

u3a
Chess Valley

Registered Charity 1126990

NEWSLETTER

September - November 2024

website: www.cvu3a.uk



Front Cover: The rare Butterfly Orchid, spotted by Wildlife Group members on their June visit to Dancersend Nature Reserve.

Right: Chris Day's fantastic selection of perennials command the attention of Gardening Group members in July.

Below: Good walking weather for Amblers at Great Bois Wood in August.

Bottom Right: It's fair winds and good weather for our dinghy sailors at Troy Lake.

Bottom Left: The music and songs of the First World War proved an emotive topic for the History Group at Colin O'Rourke's presentation in July.



Speakers for monthly talks

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



Lucy Moore

Thursday 12th September

Maharanis: The Tale of Four Indian Queens and 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 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.

Paul Barwick

Thursday 10th October

The White House Mouse (Nancy Wake): A Truly Remarkable Spy

This is the story of the inspirational World War Two spy, Nancy Wake, a remarkable woman who lived with the daily threat of torture and death at the hands of the Gestapo. Her incredible courage and strength of purpose is an awe-inspiring tale as we follow her exploits as an agent of the famous Special Operations Executive in occupied France. We explore her life, lived to the full, and salute her tremendous bravery.

Ann Fletcher

Thursday 14th November

From the Mill to Monte Carlo

Joseph Hobson Jagger was a Yorkshire textile worker who had laboured in the Victorian mills of Bradford, but he was not what might be expected, as he 'broke the bank at Monte Carlo'! He was the only person known to have devised an infallible and completely legal system to defeat the odds at roulette and win a fortune. Find out what happened to his millions and why he should now be regarded as the real 'man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo'.

Danielle Barnett

Thursday 12th December

'Tis The season To Be Jolly: Christmas Traditions All Over the World

Danielle has over 30 years in the entertainment industry under her belt, a signed singer songwriter with five Top Ten chart hits to date, and has managed two worldwide Top Ten chart bands. She was formerly the lead singer for the world-famous number one chart act Urban Cookie Collective who had a big hit with *The Key The Secret* and she has fronted the act for 23 years. We can look forward to her fun look at the weird, wonderful and somewhat wacky Christmas traditions all over the world.



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



Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our September – November newsletter. You will be pleased to learn that I have nothing really to report this time around so you can get on with the more interesting parts of the newsletter!

With best wishes



James Cadle
chair@cvu3a.uk

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Andy Anderson	<i>Amersham</i>	Pat Milliner	<i>Amersham</i>
Mike Axten	<i>Amersham</i>	Helen Parry	<i>Amersham</i>
Keith Bond	<i>Chesham</i>	Richard Pearl	<i>Amersham</i>
Garry Giles	<i>Chesham</i>	Sheila Poole	<i>Chesham</i>
Katie Giles	<i>Chesham</i>	Allen Salter	<i>Chalfont St Giles</i>
Claire Gilhooly	<i>Latimer</i>	Penney Salter	<i>Chalfont St Giles</i>
Brian Hall	<i>Chesham</i>	Mike Smith	<i>Hyde Heath</i>
Martin Harborne	<i>Chesham</i>	Ann Whiting	<i>Beaconsfield</i>
Sylvia Lawson	<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	Position vacant	vicechair@cvu3a.uk	
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor	treasurer@cvu3a.uk	01494 434918
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Membership Secretary	Jim Wilkie	membership@cvu3a.uk	01494 782081
Groups Coordinator	Position vacant	groups@cvu3a.uk	
Web Editor	Valerie Garrood	webmaster@cvu3a.uk	01494 433585
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	James Cadle		07889 732291
Speaker Organiser	Peter Windsor	speakers@cvu3a.uk	07595 776473
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb	eventscoord@cvu3a.uk	01494 773718

From the Events Team

Visit to Hatfield House

On 14th June, 42 of us visited Hatfield House. This is a privately owned stately home where Elizabeth 1st was staying when she was told she had become Queen. Our two guides were particularly good, and one of them completed the tour by playing the organ for us.

Alan Gray

Visit to Kew Gardens Christmas Lights, Thursday 28th November 2024.

The Events Team has organised a coach trip to see the Christmas Lights Trail at Kew Gardens on Thursday 28th November. We have been able to obtain 50 tickets. Please email me on events@cvu3a.uk to register interest.

Jackie Cobb

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
Art	Angela Spittle	art@cvu3a.uk
	Janice Gray	
Art Discussion 1	Angela Bishop	artdiscuss@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 2	Caroline Jenks	artdiscuss2@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 1	Gillian Eastmond	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
	Brian Harding	
Music Appreciation	Geoff Hayes	music@cvu3a.uk
	Colin O'Rourke	

(continues on next page)

Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
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 Hitchenor	wine2@cvu3a.uk
Writers	John & Helene Bunyan	writers@cvu3a.uk

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd November 2024

News From The Groups

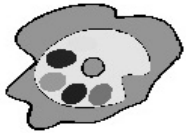
GROUP MEETINGS

Most of our Groups 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



During a rainy period we decided to see if we could cheer ourselves up with splashy or reflective paintings to cheer us through the gloom! The holiday period meant a few missed sessions for us, so we are looking forward to more explorations in our work, in September!

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



Our June meeting featured two female contemporary artists, Bridget Riley and Tracey Emin. We looked at Bridget Riley's technical expertise in her use of colour to achieve three-dimensional works as in *Movement in Squares* (1961). We also looked at two later works: *Nataraja* (1993) and *Achean* (1981), which depict India and Egypt respectively. We were challenged by Tracey Emin with her Turner Prize-winning *My Bed* (1998). We discussed the autobiographical nature of much of her work, with creations featuring love, desire, loss and grief. One member encouraged us to consider the role of the Saatchi gallery in promoting her work. We were cheered by her largest text work, a neon sign erected at St Pancras Station, *I want my time with You*.

