

**u3a**  
Chess Valley

Registered Charity 1126990

# NEWSLETTER

*June - August 2022*

website: [www.cvu3a.uk](http://www.cvu3a.uk)





Front Cover: Colin Pawson rounded off his amazing presentation on Coaches and Coach-horns at the March General Meeting with some expert renditions of coaching fanfares.

Top: Striders take a break at a Roman encampment they came across on their weekend trip to Brecon Beacons.

Above: Amblers took a walk around the Wendover arm of the Grand Union canal in May. Laurie Batten took this creative photograph of new-born spring lambs in one of the nearby pastures.

Upper right: Following her captivating talk, *Buckinghamshire Spies and Subversives*, at the General Meeting in April, author Denise Beddows managed brisk sales of her various books, both fiction and non-fiction.

Lower right: *Crop Circles: Made by humans or aliens?* Returning speaker Andy Thomas gave us the benefit of his extensive research on the topic at the History Group's May gathering. The jury's still out on that one.



# Speakers for General Meetings

All meetings start at 2pm

Council Chamber

Chesham Town Hall

Chesham, Bucks HP5 1DS

(Note: We hope to return to our usual venue, the Broadway Baptist Church, in October, once their building works have finished.)

**David Callaghan**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June**

## ***Cometh the Day, Cometh the Jewel***

David joined the West End firm of jewellers, Hancocks, as an apprentice in 1955 and retired in 1997 as their Senior Director. He is a past president of the Society of Jewellery Historians and is a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths. David's talk presents some of the extraordinary tales behind notable pieces of jewellery.

**(This talk was postponed from January, due to our need to go back to Zoom that month.)**

**Dr Aaron Hunter**

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July**

## ***The Dinosaurs of Crystal Palace***

Aaron is a geologist and guide/lecturer at Cambridge University, as well as being a London Blue Badge Guide and an Arts Society lecturer. Who knew there were dinosaurs in Crystal Palace? You will find them in the world's first dinosaur park, opened in 1854, and our expert takes us on a tour.

**Jeff Evans**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August**

## ***The Questionable History of the TV Quiz Show***

Jeff is a journalist and television historian, and the author of *Rock and Pop on British TV from 1960*. This talk covers the whole colourful history of the TV quiz show, celebrating the good, the bad, the winners, the losers and the cheaters, unearthing some very dodgy dealing along the way. Where did it all begin? How could a copy of the *Radio Times* have helped you win a handkerchief? Which dame of the British theatre was once a quiz show hostess? This talk contains plenty of surprises, and lots of 'I didn't know that' moments.

**Mervyn Edwards**

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September**

## ***Walking the Beat to Nirvana***

Mervyn is a former police officer, currently working as a consultant in Specialist Security Services, and a writer. Before retiring as a Chief Superintendent, he was in charge of Special Operations, which encompassed drug and explosive dogs search teams, armed protection of royalty, counter terrorism and riot training, and was part of a group tasked with training the police to deal with CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) terrorism. Despite the serious subject matter of this talk, it also includes a great deal of humour.



**Chesham Town Hall is accessible to wheelchairs.**

# Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our summer newsletter for 2022.

I am writing this before the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, although it will probably be landing on your doormat afterwards. Let's hope that we have/had good weather and that people enjoyed some nice events as a distraction from more worrying things going on in the world.

## Annual General Meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2pm

This is my 'last call' for members to attend our AGM which this year takes place in the Council Chamber of Chesham Town Hall. We do need a quorum of at least 60 paid-up members to enable the meeting to take place.

## Thames Valley Network events

The Thames Valley Network of u3as, to which we belong, is resuming live study days from 29<sup>th</sup> July. It's not clear at the moment whether all such events will then be live or whether they may adopt a mixed approach with some live and some via Zoom. Anyway, you can find out what's coming along by visiting the TVN website: [u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://u3atvnetwork.org.uk).

