, leaving us with a desire to learn more.

We welcomed again at our January meeting Ross Panter, retired History teacher, also from Chiltern u3a. He told us a wonderful real-life story of an amazing man whom none of us had ever been aware of:

Lieutenant General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart, VC KBE CB CMG DSO (1880-1963) was an officer in the British Army, born into an aristocratic family in Brussels. He was sent to boarding school in England and from there to Balliol College, Oxford. He left to join the British Army during the second Boer War, signing up as Trooper Carton, falsifying his age from 20 to 25. Wounded in the stomach and groin in South Africa, he was invalided home. This was just the beginning of his passion for life in war situations, with the resultant damage to his body, which never diminished his will to continue fighting.

His father, though furious at him for abandoning his studies, allowed him to stay in the army. He was given a commission as second lieutenant in the 4th Dragoon Guards and transferred to India in 1902. After serving in the British Army for eight years, he took the oath of allegiance to Edward VII and became a British subject.

During the First World War he was shot twice in the face, losing his eye and a portion of his ear in a low-level campaign in British Somaliland. In 1915 he was sent to the Western Front to command three infantry battalions and a brigade. He was wounded seven more times, losing his left hand. At the Battle of the Somme he was shot through the skull and ankle, through the hip at the Battle of Passchendaele, through the leg at Cambrai and through the ear at Arras. "Frankly", he said, "I have enjoyed the War"!

He was heavily involved in WWII as head of missions and in advisory capacities. On a journey home from Yugoslavia his plane crash-landed into the sea off the coast of Italian-controlled Libya. He swam ashore and was taken prisoner by the Italians. Six times he tried to escape. This was the second plane crash he survived.

Within a month of his return to England in 1943, he was sent by Churchill (who greatly admired him) to join the China mission as his personal representative. Reporting back to the government in 1945, he was asked to stay on in China, reporting on the increasing power of the Chinese Communists, whom he despised on principle.

He participated in the formal surrender of the Japanese in 1945. In 1947 now aged 66, he retired with the honorary rank of Lieutenant General. En route home whilst staying with a friend in Rangoon he slipped on matting and broke several vertebrae in his back; the final insult to a body already disabled and disfigured by many onslaughts throughout his phenomenal life. He died aged 83 in Ireland where he and his second wife had made their home. His book *Happy Odyssey: The Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart* may well be a good read.

Another great man, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), was the subject of Stephen Barker's return visit at our February meeting. His presentation revolved around *Watershed: Mahatma Gandhi and the First World War*. He was the youngest of four from a middle class Hindu family; unexceptional at school, shy and withdrawn with a dry sense of humour and an enormous capacity for writing, he was married at 13 to his wife of 14; life expectancy in India was very low.

He trained in law at the Inner Temple in London and was called to the bar at the age of 22. He moved to South Africa in 1893 to represent an Indian merchant in a lawsuit.

(cont.)

There he faced discrimination for the first time, but stayed and raised his family for the next 21 years. He first employed nonviolent resistance in a civil rights campaign. This was the beginning of his passion for truth, the law and the rights of ordinary people. He became involved with the Boer War where the honorific 'Mahatma', meaning great soul or venerable, was first applied to him. He campaigned for the rights of Indians in the country and thus was born 'satyagraha' (devotion to truth); a new technique for redressing wrongs through inviting suffering, not inflicting it, resisting adversaries without rancour and fighting them without violence. South Africa was not just the country where Gandhi formed this novel technique for political action, but also where he was transformed into a leader of men.

Gandhi left South Africa in 1914 just before the outbreak of war, living in London briefly, then returning to India in 1915. He supported the British war effort there recruiting soldiers for the British Indian Army, though he criticised British officials for high-handedness and for not taking up the grievances of long-suffering peasantry.

With the pushing through of the Rowlatt Act allowing for the imprisonment without trial of those suspected of sedition, Gandhi became estranged from the British Raj. Violent outbreaks followed, particularly in the Punjab. At the Massacre of Amritsar, when British-led soldiers killed 400 Indians, Gandhi's support for Empire ended, which in turn accelerated the end of the British Raj. From then, he was a radical proponent of Home Rule. This was a great talk by Stephen, leaving us wanting to know more about this inspiring man.