In July we looked at American Expressionism. This art movement started in the early part of the twentieth century as a response to the more conventional art of the period. It consists of vast abstract paintings using vivid colour, demonstrating freedom and emotion. Many are untitled, inviting the viewer to consider their own feelings as they view the work. Notable exponents of the movement are Mark Rothco and Barnett Newman. We looked at Jackson Pollock with his portrayal of nature in *Shimmering Substance* (1945) and Robert Motherwell's *The Voyage* (1949). We considered the role of the art critic in promoting this challenging movement and whether emerging corporate wealth elevated the sale price of these works.

In August we discussed Andy Goldsworthy, unknown to some of the Group. A British artist, he is a widely known exponent of Land Art. Many examples are created from natural materials, such as leaves and snow, and are only transitory. Some are more permanent, like cairns, using local stone. Everyone agreed that these works need to be seen in their surroundings to be enjoyed more fully. Most fascinating were the photographs of his leaf creations as seen in *Sycamore Leaves Edging Sycamore Tree* (1997) and *14 Snowball Contents* (2000), fourteen snowballs deposited in the City of London to melt and reveal their contents. His works have featured on Royal Mail postage stamps: *Springtime* (1995) and *Ice Sculptures* (2003).

Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



'Artists' Self-Portraits' was the theme for our June meeting. We each chose artists, some famous and some not so well known, to discuss. We looked at the pioneering work of Caterina van Hemessen who was likely to have been the first artist, male or female, to depict themselves at work at an easel, in 1548. Another female trendsetter was Clara Peeters (1583 -1657) who included a discreet self-portrait in almost all of her works. This incorporation of a self-portrait in paintings caught on, and other artists followed suit. Not all artists were kind to themselves in their self-depiction. Joan Miro's moon-like face and Egon Schiele's gaunt staring features, were such examples. Rembrandt in his youth and old age, Vincent van Gogh with a pipe and straw hat, and the brother and sister artists Augustus and Gwen John came together in a very entertaining and informative meeting. (cont.)

In July we had a presentation by Claire on the life and work of Caravaggio, nicknamed “The Bad Boy of Baroque”, because of his riotous and unpredictable behaviour. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio was born in 1571 in Milan. For almost all his creative life he worked in Rome, where he developed his chiaroscuro style of painting, using light for dramatic effect. During his early career he painted secular subjects, including intimate chamber pieces (*The Lute Player*, *Boy Bitten by a Lizard*). His first religious paintings were realistic depictions of biblical subjects; he preferred to paint his subjects with their natural flaws, which was controversial for the time. For the final few years of his life, he moved between Naples, Malta and Sicily, still working but also avoiding the authorities, keen to arrest him for murder. He apparently died of a fever in 1610 but, like his life, his death was also controversial; was it a natural death or was he murdered? It was a most interesting afternoon for our Group.

The sun shone on us for our August meeting held in Caroline’s garden. ‘Brainstorm a Picture’ was the theme, based on The National Gallery’s *Take One Picture* scheme. We looked at pictures and discussed how we could create art activities based on them: Van Gogh’s bedroom, a mosaic floor battle scene from Pompeii, Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s banquet scene *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, a very strange depiction of *George and the Dragon* by Uccello and an American artist, Audrey Flack’s photorealistic painting linked to gambling; All these diverse examples stimulated our imaginations into creating some interesting ideas, not always sensible, which added to the enjoyment of the day: Elevenses, lunch and tea in the garden; Perfect.

Book 1

Gillian Eastmond



This informal, friendly Book Group meets at 10am on the third Friday morning of the month at a member’s house in Chesham, Amersham or Great Missenden. This evens out the distance anyone must drive. We usually miss out an August meeting.

We 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, members ask questions about the book and often others have read it and will comment on it. We can also have a short discussion about the theme of the book and recommend other similar books.

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 Group ends after two hours because people have other commitments and so must leave. However, it normally could have lasted 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



We continue to meet in Amersham library at 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month. The books we read are sets of 10 provided by the library. Our Group is full at present.

This quarter we have read three different books, again providing much food for thought. The first was *The Burning Chamber* by Kate Mosse, followed by *Three Sisters* by Heather

Morris, and the diary of a junior doctor, Adam Kay, entitled *This Is Going To Hurt*.

The Burning Chamber is an historical drama set in France in 1562. The backdrop of the story is the rise of the Huguenots, the consequent religious unrest and their persecution. Kate Mosse is renowned for her in-depth historical research; The France of this period is brought vividly to life. The fictional story of heroine Minou Joubert is compelling. The author’s writing style, however, divided the Group.

Three Sisters by Heather Morris is the true story of three sisters from Slovakia who survived the Holocaust against all the odds. It is another story of strong women, but one that is deeply harrowing, yet moving. It provoked much discussion and questions as to how the Holocaust is presented.

In *This Is Going To Hurt*, Adam Kay brings to life the experiences, trials and tribulations of a junior doctor in the NHS. It is a timely reminder of the present problems in the NHS but, nevertheless, it felt a little dated now.



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Availability is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham Library; we currently have a full complement of ten members. Our June, July and August books received very mixed reviews, making for interesting meetings. Our August choice was *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, followed by *Isa and May* by Margaret Forster, for September.

The October choice is the popular *This is Going to Hurt* by Adam Kay. Our meetings are sociable as well as informative, as it is always interesting to hear different opinions.