*With best wishes*



**James Cadle**  
chair@cvu3a.uk

## New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Robin Addison	<i>Dunstable</i>	Carol Ann Hance	<i>Amersham Common</i>
Mary Adlington Axon	<i>Ashley Green</i>	Parvez Hussain	<i>Chesham</i>
Diana Bacon	<i>Chesham</i>	Greta Jeffreys	<i>Chesham Bois</i>
Adele Bassett	<i>Great Missenden</i>	Angela Marr	<i>Old Amersham</i>
Brigitte Bertout	<i>Chesham</i>	Jude Potheary	<i>Amersham</i>
Rebecca Brandon	<i>Chesham</i>	Timothy Pye	<i>Great Missenden</i>
Irene Glyn-Jones	<i>Amersham</i>	Christopher Webb	<i>Chesham</i>
Richard Glyn-Jones	<i>Amersham</i>	Denis Weller	<i>Aylesbury</i>
Annette Greatbatch	<i>Chalfont St Giles</i>	David Whittaker	<i>Watford</i>
Ken Greatbatch	<i>Chalfont St Giles</i>	Michael Woolnough	<i>Chesham</i>

If you know anyone you think might be interested in joining, please ask them to get in touch with the Membership Secretary; contact details on page 5.

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

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

## From the Groups Coordinator

First, I bring you news of two possible new groups. I mentioned Archery before and a Cribbage Group has also been suggested so if you are interested in either of these please contact me via [groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk) please.

It seems to be an increasing problem to find Group Convenors so I sadly announce the closure of both the Eclectic Music Group and the Jazz Appreciation Group. The Convenors of each have retired and despite these being reasonable-sized groups no one has come forward to take over.

That moves me to my soapbox stance! The whole u3a movement is very much based on the theory of 'government by the people for the people'. Please do not sit back and assume someone else will do it. If you are able to help in any way please step forward. We are desperate for new blood on the committee and many Groups could do with more help. Please!!

**Helen Barnard**  
**Groups Coordinator**  
[groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk)

## Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle	<a href="mailto:chair@cvu3a.uk">chair@cvu3a.uk</a>	07889 732291
Vice-Chair	Helen Barnard	<a href="mailto:vicechair@cvu3a.uk">vicechair@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 715588
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor	<a href="mailto:treasurer@cvu3a.uk">treasurer@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 434918
Business Secretary	Colin O'Rourke	<a href="mailto:secretary@cvu3a.uk">secretary@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 728897
Membership Secretary	Jim Wilkie	<a href="mailto:membership@cvu3a.uk">membership@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 782081
Groups Coordinator	Helen Barnard	<a href="mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk">groups@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 715588
Webmaster	Valerie Garrood	<a href="mailto:webmaster@cvu3a.uk">webmaster@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 433585
Newsletter Editors	John Bunyan	<a href="mailto:newsletter@cvu3a.uk">newsletter@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 778858
	James Cadle		01494 716992
Speaker Organiser	Michael Cohn*	<a href="mailto:speakers@cvu3a.uk">speakers@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 763542
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb	<a href="mailto:eventscoord@cvu3a.uk">eventscoord@cvu3a.uk</a>	01494 773718
<i>* indicates a non-voting member</i>			

## Update from the Events Team

Two more events are planned, as follows:

- **Henley boat trip, Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July**  
This will leave and return from Hobbs of Henley's boatyard and explore some of the countryside surrounding the River Thames.
- **Church crawl, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August**  
This visit is an exploration of the architecture and art of country churches at The Lee (near Chesham) and at Weston Turvill (near Aylesbury).

Both trips involve member own transport to and from the start/end, and details are available from Jackie Cobb – [events@cvua.uk](mailto:events@cvua.uk).