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 Mondays of every month. The meetings offer an opportunity to share ideas and skills.

We gathered for our Christmas lunch at 'The Squirrel' in February. This proved a great idea as it is a bleak time of year and quieter than the hectic lead up to festivities in December; good fun was had by all.

Currently, members of the Group are working on knitting, embroidery, patchwork, quilting and crochet projects. We have space for one more person, so please get in touch with the Convenor if you would like to join us.

Line Dancing

Linda English



The Line Dancing Group is run by Chiltern u3a, who 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 and chatting with a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. Anyone is welcome from beginners to more experienced players. We meet on the second and fourth Mondays (except Bank Holidays) at 2pm in the Free Church, Amersham. The Group is currently full.

The MOTOs have continued to socialise over their fortnightly Sunday lunches at local restaurants and pubs. These have included 'The Tavern' and 'The Junction' in Chesham, 'The Bell' in Bovingdon and 'The White Hart' in Whelpley Hill. Our monthly planning meetings are held over coffee and cakes at 'The Elgiva Café'. The Group is now full.

MOTO 2**Brian Harding**

Our Group has expanded by three, but we may lose one member to a relocation. When Rodney, our previous Convenor, returns from convalesce we will be reaching a maximum number to sensibly book a single pub table for our lunches. As a Group, we collectively decide on the different pubs and restaurants to visit each month and look forward to having a good attendance and lively conversation.

Music Appreciation**Geoff Hayes & Colin O'Rourke**

I wonder how many people reading this have heard of Madeleine Peryoux, a fabulous American jazz singer in the style of Billie Holliday who began her career singing on the streets of Paris, or know that the fourth movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony was written as a love letter to a socialite, Alma Schindler, whom he subsequently went on

to marry?

I must admit that I knew neither, but they are just two of the things I learned from attending the Music Appreciation Group meeting. Our meetings are enjoyable, fascinating and friendly. Everyone gets a chance to share their choice of music, and to perhaps add some interesting information, be it personal or otherwise.

We base our choices around a meeting theme, the next one for our 6th March meeting is music from Wales and Ireland, as it is between St David's, and St Patrick's days. I am torn between something by The Corrs and *The Armed Man* from Karl Jenkins.

There's no singing or playing of instruments involved. We play selected tracks and accompanying videos / films from Youtube and have a chance to pass comment or discuss more widely, depending on interest from the Group.

We have room for more members so, if you are interested, please join us: you will be most welcome. We meet at the Town Hall in Chesham on the first Thursday of the month from 2 to 4pm. Come along, enjoy the music, and learn something interesting.

Patchwork & Quilting**Angela Bratton & Dee Watson**

So here we are in 2025 and we have now had two monthly workshops with those who were able to come, starting some new projects alongside working on current ones. However, quite a few people were not able to be there due to other commitments so this is a good opportunity to invite anyone who would like to learn to patchwork. If you can thread a needle, use a ruler and can cut out fabric, then it is not difficult. If you have done it in the past and would like to get back to it, then why not come to visit us at Hyde Heath village hall. It's a lovely venue where we meet on the 3rd Wednesday each month and will be there from 9.30 to 3.30, so if you want to join us for the day to try it out or just drop in for a cuppa and see what we are doing, you will be welcome. Ring Dee on 07889 263207, so that we know when to expect you, and for you to find out more about us.

We are a very friendly Group and enjoy our sewing and sharing our successes. We're also appreciative of any advice we can gain from each other. We do hope to hear from anyone who wants to return to sewing or to start a new pastime.

For those of you who regularly read about us, you will know that we try to make some quilts to donate to charities for those in need (babies and adults) and I am pleased to report that we have finished off about 10 quilts, which will now be given away to others who will love and cherish them.

28th February 2025

Notice that the 17th Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the Chess Valley u3a will be held on Thursday 12th June 2025 at 2.00pm in the Broadway Baptist Church, Chesham.

The purpose of this advance notification is to enable you to:

Make nominations of candidates for election to the committee at the AGM. There is currently one vacancy for a new committee member and five candidates standing for re-election.

