



Front cover: A truly amazing wetland landscape painted by a member of the Art Group. Is there no limit to their talents?

Right: The MOTO 3s have got off to a grand start. Here they are at 'The Squirrel' in Penn.

Below: The Singing for Pleasure Group's Summer Concert in July was a great success. But sadly their Musical Director Ali is leaving to pursue her professional career. Everybody wishes her well.

Bottom: Keith Hoffmeister at the Railways Group visit to Buckinghamshire Railway Centre in July...and that's not his phone number.

Bottom right: On a hot day in July, members of the Walks into History: Country Group rest up by the Thames at Cookham.



Speakers for monthly talks

All talks start at 2pm

Broadway Baptist Church
78 The Broadway, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1EG



Eleanor Phillips

Thursday 10th September

Phantoms of the Chilterns

Local historian, author and CVu3a member Eleanor Phillips takes us on a tour of the Chilterns on a journey into the paranormal, visiting towns, villages and the lonely countryside from High Wycombe to Hemel Hempstead.

Helen Fry

Thursday 8th October

A Very Secret War

Latimer House was once described as 'a very secret place'. There, 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.

Josh Windsor

Thursday 29th October

AI Demystified

Artificial Intelligence seems to be everywhere at the moment, but what is it really and how will it affect our lives? Josh Windsor provides an accessible introduction to AI for the u3a community, exploring what AI is, how it already shapes everyday life, and where it may take us next. The talk covers practical uses, common myths, opportunities, risks, and simple demonstrations, with a focus on understanding the technology without jargon or technical knowledge.

Sandy Primrose

Thursday 12th November

Plants, Murder and Medical Mysteries

Plants have been found to be the cause of disease in many prominent medical mysteries, but plants also have provided vital evidence that led to the conviction of thieves, rapists and murderers. Sandy Primrose is a biologist by training and has had a varied career as an academic and then in the pharmaceutical, diagnostic, life science and speciality chemistry industries. Sandy has written a number of books based on his lectures including *Plants, Poisons and Personalities*, *The Modern Plant Hunters* and *Plants, Murder and Medical Mysteries*, the basis for this talk.

Tony Harris

Thursday 10th December

History of the Pantomime

Tony Harris is a professional comedian, raconteur and actor specialising in historical talks with an hysterical twist. For two years Tony lived and worked at Hampton Court Palace and played Henry VIII every other day for the benefit of more than half a million tourists. He has been bringing his unique blend of history and comedy to the speaker circuit for the past six years. His aim is to trick people into learning by making them laugh, but every point he makes is historically accurate.



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



Notes from the Chair

Well, we seem to be over the series of heatwaves that have assailed us this summer, although I understand that there may be another in September. It seems churlish to complain, when we moan enough about rain ruining summer events but the parched state of gardens, parks, farmland the countryside generally has presented a rather sorry spectacle for the past few weeks.

Heather Sprake has kindly stepped up as Convenor of the Music Appreciation Group and has a plea for help to keep the Group going and even, hopefully, expand it. Please see the entry for this Group for more details.

Meanwhile, we have some good news as our Singing for Pleasure Group has found a new musical director, Tom Kilworth, so they will hopefully continue to go from strength to strength.

With best wishes



James Cadle

chair@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Judith Allcock	Amersham	Linda Coignet	Chalfont St Giles
Sue Angell	Chesham	Brenda Gover	Ballinger
Sheila Bray	Hyde Heath	Val Simmons	Amersham
Carol Giudice	Chesham	Kate Whitaker	Little Chalfont

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.

From the Groups Coordinator

Welcome to another quarterly newsletter. It seems like only last week I was writing my piece for the last one and after a long hot summer I expect most of us will be pleased to get back to our weekly/monthly Goups.

Stop Press

I have just held a trial session of Chair Yoga with Sasha who will lead the sessions. We had a very successful meeting with prospective members; those attending enjoyed the session and most have signed up to a weekly meeting. In fact, if you would like to join, you will have to be quick as we are almost at the stage of starting a waiting list. The hourly session will hopefully be starting on Thursday 10 September. At the time of writing I am still negotiating the room hire, but it will hopefully be between 11.00 am and mid-day. I must also pass on a HUGE thank you to Gill Windett and Anita Wallace for stepping up and offering to be the Convenors of the Group.

On the subject of Convenors, our u3a cannot operate Groups without Convenors and it's so difficult to encourage members to take on the role. So if your Goup is struggling, as a couple of Groups have been lately, PLEASE consider taking on the role or the Groups will have to CLOSE. After all, u3a is 'for the members *by the members*'.

Sue Broad

Groups Coordinator

groups@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle*	chair@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk	07889 732291
Vice-Chair	Marion Lloyd*	vicechair@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk	07789 507635
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor*	treasurer@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk	01494 434918
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Membership Secretary	Jim Wilkie*	membership@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk	01494 782081
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Committee Member	Jim Campbell	jim.campbell@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk	07702 982209

**Also Trustee of Chess Valley u3a*

Recent visit organised by the Events Team

Kew Gardens and the Henry Moore Exhibition, 8th July 2026

We had a successful visit to Kew Gardens despite the heat on the day. We were provided with an air-conditioned coach, which was most welcome. Arriving in plenty of time before our allotted time slot for a guided tour, we went to the 'Orangery' restaurant for coffees. We had three guides so were able to divide into small groups depending on walking ability. The guides were very knowledgeable on the subject of Henry Moore and his enormous sculptures dotted around the garden. It all went very well even though it had been necessary to change the parking and pickup points.

The Events Team

u3a 2027 diaries now available

Despite rumours that they wouldn't be offered this year, the Third Age Trust website is offering pocket diaries for sale for 2027. They are a slightly different design from this year's but still excellent and reasonable value at £9 each (plus postage).

So, if you still use a paper diary (like our Chair does), head to the TAT website (www.u3a.org.uk) and hit the 'Shop' tab at the top of the screen.



Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd November 2026

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
Art	Janice Gray	art@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Art Discussion 1	Angela Bishop	artdiscuss@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Sarah Organ	
Art Discussion 2	Caroline Jenks	artdiscuss2@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Book Group 1	Caroline Jenks	bookgroup1@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Book Group 2	Alison Pullinger	bookgroup2@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Georgina Mead	
Book Group 3	Helen Barnard	bookgroup3@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Book Group 4	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup4@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Bowls (Short Mat), (Chiltern)	Sue Spalton	shortbowls@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Peter Williams	
Bridge	John Curtis	bridge@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Bridge for Beginners	Marion Lloyd	startbridge@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Canasta	Linda Hepworth	canasta@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Sue Hawksley	
Chess	Caroline Jenks	chess@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
City of London Churches	Jackie Cobb	londonchurches@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Current Affairs	Eileen Overton	currentaffs@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Dinghy Sailing	Wendy Barnes	sailing@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Judith Young	
French Conversation	Morag Robertson	frenchcons@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
French Intermediate	Hilary Alleston	french@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Fun Quizzes	James Cadle	quizzes@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Gardening	Jenny Beirne	garden@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
German	Jenny Lee	german@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
German Conversation Beginners	Caroline Jenks	startgerman@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
History	Claire Paterson	history@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Ian Hutt	
Keep Fit for 60+	Kay Johnson	keepfit60@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Jackie Cobb	
Knitting & Other Crafts	Jo Biggs	knit@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Line Dancing (Chiltern)	Linda English	linedance@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott	mahjong@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