**Copy date for the next newsletter is 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**

# Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a e-mail
<b>Art</b>	Mo Barnes	art@cvu3a.uk
	Angela Spittle	
<b>Art Discussion 1</b>	Angela Bishop	artdiscuss@cvu3a.uk
<b>Art Discussion 2</b>	Caroline Jenks	artdiscuss2@cvu3a.uk
<b>Art Discussion 3</b> (currently dormant)	Helen Barnard	artdiscuss3@cvu3a.uk
<b>Book Group 1</b>	Gillian Eastmond and Mavis	bookgroup1@cvu3a.uk
	Mavis Earnshaw	
<b>Book Group 2</b>	Liz Howlett	bookgroup2@cvu3a.uk
	Christine Ross	
<b>Book Group 3</b>	Eileen Overton	bookgroup3@cvu3a.uk
<b>Book Group 4</b>	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup4@cvu3a.uk
<b>Bowls (Green), Outdoors (Chiltern)</b>	Margaret Stickland	bowls@cvu3a.uk
<b>Bowls (Short Mat), Indoors (Chiltern)</b>	Sue Spalton	shortbowls@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Williams	
<b>Bridge</b>	John Curtis	bridge@cvu3a.uk
	Patrick Clarke	
<b>Bus Pass Adventures</b>	Anne Muir	buspass@cvu3a.uk
<b>Canasta</b>	Linda Hepworth	canasta@cvu3a.uk
	Sue Hawksley	
<b>Chess</b>	Peter Schweiger	chess@cvu3a.uk
<b>City of London Churches</b>	Jackie Cobb	londonchurches@cvu3a.uk
<b>Current Affairs</b>	Eileen Overton	currentaffs@cvu3a.uk
<b>Digital Imaging</b>	Pippa Greensmith	digimaging@cvu3a.uk
	David Hurd	
<b>Dinghy Sailing</b>	Wendy Barnes	sailing@cvu3a.uk
	Judith Young	
<b>Eclectic Music</b>	Danny Robins	music@cvu3a.uk
	Rod Stevens	
<b>Family History</b>	Sue Broad	familyhist@cvu3a.uk
<b>Folk Music</b>	Richard Skepper	folkmusic@cvu3a.uk
<b>French Conversation</b>	Morag Robertson	frenchcons@cvu3a.uk
<b>French Intermediate</b>	Hilary Alleston	french@cvu3a.uk
<b>Gardening</b>	Stephanie Rothwell	garden@cvu3a.uk
	Camilla Plummer	
<b>German</b>	Jenny Lee	german@cvu3a.uk
<b>History</b>	Claire Paterson	history@cvu3a.uk
	Ian Hutt	
<b>Italian</b> (currently dormant)	Vacancy	newitalian@cvu3a.uk

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# Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a e-mail
<b>Jazz Appreciation</b>	Danny Robins	jazzmusic@cvu3a.uk
<b>Keep Fit for 60+</b> (currently dormant)	Vacancy	keepfit60@cvu3a.uk
<b>Knitting and Other Crafts</b>	Sue Rawbone	knit@cvu3a.uk
<b>Line Dancing (Chiltern)</b>	Lynne Benes	u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk
	Linda English	
<b>Mah Jong</b>	Ed Perrott	mahjong@cvu3a.uk
<b>MOTO</b>	Mo Barnes	moto@cvu3a.uk
<b>MOTO 2</b> (currently dormant)	Vacancy	moto2@cvu3a.uk
<b>Patchwork &amp; Quilting</b>	Angela Bratton	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Janet Moore	
<b>Photography</b>	David Hurd	photography@cvu3a.uk
<b>Pilates (1, 2 and 3)</b>	Christine Ross	pilates@cvu3a.uk
	Liz Howlett	
<b>Play Reading</b>	Claire Paterson	playread@cvu3a.uk
	Linda Hepworth	
<b>Poetry</b>	Christine Ogborne	poetry@cvu3a.uk
<b>Railways</b>	Graham Yellowley	railways@cvu3a.uk
	James Cadle	
<b>Science &amp; Technology</b>	Mike Christianson	sciencetech@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Twist	
<b>Scrabble for Fun</b>	Tony Muir	scrabble@cvu3a.uk
<b>Singing for Pleasure</b>	Angela Bratton	singing@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
<b>Spanish Conv (Inter)</b>	Hilary Alleston	spanishconv@cvu3a.uk
<b>Stamps</b>	Brian Feakes	stamps@cvu3a.uk
<b>Tai Chi</b>	Sue Broad	taichi@cvu3a.uk
<b>Theatre</b>	This Group is run by a small sub-committee.	theatre@cvu3a.uk
<b>Ukulele</b>	Jeff Naman	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
	Heather Sprake	
<b>Amblers</b>	Susan Osborne	amblers@cvu3a.uk
<b>Walkers 1</b>	Stuart Stanley	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
<b>Walkers 2</b>	Sue Rawbone	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
<b>Walkers 3</b>	Jane Towers	walkers3@cvu3a.uk
<b>Striders 1</b>	Andrew Brown	striders@cvu3a.uk
<b>Striders 2</b>	Ian Lee	striders21@cvu3a.uk