Notify the Secretary of any motions you wish to be dealt with at the meeting.

You may wish to nominate someone to become a member of the Committee. To assist you in making a nomination, enclosed is a Proxy Voting Form which you should complete and return to the Secretary by 6th June 2025.

If you wish to propose any other matters for discussion these must be put in writing, proposed and seconded, and forwarded to the Secretary (via email at secretary@cvu3a.uk, or via post to the below address) by 6th June 2025.

The meeting will be followed by our usual Monthly Talk.

Chess Valley u3a
Business Secretary
118 White Hill
Chesham
Bucks
HP5 1AR

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Committee Elections June 2025

Nomination Form for Officers and Committee Members

Six Committee roles are subject for election or re-election.

Position applied for (tick one or more boxes)

Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vice-Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Web Editor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Events Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaker Organiser	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposer and Seconder

Proposer's name (in capitals)

Signature

Seconder's name (in capitals)

Signature

Nominee's full name (in capitals)

Nominee's CVu3a membership number (if known)

Nominee declaration

If elected, I am willing to accept the position for a two year term on the Chess Valley u3a Committee.

Signature Date

Please send your nomination, no later than 9th May 2025, by email to: secretary@cvu3a.uk

or by post to: Chess Valley u3a, The Secretary, 118 White Hill, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1AR



Chess Valley University of the Third Age

Annual General Meeting 2025

Proxy Voting Form

The following matters are to be presented at the 17th Annual General Meeting of the Chess Valley u3a (CVu3a) on Thursday 12th June 2025 and I, the undersigned, authorise the Chair of the Meeting or to vote in accordance with my instructions:

	Yes	No	Abstain
Approval of the Minutes of the 16 th AGM of CVu3a held on Thursday 13 th June 2024	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approval of Accounts of CVu3a for 2024/2025	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-election of James Cadle as Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-election of Valerie Garrood as Web Editor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-election of Jackie Cobb as Events Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-election of West Marshall as Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Re-election of Peter Windsor as Speaker Organiser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirmation of Sue Broad as Committee Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirmation of Jim Campbell as Committee Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reappointment of Ernest Newhouse as Examiner of CVu3a's accounts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I wish to ask the following question:

.....

Signature: Date:

Name (print): Membership No:

To be returned to the Business Secretary by Friday 6th June 2025:

Chess Valley u3a, Business Secretary, 118 White Hill, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1AR

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Our final meeting of last year in December was Christmas-themed with mince pies and our Famous *Five Minutes of Fame*.

Alec might find himself in demand after demonstrating his amazing Text effects, and Barry and David showed photographs in PowerPoint presentations. There were beautiful images from others, particularly street photography, autumnal scenes and travel photography, so lots of good contributions.

We next met on the 15th January when Drew Burnett from Wild Eye Photography showed his photographs from recent trips to Montana and Alaska. Drew was a very entertaining speaker as well as being a superb animal photographer, so this was a very interesting meeting with a wonderful set of animal and bird photographs and a lot of good advice for our photographers. We had 20 in the audience, 12 PGDI members and 8 from the Wildlife Group.

Our meeting in February was attended by 12 members; we looked at their photographs from the Christmas period. These included a presentation of photographs of paintings by Van Gogh from the recent exhibition in London, beach scenes, cathedrals and some interesting displays from Tate Modern. We then watched some videos of photographing with candlelight. These can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/JyBygiEzuuw?si=hPaprl-QI2vHiDRm>

https://youtu.be/1kYqQeqXGzE?si=hJM1EDD9usO_cmp9

<https://youtu.be/M1MFgB6D2aQ?si=imojwY-HVmavYVMf>

The rest of the meeting was taken up with a discussion about the programme for the rest of the year. Ideas that came up were:

Visiting photography exhibitions

A field trip to Chalfont St Giles

A field trip to London, including Tate Modern / Shoreditch / Brick Lane

A field trip to Highgate Cemetery

Table-top photography / Portraits / Professional models

A field trip to St Albans / Verulamium

Print display

Night field trip: Christmas in Chesham (21st November)

Recap on Layers, Masks and Blending modes

Engage a speaker on using mobile phone cameras

The next meeting will be on March 19th when we will look at members' candlelight photographs and their Photoshop work on some routine photographs to improve them. The forthcoming programme will include many of the above items.