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 July, we read *One Day* by David Nicholls. In August we met for a pub lunch with most of our members present. In September we will read *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng.



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.

In the winter we meet each Friday from 13.15 to 15.30pm at Chesham White Hill Centre for Indoor Short Mat Bowls. Please contact the Convenors nearer the time to get the start date for winter 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.



The Bridge Group continues to meet at Chartridge Park Golf Club on a Wednesday afternoon, 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.



We would still like to see more members with an interest in playing canasta. We play once a month in one another's houses. If you would like to join us, please contact a Convenor at: canasta@cvu3a.uk



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.

How about two really awful jokes about cards:

"All I got for my birthday was a pack of cards covered in treacle...I'm having a hard time dealing with it."

" Q: What do you call an insect with a pack of cards? A: Ant & Deck" (beano.com)



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. 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 our next meeting.

Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



We are more than halfway through our season and have enjoyed good sailing conditions for the majority of our sessions. Our members belong to various u3as in the area and we welcome all comers whether experienced or beginners. At the start of the season at the end of April, there was an influx of new members but we are now well integrated and can accommodate more people, as we have the use of the dinghies that belong to Rickmansworth Sailing Club. These include a Wayfarer, Wanderer, Laser 2000, Comet Versa, RS Vision, Enterprise, and single handers (Lasers and Picos). Troy Lake, where we sail, is a tranquil and picturesque location, home to many water birds, and is a lovely place to relax whether sailing or sitting on shore. We normally meet on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month (dates on our web page). Please contact either of the Convenors for more information.

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.

Fun Quizzes

James Cadle



The Fun Quizzes Group 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



In June we welcomed a new speaker to our Group: Stefan White told us the intriguing account of the infamous Tradescant family who were 17th century plant hunters. The talk, entitled *Skulduggery in the Shrubbery*, outlined the dastardly deeds to which these intrepid explorers resorted in order to outwit and deceive their rivals to gain glory for themselves. A particular villain in this story is Elias Ashmole, the eponymous founder of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford: a fact that surprised us all!

(cont.)

A regular speaker, Chris Day, arrived at our July meeting with a wonderful array of plants. Chris is the Garden Centre Publicity Manager for Buckingham Garden Centre and Nurseries. The plants were his props for the talk he gave about how, by using perennial rather than seasonal plants, we can create containers that provide all-round interest and thus are more sustainable. As ever, Chris's demonstration and accompanying information held everyone's attention. After the talk, members were keen to snap up the plants that Chris offered for sale.

With no meeting in August, we have for September a planned visit and guided tour of Waterperry Gardens near Oxford.

For our meeting in October we're delighted to welcome the renowned garden expert, Matthew Biggs, of *Gardeners Question Time* fame. He will be telling us how to find the perfect plant for problem places, a topic very dear to gardeners' hearts!

Although our Group is growing in numbers, we still welcome new members. Please contact one of the Convenors if you would like to join us. Full details of the Group, together with this year's programme, can be found on the Gardening Group page of the CVu3a website.

German

Jenny Lee



Our small German Group continues to be great fun and we cover a wide range of topics. For example, in one session we discovered some very long German words. This is one we found:

'Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz'

Meaning 'Beef labelling regulation assignment transfer law'. There are many more long words; such is the German language!

History

Claire Paterson & Ian Hutt



Ian Arthurton, a volunteer at Amersham Museum, visited our June meeting and gave an excellent and informative talk on *The History of the Metropolitan Railway*. A line that we all know so well, but Ian told us a lot we didn't know: its beginnings, a wonderful time of expansion and the vested interests.

It served London from 1863 to 1933 as both a passenger and goods railway, its main line heading north from the City to the Middlesex suburbs. At the start it had gas-lit wooden carriages and was hauled by steam locos. It was the world's first passenger carrying designated underground railway and ran every 15 minutes with first, second and third class fares priced at 6d, 4d and 3d respectively, costing double for a return ticket.

Considerable development ensued with the line being extended north and south, most importantly north-west into the Middlesex countryside stimulating the development of the new suburb of Harrow, reached in 1880. From 1897 services extended as far as Verney Junction in Buckinghamshire, which closed in 1968.

In 1905 local services between Baker Street and Harrow were electrified. Trains beyond Harrow were still hauled by a steam loco, which was changed en route. Electrification eventually ran as far as Amersham with steam still used on the branch to Chesham until 1960.

The term 'Metro-land' was coined by the Met's marketing department in 1915. It promoted the land served by the Met for the walker, visitor and later the house-hunter, who could dream of a modern home in beautiful countryside with a fast railway service to central London; it certainly worked.

Our member Colin O'Rourke gave an enlightening presentation in July on the background and stories behind some well-known and not so well-known music and songs from World War One. Many were composed by men who had fought or taken some part in the war. Arthur Bliss, Master of the Queen's Music served. Vaughan Williams was in the Medical Corps; Classical composer Frederick Kelly survived the Gallipoli campaign but was killed on the Somme.

With the need for conscription, songs stirring the emotions became popular. *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* (and the soldier's version, *That's the Wrong Way to Tickle Mary*) became very popular, as it was a good marching song.

(cont.)

Trench songs *Pack Up Your Troubles*, *Take Me Back to Dear Old Blighty*, *When this Bloody War is Over* and the rather macabre *Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire* were sung with many changes of wording by the soldiers, but they helped keep up moral.

Colin finished his presentation with a short video that included many of the WW1 songs, ending with *The Last Post*: quite an emotional and thought-provoking afternoon.