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# Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a e-mail
<b>Walks into History: Country</b>	Peter Schweiger	walkshist@cvu3a.uk
	Tony Biddle	
<b>Walks into History: London</b>	Angela Shipley	walkslondon@cvu3a.uk
<b>Wildlife</b>	Harry Howlett	wildlife@cvu3a.uk
	Keith Sonley	
<b>Wine Appreciation 1</b>	Pauline & Tom Hohenberg	wine@cvu3a.uk
<b>Wine Appreciation 2</b>	Muriel Gray (acting)	wine2@cvu3a.uk
<b>Writers</b>	John & Helene Bunyan	writers@cvu3a.uk

## What's in a name?

I always marvel at people with lots of grandchildren and who can remember their names. We have only got two but can usually be relied on to confuse them, forget them or call them by totally different ones. The boxer George Foreman has five sons all of whom he named George, so that he never confused them and, when called, the right son always came albeit with four others.

Noel Coward, when forgetting a name, simply asked the person for it and when being told that it was, say, Brown, would exclaim "yes of course I know that, but for this instant your first name eludes me". It obviously also works the other way round.

Names were once a label of your profession or trade – Cutler, Brewer, Farmer, Smith – where in a village environment there was probably only one of each. So identity and occupation were not problems, except perhaps for some members of the Hooker family. However a different approach was needed in Wales where, due to the disproportionate numbers of Jones's, additional information is required as in 'Jones the Bread', that is the baker. This, I suppose is how Jones the Spy was tracked down by MI5 living in Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerichwyrndrobwilllantysiliogogoch.

Family names only seem to change much with immigration and its subsequent confusions around translation and spelling; the USA, for instance, providing the best examples. My favourite is Eagleburger; yum! And if names were evolving now we would have Webmaster and not Webster and Jogger for Walker, although the singer Rag and Bone man has used a past name to style his very current identity.

And be careful what you wish for. In the '90s an ardent Leeds supporter named his offspring with all the names of that club's players\*. His son perhaps understandably, now supports Arsenal.

*'Timewaster'*

*\*Dominic, Andrew, Lukic, Newsome, Fairclough, White, Dorige, Mcallister, Batty, Strachen, Speed, Chapman, Cantona Cazeau*



# News From The Groups

## GROUP MEETINGS

Groups are now meeting in person. All Groups are open to enquiries from new members and, if full, will hold a waiting list. Groups that are inactive do not have an entry in the newsletter.

***In public buildings it is important that the Convenor knows who is at the meeting in case of fire. Please, always sign in and out of the building. Also, make sure you know where the fire exits are. Please adhere to the pandemic hygiene rules set for the premises.***

## Art

Mo Barnes & Angela Spittle



Our latest projects during our *Art for Fun* sessions have concentrated on portraiture. We initially tried drawing and painting a portrait from a magazine or from a family photo in any medium. We then attempted portraits of pets. This was followed up by copying a Van Gogh picture using acrylic paint directly onto paper. Our most recent sessions have taken a different direction: we have taken up drawing and painting flowers from our gardens. As usual, coffee and biscuit breaks provided pleasurable intervals. The Group is currently full.

## Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



In March, our subject was Friedensreich Hundertwasser, an Austrian artist somewhat unknown to our Group. Born in 1928, his work ranged from paintings and tapestries to unique and challenging architecture. He died in 2002, having exhibited his work across the globe, over the whole of his life. One member showed his gloriously colourful work entitled *Half Paris / Half Siena* from 1950. Several members chose his architecture ranging from an apartment block in Darmstad, to a toilet block in Kawakawa in New Zealand and an incinerator in Vienna. Many of us were unaware of his pioneering environmental designs and use of reclaimed material.