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



The Pilates Groups had a very enjoyable Christmas Party in December; this was very well attended and great fun.

In January we returned to classes. Many of our ladies and gents are quite experienced, having joined us in October 2016. This has enabled us to safely increase each class to 20.

Despite this we still have a waiting list. If you are on it please be patient; we will do everything we can to offer you a place as soon as possible.

A very belated Happy New Year to everyone, and a huge thank you to Sue our wonderful instructor and to all the Groups who turn up cheerfully each week to work at improving their health, fitness, mobility and balance. Pilates is good for you!

"Great photography is about depth of feeling, not depth of field." (Peter Adams)

"I don't trust words. I trust pictures." (Gilles Peress)

"Photography takes an instant out of time, altering life by holding it still." (Dorothea Lange)



We read a different play each month, the choice of which is dependent on what is available at the library (some of the copies are rather aged!) We would like to have more members but ten is as many as we can fit into one another's houses for our monthly meetings.

Our December meeting was a celebration of Christmas and we shared mince pies, discussed poems, and raised a glass! In January we read the poetry of Dylan Thomas.

February saw us choosing poetry on the theme of 'Time and Clocks', and yes, W H Auden's *Stop All The Clocks* was included.

Future Meetings:

March: Ursula Askham Fanthorpe

April: 'Truth and Lies'

May: Rupert Brooke



We are fortunate to have a good membership with new members joining regularly. They have enjoyed good talks and a very good visit to St Pancras Station.

December 20th: *Oxford to Cambridge, Then and Now*: Dick Crane: We have been trying to get Dick Crane to come and give us a talk for quite a while and we were treated to a really interesting one on the links between Oxford and Cambridge, reasons for the line being built and its spur lines. Pictures of the old stations and their current state of them added to what emerged as a really interesting talk: Another talk please, Dick!

January 24th: St Pancras Hotel and Station Visit: Thirty of the Group met at St Pancras Hotel Reception / Concierge desk and set off with two guides, each leading a group of 15 of us. We gained access to parts of the hotel that only guests can roam through. The decoration and carpets were sumptuous, rooms were ornately decorated and the terrace off the Ladies Smoking Room was a delight. Lots of information was imparted and arriving on the concourse of the station next to the 'Champagne Bar' meant that it was time to sit down and absorb everything we had seen and could see. A very good visit.

February 21st: *Metroland*: Oliver Green. Oliver Green was the Head Curator at London Transport Museum and gave a lovely talk on *Metroland*, not just the Metropolitan Line section, but also the spread of suburbia in other parts of London built around the developing tube network. These included the Piccadilly Line and Northern Lines. It was interesting to see the house styles in each area and Oliver had some great photos showing steam trains and other locomotives (Electric Locomotive number 14 Benjamin Disraeli, for example) in open countryside, followed by modern day pictures showing the complete build-up of houses / suburbs.

Our next meetings are:

March 21st: *Preserving the King of Diesels: 40 Years of Deltic Preservation*: Murray Brown

April 25th: *Highs and Lows on the Narrow Gauge*: Mike Brookes

May 16th: Talk by the Director of the London Transport Museum, Covent Garden

June 27th: *The Paris Metro*: Andrew Martin

Note that the May 16th talk will be at the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden.

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

"The world's longest railway is the Trans-Siberian Railway, which connects European Russia to the Russian Far East, and is over 5,772 miles long." (AI Overview)



A new term and a new repertoire!

Rehearsals are well under way after the Christmas break. We welcomed two new members and two returnees to the choir this term.

Ali, our musical director, has chosen a mix of familiar pop songs and pieces from well-known musicals, as well as some classical items for us this term. These will form part of our programme at our end of year concert in July.

As ever, we are very grateful to Ali for teaching us with patience and enthusiasm and to Gwen, our accompanist, who gives her time freely to attend our rehearsals.