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Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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MOTO 2	Joan Barton	moto2@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Ted Harrington	
MOTO 3	Val Littlejohn	Moto3@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Camilla Plummer	
Music Appreciation	Heather Sprake	music@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Patchwork & Quilting	Angela Bratton	patchquilt@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Dee Watson	
Photography with Digital Imaging	David Hurd	photography@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Pippa Greensmith	
Pilates (1, 2 and 3)	Christine Ross	pilates@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Liz Howlett	
Play Reading	Joan Barton	playread@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Linda Hepworth	
Poetry	Christine Ogborne	poetry@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Railways	Graham Yellowley	railways@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	James Cadle	
Singing for Pleasure	Angela Bratton	singing@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
Spanish Conv (Inter)	Hilary Alleston	spanishconv@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Stamps & Other Collectables	Steve Epps	stamps@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Tai Chi	Sue Broad	taichi@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Meg Brinton	
Theatre	Geoff Naylor	theatre@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Helen Barnard	
Ukulele	Jeff Naman	ukulele@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Heather Sprake	
Amblers	Susan Osborne	amblers@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Walkers 1	Stuart Stanley	walkers1@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Walkers 2	Michael Ferraro	walkers2@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Walkers 3	Catherine Haridi	walkers3@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Jill Thomas	
Striders	Ian Barrett	striders@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Keith Pittman	
Walks into History: Country	Peter Schweiger	walkshist@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Walks into History: London	Angela Shipley	walkslondon@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Wildlife	Harry Howlett	wildlife@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
	Keith Sonley	
Wine Appreciation 1	Pauline & Tom Hohenberg	wine@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Wine Appreciation 2	Graham Hitchener	wine2@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk
Writers	John & Helene Bunyan	writers@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

Apolitically speaking

Having ‘enjoyed’ the Eighty Experience for all of six months, I am now trying to return it based on the miss-selling claim that ‘eighty is the new seventy’, which it very obviously isn’t. It remains the old model eighty with no redeeming features, some extra penalties and the perpetual offer of an unwanted seat on a train, which can only be declined with apologies, exaggerated thanks and much ceremony. Mark you, as Keith Richards once said to his audience ‘It’s great to be here. It’s great to be anywhere...’

Now, I am fully aware that the u3a has a non-political policy and rightly so otherwise even these sacred pages would, in addition to u3a members’ wise words, be full of has-been footballers and journo wannabees seeking to spread their views like Britannia, wider still and wider. Coincidentally, over the same period of time that I have been trialling the Eighty Experience, everything – and I do mean absolutely everything – has become even more political, filling every naughty nook and sordid cranny that our grubby ‘meeja’ can find, be it printed, broadcast or narrowcast. The takeover ranges from *Gardeners’ Question Time* (I jest) to comedy, the latter so much so that its proponents have forgotten entirely the purpose of comedy, that is humour, and not the clumsy iteration of unoriginal, political, correct or otherwise, diatribes.

We live sadly in a world of half, even quarter, truths and for once let’s not blame the politicians as much as the journos, who in the new exercise of free speech now shout their piercing questions across Downing Street, expecting (?) answers to such subtleties as ‘when are you going to resign’!

Where half-truths don’t exist, untruths fill the bill nicely especially, but only if they are negative. For instance, we have for some years now been fed the myth of a rising crime rate as opposed to the truth of a falling one but why tell a good news story and why let facts get in the way of a headline?

But back to being eighty; Andrew Watt, the young producer of the Rolling Stones’ last two albums, has coined a better phrase for that age group, ‘the Octo Guys’. It fits the bill much better than ‘senior citizens’ and sounds a lot more acceptable than ‘old farts’.

‘Timewaster’

Chess Valley u3a equipment

We have various items of equipment purchased by Chess Valley u3a. If you would like to borrow any of this equipment, please contact the relevant custodian.

Equipment	Custodian	Contact details
Data projector 1 (Epson)	James Cadle	James Cadle 07889 732291 chair@cvu3a.uk
Data projector 2 (Epson)	Harry Howlett	
Laptop computer (Windows 10, Office 2016)	James Cadle	Harry Howlett 07780 522388 wildlife@cvu3a.uk
Companion speakers for laptop		
PAT-tested extension cable/surge adapter		
Projection screen 1 (5 ft)		
Projection screen 2 (6 ft)	Ian Hutt	Ian Hutt 01494 583955 history@cvu3a.uk
Pinboards x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	
Easels x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	Keith Hoffmeister 01494 766990
Portable PA systems	James Cadle	

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

Janice Gray



Our merry band of artists have continued exploring work for our calendar project and mixing it up with paintings of their own, started at home. We don't meet during August. Many have holidays, so with a small Group it is easier to have a break. In effect we miss two meetings together at The White Hill Centre, although we did try to get a plein air session in, but this fell by the wayside due to the heat making painting outside almost impossible, and other members' commitments. The Group is open to welcoming a new person to join us, as one of our members of many years standing has recently moved to Scotland.

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop & Sarah Organ



'Children in Photography' was the subject for our June meeting. In the 200 years since the first permanent photograph was created, the depiction of children has evolved from the posed formality of Victorian studio portraits, through subjects of innocence and social reform, to children as active participants, with issues of art versus exploitation arising in the 20th and current centuries.

We began by looking at the work of English photographer Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879), largely self-taught, who came to the art form quite late in her life. Her subjects were her own children and those of friends. She took around 900 photographs over a twelve-year period. Her work was contentious; her early work often had visible finger marks and was criticised for being amateurish. Nevertheless, her portraits have been recognised as significant in the history of photography and major retrospective exhibitions of her work have been held. We were interested to note the work of Oscar Gustave Rejlander (1813-1875), a Victorian art photographer who helped teach Julia Margaret Cameron photography. He trained as an artist but moved to photography, developing it as an expressive art form, including the use of photo montage.

We looked at some of the work of American photographer Sally Mann (born 1951), whose series *The Two Virginias* feature the African American nanny who raised her and her youngest daughter who she named after the nanny. Her work has generated much controversy, particularly her series *Immediate Family* depicting intimate, often nude, photographs of her own children in rural Virginia, and these generated some discussion in the Group.

We then looked at the work of some photographers who highlighted social issues surrounding children. These included Dorothea Lange (1895-1965) whose *The Migrant Mother*, depicting a mother with three children, captured the plight of migrant farm workers in the Great Depression, and the work of Lewis Hine (1874-1940), who photographed immigrant arrivals at Ellis Island and the harsh labour conditions of children in Pittsburgh, and whose work was influential in the passing of Child Labor laws as well as being sympathetic depictions of individuals in abject working conditions. Another photographer whose work was documentary was Roger Mayne (1929-2014), a chemist who became interested in photography and is best known for his documentation of the children of Southam Street, London. Two other photographers we considered who captured everyday life were Shirley Baker (1932-2014), who captured portraits in working class areas of Greater Manchester, and Diane Arbus (1923-1971), an American photographer whose work covered a wide range of subjects, including children, mothers, and families.

(cont.)

Cecil Beaton (1904-1980) was probably best known for his celebrity, royal and socialite portraits, though he was also one of the most prolific photographers of everyday life in World War 2, taking over 7,000 photographs between 1940 and 1945. We looked at two of his 'Children of the Blitz' photographs: *Firewood*, showing four children scavenging for firewood in a bomb site, and *Three-year-old Eileen Dunne, a victim of the London Blitz, in hospital*. We also looked at one of his royal portraits, of Queen Elizabeth with Charles and Anne as children, and considered Beaton's influence in shaping the representation of the monarchy to the general public. Another society photographer we briefly looked at was Marcus Adams (1875-1959), who was noted for his portraits of children.

One of our members brought *The Millenium Generation* by Robin Laurence, a visual and sociological photographic record of the lives of young people from around the world just before the turn of the 21st Century. Another member shared photographs of her son's work on the project, *Building Schools for Burma*, for a charitable organisation, including a photograph of children in a trench learning with their teacher, their school being in a war zone.

We also looked at some of the photographs of Sicilian photographer Enzo Sellerio (1924–2012) who took iconic photographs of children in Sicily from the 1950s through to the 1970s.

The Group did not meet in July. For our August meeting we met in the delightful garden of one of our members and, over a shared lunch, talked about our favourite artists and/or a piece of art that was significant to us in some way.

Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



In June, we imagined ourselves at an exhibition, specifically the *Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer Portrait Award 2025* exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. The standard was incredibly high, and we found many of the portraits very moving. There were a significant number of people in their "seventh age", some still vibrant and others deeply saddening. We were overwhelmed by the beauty of some of the hyperrealist paintings, meaning that we didn't predict the prize winners which tended to be in a looser, more painterly style. When we revealed the winner, there were many cries of "No, really?"

The theme for our July meeting was 'Summer Gatherings'. We chose examples of suitable outdoor activities ranging from the eighteenth century 'Fete Galante' genre, a French term meaning 'Elegant Festival' or 'Courtship Party', to rather less sophisticated but equally engaging boating scenes from the twentieth century. In the eighteenth century Jean-Antoine Watteau painted elegant aristocrats in gorgeous gowns or fancy-dress, enjoying music and flirtation in pastoral landscapes, and a little over a hundred years later the English artist Edward John Gregory painted a wonderfully light-hearted scene of holidaymakers enjoying a sunny Sunday afternoon at Boulter's Lock on the River Thames; far from elegant, but a joyful scene. We could not have a subject like Summer Gatherings without mentioning the infamous painting by Edouard Manet, *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, which caused an uproar when it was exhibited at The Salon des Refusés, having been rejected by The Salon in Paris. A naked woman having a picnic lunch, accompanied by two fully dressed men, was an affront to propriety... it still is rather puzzling. We looked at sporting activities; tennis, cricket, croquet and of course swimming. Swimming, the essential summer activity, was demonstrated in David Hockney's, *By the Poolside*, a calm and elegant picture, the scene bathed in Californian sunshine, and in pictures of bathers on the beach and by the river by Joaquin Sorolla (The Master of Light), Edward Henry Pothast and Claude Monet. To finish our summer meeting we had to include the quintessential summer garden party at Buckingham Palace. Frederick Sargent painted Queen Victoria welcoming her guests. She stood out, still dressed in black, amidst a crowd of elegantly dressed Victorian glitterati under a partially cloudy sky; so very little rain in our summer selection, a little like the summer of 2026.

Traditionally, we have our August meeting outside in Caroline's garden and make a day of it, including a picnic lunch. Last year was rained off and we spent the day inside and this year we had to go inside because of the extreme heat! Our meeting was themed 'A Picture Special to You' and we each either brought in a picture or spoke about a picture which had a particular significance to us.

(cont.)

We were impressed with the artistic abilities of some of our members and our members' families. It led to very interesting discussions and we all got to know each other a little more. After lunch we had an art quiz. Caroline does love a quiz to stimulate our artistic knowledge, and it was interesting to see how much we have learned in our time together. Thank you, Caroline!

Book 1

Caroline Jenks



This is the Book Group with a difference: it is for those who are already keen readers, or who wish to expand their knowledge of books. We all read and tell the Group about any books we wish; so, you hear what others do, or don't, recommend. We have a wide variety of tastes, both in subject matter and style, so there are always interesting discussions.

A member recently told us about some of the disasters recounted in *The World's Worst Aircraft* (not to be read by nervous fliers!) which led to a discussion about other books we'd read covering the topic of flight, such as *Going Solo* by Roald Dahl and *The Great Circle* by Maggie Shipstead.

We've discussed several recent American novels reflecting various aspects of modern culture there, e.g. trad(itional) wives in *Yesteryear* by Caro Claire Burke and the gaming industry in *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin. They have been eye-opening and enjoyable reads but, we feel, have possibly 'tick-boxed' too many issues and groups, or been too obviously completed with filming in mind.

If you like books linked to the art world, then *The Artist* by Lucy Steeds is highly recommended. It's about a fictional monstrously controlling and reclusive artist in 1920's Provence, with a secret which is gradually revealed. A fascinating factual work on art is Andrew Graham-Dixon's book, *Vermeer: A Life Lost and Found* which has a radical new explanation for his works.

It is always interesting when members reread older books and we are usually delighted that they are as good as we originally thought, e.g. *A Town Like Alice* by Nevil Shute, *Shogun* by James Clavell and the *Regeneration* trilogy by Pat Barker.

Other books we highly recommend are: *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* by Karen Joy Fowler, *Old Baggage* by Lissa Evans, *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* by Elif Shafak and *Strange Buildings* by Uketsu.

The Group is currently full, but please let the Convenor know if you want to join the waiting list.

Book 2

Alison Pullinger & Georgina Mead



We are a friendly group of about 10 and meet every first Wednesday afternoon of the month in Amersham library. Currently we have two vacancies for new members. Please get in touch with either Georgina Mead or Alison Pullinger if you are interested.

We read a variety of books, mostly fiction, from the sets the library has to offer. We read books which are recommended and some which we wouldn't ordinarily come across which makes for some great discussions.

Our first book this quarter was *The Doll Factory* by Elizabeth McNeil. Set in 1850's London, it tells the tale of Iris who paints dolls alongside her twin sister while dreaming of becoming a real artist. She meets a pre-Raphaelite painter who offers her free painting lessons in exchange for her becoming his model. Add to this an obsessive taxidermist who wants to make her part of his collection, and the story takes a dark turn. This book works on many levels, not least as a great evocation of the sights and smells of nineteenth century London.

Our second read was Matt Haig's *How To Stop Time*. In a nutshell it is about a man suffering from a rare condition which means he only ages one year every fifteen years so, he lives for four hundred years. During this time, he crosses paths with some famous historical figures from past centuries. He spends his life protecting his secret whilst also looking for his daughter who has the same condition.

Whilst the premise of the book is rather implausible, it does raise some thought-provoking themes. The Group did not rate this novel as highly as *The Midnight Library* by the same author, and all agreed that you needed to suspend disbelief to enjoy it.

(cont.)

Finally, we have *In Memoriam* by Alice Winn, her debut novel. This book got a more positive response from us all. Having read several novels set in World War One, this one was presented through the eyes and feelings of public schoolboys who signed up when they were very young; some had not yet finished their schooling. It follows the relationship and romance between two of the boys as they enlist and face the harsh and brutal realities of the front line. The story explores their hidden relationship against the horrors of trench warfare. The novel brought home once again the absolute senseless waste of young life in the First World War

Alison Pullinger and Georgina Mead

Book 3

Helen Barnard



We continue to meet in each other's houses once a month, reading books from the library. We are presently reading *Autumn* by Ali Smith and next month move on to *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller. The books are discussed and very rarely do we all agree! Unfortunately, there are at present no vacancies in the Group

Book 4

Jackie Cobb



We meet in each other's homes, and we all choose a book in turn. In July we read *The Frozen People* by Elly Griffiths. In August, as several people were on holiday, we had a pub lunch.

In September we will read *The Eights* by Joanna Miller.

We would be pleased for another member to join our Book Group.

Bowls (Short Mat)

Sue Spalton & Peter Williams (Chiltern u3a)

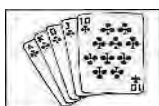


Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. Summer sessions are held outdoors at Holmer Green Sports Association each Monday from 13.50 to 16.00. The cost is £3, including a cup of tea per session. In the winter we meet each Friday from 13.15 to 15.30 at Chesham Whitehill Centre.

So, if you would like to 'try your hand' then get in touch: experience not needed; tuition given; bowls available. Please contact the Convenors before attending, for more information: shortbowls@cvu3a.uk.

Bridge

John Curtis



The Bridge Group continues to meet on Wednesday afternoons at Chartridge Park Golf Club, and we play ACOL Bridge to a reasonable standard in a friendly atmosphere. In a nod to technology, we have started collecting the weekly fee with a credit card reader rather than use cash, which most people seem to prefer.

Attendances have been quite good through the summer months so far (when historically outdoor pursuits take preference over bridge) although we have had to cancel a few sessions due to the heatwave temperatures in our south facing venue! The Group is currently at full capacity with a small waiting list. Should you wish for your name to be added to the waiting list, please contact the Convenor.