In April, we discussed cartoons. These ranged from the delicate primary sketches such as those by Leonardo da Vinci of the *Virgin and Child* (The Burlington House Cartoon) to 'images of the moment', which we recognise in our newspapers and periodicals. One member introduced us to James Gillray, a late 17<sup>th</sup> century artist and father of the political cartoon. He produced limited editions of representations of events of his time in cartoon form, which became collector's items. Other members showed cartoons from *Private Eye*, Giles from the *Daily Express* and from the *New Yorker*. It was agreed that all their work, as viewed by millions, had great artistic merit.

In May, our subject was Gustav Klimt, another Austrian artist born in 1862 and who died in 1918. His work appeared unique when considered alongside European influences at the time. He was a founder member of the 'Vienna Succession Movement'. He produced highly detailed landscapes and portraits, but is probably best known for *The Kiss*, a sensuous, gilded work showing a couple embracing. Several members were able to give their personal impression of his work called the *Beethoven Frieze*, in the Belvedere Gallery, Vienna. This is a celebration of the composer and his work, *Ode to Joy*.

Future subjects are to be Gauguin and to welcome summer we have 'The Seaside'.

## Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



'Indigenous Art' was the theme for our March meeting: Aztec feather-work, beadwork from the Ndebele culture of northern South Africa and the monumental stone carvings from Easter Island featured. There was some extraordinarily sensitive painting from the Inuit people in northern Canada, as well as boldly painted totem poles from the same region. We looked at Hawaiian cloth work, Maori carvings and paintings and Dreamtime art from Australia. It was a most informative afternoon highlighting human creativity. (cont.)

Our April meeting was entitled 'Women Artists'. Caroline introduced the meeting with a brief talk on the 'Guerrilla Girls', a group formed in New York in 1985, which campaigned for greater recognition and representation for women in the art world. Women have been professional artists from the late Renaissance and we followed the careers of some very creative and adventurous women over the centuries. These included Lavinia Fontana, a Renaissance artist, Marianne North, an artist who travelled worldwide on her own in the 1800s, Berthe Morisot, an Impressionist artist, Tamara de Lempicka, a Polish artist who painted Art Deco portraits and Barbara Rae, a Scottish artist born in 1943, who records time passing.

We did not meet in May (a bank holiday got in the way), so we had lunch as a substitute for our meeting.

### Book 1

Gillian Eastmond & Mavis Earnshaw



This smaller friendly Book Group meets about every six weeks on a Friday morning, at three different members' homes. We have now resumed face-to-face meetings. We bring with us one or two books, fiction or non-fiction, which we have found interesting. Each person then gives a very brief description of the book and says why they personally thought it worth reading. We then have questions about the book and sometimes a lively discussion about the theme of the book. In normal times the owner can often lend the book to anyone who wants it. You will never have to read a book you don't like but you will also be introduced to books you might never have met otherwise. If you want to join us please email a Convenor to see if there is a vacancy.

### Book 2

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



From June 2022, Book Group 2 will have a change of venue and time. We will move from Chesham Library to Amersham Library, meeting at 2pm instead of 11.45 - but still on the first Wednesday of the month. Our most recent novels were *The Moment* by Douglas Kennedy, *Disgrace* by J M Coetzee and *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai. All three prompted interesting discussions, which mostly centred on the Group members' recollections of the three countries featured: Germany, South Africa and India, respectively.

### Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Availability is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham library. Due to members moving away, two vacancies have occurred. Please contact the Convenor if you are interested in joining us. Our books for the next three months are: *The Gustav Sonata* by Rose Tremain, *Waiting for Columbus* by Thomas Trotimuk and *The Silence of the Girls* by Pat Barker. We strive to read a variety of titles, which will stretch our minds and give us lots to discuss.

### Book 4

Jackie Cobb



We would be happy to welcome two new members to our Group. We have discussed *Once Upon a River* by Diane Setterfield in May. The next two books we will discuss in June are *Girl A* by Abigail Dean and in July *Nelson's Daughter* by Miranda Hearn.