Our summer visit this year was to 'Stonor Park House and Estate', the origins of which go back to medieval times. It has been home to the Stonor family for over 850 years. A stroll through the house is a vivid walk through history with its collection of art and treasures from across the globe. We had a guided tour of the gothic revival hall, atmospheric 17th century library and long gallery, dining room and bedrooms. As firm Catholics, the family suffered during the Reformation when they were forced to take a severely restricted part in public life, as Catholics were fined and persecuted. Evidence of their commitment exists in a priest hole in a hidden roof space where Saint Edmund Campion and followers hid whilst printing his *Ten Reasons* pamphlet.

We were warmly welcomed with coffee and biscuits. We viewed the icehouse, beautiful chapel and the circle of ancient standing stones that gave the family their name. Many members, after picnicking in the grounds, strolled through the lovely gardens on a beautiful, though extremely hot, day.

We will be welcoming again to our meeting on 9th September, Dr Helen Fry, a great speaker whose talk is called *Women of Intelligence*.

In October Lesley Thomas will be speaking about *The Winchester Geese*, ladies who were licensed by the Bishop of Winchester to work within the Liberty of the Clink, and not as cleaners!

November will see the annual return of the Chesham Grammar School History students. It's always a really worthwhile meeting, hearing their presentations.

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 member's houses on the first and third Mondays of every month. The meetings offer an opportunity to share ideas and skills. This month Helen completed a beautiful knitted cardigan and Mirit produced the best cheesecake ever! At the moment members of our Group are working on knitting, embroidery, patchwork and crochet projects. We currently have room 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, 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! (cont.)

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. 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 and socialise over their fortnightly Sunday lunches at local hostelrys and restaurants. These have included 'The Tavern' in Chesham, 'The Crown' in Ley Hill and 'The Swan', 'Zaza' and 'Amersham House' in Amersham. Also there is 'The White Hart' in Whelpley Hill. Our monthly planning meetings are held over coffee and cakes at 'The Elgiva' Cafe.

MOTO 2

Rodney Newth

Our Group continues to meet on the second Saturday of the month for lunch, usually in a pub. The September meeting will be at 'The Squirrel', Penn Street. We are accepting new members. Due to medical problems, Rodney Newth is standing down as convenor from September and will be replaced by Brian Harding who has organised some of our recent meetings: welcome Brian.

Music Appreciation

Geoff Hayes & Colin O'Rourke



Our Group meetings continue to thrive and surprise. We have had some really interesting choices for the meetings since June and our musical education continues.

Our Country and Western choices for the June meeting included the famous trio of Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt. Glen Campbell's *Wichita Line*, a comic female answer to *King of the Road* called *Queen of the House* and a moving protest song in support of Native Americans by Johnny Cash called *As Long As The Grass Shall Grow* also featured. Our second theme of 'D' brought in Dvorak, Doris Day and Derek and the Dominoes, amongst others.

July was just as eclectic. Themes of 'Independence' and 'Summer' brought us numbers by Eddie Cochrane, Aretha Franklin, Holst, and Donna Summer; I wonder if you can guess which songs?

In August we continued with the 'Summertime' theme as there are so many to choose from, and added Spain in honour of their national football team winning the Euros. So we had the *Toreador Song* from *Carmen* with a video from the Royal Opera House; well worth viewing, Enrique and Julio Inglesias, Madonna, and the prize for the most tenuous link goes to Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* as it was used in the film *The Seven Year Itch* which has as a central theme, the blazing hot New York summer.

Our Themes for September are 'Blues' and 'African music' so do come and join us and surprise us with your selections.

We meet in Chesham Town Hall, first Thursday of the month 2.15 till 4pm. So the next meetings are on 5th September, 3rd October and 7th November. For more details, contact the Convenors on music@cvu3a.uk

Geoff

Patchwork & Quilting

Angela Bratton & Dee Watson



We continue to meet each month in the Village Hall at Hyde Heath and our pile of patchwork blocks is growing. They will be made into cot-sized quilts for babies in hospital. We hope to donate these to the charity organisation before Christmas. We have concentrated on some lovely novelty animal prints that are bright and cheerful, and are taken home by the babies when they are well enough to leave hospital. Other designs in larger sizes are also made, which may go to young people in need, or for wheelchair users. The charity cannot get enough of these and we are just one of many such groups who willingly provide quilts to pass on to those who will use them and love them.

(cont.)

We also work on our own personal projects, some of which might be in production for quite a few months, but each month new ones also appear so we always have different and interesting things to display to each other and new ideas are shared.

Sadly, in September we will be waving goodbye to Margaret Payne who, with her husband Geoff, will be moving away from the Chess Valley to live in Durham, nearer to their family. She was a Convenor of our Group for some years and inspired us with advice and practical help, enthusing us all to enjoy this lovely hobby. We wish them well, but also wish they were not going, as we will miss her so much, but Margaret is a very talented expert in patchwork and quilting, so we know that Chess Valley's loss will be another patchwork group's gain.

I mentioned in the last newsletter that we have great camaraderie amongst the ladies, and we were delighted to welcome Katie, a new recruit, to our Group. If anyone else would like to take up this hobby or maybe pick up their needles and fabric again and join like-minded people, please contact us. The 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 to 3.30pm. So come along to see us at one of our sessions (no obligation) and there will be tea and cake.

Photography & Digital Imaging

Pippa Greensmith & David Hurd



In June we held our first meeting of Photography and Digital Imaging combined. We looked at photos from our field trip to Little Venice and Paddington Basin, followed by a talk on Monochrome Photography. Our summer project is Landscape Photography, so in July we explored relevant tips and techniques.