Bridge for Beginners

Marion Lloyd



This new Group has made a good start. We have a regular group of attendees, some have never played before, some are revising skills from many years ago and some just want to develop their skills in a safe environment. We also have a regular team of experienced players that act as coaches.

We meet on first and third Thursdays of the month at The Chartridge Park Golf Club: 2 to 4pm, and we have space for anyone who would like to join us.

We do have to contribute to the hire of the room which is currently £4 each week. We are looking forward to getting going again after the summer break! Please let me know if you would like to join in!

Marion Lloyd



We continue to meet at one another's houses on third Monday afternoon of the month. We still have room for a couple of new members so if you're familiar with the game do come along. Please contact us at: canasta@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

Chess

Caroline Jenks



Have you ever played Chess? If you thought it was people sitting deadly serious and in silence, you'd be surprised how sociable this Group is. We now spend as much time mulling over chess puzzles together and learning how to play, as actually playing games. We are not competitive! At our last meeting we enjoyed slowly following the moves of a Grand Master game and trying to understand the reasons for each move.

Do come for a taster session, no commitment. Meetings are held in the Convenor's house and are now on the fourth Friday morning of the month, 10.30 to noon; morning drinks and biscuits provided. The Group will welcome anyone: those who want to learn and those who can help teach us.

Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We discuss all sorts of topics which are in the news, and we listen to everyone's point of view. We learn so much from our fellow members who have a variety of skills and knowledge. Come along and join us for a fun discussion. If you are interested, please contact the Convenor for details of the next meeting.

Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



Our sailing season started at the end of April, and we meet twice a month at Troy Lake (between Maple Cross and Denham) usually on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month (but please check the schedule for variations on our page, on the Chess Valley u3a website). Our members belong to various u3as around the Chilterns and south Hertfordshire, and the warm weather over the summer has encouraged a good turnout. On one occasion, we had six dinghies on the water as well as two kayaks and a paddleboard.

We encourage the more experienced sailors to help beginners, but we do not give formal tuition leading to RYA qualifications. However, our hosts, Rickmansworth Sailing Club, run sailing courses and offer a discount for our members. Our season ends at the end of October, so for more information, please contact either of the Convenors.

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



We have taken a break this August but will begin again in September. In fact, all dates have been booked to host our Conversation Group. I have even booked an off-schedule chat with a couple of the Group. Some topics have already been suggested, so we are looking forward to September with enthusiasm.

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 are a very sociable Group.

- 1: *France is home to the world's largest museum. Which one is it?*
 - 2: *Who famously said "How can you govern a country which has two hundred and forty-six varieties of cheese"?*
 - 3: *On which French island can you find the volcano Le Piton de la Fournaise?*
- (See the end of the 'News From The Groups' section for the answers).*



The Fun Quizzes Group meets on Zoom during the winter months (November to April) and our first meeting of the new season will be on Tuesday 10th November, with subsequent quizzes on the second Tuesday evening of the month. We call them Fun Quizzes because the players don't compete against each other but instead pit their wits against the question-setter. Each quiz consists of 50 questions, many multiple-choice, divided into five rounds of 10 questions each.

The Zoom session opens at 7:15pm for a 7:30 start and each quiz lasts about an hour. If you are interested in joining us, please email the Convenor: quizzes@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell & Jenny Beirne



'Challenging' is a word that comes to mind constantly, when thinking of gardening this summer. The Garden Group's annual garden visit took place on June 24th, which happened to coincide with one of the Amber Weather Warning days. Unfortunately, it was just too hot for some of our members to participate, but a good number braved the heat warnings and came armed with hats, water bottles and umbrellas. The Adwell estate is not often open to the public and proved to be a delightful discovery; beautiful traditional borders, a walled garden and a series of delightful lakes with plenty of tree-cover. Colin Roberts, the head gardener, took us into the shade of the chapel to give us plenty of information about the garden, which is frequently used in episodes of *Midsummer Murders*. Our cream tea was delicious, despite the heat!

In July our speaker was Carolyn Foster, who gave us a fascinating talk about the way in which plants and planting styles have changed over the years, from the formal gardens of the 16th and 17th centuries, through the landscape movement, the Victorians with their love of exotic plant-hunting and glasshouses, to the 20th century, and now the 'New Perennial Movement' of this century. Carolyn was very knowledgeable and her photos illustrating the talk were excellent. A lively discussion occurred about the latest planting at Wisley and whether it is surviving the baking sunshine of this summer.

We do not meet in August, but our September meeting is entitled *Gardening in the Third Age: Gadgets and Gizmos*, with Ann Luder as the speaker. In October David Marsh will be speaking on the History of the Cottage Garden. By then we may be enduring an autumn of monsoon conditions. Who knows?

Stephanie and Jenny

German

Jenny Lee



Our friendly German Conversation Group has continued to meet during this hot weather, and we have talked about exciting holidays, interesting outings, books, in fact anything of interest. Did you know no matter how kind your children are, the children in Germany will always be 'Kinder'! That is the German word for children!

German Conversation Beginners

Caroline Jenks



German Conversation Beginners has now held three meetings. We have learnt how to introduce ourselves, talk about family members and describe the colour of clothes! We're also beginning to get to grips with the basic grammar of verbs, nouns and adjectives.

The Group is for complete beginners or people who learnt German so long ago that they want to start from scratch again. Meetings are held at the Convenor's house on the fourth Friday afternoon of the month from 3.30 to 5pm, afternoon tea provided: it's a sociable Group. We would be very happy to welcome new members. Come and have a try; no commitment.

4: In which German city is the Oktoberfest held?

5: What is the largest wooded area in Germany?

6: What is the highest mountain in Germany?

(See the end of the 'News From The Groups' section for the answers).



Historian Peter Hague visited us in June with a fascinating story, *Cabbage, Crackers and Tea*. This was the history behind three London icons, The Savoy, The Ritz and Fortnum and Mason. Who knew that Richard D'Oyly Carte built The Savoy with profits from his opera productions? London's most famous luxurious hotel opened in 1889. It attracted monied people but was not immune to notoriety; in 1898 the illustrious trio whom Carte had employed, Cesar Ritz, Escoffier and deputy manager Echenard were dismissed for fraud, larceny and embezzlement. In 1923 a French socialite shot and killed her husband, a wealthy Egyptian aristocrat, in their luxury suite.

After dismissal from The Savoy, Cesar Ritz and Auguste Escoffier went on to open their own luxury hotels and restaurants. The Ritz at 150 Piccadilly, London was opened in 1906 and became a rival for elegance and luxury. The oldest of this trio, Fortnum and Mason, was founded in 1707 by William Fortnum, a grocer, and Hugh Mason, his landlord, in Fortnum's small shop at St. James's Market. Connections with the Royal Court through Fortnum's grandson led to an increase in business. The store began to stock speciality items namely "ready luxury meals" such as poultry or game served in aspic. In 1886 they became the first store in Britain to stock Heinz baked beans! Famous now for its hampers, which they began providing during the Napoleonic Wars, they supplied dried fruit and spices to British officers, continuing during the Crimean War when Queen Victoria sent shipments of F & M's concentrated beef tea to Florence Nightingale's hospitals. Today F & M's Hampers are sent all over the world.

Peter was an engaging and humorous speaker who gave us these nuggets of intriguing information and much more.

Our July meeting was based around the nursery rhyme *Oranges and Lemons* and was given by u3a Chiltern member Helen Tippins. Again, we were treated to lots of tiny pieces of information about the churches in the rhyme and the parishes that they served; a window into parts of London that we don't often think about.

Our summer visit this August is to the tiny medieval village of Nether Winchendon that boasts no shops, no school and no pub, but does have a church which we will visit together with Nether Winchendon Manor House, a Grade 1 listed medieval and Tudor house with 16th-century features and 18th-century "Strawberry Hill Gothick" style updates. Owned by the same family for 450 years, we will be welcomed by Georgianna Spencer Bernard who will give us a guided tour of the house. There are gardens to explore which go down to the river and the 13th-century church of St. Nicholas which we can also visit. It sounds like a very enjoyable day, and we hope the weather will be kind.