New members are welcome. If you enjoy singing and would like to join the choir, then please contact one of the Convenors. Full details can be found on the Singing for Pleasure 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, Group members showed an eclectic mix of items from their collections. These included a large collection of matchboxes and match booklets from the 1950s onwards (we learnt a new term for collecting these: phillumeny). Also there was a large collection of sports programmes including a rare programme from the 1948 Olympic games in London, an 1895 Scottish silver christening mug that had been presented to a member's grandfather and a

display of stamps, postcards and other items from the 1924-25 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. We also looked at a collection of stamp albums passed to our new member Kay; welcome, Kay.

At our next meeting we will be concentrating on stamps again.

If anyone has a collection of anything they would like to show, discuss or get an opinion on, you are welcome to join us.

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton



After our half term break we resumed classes on the 25th February for our remaining six weeks of term.

The class have agreed with our tutor that we would concentrate on the 24 form for the next few weeks so that we can really get to remember the correct movements, in the correct order.

Unfortunately the Group has been full for some time now and we have been unable to find another suitably trained tutor to start a new beginners Group. If you know of such a person, who must have the necessary qualifications and insurance, please let the Convenor know.

Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



Our recent trip to the *ABBA Voyage* show was greatly enjoyed by the two coachloads of Group members who went. Our next trip is to *Les Misérables* on 15 May and our allotted tickets for this sold out within a very short time.

As the Group expands, this will happen more often, so do not delay! If you want to go, please respond as soon as possible, so as to secure your seat.

We then have a trip planned to Stratford upon Avon to see the Royal Shakespeare production of *The Winter's Tale* on 30 July.

(cont.)

We can confirm that, for insurance reasons, all persons wishing to come on these trips must be Chess Valley u3a members. If you have ideas for future trips, please do let us know but they must be for shows that can offer group prices as otherwise, with the coach fare, they may not be financially viable.

The Group is able to accept new members.

Ukulele

Jeff Naman & Heather Sprake



*'I was on my own feeling sad and blue
When I met a friend who knew just what to do
On her little uke, she began to play
And then I knew I'd buy a uke that day'*

I had never played an instrument or read music but was introduced to the Ukulele and now love playing it. The above is an extract of one of the songs we play: *Blame it on the Ukulele*.

We meet on the first and third Tuesday afternoons of each month. If you would like to give it a try, please contact me for a chat. Our new members are enjoying being part of the Group and coming up with new suggestions for future meetings. It is fun and not taken too seriously.

Jeff Naman 07976 633798

Walking Groups

Each Walking Group accepts participants from other Groups with prior notification. Members of the Groups also walk individually to scout new routes.

Amblers (3 - 4 miles)

Sue Osborne

Our February walk commenced in the village of Great Hampden from where we walked towards Denner Hill Farm. It was not the brightest of days but that did not dampen our enthusiasm. We were not to be disappointed, as along our route we saw many snowdrops, and daffodils were pushing through the cold earth. We were intrigued to see what appeared to be an old staddle stone fixed into the base of a barn door. In the past these stones were used to lift the granaries above the ground, protecting the stored grain from vermin and water.

Despite the dull misty day we enjoyed our walk, and thought of spring and the many lovely walks to come in our future programme.

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

The Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 and walks are usually between 4 and 5.5 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, published every three months and members advise the walk leader if they wish to participate.

For the fourth quarter of 2024, we held walks in Little Gaddesden, The Lee, Berkhamsted, Little Hay, Chorleywood, and Cliveden. For the first quarter of 2025 our walks were or will be in Hawridge, Studham, Ashridge and Burnham Beeches.

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

Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

Mud seems to be playing a large part in our walks at this time of year but it has not put off many people as we have had good numbers and it has been lovely to see snowdrops and a few daffodils poking their heads through. I also hope by the time you read this we will have seen the sun rather than day after day of grey, dampish weather!

(cont.)

However, as we say, we walk whatever the weather and it is lovely to catch up with friends as well as newcomers to the Group. Our walks over the past few months have been around Little Kingshill, Great Missenden and Prestwood, with another at Hyde Heath. Our next one is from the village of Fulmer and will take us into the Black Park Country Park.

We welcome new members but please contact the Convenor first if you wish to join the Group.

Walkers 3

Jill Thomas & Catherine Haridi

New walkers are always welcome to join us at Walkers 3, and we walk on the first Wednesday of the month.