If you are interested in joining us please contact the Convenor, Jackie Cobb

### Bowls (Green Outdoors)

Margaret Stickland (Chiltern u3a)

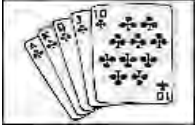
CVu3a members can join Chiltern members for the forthcoming season of weekly outdoor bowls, which runs from May to September on Wednesdays at Amersham Bowls Club, Hervines Park, from 10.30 to 12.30. The cost is £50 for the season. Contact Margaret to check on the availability of places, on [bowls@cvu3a.uk](mailto:bowls@cvu3a.uk).

*Summer Fun Fact 1: Due to the iron from which it's made expanding in the summer heat, the Eiffel Tower grows about six inches during the season. (linqatnorthsprings.com)*

**Bowls (Short Mat)****Sue Spalton & Peter Williams (Chiltern u3a)**

Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. The outdoor summer sessions are on Monday afternoons at Holmer Green Sports Association and run from 1.50 to 4pm. If you wish to 'try your hand', tuition is given. Bowls are available. The cost is £3 per session.

Interested members should contact the Convenors using: [shortbowls@cvu3a.uk](mailto:shortbowls@cvu3a.uk).

**Bridge****John Curtis & Patrick Clarke**

The Bridge Group meets on Wednesday afternoons at Chartridge Park Golf Club. Attendances have been good and there is a waiting list to join the Group. It is just wonderful to be able to play bridge face to face, rather than on a computer! Please contact the Convenors to join the list, or hopefully join us in person, should a place become

available.

**Bus Pass Adventures****Anne Muir**

On Wednesday 30th March, seven adventurers left Chesham Broadway at 9.15 and, after being joined by another intrepid explorer in Amersham, proceeded via Wycombe to Thame, arriving in time for coffee. Thame has an elegant old wide High Street, rather like Amersham Old Town. Along this are half a dozen coffee shops, about ten pubs, two restaurants and two fish and chip shops: so plenty of choice for everyone. We alighted opposite Thame Town Hall, which set the tone for our short visit. This building has featured in many episodes of 'Midsomer Murders', mainly as 'Causton Town Hall and Arts Centre'. Many of the shops and other structures in the High Street have appeared in the series, normally with sinister overtones.

After coffee, a few of us made a short tour of some of these locations and also came across the grave of Robin Gibb of Bee Gees fame in St Mary's Churchyard. He had a property in Thame for 30 years. John Hampden (c1640) and the Irish poet W B Yeats (c1900) also had property in the High Street. The 'Greyhound Inn' was the training base of James Figg (born 1684 in Thame) who is reputed to be the world's first bare knuckle boxing champion. The Memorial Garden at the South end of town has a lovely section dedicated to the deaths of the young: infants or premature births etc. Near to this I explored the old railway line and came across the two platform faces of Thame Station. The track bed now forms a walk/cycle-way for six miles towards Princes Risborough. The Group caught the 2.20pm service back to Chesham via Wycombe, arriving home just in time for tea.

Bob O'Dell

The next outing of the Bus Pass Group will be on Thursday, 30th June, destination and details to be announced later.

**Canasta****Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley**

What with Easter and long awaited holidays, the Canasta Group hasn't been very active over the past three months with only two or three people playing at each meeting. We meet on the third Monday of each month at one another's houses. New members would be very welcome; please contact us on [canasta@cvu3a.uk](mailto:canasta@cvu3a.uk) if you are interested.

**Chess****Peter Schweiger**

The Chess Group is in great need of new members so, if you want to play chess in a friendly atmosphere, please contact Peter at [chess@cvu3a.uk](mailto:chess@cvu3a.uk) and 'check' us out. The Group meets in the afternoon on the last Friday of the month at the Convenor's home.

*Summer Fun Fact 2: The Frisbee was invented in the 1870s as a pie plate. In the 1940s college students began throwing them around. They are no longer used for pies.*

*([linqatnorthsprings.com](http://linqatnorthsprings.com))*



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.

## Digital Imaging

Pippa Greensmith &amp; David Hurd



Who says the camera never lies?

We've had some fascinating creative adventures so far this year. Topics covered include 'Applied Textures' and 'Torn Edges', as well as exploring the 'Dodge and Burn' tools in Photoshop. One of our members gave a useful demonstration on 'Levels and Colour Curves'. The aim of the Group is firstly to learn how to improve digital photographs and then, just for fun, how to manipulate and change images.