Keep Fit for 60+

Kay Johnson & Jackie Cobb



Our leader Caroline is very good, keeps an eye on all the members and suggests different exercises for those with joint problems. We have a very good attendance at our Group but had to cancel one class due to the extreme heat that we have been having this summer. Fortunately, we finished for the summer holidays before some of the hottest weather in mid-July. We begin again on 9th September. We have the half term breaks to allow the Convenors to have time to themselves.

We do have a waiting list as it has proved to be a most popular class.

Knitting & Other Crafts

Jo Biggs



We meet at members' houses on the first and third Mondays of each month. The meetings provide an opportunity to get together, share our progress on projects, swap ideas and see finished results. We all thoroughly enjoyed our summer lunch at the 'Boot and Slipper' in early August. We currently have a waiting list of one. Please contact Jo Biggs if you are interested in the Group.

7) Which Olympic medalist was often seen knitting whilst watching events at the 2021 Olympics? (See the end of the 'News From The Groups' section for the answer).



Kay Johnson and I are the Convenors of the new Knitting and Needlework Group.

We are planning to hold our meetings from 10am to 11.30am in our own houses on the fourth Friday of the month. This is different from the day and time we originally announced. Our first meeting will be on Friday 25th September. We look forward to seeing our new members then.

We are still ready to welcome new members. If you are interested, please contact us on: knit2@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk.

Line Dancing

Linda English



The Line Dancing Group is run by Chiltern u3a but also welcomes members from Chess Valley u3a. We normally meet in the Methodist Church Hall, Bellingdon Road, Chesham HP5 2HA on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. From January 2026 the sessions have run from 9:30am to 11am, the first half hour dedicated to new beginners, with the more experienced dancers joining at 10am. We pay our teacher each time we attend a session. No previous experience is necessary. The emphasis is on exercising the body and mind and having

fun. Limited parking is available at the venue. We currently have a waiting list, so please contact the Convenor if you wish to be put on it. Email: u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk

Mah Jong

Edward Perrott



Mah Jong, which originated in China, is a game played with tiles. 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. Currently our Group is full but if you are interested in playing, please contact the Convenor to have your name put on our waiting list.

MOTO 2 (Members On Their Own)

Joan Barton & Ted Harrington

We meet up for lunch once a month on a Saturday, trying out different pubs or returning to ones we liked. In June we lunched at the 'Chipperfield Boot', which had been recommended and which we all enjoyed

July: The 'Black Horse' along The Vale in Chesham; I was not able to attend this but the general consensus was just 'ok', which is a shame as the breakfast and garden menus at this newly reopened pub are excellent. It probably won't go on our 'future' list, though we'll keep our ears open for reports from others and hope for improvements as it settles down.

August; this time we enjoyed lunch at the 'Cock and Rabbit' at The Lee; a very tasty meal and friendly service; will definitely keep that on our list for future lunches.

Now to decide where our September venue will be...

MOTO 3

Val Littlejohn & Camilla Plummer

Moto3 (Members on Their Own) was launched on 9th of June and so we are very young. We are basically a lunch club that meets on the second Sunday of the month with a view to socialising with friendly people and enjoying a good meal on what is often a dead day if you are on your own. We have enjoyed four meals to date but are branching out to have coffee mornings. We are open to extending ourselves to outings. We are a small group but are so successful that we hope to expand and are open to a few more members. Our last lunch was at The Squirrel in Penn.

Contact us at moto3@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk if you are interested in joining us.



To music lovers everywhere; an impassioned plea from the Music Appreciation Group. We are a small band of music lovers with very eclectic tastes, but we are struggling, like many Groups, for numbers. We meet on the first Thursday of the month from 2pm to 4pm (venue to be confirmed) and would love to acquire a few more members. Your personal taste in music is irrelevant as we love to hear all genres from the quirky to the deadly serious.

Each month we have a theme and each member comes armed with their choice of music. Sometimes the connection to the theme appears to be rather tenuous but that doesn't matter, and we go round the table so that each person can have their music played. Generally, we get the chance to choose at least two pieces each but that, of course, depends how many members attend each session. It is good to have some background information on the piece and/or the composer/artist, but not essential.

At present, as there are over 600 members of our wonderful u3a, there must be at least a few of you who would like to spend an enjoyable couple of hours once a month with like-minded people listening to an eclectic mix of music.

If you would like to join us, please email me on heathersprake@gmail.com and I will add you to the list and make sure you get the details of our next meeting. I look forward to hearing from you.

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

One of the big challenges to mankind on Planet Earth is how to be sustainable and it is only in more recent times that we have woken up to the fact that our resources are declining; we are at the mercy of global warming and this summer has seen our hottest and driest for a long time. What can we do about it? Our Patchwork Group is very aware of this and although it is such a treat to make things from newly made pristine cotton, we

are aware of how much this trade impacts on water sources to grow the cotton plants in various parts of the world. The phrase 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' is used so much now and anyone who watches the Sewing Bee on BBC will know how this features in some episodes.

Our Group has made various items using the fabric from out-of-date pretty dresses and pre-loved shirts to make quilts, as well as making bunting for babies from the shirt collars and using all the buttons and other hardware. So much can be made with denim, and we have all got lots of that. We continue to make items for charities to donate to people in need. Our efforts are based on trying to accommodate the R/R/R ethic into our pastime, saving money, resources and reducing landfill.

We welcome sewers of all types, not just patchwork but also those who would love to be part of a lovely Group; come and see us and try us out. You will not regret it, but ring Dee on 07889 263207 for a quick chat before you come to meet us.

Unlike the Sewing Bee, we do not try to make anything out of a paddling pool, two lamp shades, a duvet cover and a garden chair. We are actually quite normal. We cannot save the planet, but we can do our bit and enjoy doing it. We go into autumn with new ideas.

Photography with Digital Imaging**Pippa Greensmith & David Hurd**

We sadly lost one of the Group's founder members, Sylvia Walters, in May. Sylvia had been a very active member, always supporting the Group, and was a really good photographer. She is a great loss to us and will be sadly missed.

There were only seven members at the July meeting where we looked at the photographs from the field trip to Rickmansworth Aquadrome. Subjects included birds, boats and scenery. We also looked at the photographs from last month's 'creativity' challenge to take 10 photographs of an everyday object. Alec showed his very original takes on the humble memory stick; Alex, a stylish set of images of coffee cups and David, a series on strawberries.

There were also two videos, one on the mistakes novice photographers make (hopefully not mistakes our members would make) and another on how to take candid photographs of people. The technique which caught my imagination was to act as a bumbling idiot; something we should all be capable of doing! (cont.)

There was no meeting in August, and the next meeting will be in September when we will reprise a portrait session; more details to follow in September.

As a creative exercise, the next project is to photograph 'A Day in Your Life'. Plan ahead and think about the moments you want to capture. What things are important in your life right now that you want to record? Make sure you have your camera within reach all day and just keep shooting! We will look at your photos in December as part of your 'Five minutes of Fame'.

The provisional programme for the rest of the year is as follows:

September 16: Members' Photographs. Portrait Session.

October 21: Print Display. For the next meeting; Create a Photo Series.

November 18: Members' Photographs. Chiaroscuro.

November 21: Night field trip; *Christmas in Chesham*.

December 16: *Five Minutes of Fame*. Mince Pies.

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



It was ten years ago that Liz and I attended a Convenors meeting where we were informed that Chess Valley u3a had no physical activity Groups apart from Walking. At that point I decided it was possible with Liz to organise Pilates sessions. Liz wisely counselled me and told me to think about it before speaking; always good advice!