In Digital Imaging, we looked at creating vignettes and using dodge and burn tools. We also investigated famous faked photographs, past and present.

There was no meeting in August and our next meeting will be in September where, apart from looking at the landscape photographs taken over summer, we will explore the use of humour and symmetry in photography. We will have our last field trip in October, returning to Marlow, last visited by us in 2010.

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



After only three weeks of a summer break, Pilates 1, 2 and 3 head back to the Jubilee Scout Hut on Rectory Hill for the autumn term. The dates for the 13-week term are in our diaries along with the date of our Christmas lunch on 16th December! The latter is a superb opportunity for all three classes (as many as 60 of us) to mingle and have fun; well worth the pain and effort of our Monday morning stretching and toning sessions with our fantastic teacher, Sue.

Play Reading

Joan Barton & Linda Hepworth



Our latest meeting was on Wednesday, 22nd August (how the summer has flown!) when we welcomed a new member, Mike. This once more brings us up to full capacity. There was no meeting in July as too many of us were away, so the play we were going to read then was read on Wednesday. This was *Lord Arthur Saville's Crime*, based on a short story by Oscar Wilde. Our previous meeting in June was hosted by Mavis and we read *Round and Round the Garden*, the first play in *The Norman Conquests* trilogy by Alan Ayckbourn. There were only five of us there, but as the play has only six characters, this worked quite well. We might do the second and third plays in the series at some future date but, as always, the choice of play depends what is available from the library.

Joan

Poetry

Christine Ogborne

Our Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, in each other's homes. We enjoy reading and discussing our chosen poems and poets.

In June our chosen subject was 'Seas and Coasts' and we read *Flaggy Shore* by Seamus Heaney; *The Merman* by Tennyson and *Sargasso Sea* by Norman MacCaig, among others.

(cont.)

July saw us revelling in the poetry of Louis MacNeice and we all vowed to find and read more of his brilliant work, such as the poem *Entirely*. In August we had 'Gardens' as our theme and some of the many poets chosen were U A Fanthorpe, Robert Frost and Edward Thomas.

Future meeting topics will be:

September: Mary Oliver

October: Autumn

November: Shakespeare

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

Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



We have had some excellent speakers this year and recent talks continued in that vein:

June 28th: Thomas Brassey: Chris Hillier. Chris Hillier returned and this time spoke about one of the great Railway Engineers of all time, Thomas Brassey. But who knew about his feats; well Chris certainly did. He built one in every twenty miles of track in the world (at the time), which included the lines from London to Southampton, Paris to Rouen and further lines in France, Netherlands, Italy, Prussia and Spain as well as Canada and the Crimea. At one point he was track laying in Europe, India, Australia and South America with a workforce of over 75,000: A great talk on a subject more people should know about.

July 28th: Chinnor & Princes Risborough visit: John Bratton. On our visit to the charming Chinnor Railway we were hauled first by a steam locomotive (4555, GWR Small Prairie) then on the return, by diesel (Class 37) both of which were very smooth and the scenery was gorgeous. The on-board cream teas looked particularly inviting, however we had only booked standard class tickets: maybe next time. We did not meet in August.

Our next meetings are as follows:

September 13th: Reunification project at the Great Central Railway: Tom Ingall.

October (date to be confirmed): Visit to Leighton Buzzard Railway: Geoff Frost.

November 15th: Cambrian Coast Express: Francis Gomme.

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

Singing for Pleasure

Stephanie Rothwell & Angela Bratton



On a very warm Monday evening in July the Singing for Pleasure Group gave their end-of-term summer concert. The choir entertained a large audience of about 80 guests with a varied repertoire including songs from musicals, pop, country and the classics. Their rendition of *Sway* in Spanish received praise from a native Spanish speaker! The concert was a resounding success and a fitting finale to another very enjoyable year of singing.

Thanks to the generosity of members of the audience, we raised £137.80 for Dementia UK, a charity chosen by Ali, our Musical Director.

The Group reconvenes on Monday, 2nd September and we're looking forward to rehearsing a new repertoire under Ali's excellent tutelage. We are also indebted to Gwen who gives freely of her time each week to accompany us on the piano.

We still welcome new members so if you would like to join us please contact one of the Convenors and come along for a taster session. Full details of the Group can be found on the Singing for Pleasure page on the CVu3a website.

"To sing is an expression of your being, a being which is becoming." (Maria Callas)



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

Stamps & Collectables

Steve Epps



The Stamps and Collectables Group's next meeting on October 21st takes us into another new area of collecting:

John Bunyan will be showing us the highlights of his extensive collection of vintage cameras. We are looking forward to learning about a new area of expertise. John is inviting Group members to bring in any cameras from home they might wish to have more information on.

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton



Tai Chi is now closed for the summer holiday until 17th September. Our tutor Peter has travelled to Singapore with four of his students (not from our class) to participate in the world Tai Chi competition. We're not expecting gold medals, as they will be competing against students from countries where Tai Chi is practiced from a very young age, but it's not the winning, it's the taking part that matters.

Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



We have recently had trips to see *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in Stratford and *Kiss me Kate*, both of which were enjoyed by those who went. Our next trips are to *Fawlty Towers* on 25th September and *ABBA Voyage* on 30th January next year. Both of these are now sold out but please apply to the Convenors if you wish to be added to the waiting list.

We remain happy to welcome new members and if anyone has suggestions for future trips please do let us know. Email theatre@cvu3a.uk

Ukulele

Jeff Naman & Heather Sprake



We continue our fortnightly meetings at the Methodist Church in Bellingdon Road, Chesham, starting at 2.30pm. Members' attendance has been good despite the holiday season and more new songs are continually introduced.