We joined forces with Walkers 2 for our Christmas walk (led and organised by Sue), and stopped at the village of Little Kingshill; oh the mud in places! But there were some beautiful views; then lunch at 'The Full Moon' pub. Libby led our January and February walks. In January we had a hilly walk around Chesham and Chesham Bois; and in February, a walk around Hyde Heath, which incorporated a stop at the new gate paid for out of our gate fund, dedicated to Martin Cooper, who unfortunately is no longer with us.

Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



Both Striders Groups have vacancies, so if you enjoy walking between six and eight miles in the Chilterns with like-minded people, do come and join us. The walk generally takes us about three hours so the pace is not very fast; the aim is to enjoy the exercise and not to make it a work-out. Currently walks are very muddy, but thank you to the walk leaders who do the recce and manage to find routes that avoid the worst of the mud. We are looking forward to warmer weather and hopefully more sunshine, and the opportunity to do full day walks on the fifth Tuesday of the month.

Just before Christmas, we held our annual Christmas walk and lunch. Members from both Groups came together for a walk starting from Cholesbury Village Hall, with a pit stop at a member's garden in Bellingdon for mulled wine and mince pies. Returning to Cholesbury, we enjoyed a buffet lunch, a raffle and some entertainment from talented members of the Groups. The event raised £290 for the Chiltern Society and Andrew Clark provided a brief summary of the activities of the organisation.

Our thoughts are now turning to the Summer Walk, where we head away from the local area for a day trip. The Convenors would welcome suggestions for a destination for this year. Some have suggested going back to the Seven Sisters on the coast near Eastbourne, while another suggestion is to walk along the Thames path beyond Oxford.

Our Groups continue to grow with younger CVu3a members joining and lowering the average age of the Group as a whole; excellent news for the longer term future of Striders. There is however no waiting list for either Striders Group: so, if you would like to join one or other Group, please contact either Andrew Brown (Striders 1) or Ian Lee (Striders 2). Striders 1 meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month; Striders 2 meet on the first and third Tuesdays.

Walks into History: Country

Peter Schweiger

Wallingford: January 2025



Twenty hardy souls met at the former cattle market car park in Wallingford on a cold frosty morning. The town's name came from being on the Thames where William the Conqueror crossed by a ford. The 'Walling' part probably came about because the town was surrounded by a massive earth wall, built by the Saxons, about 800 AD. So it was 'Wall' and 'Ford' and over time, this became Wallingford.

Having warmed up at the 'Dolphin Inn' with hot drinks, the Group was led by Susan Russell and Peter Schweiger on a trail provided by the town Information Centre. This is situated in the Town Hall built in 1670. A notable resident was Sir William Blackstone, who wrote about English Laws; his work formed the basis of the American Constitution. (cont.)

Another famous resident was Agatha Christie who lived the last 30 years of her life here. We saw her life-size statue sitting on a bench looking as cold as we felt. She even had a dewdrop hanging from her nose! As the creator of famous fictitious characters Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot, she sold over two billion books!

We were glad for the input from Jim Olney, who could explain the attractive brickwork and the ways old buildings were constructed, as we walked along Church Lane. The town had been of royal importance with a mint in Goldsmith's Lane. The remains of the 11th century castle can also be seen. The massive ramparts, built with pick and shovel to repel the Danes, were higher than some of the nearby houses that we could look over as we walked along them.

Wallingford had an iron foundry and its work was seen in the lamp-posts on the bridge and the iron vent pipe of the sewerage system. The iron was also used to make window frames that can still be seen. A huge and very ancient malt house, built using 'clunch', a form of very hard chalk, impressed us.

The Thames was full of floodwater and next to the bridge there were markers indicating where the water had reached in years of bad floods. The bridge was last rebuilt in 1809 after previous ones were swept away by floods.

To warm up a bit, we went into a large antiques supermarket with masses of stock, before returning to the cosiness of food and drink at the 'Dolphin Inn'. Wallingford is worthy of repeat visits to explore more.

Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell



The life of Charles Dickens: December 2024

It wouldn't be feasible to think of London at Christmas without Charles Dickens being amongst us, so this was the second December walk based on his life. The first, three years ago, started in East London and centred on the setting of his most popular story, *A Christmas Carol*. Now we found ourselves at Embankment

with the focus being his own life in the capital along with Victorian London's real buildings and people that gave rise to so many of his fictional characters.