After some thought we approached the committee with our plan. We were met with a great deal of opposition as the purist members believed it was against the ethos of the u3a. It was essential that we had a fully qualified and insured leader, which meant we had to make a charge; this was also met with disapproval. Eventually all these problems were solved, and we were given the go ahead.

Several Groups now do this, but Pilates were the first and it was a hurdle that took some time to overcome.

There was a huge amount of interest, and it was clear that one class was insufficient, so we quickly had three classes organised and on the 16th of October, Chess Valley u3a Pilates was born.

Many of the original members are still with us and Sue is enormously proud of all the progress we have made. Long may it continue, perhaps for another 10 years.

Play Reading

Joan Barton & Linda Hepworth



In June we read *A Murder Is Announced* by Agatha Christie; some good characters in this one, who keep you guessing right to the end when Miss Marple, with her usual aplomb, announces the real killer!

Our July choice was *Dear Charles* by Alan Melville. When her three children, who all believe they have one deceased father, Charles, announce they are planning to marry, their mother decides she should also marry, and so become respectable, to impress the various in-laws. She invites her children's three real fathers to stay so they can decide which one she will marry. Eventually the children discard all three fathers and decide to claim Charles as their real father.

The Soft September Air by Charlotte Hastings was our August read. A woman who is just settling down nicely into retirement in a university town is persuaded by a student to allow him to lodge in her house. After she has reluctantly agreed, two more students descend on her and she finds herself getting involved in their lives and problems. Just as she is breathing a sigh of relief when they all graduate and are about to move on, another student begs for a room, and it seems it's going to start all over again.

Here's an Agatha Christie question:

8) *Murder on the Orient Express*, *The ABC Murders*, *4:50 from Paddington*, *Dead Man's Folly*, *Death on the Nile*, *Evil under the Sun*, *And Then There Were None* and *Peril at End House*: What do these novels have in common?

(See the end of the 'News From The Groups' section for the answer).



Our meetings over the summer months have, in a way, reflected the weather and countryside. In June our subject was 'Birdsong' and some of our choices were *The Skylark* by John Clare, *Empty Nest* by C A Duffy and *Free as a Bird* by Elizabeth Buchel. The American Poet Laureate Louise Gluck was our chosen poet in July, and we were surprised by her style and unique verses linked to nature and gardens, such as *Grandmother in the Garden*. Our August meeting saw us looking at poetry connected to the sun, moon and stars. *Moon*

Compasses by Robert Frost and *The Starlight Night* by Gerard Manley Hopkins were just two of those we read and discussed.

Future Meetings:

September: Andrew Motion

October: At First Sight: Poem to Discuss

November: Maya Angelou

Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



We have enjoyed the recent months with a talk on Sri Lanka and a visit to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton.

June 19th: John Scales: Sri Lanka: What an excellent talk on Sri Lanka; John combined enthusiasm, knowledge, good photos as well as Railways, in a presentation that worked extremely well. With embedded videos at times it felt as though we were actually in

Sri Lanka. As well as being very informative, John combined information on the railways with a travelogue and humour. We all very much enjoyed this talk.

July 29th: Graham Yellowley: Visit to Buckinghamshire Railway Centre (BRC) at Quainton: Sandy Harrison, a member of the Railways Group, volunteers at the BRC and we arranged for him to act as our guide for the day. We dutifully met at 10:40 for an 11:00 start when Steve Green, General Manager of BRC, gave us an excellent talk about how the Heritage Railway and real-world economics collide and how this is managed. We were all fascinated and could have listened for longer, but it was time to go to the platform and get a ride behind 'Arthur' (also known as Thomas the Tank Engine but with the faceplate removed). Then Sandy took us on a tour of the site, into the engineering shed, over the bridge, past the signal box and showground, to the other engineering shed (where the 'Spirit of Sandringham' Cab is being built), through the museum and back to the Visitor Centre for lunch. Steve Green rejoined us and he and Keith Hoffmeister spent a long time discussing life, the universe and HS2! A really good day out and enjoyed by all.

Our next meetings are:

September 18th: The Route of the Master Cutler: Dick Crane

October 16th: Hidden London tour

November 20th: High Speed Rail: Christian Wolmar

December 18th: Glasgow Metro: James Cadle

2027

January 15th: Atlantic Coast Express: Francis Gomme

February 19th: Clan Line, Preparation of a Running Day: Tony Bond

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



We were delighted at the return of our musical director, Ali, who had taken a sabbatical during the previous term due to professional commitments.

She quickly knocked us into shape in preparation for our annual end-of-term Summer Concert for family and friends. Although we felt under-rehearsed and with a challenging repertoire, we considered that we had acquitted ourselves competently. (cont.)

Sadly, this was our last concert with Ali at the baton. She will be pursuing her professional career which has snowballed since Covid. Although we will miss her greatly, we are extremely grateful that we have had six years of her excellent tutelage as well as lots of fun! We wish her all the best in her new projects.

Happily, we have found a replacement for Ali who has an equally impressive professional pedigree. Tom Kilworth will be our Musical Director from September, and we are all looking forward to working with him.

We have spaces for new members. Please contact the Convenors if you would like to join the Group.

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



For our next meeting Peter Windsor, who is a retired Prison Governor, has kindly offered to show us his collection of prison memorabilia. We are trying to find the best date for this, probably a Monday in October. Guests would be welcome to what promises to be an interesting session.

Please contact me if you would like to attend, and I will let Group members and guests know the date when it is fixed.

Steve Epps

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton

The Tai Chi group is currently on summer break and will resume activities in the Autumn Term in September. Contact Sue for information on the start date.

Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



The Group continues to be a popular one, and our most recent visits included *The Marquise*, *High Society* and *Allegro*. Still to come we have *As You Like It* at Stratford and at the time of writing, *Million-Dollar Quartet* has just been announced. By the time you read this it is likely to be sold out but we do always keep a cancellation list.

Advice to members is always to book as soon as you see something that interests you.

Ukulele

Jeff Naman & Heather Sprake



Despite the hot weather and school holiday grandparenting duties, our meetings have been very well attended, as usual.

I hate to say it, but we will soon be starting on our Christmas repertoire, practising for our seasonal gigs.

A reminder that we hold our fortnightly meetings at the Methodist Church in Bellingdon Road, Chesham, starting at 2.30pm. The next couple of meetings are on Tuesday August 18th and September 1st. Give me a ring if you would like to know more or come and meet us. New members are always welcome to give the ukulele a try.

Jeff Naman 07976 633798

9) How many strings does a standard Hawaiian ukulele have?

10) In which country, known for its distinctive wine, did the ukulele first originate?

11) All four members of The Beatles played the ukulele. Which one was the most involved with it, making a 2001 recording playing one?

12) What does the word 'ukulele' translate to in Hawaiian? (funtrivia.com)

(See the end of the 'News From The Groups' section for the answers).

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 Amblers walk this August was to Denner Hill Farm. It was a warm morning.

From Great Hampden we walked through woodland and fields in the direction of Denner Hill. The views across the valley towards Speen and High Wycombe were lovely. The hedgerows were abundant with blackberries which we took time to pick, and so replenished ourselves along the way. The walk was not too long. As the midday heat began to rise, we headed for home, feeling well satisfied with ourselves.

Chris Willcocks

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

Our Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 10:00 and walks are usually between four and five and a half miles long and are led by members. We usually convene 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 second quarter 2026, we held walks in Great Hampden, Wiggington, Piddington, Littlewick Green and Sarratt. For the third quarter of 2026 our walks were or will be in Chipperfield, The Lee, Hughenden Manor, Little Marlow and Littlewick Green. New members are welcome, including members of other walking Groups.

Walkers 2

Michael Ferraro

We normally meet at 9:45am for a 10am start on the fourth Thursday each month for a walk of around six miles, with a bring-your-own coffee stop part way.