New members are always welcome to give the ukulele a try. If you are somewhat nervous, give me a ring for a chat. Our new members, never having played before, are enjoying our meetings.

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

On a glorious sunny (but not too hot) day in August the Amblers gathered at the Chesham Open Air Pool car park on Moor Road. We meandered along the River Chess discussing flooding along Moor Road at the beginning of July following heavy rainstorms, unsightly concrete barriers along the Chess (should they be removed?), the importance of chalk streams and the importance of watercress in Victorian times and its transportation to London by train.

(cont.)

Fortunately, on the day, our route was totally dry if a little uneven underfoot as we made our way up past Chesham Bois Burial ground, eventually arriving at Great Bois Wood House. Climbing up through Great Bois Wood, we looked out over a perfect view of Chesham before wending our way back down to Chesham Moor, where we had begun our walk.

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

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

For the second quarter of this year, we held walks in Ley Hill, Sarratt, Latimer and Dorney. In the third quarter, our walks were in Harwell and Little Marlow. Further walks are to be arranged.

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

Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

Walkers 2 meets on the fourth Thursday of the month and the walks are normally five to six miles in length.

In the past few months the leaders have chosen a variety of venues that have included the Black Park Country Park near Fulmer, Winchmore Hill and Bledlow, and our next one is around The Lee. I also think we have managed to choose dry days for most of them.

Normally at the start of the walks, the participants donate £1 which goes into a fund to either replace stiles with gates through the Chiltern Society or for the Air Ambulance. After much discussion and visits to potentially bad stiles, the paperwork has just been completed to replace a stile in Plough Lane, Belsize. The plaque to be attached to the stile will be in memory of Martin Cooper, one of our long-term members who passed away in the spring of 2022.

New members are always welcome but please contact the Convenor first.

Walkers 3

Jill Thomas & Catherine Haridi

We have had three lovely walks to report on. The first was in June, led by Gillian and Jill, which started in the centre of Sarratt and took in Commonwood, Bucks Hill, Belsize and the woods at Chipperfield Common. Our July walk, lead by John, started at Hervines Park and took in Hyde Heath, Little Missenden and back to Old Amersham. In August we had perfect walking weather and, apart from an unexpected field of cows, the route took us around the beautiful views and fields of Ley Hill; thank you Cathy.

Our walks are approximately five miles long, on the first Wednesday of the month. New members are always welcome.

Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



Our summer outing this year was to the South Downs around Petworth. Unfortunately the weather was not kind to walkers on the day. One group of walkers took on a 13-mile challenge and had nearly dried out by the time they reached Petworth, but the heavens opened for their final section as they crossed Petworth deer park with little chance of shelter. The rest of the Group started out with an exploration of Wynncoombe Arboretum led by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable owner, who knew the details of every tree species; when it was planted, where it came from and how much he paid for it! However, the weather put off a number from tackling the follow-on of a six mile walk to Petworth and they took the coach to the town while 14 Striders did take the walking route, only getting slightly wet along the way.

Our regular Tuesday walks nearer to home have seen the extremes of blazing sun and cancellation because of heavy rain.

(cont.)

Much to the chagrin / relief (choose the appropriate option!) of those walkers who had braved the elements on the 13-mile Petworth walk, the next regular walk (led by Carol Brown, from the Bridgewater Monument to Ivinghoe Beacon) and the next fifth Tuesday long walk (led by Keith Pittman through Wendover Woods and along the Wendover Arm of the canal) took place in beautiful sunny weather, much closer to home!

Different members of the Group take on the role of leading each walk, which leads to a wide variety of locations and routes for them. The 'Lions of Bledlow' (mentioned in the last report) was the starting point of a June walk that included excellent views across Aylesbury Vale from the refreshment stop near Bledlow Ridge. The woods and lanes around Chipperfield proved to be just right for an August walk in very hot weather as the trees provided shade from the sun. Another recent walk took us from Ashley Green past a collection of sequoia trees (a surprise that they thrive in Chesham weather!), a ruined 13th century chapel, a ringwork fortification from the time of the Norman Conquest and a portable toilet depot from more recent times!

We would welcome new members to join us. The regular Tuesday morning walks are advertised as being between 7 and 10 miles long, but these days are usually between 6 and 8 miles. A small group of Striders take on longer walks on any fifth Tuesdays of the month. Striders 2 walk on the first and third Tuesdays of every month while Striders 1 walk on the second and fourth Tuesdays; but there is generally a chance for all Striders to join any of the walks. Do contact the Convenors, Andrew Brown and Ian Lee, if you are interested in joining one or other of the Striders Groups.

Walks into History: Country

Peter Schweiger



Berkhamstead: July 2024

Berkhamstead is a busy town set in a valley of the Chiltern Hills, with a history going back before Saxon times. Its claim to fame includes strong royal, literary and teaching connections. It was at the Saxon fort there that William was handed the crown in 1066. There, his half-brother Count Robert of Mortain built a motte and bailey castle with two moats. Substantial ruins of the castle still remain, Geoffrey Chaucer having been Clerk of the

Works.

Berkhamstead School was founded in 1541 by John Incent, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, whose father was Secretary to Cicely, Duchess of York. The Grand Junction, now the Grand Union Canal, was opened through Berkhamstead in 1798. Up until the Second World War, the canal was the principal artery of the industrial revolution, linking London with the West Midlands. The 'Father of Inland Navigation', the Duke of Bridgewater, who inspired the canal system in England, had his home up on the hill at Ashridge.