If this all sounds like a foreign language to you, but you'd like to learn more, do join us at Little Chalfont Village Hall on the fourth Monday of the month.

## Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes &amp; Judith Young



The 2022 sailing season started at the end of April and we plan to meet on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month at Troy Lake, between Maple Cross and Denham (but see the timetable on the website for updates). The safety boat team met at the beginning of April to review safety procedures and were able to get out on the water for a short boat handling practice session with the Training Principal at Rickmansworth Sailing Club. Thanks to everyone who has volunteered for safety boat duty.

The clubhouse is currently undergoing major refurbishment, so we are using the bar as a communal meeting place. The gents changing room is out of commission, so everyone should use the ladies changing room; please knock before entering to save any embarrassment.

Wet suits are not compulsory, but please make sure you are appropriately dressed for the weather conditions. We recommend that you bring a change of clothing in case you get wet!

No previous experience is necessary; we just ask that you can swim 10 metres. The fees this year are £10 for a full session (1pm - 5pm) and £5 for a half session, to include tea and cake.

For more information, please contact either of the Convenors.

## Eclectic Music

Danny Robins &amp; Rod Stevens



Members of the Group will be aware that Eclectic Music was due to close in June 2020 but in the hope that it would continue Rod Stevens and I took on the role to act as caretaker Convenors until a new Convenor was found. We are no longer able to continue in this role and unfortunately, as no one has come forward to take it on, reluctantly the Group will close after the June meeting.

So our final meeting will be on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June at 2pm: Venue: The Owen Room, Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham, HP6 6AJ.

The title is *Convenors' Final Choice*. This will be a programme of what we consider to be representative of Eclectic Music. On offer will be music by Italian string players, Norwegian trumpeters, British brass bands, German orchestras and a few comedians.

Tea, coffee and home-made cakes will be on sale in the Church canteen at 3pm.

*Summer Fun Fact 3: In Perth, Australia in 2015 with a summer temperature of 111°f, a resident fried some eggs on the pavement (in a pan actually to prevent them tasting gritty). (bestlifeonline.com/summer-facts)*



Members are slowly having the confidence to return to actual meetings although numbers are not yet up to pre-pandemic levels. Zoom meetings will still be on the agenda as it gives us the opportunity to invite speakers who live too far away to travel to Chesham.

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month in Chesham Town Hall at 2.15pm. New members are warmly welcomed. At our next meeting on the seventh of June, Alan Ruston will speak on *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

Alan has been involved in lecturing, speaking and writing on family history for over 30 years. He is a regular speaker at the Society of Genealogists and has written two books in the *My Ancestor was...* series. He is also Vice President of Herts FHS and a former Editor of their journal as well as an office holder in several Societies involved in Hertfordshire history. His other specialist areas are the history of nonconformity and popular theatre.

*The Gentleman's Magazine* is a proven and valued resource for family historians. As Britain's first monthly magazine, it ran (with some ups and downs) from 1731 and had an innovative role in the development of the modern obituary.



After three months of meetings, members of the Group are still on speaking terms with each other and indeed steady progress has been made on developing a repertoire. Whaling, though not generally fashionable, has proved to be a popular subject as has wailing, of course. Members have different musical backgrounds but are collaborating with a joyful enthusiasm and there has been mention of performing to others down the line. Holidays and illnesses have depleted numbers attending but the Group is close to the maximum workable size with singers, guitarists, a fiddler, a clarinet, a ukulele, a whistler and an accordion. However if anyone wants to come along and bang a folk drum or 'bodhran' they would be most welcome; no previous experience needed, just enthusiasm.



The French Group has continued to meet in person, taking turns in each other's houses. We continue to chat in French about various current issues, trying to steer clear of politics! We do have room for more participants if anyone is keen to practise their French.

We are still enjoying our regular meetings, talking about recent events and looking forward to getting out more in summer. We are still open to new members, so do give us a try.