Our June walk was due to be a classic Chiltern five-mile walk led by Jenny Beirne on the 25th. The initial response to invitations was strong but, as the date approached with the Met Office predicting temperatures of up to 35°C, most of the walkers dropped out and the decision was finally taken to cancel the walk for safety reasons. By co-incidence, with the intended leader for July having had to withdraw, Jenny was still able to lead her walk from The Lee on the 23rd of July.

The August walk (at time of writing) of about five miles will be led by Susan Russell on the 27th from Great Gaddesden, skirting water meadows and grazing cattle (fenced off). Then it's uphill into High Park Wood, and downhill, skirting Potten End towards Frithsden. A steeper climb starts here, past the sadly defunct vineyard (the Romans grew vines in the Gade Valley), then down the Roman Road (or Spooky Lane) to Nettleden and St Margaret's, and back to Great Gaddesden past the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery.

New members are welcome, but please check with the Convenor first. There is no fee for membership, but we usually request a £1 optional donation on the day which funds either gates replacing stiles through the Chiltern Society or a donation to the Air Ambulance.

Walkers 3

Jill Thomas & Catherine Haridi

New walkers are welcome at Walkers 3. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month.

Pauline and Pearl led our June walk which started from Ricki Aquadrome. It was a very varied walk that included the canal, river, woodlands, fields, and a moor designated of Special Scientific Interest.

Susan led our July walk from Hedgerley. The walk started with a picturesque village with its pond, woodlands and RSPB reserve. It included some historic sites which were once part of the Bulstrode Estate. The terrain was a mixture of paths, tracks, lanes and roads.

Brigid's August walk started at Hawridge where we began early to get ahead of the heat build-up. The route crossed the valley to Oak Lane, went through a wood and over fields to Arrewig Lane and up to Arrewig farm. We then went downhill to walk for about one and a half miles through Cindry Bottom, Lady Grove and Stonehill woods. We returned via Dundridge Manor.



What a difference three months makes! The average length of our regular weekly walks over the last three months was seven and a half miles, with participants numbering between 9 and 18 per walk. The number of Striders walking has been noticeably lower recently partly due to the hot weather we have been experiencing.

In July, one of the main events in the Striders programme, the Summer Walk, was enjoyed by a rather select group of five covering a strenuous 11-mile route starting from Box Hill, Surrey. The weather was hot, the views were tremendous, and the ups and downs were memorable! Box Hill is notable for being used by the Tour de France, the Tour of Britain and the Olympic cycle races which all keep to the roads, possibly because the footpaths are so much steeper.

For a change from the usual circular walks, a couple of walks started and finished at a railway station so that we could have a linear walk, although I must reveal that many Striders, when following a leader, are so engrossed in chatting that they have no idea where they are!

Two of our recent walks have been led by new recruits to Striders. It's great to see them contributing to the Group so quickly. Many thanks to them, and all our walk leaders.

If you wish to join us, contact: striders@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk

Walks into History: Country

Peter Schweiger



Cookham: July 2026

A very hot week and never has the place name been more appropriate; it Cooked-em! Just eight brave souls used their soles on the hot pavements and paths in this delightful Thames-side village. Fortifying ourselves at 'The Crown' with coffees, we kept, where possible, to the shady parts of the High Street.

Our first highlight was a garage selling old Citroen cars and repairing antique ones. No kidding, one was over 100 years old. There was also an Austin Chummy of 1924. We asked a passerby to take our photo outside the Stanley Spencer art gallery and walked past the 'Odney' Club; a private club for John Lewis partners. The road led to the large weir on the River Thames, where the hot weather had led to deaths by drowning from shock in cold water. A big notice on the fence said, "Don't be a Memory". We all survived and enjoyed being on a bench by the river.

It had to turn into an ABC tour; Another Beautiful Church, where there was a copy of the Stanley Spencer painting of The Last Supper, where the disciples are playing footsie. The Thames path led us back to 'The Crown' for lunch. The enormous portions partly ended up in doggy bags.

Peter Schweiger

Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell



Medical Bloomsbury: June 2026

It is not until you take a tour with excellent London Walks guides that you come to realise how much we wander through our great city without taking note, without looking up at buildings and passing through with a cursory glance at all the history that is staring us in the face.

I am familiar with Bloomsbury; my daughter-in-law works there and I have frequently collected my grandsons from their day nursery in Gordon Square.

But this walk was overflowing with eye-opening facts about this centre of medical excellence which has worked tirelessly to improve the nation's health since 1826. It is a place of firsts, quiet squares, statues, names carved in stone and blue plaques.

Before Henry VIII, the responsibility for health and education lay with the monasteries and we all know what he did to them. Places of excellence for research and new hospitals were needed; thus, University College London (UCL) was established in 1826 based on the pioneering ideas of Jeremy Bentham, followed by the hospital in 1832. The land was owned by the Russell family, Earl of Bedford and the son, Lord Tavistock, giving rise to the many squares and little areas of parkland, named after them.

(cont.)

Women were prevented from entering the teaching hospitals in England, thus the numerous names of leaders in their field carved all around the buildings are all men, that is, until 2019 when Florence Nightingale, Marie Curie and Alice Ball were added. We did see a blue plaque for Lilian Lindsay, the first female dentist, and later, a grander statue of Louisa Brandreth Aldrich Blake, the first female surgeon. Nowadays 75% of medical students are women.

There were notable buildings too: the Art Deco Senate building, now the administration centre for London University, previously the first library in the country and, along Gower Street, the main porticoed entrance of the main Faculty of Medical Sciences designed by William Wilkins who is also responsible for the National Gallery. 180 degrees behind us we saw the red brick building of the old hospital built in 1905, a botched job as the impressive arched entrance is completely out of line with the cruciform building and towers behind it. It now incongruously sits beside the massive, modern hospital constructed entirely in turquoise and white glass, opened in 2005.

Round the corner, we entered the Wellcome Foundation building, named for Henry, a pharmacist who devised a means of containing drugs in capsules, an alternative to swallowing liquids. Now the wealthiest charity in the country, it has donated £3 billion to medical research. We stood in front of a glass case housing Jeremy Bentham himself who, on his death in 1832, donated his body to research. So, we have his actual preserved skeleton, dressed in his actual clothes, sitting in his own chair. It's all real, except for his head which is artificial; the real mummified one is locked safely away in the vaults, ever since medical students from Kings College hospital stole it in 1975 and held UCL to ransom for its return.

We spent a reflective few minutes beside the Tavistock Square memorial to the 13 who died and over 100 injured on July 7th, 2005, when a bomb detonated on a bus on this very spot, right outside the headquarters of the British Medical Association, whose medical staff ran out to help where they could. I cannot fail to mention the Foundling Hospital, our final poignant stop, where we stood on the pavement looking at the little keepsakes, now embedded in the cement, that mothers would leave for their children, when they handed over the babies they would never see again.

Angela Shipley

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



The Wildlife Group continues to flourish with new members added to the Group in June and July. Despite the uncalled 'Scorched Earth' predicament we and wildlife find ourselves in, most likely brought about by climate change, we have enjoyed fruitful field visits to College Lake near Marsworth, Roadfarm near Great Missenden and the Dogs Trust at Harefield.

Very varied in their focus, we have learned much from College Lake about the geology of our chalk hills and their ability to sustain plant life (orchids, for example) for the benefit of creatures large and small. A fourth expedition to Roadfarm yielded more information on the benefits of natural resources such as hedgerows. Carefully crafted, the hedgerow can be designed as a barrier for livestock, a haven for bird life and a rich habitat for insects and bees to fertilise crops nearby.

In August, our attention was drawn towards domestic, rather than wild, animals with a visit to a rehousing centre for dogs at Harefield. A centre of excellence for finding new owners, even foster homes, one couldn't feel anything but sadness for the plight of some of these dogs. Whilst many owners adore their canine partners, many have to give up ownership due to the cost of living, leading to a greater supply of dogs now than in the past. It is here where the Dogs Trust can be most helpful.