We started our walk in the High Street at the Church of St Peter's, with a very interesting talk given by Chris Greene, a local man who has written a book on its history. The church is medieval in origin, dating back to 12th Century. The earliest parish records go back to 1222 and the oldest parts of the church still existing, date from the 13th century. The church has been altered and extended many times in the past 800 years; it was restored in 1820 by Wyatville, and again in 1870 by Butterfield, then reordered in the 1960s.

We then followed the Blue Plaque route with famous names such as the hymnist and poet William Cowper, who was born in the Rectory less than two hundred years before Graham Greene was born at St. John's, Chesham Road; a boarding house of Berkhamstead School. John Barrie stayed here and the Llewellyn Davies children were the inspiration for *Peter Pan*. Down the High Street, Clementine Hozier lived and attended the Girls' School, now part of Berkhamstead School. She became the wife of Sir Winston Churchill. Those are just a few of the famous one-time inhabitants of this remarkable town.

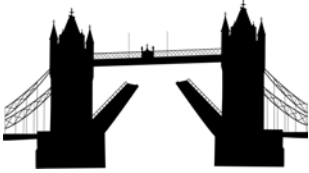
We finished our walk at the 'Crystal Palace' pub by the side of the Grand Union Canal, where we had lunch.

Jackie Cobb

These are from a u3a site in New Zealand (u3atawa.org.nz):

"I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me."

"Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate."

Legal London: June 2024

Behind the busy noisy street of Holborn, there lies a large area of peace and tranquillity, comprising a confusing maze of perfect squares, immaculate gardens and impressive buildings. You have to feel sorry however for the legal bods who are stuck, working away inside them. We walked the short distance from Holborn tube station to Lincoln Inn Fields, first owned by the Knights Templar for use as farmland for their animals and who, as a side-line, became bankers, looking after the belongings of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. Since some pilgrims died on route, they became asset rich from the spoils. Later, the lawyers moved in as the land is conveniently situated between the financial City of London and the second City of Westminster, the centre of political power.

The facts came fast from our guides: Inns of Court are for barristers who, as lawyers training on the job from the age of 13-14, required accommodation with each inn having a library for learning, a dining hall and a chapel, as do the Oxbridge universities and some private schools. We visited several and viewed the wooden slats by the doors naming all of the current barristers, with the most senior (QCs now KCs) at the top and, as any leave, the other names are moved up while the leaver's slat is presented to them. The emblems of each chamber, heraldic in character, decorate the buildings (griffin, lambs and winged horses) along with a profusion of Treasurers; marks cut in stone showing the initials and dates of those in charge of the finances of each, the latest being 2010. A menu graced the wall of one dining hall in Grays Inn where the members can get a subsidised main course for £12.99, not bad in these harsh times, but you have to realise that no lawyer can be called to the Bar until he/she has eaten 12 meals in their own court, taking part in mock trials after the tables have been cleared.

We passed through an archway whose walls formed a book shop stuffed with legal tomes, and on to Ravenscroft Tailors, in their own gas-lit alley, makers of gowns and wigs since 1689; legal, academic and coronation, whose best customer is the country of Nigeria. In those days the horsehair wigs were long; the longer your wig, the more important you were (hence the term 'Bigwig'). But wig powder became taxed and the wigs got gradually shortened to those we are familiar with today. Finally, we took in the rounded shape of the Temple Church designed to resemble the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and a reminder of the links to those Knights Templar. We ended our walk outside the Royal Court of Justice, home to mostly civil cases where the rich and famous sue each other (criminal cases are heard down the road at the Old Bailey). Here we saw bomb damage and shrapnel marks in the walls of the buildings, but this impressive Gothic structure, built in the 1870s by the Germans, survived unscathed!

Angela Shipley

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



The Wildlife Group has been occupied over these months with field visits to sample nature in its natural habitat. The month of June saw us visit Dancersend Nature Reserve, a site designated as of Special Scientific Interest (SSI), guided by Ranger Mick Jones. The Rothschild family initiated the concept of nature conservation and began the process at Dancersend. In a world remote from the trappings of modern life, the Group became engaged in the identification of flora, including the rare butterfly orchid (see front cover, ed). It proved quite energetic but Mick was an enthusiastic guide and we learnt a lot with many saying they would return under their own volition.

In July, our second visit to Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital took place, and once more we were confronted with wild animals that had been damaged in some way. The hospital declared that they were offering lodgings for 304 hedgehogs and 50 - 60 red kites, together with substantial homes for foxes, badgers and multiple bird families. Some time was spent reviewing the lives of tortoises and one in particular called Helmet who surprised us all; far from placid, this 94 year old proved to be extremely territorial and took a great dislike to the intrusion of trainer shoes in his domain; watch out!

(cont.)

August brought us some hot weather for a return visit to Road Farm near Great Missenden. A family run business by brother and sister, we were brought up-to-date with current thinking on methods of farming with minimal impact on global warming and climate change. 'Regenerative' farming is the buzzword and if you are interested to know more, terms such as 'mob grazing' and 'natural plant based enhancement of soil structure' will both fill your mind. Road Farm is one of some 16 plus farms in the Chilterns to follow farming practices with a view to protecting the environment and wildlife.

Scheduled for September, the last of our outdoor activities will take the form of a visit to Chesham from Berkshire Birds of Prey. Here we will encounter owls and raptors flying to and from the hand, thanks to the offer of a sizeable garden from one of our members, to host this. October sees us return to the comforts of Amersham Common Village Hall (ACVH) to learn about parrots and their welfare from bird vet Alan Jones. In November we get an update on efforts to restore past varieties of fruit, from the Chiltern Heritage Orchard. Last but not least, December sees our social gathering with a review of 2024 and news of plans for 2025.