However, his life started in Portsmouth in 1812, where his father was a civil servant in the navy, moving on to Chatham in Kent and landing in London in Camden. By this time the family fortunes had floundered and his father was slammed into a debtor's prison along with his whole family who had to tag along. All that is, except for the 12-year-old Charles who was put to work by his mother, to live all on his own at Warren's Blacking factory, pasting labels on shoe polish containers, right where we stood at Embankment station. Later he was transferred to the factory showrooms in Chandos Street and we followed his exact footsteps as he walked alone from his digs to work, passing round Watergate where the Thames used to lap at its edge; then into Buckingham Street, where he later lived opposite the Duke of Buckingham's residence. He left the factory aged 15 after his father, now free, spotted him through the showroom window and ashamed, sent him back to school where he learned physics, maths, and Latin, allowing him to later gain employment as a legal clerk at Gray's Inn.

His early books were published in magazine form, forcing people to buy each edition to continue the story. In 1843, he wrote a Christmas Carol in six weeks, which sold out at five shillings a copy, leather bound with gold leafed pages. He wrote 15 books in all, over 13 years. We met so many of his characters along the way: Mr Macawber, based on his father, Bob Fagin (*Oliver Twist*), *Little Dorritt* (focusing on the debtors prison system) and the bitter, jilted Miss Havesham (*Great Expectations*). We paused at 'Rules Restaurant' in Covent Garden, the oldest in London, where he dined regularly with his mistress, Nellie Turner. A 22-year marriage to Catherine Hogarth and 10 children marked his life during which he treated his wife cruelly, taking their children away from her before divorcing her. He died from a stroke in 1870 aged 58 and wanted to be buried near his home in Rochester Cathedral. However, he ended up in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Angela Shipley

"The most important thing in life is to stop saying, 'I wish' and start saying, 'I will'. Consider nothing impossible, then treat possibilities as probabilities."

(Charles Dickens: David Copperfield)



Our year started with a talk on 'Deer' by Geoff Wickett from Chiltern Venison. The Group learnt all about the six varieties of wild deer in the UK: Red, Roe, Fallow, Sika, Muntjac and Chinese Water deer. Did you know that the latter has tusks and not antlers? Geoff talked about their management in the Chilterns and the politics of controlling numbers throughout the UK.

In February, we departed from the local scene and were treated to a talk on 'Volcanoes and Dragons' by John Tyler. Our member Steve Epps, past Convenor of the Group, took charge and all were treated to a slide show of what can be seen in Indonesia; a truly interesting presentation.

Looking forward to the next three months, we hope to benefit from the knowledge of speakers on swan upping, hedgehogs and squirrels. If these subjects are of interest, or for that matter wildlife, habitat or the farming environment, come and join us. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at Amersham Common Village Hall starting at 2pm.

Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



The November meeting at the Clarkes' had an Australian theme, starting with a Penfolds *Max Chardonnay* from the Adelaide Hills at £20. This was followed by another Chardonnay from the McGuigan family available from M&S for £9.99. Moving on to reds, there was another Penfolds wine, a blend of Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon from Koonunga Hill, which was 14.5% and good value at £11.50 less 25%. The evening finished with a 2021 *Margaret River Special Selection Xanadu* from the Wine Society, which was a 14% blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot.

December at the Connors' was an Italian night, starting with a *Trere Arlus Albana Secco Romagna* from the Wine Society at £10.50. This was followed by a *Farinelli Abruzzo* made from Trebbiano grapes, from Laithwaites at £8.99 but at only 11% it was rather innocuous. A *Masi Campofiorin 2020 Rosso Verona*, made from Corvina grapes was reduced in Waitrose from £15 to £10. The *Ultima Edizione* red from Avery's at £12.99 was an unusual blend of *Montepulciano*, *Sangiovese*, *Primitivo* and *Negroamaro*. The evening finished with a *Moscato d'Asti Dolce 2013*, slightly fizzy and only 5% from Majestic at around £10.