In September we return to Amersham Common Village Hall for our meetings, when we have some really interesting subjects. We will learn all about bees, the types, the vital roles they play, the threats to them, how to identify them and how we can help them. In October our talk will be about 'musical plants'; humans have been making music for at least 40,000 years, and this talk shines a spotlight on the plants that we use in our music-making. In November we return to the theme of dogs, when our speaker will tell us about the amazing work of Medical Detection Dogs; the pioneering research work they do with their dogs to recognise volatile patterns associated with disease. The organisation provides alert dogs to individuals; they can detect minute changes in a person's odour triggered by their medical condition and alert them to an impending medical event.

(cont.)

We complete 2026 with our usual social get-together in December, and plans for 2027 are already moving forward. We always welcome new members, so if our talks and visits sound of interest, please contact us.

Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In May at the Hohenberg's, the theme was 'Wines from Aldi'. We opened with Aldi's *Cava* and *Cabernet Sauvignon* and then moved on to a very drinkable *Baron Amarillo Rioja Blanco* retailing at only £6 and 12.5%. This was followed by a *Gavi Costellore*, 12% and selling for £7.69. Moving on to the reds, we had a *Baron Amarillo Rioja Reserva 2020*, 13.5% and only £5.99. In contrast, a quite light *Chassaux et Fils Cote du Rhone* was 13.5% and finally we had a *Cuvee Malbec*, 13% reduced from £8.99 to £4.99.

On a lovely evening in July, we sat outside at the Connors' and sampled wines from Iberia. Starting with copious quantities of Morrisons *Cava* at £7.20 we moved on to *Hacienda Lopez de Haro white Rioja* from Waitrose, 12% at £11.50. This was closely followed by a *Planalto Douro* from Portugal, 13% and £15, described as "Made by God with the help of Man". Another white, *Rioja Cune*, followed, made from Viura grapes matured in oak, at 12.5%, £13 from Majestic. The last white was a *Codax 21 Albarino Rias Baixas 2021* at 12.5% and £14.99 from Averys.

Finally moving on to the reds, we had an exceptional *Lobo e Falcao* (Wolf and Falcon) Portuguese from the Tagus, 14% and £13.99, then an *El Duque de Miralta Gran Reserva 2019 Rioja*, 14% and £16 from M&S. The last red was a *Vina Zorzal Cueva de la Mora* from Navara, 13.5% and £13 from The Wine Society. By this time the notes got a little sketchy, but I believe we concluded with *Blandy's Madeira Duke of Clarence*, 17% and £16.25 from Morrisons; a truly memorable evening!

Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchenor



June's meeting featured Wines from Chile. The scoring for five of the six wines was very close but the clear winner on the night was a *Peumo Carmenere*, (from Tesco) which was originally a French grape before it was almost completely decimated 150 years ago. Nowadays, Chile is the biggest producer of this lovely medium bodied red wine.

Our get together in July was in Althea and Laurie's lovely garden. Its theme was 'Wine for the Adventurous' with a world tour of wines from Italy, Greece, Hungary, South Africa, Ukraine and Uruguay. All the bottles came from the Wine Society but disappointingly, it was agreed that none of the wines were as nice as the weather and garden!

August's meeting theme was 'Can You Tell the Difference?' This featured just two grape varieties, both favourites of our Group; Viognier for the whites and Primitivo (or Zinfandel as it is called in the US). Our members were surprised at how different the same grape could taste, depending upon which country it came from. The winner on the evening was an outstanding Zinfandel, despite its high price. This is, by some distance, this quarter's recommended wine (see label right).

So, our recommendation: If you fancy a little spoil for a seriously good red wine try the *Brazin old Vine Lodi Zinfandel*. It's big and bold with hints of blackberry, raspberry and black pepper notes. It is really delicious but at £18 from Waitrose, best bought with one of this supermarket's 25% off periodic deals, and at £13.50 with the offer, it's a steal.



Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



outside?

Family duties and other commitments affected our meetings this quarter, so we have taken a holiday in August. 'Traces We Leave Behind' was our June topic when we met at Peter's house. A wide variety of stories were presented, including notes from a prisoner and a 'Secret Teddy'. 'Inside and Out' was our July topic at our meeting at Lisbeth's house. Nestled in lovely woodland, her home remained mercifully cool during the heatwave. Indeed, this formed the subject of one of the pieces presented; How do you stay cool inside, despite the temperature

(cont.)

Our August topic would have been 'The Last Laugh', which we will now carry over to September.

Our Group welcomes new members so, if you write in any capacity, maybe you would like to join us. Our meetings have now come forward half an hour to start at 2pm, generally on the second Friday of the month in a member's home. We agree on a topic for our next meeting, but members can present from any work that they may have in hand.

An Apology: In the June Newsletter I attributed the front cover photograph of the Market Hall in Old Amersham to Andrew Brown. It was, of course, taken by photographer, Alex Brown. (ed.)

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS: ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

- 1) *Le Louvre*
- 2) *Charles de Gaulle*
- 3) *Reunion Island*
- 4) *Munich*
- 5) *The Black Forest*
- 6) *The Zugspitze*
- 7) *Tom Daley*
- 8) *They have all been made into video games*
- 9) *Four Strings*
- 10) *Portugal*
- 11) *George Harrison*
- 12) *Jumping Flea*

AUTUMN

"I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers."

(Lucy Maud Montgomery)

"Autumn passes and one remembers one's reverence."

(Yoko Ono)

"Fall has always been my favorite season. The time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature had been saving up all year for the grand finale."

(Lauren DeStefano)

"Is not this a true autumn day? Just the still melancholy that I love - that makes life and nature harmonise. The birds are consulting about their migrations, the trees are putting on the hectic or the pallid hues of decay, and begin to strew the ground, that one's very footsteps may not disturb the repose of earth and air, while they give us a scent that is a perfect anodyne to the restless spirit. Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns."

(George Eliot)

Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

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

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

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

THIRD in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Pilates 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Walkers 1	Patchwork & Quilting (all day)	Book 4 (am)	Railways (am)
Canasta (pm)	Striders	German (am)	Chair Yoga (am)	Book 1 (am)
Knitting & Other Crafts (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Spanish Conversation (Intermediate) (am)	Bridge for Beginners (pm)	Stamps and Collectables meets in members' houses every two months
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Book 3 (pm)	Photography with Digital Imaging (pm)		
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Ukulele (pm)	Play Reading (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		
		Keep Fit (pm)		

FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders	French Conversation (am)	Walkers 2	Chess (am)
Pilates 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Chair Yoga (am)	Knit 2 (am)
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Poetry (pm)	German Conversation for Beginners (PM)
Singing for Pleasure (eve)		Dinghy Sailing (pm) (April-October)	Wine 1 (eve)	MOTO 2 meets for lunch on the second Saturday of each month MOTO 3 meets for lunch on the second Sunday of the month.
		Gardening (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		
		Keep Fit (pm)		

Top right: The Visit to Kew Gardens and the Henry Moore Exhibition in July was, despite the heat, very successful. Two of our members get to grips with one of his famous sculptures.



Centre right: Wine Appreciation Group 1 met at the Connor's in July on a lovely evening, and worked their way through selected wines from Iberia. It's tough, but somebody has to do it.

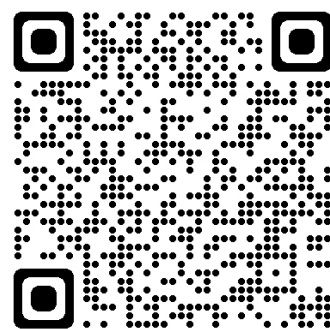


Bottom right: And here's evidence of their responsible recycling!

Below: Walkers 3 have been very active throughout June, July and August this year despite the hot weather. They've been to Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Hedgerley and Hawridge.



Striders' summer walk this year was at Box Hill, Surrey, in July, in a heatwave. Nevertheless five intrepid members braved the heat, searching in vain for shade under an amazing tree, climbing the never-ending hill, or just stepping out.



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