If you are interested in wildlife matters, come and join us. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at ACVH for talks during the autumn and winter months.

Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In May we were at the Brattons where the theme was Chardonnays and Merlots. Starting with a very drinkable *Cremant de Loire Rose*, we continued with an own-brand Chardonnay from Waitrose at £11 and a *Bouchard Aine Chardonnay* from Beaune via Tesco at £9.50 less 25%. The reds were a *Macon Villages Chardonnay* from Waitrose at £12, a Waitrose Chilean Merlot at £7 and a *Wairau Cove Merlot* from Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, at £8.50.

In June we were at the Clarkes and the theme was Rioja. We had two whites and two reds to sample, starting with a *Castillo de Logrono Familia Manzanos Barrica Rioja Blanco*, £19.99 from Virgin Wines, a blend of Viura and Chardonnay grapes. This was followed by a *Baron de Ley Rioja* from Waitrose at £8. The reds were a *Faustino VII Tempranillo* from Tesco, reduced from £8.75 to £5.62; a bargain! Finally there was a *Marques de Riscal 2016* at 14%.

The July meeting was in the Howlett's summerhouse where we sampled Californian wines, 80% of which are apparently Zinfandel. We started with a *District 7 Chardonnay* from Monterey at 13.5%. Then there was a *Six Poets Chardonnay* from Tesco, a *Karen Birmingham Zinfandel* at 14.5% from Naked Wines, an *American Gothic Zinfandel* from Lodi via Waitrose at 14% and finally an *F. Stephen Millier Angels Reserve Merlot* at 14%, exclusive to Naked Wines, reduced from £13.99 to £9.99.

Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchener



Gill and Graham hosted June's meeting and the theme was 'No chardonnay or merlot tonight'. This meant that all the wines came from slightly more unusual grapes instead of the usual suspects! For the white wines, an English *Chapel Down Bacchus* (the Roman God of Wine) topped the scores. However, the overall winner on the night was a delicious red from Puglia in Southern Italy, *Salice Salentino* featuring the negroamaro grape, this one only available from The Wine Society.

July's meeting again fell foul of the poor weather, so we weren't able to enjoy Althea and Laurie's garden. So, indoors, we sampled a variety of wines from Laithwaites. The white wines scored poorly compared to the reds, which included a well-loved wine name for our Group, *Cabalie* red. Unfortunately their white version was frankly pretty awful and came bottom of the pile! Two of the reds scored highly: a *Pillaastro Primitivo* again from Puglia, but this was knocked off the top spot by one of Laithwaites' best sellers, *Black Stump* from down under.

(To the right is the *Villa Verde Montepulciano d'Abruzzo* from Morrison's, the Group's first recommendation to the CVu3a membership.)



(cont.)

Mirit and Greg were August's hosts with the theme of 'A perfect 10'. This comes from the *Best Supermarket Wines 2024 Guide*, which is available in bookshops. Our members didn't necessarily agree with the experts who wrote the guide! Once again, the white wine scores were down on the reds (it's strange as we all do genuinely like whites as well)! A clear winner was the *Villa Verde Montepulciano d'Abruzzo*. This is a wine often featured in good Italian restaurants as their house red, but this is an excellent example of it and a real 'steal' at just £6 a bottle from Morrison's. As mentioned, this wine is our first 'Recommended Wine of the Newsletter'. Give it a try!

Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



With the Holiday season upon us it has been difficult to find times when we can all meet up. Nevertheless, we had a lively meeting in June where we presented work on the topic: 'Lost in Translation'. With the sights and sounds of the countryside all around us at Lisbeth's house, the topic for our next meeting in August came readily to mind: 'Country Living'. The topic for our September meeting is 'Musical Instruments'.

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

A different sort of poem to finish this section: Submitted by Ian Hutt, it was created on computer using an Artificial Intelligence programme, Claude.AI. See what you think about it:

The Joy of u3a

In autumn years, our minds still bright,
We seek new knowledge, day and night.
Where can we turn to learn and grow?
The u3a, the place to go.

With friendly faces all around,
New interests and passions found.
From art to railways, books to dance,
We seize on every learning chance.

No tests or grades to cause us stress,
Just pure enjoyment, nothing less.
We share our skills, gain fresh insight,
Our curiosity burns bright.

Laughter echoes through the hall,
As friendships form among us all.
Age is just a number here,
Our spirits young, our minds sincere.

So come and join this merry band,
Where wisdom's treasures are at hand.
At u3a we learn and thrive,
Keeping dreams and wonder alive.

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)	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

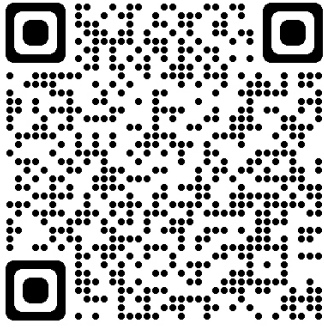
FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders 1	French Conversation (am)	Walkers 2/3	Chess (pm)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Poetry (pm)	
Singing 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

With a fair amount of rain this summer, our Art Group members have kept up their spirits painting splashy pictures. Food was also on their minds. Who can resist an iced doughnut!





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Above: ranger Mick Jones gives an introduction to the Wildlife Group at Dancersend Nature Reserve before their tour.



Left: Musicals, pop, country and the classics formed the repertoire for the Singing for Pleasure Group's Summer Concert which entranced an audience of about 80.

Below: Striders brave wet weather on their walk around Winkcoombe Arboretum, guided by the wood's owner, Nicholas Smith.