January saw us at the Howletts' for the now traditional Burns Night with Scottish food and French wine. Starting with a *Cremant de Bourgogne Cave de Lugny* from Waitrose at £9.99, we moved on to a *Chablis 1er Cru* from J. Moreau & Fils at 13.5%, available from Tesco reduced from £19.95 to £15. This was followed by a *Pouilly Fume, Les Clos du Matin, Sauvignon Blanc*, 13% from Waitrose at £16. The haggis was accompanied by *Famous Grouse* whisky and then we moved on to red with *La Cuvee Cachee 2014 Bordeaux* from Avery's; a humble Bordeaux made by a prestigious anonymous property. This was followed by a *Saint-Aubin 1er Cru Cuvee les Rouges-Gorges 2019* from Henri Prudhon & Fils Pinot Noir, £25 from the Wine Society. Finally we had a *Costieres de Nimes 2022* from Waitrose at £9.95. An exceptionally merry evening was had by all!

Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchener



December's meeting was hosted by Fiona and Richard, whose theme was 'All Wines to Begin with 'C' for Christmas'. There was one exception, with a bonus wine from Ukraine, of all places. Perhaps surprisingly, this wine called *Bolgrad* came within a whisker of the winner, an Australian *Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon*. It even beat the *Chateauneuf du Pape*! All were rounded off with some lovely Xmas nibbles and cheeses!

In January, as is our tradition, we have a meal together, rather than a wine meeting. A good lunch was enjoyed at 'The Boot' at Sarratt.

February's meeting was hosted by Muriel and Alan, and the theme was 'The Lidl Six'. The wines were good but one member thought that they were a bit inferior to equivalent wines elsewhere. I say "Roll on the new Aldi opening in Amersham this year" to test this assumption. Reds triumphed on the night but, for the first time, all three wines had the same score: An Italian Primitivo, a Chilean Malbec, and a South African Shiraz.



We have continued to have some excellent meetings this last quarter with a high level of commitment from our members. Even when domestic events conspire to prevent someone getting to a meeting, they submit their stories on-line for us to read out. 'Something Inherited' was our December topic with 'Being First' in January and, for our meeting on the 14th February, appropriately we wrote on 'Valentine's Day'. At one point, forlorn vegetables featured in a poem. Our March topic is 'De-cluttering', a timely topic after the Christmas period, and we start thinking about spring-cleaning.

Our Group welcomes new members so, if you write in any capacity, maybe you would like to join us. Our meetings are generally at 2.30pm on the second Friday of the month in a member's home. We agree a topic for our next meeting but members can present from any work that they may have in hand.

Since Valentine's Day is just behind us, here's a poem from Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
 Except for love's sake only. Do not say,
 "I love her for her smile—her look—her way
 Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
 That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
 A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—
 For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
 Be changed, or change for thee—and love, so wrought,
 May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
 Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry:
 A creature might forget to weep, who bore
 Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
 But love me for love's sake, that evermore
 Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1806 - 1861

Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

FIRST in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Art Discussion 2 (pm)	Walkers 1	Walkers 3	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 (Country) OR	Art Discussion 1 (am)	Writers (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders 1	Walks into London (alternate months)	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)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	Book 1 (am)
Knitting & Other Crafts (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)		
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	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



The Art Group can justifiably be very proud of the work they produce. They have continued to meet over the winter and work on their chosen subject 'Animals' which they have depicted in a mix of mediums.

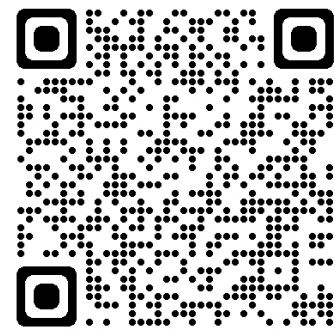


Left: The Art Group, having worked hard over December, held their Xmas bash ... in January.

Left Centre: It was 'Italian Night' at the Connors for the Christmas celebrations for Wine Appreciation 1.

Below: If you sit down on a park bench in Wallingford, Agatha Christie, a local resident, might be your companion; as discovered by the Walks into History Country Group in January.

Bottom: Walkers 1 made it to Cliveden for their Christmas outing.



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