In March we welcomed Amy Moffett as our speaker. Amy is the Head Gardener for 'Horatio's Garden', which is situated within the grounds of the Spinal Unit at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. This fully accessible garden for patients with spinal injuries, designed by Joe Swift, gardener, garden designer, writer and broadcaster, has been part-funded by the National Gardens Scheme. It has been cleverly designed to bring benefit to patients who often have to endure lengthy hospital stays. Amy emphasised how gardens can be beautiful places radiating peace and tranquillity, which can enhance a patient's feelings of wellbeing. Amy showed us a lovely slide of a delighted patient reaching to pick a tomato in the garden from his hospital bed, which had been placed there.

Our speaker for April's meeting was Dr Catherine Horwood who travelled from London to give us a very interesting talk entitled *Gardening Women*. (cont.)

Catherine is a renowned author who has written books on a variety of gardening topics; the most acclaimed being her biography of Beth Chatto. Catherine gave us a fascinating overview of the ways in which women have influenced and developed gardens and garden design from medieval times to the present day. Many of these women are unknown and unsung heroines of the gardening world, which was, predictably, male dominated. Apparently, women were often just given menial tasks in the garden such as weeding as their fingers were more dextrous than men's! Only women with access to wealth had the opportunity to become plant collectors and garden designers.

In June several members are making a return visit to the Manor House at Stevington, Bedford. Kathy Brown is the owner of this beautiful garden, which has featured in several prestigious garden magazines. This is our second visit and we are hoping for much better weather than the previous time!

Another more local trip is planned for July. We have arranged an evening tour of 'The Plant Specialist', a family-run nursery in Great Missenden.

Full details of our programme for the remainder of the year can be found on our webpage.

## German

Jenny Lee



The German Group continues to meet twice a month in each other's houses. This month we are delighted to welcome two new members. Here are a few German words you need to know for the arrival of spring:

der Frühlingsbote: harbinger of spring.

die Spargelzeit: the asparagus season (Germans love white asparagus).

die Bowle: a mixed fruit and sparkling wine beverage. Bowle is to Spring what Glühwein (mulled wine) is to winter.

das Naturgefühl: a feeling of oneness with nature.

viel spaß: have fun.

## History

Claire Paterson & Ian Hutt



"It's About Time", said Colin O'Rourke, our History Group member, who proceeded to tell us all about time in his presentation to the Group in March. It commenced with the beginning of time measurement using a sundial, which measured the passing of daytime, but clearly not night time. Graduated candles and water clocks were used, though these measured time elapsed, rather than real time. Mechanical clocks were developed using cogs, wheels and a pendulum. New inventions enabled smaller clocks to be made eventually, leading to the wristwatch, which was mainly worn by women with men using pocket watches. The

wristwatch came into its own for men during the trench warfare of World War I, as it left both hands free. He told us of Harrison and the Longitude prize, and Greenwich Mean Time, which became the legal time in 1880. Apparently the Great Western Railway was the first to use GMT as a standard for train times. This was a massive subject, which Colin explained with good use of diagrams, pictures and video, enabling some clearer understanding of the whole concept.

Part two of Ramji Abinashi's presentation on the *Partition of India* was as absorbing as his first. Mountbatten became Viceroy, appointed to oversee Independence, which was planned for 1948. He brought the event forward to August 1947 due to high tensions and his concerns that there would be a civil war. This gave only six months to arrange the division of a huge nation, mainly along religious lines. Sir Cyril Radcliffe arrived with the allotted task of drawing up borders. He had no experience, no knowledge of India and in fact had never travelled. Britain was deep in wartime debt and wanted out. The total population of 390 million was split, 330 to India, 30 million to West Pakistan and 30 million to East Pakistan. Subsequently it was estimated that between 10 and 20 million former Indian nationals were displaced, with over one million men, women and children killed in the resulting violence: A really sad outcome to a very complex situation and one that still affects the relationship between India and Pakistan today.

Moving a little away from our usual historical subjects, our May talk was given by Andy Thomas on *The Mystery of Crop Circles*.

(cont.)

He was a very passionate and compelling speaker on his subject. Many members were sceptical, but his argument, on the whole, was convincing: That these intriguing patterns were not and could not be produced by man! Even after 15 years of his study of the phenomenon though, he still could not definitely understand or inform us as to how they were done. The first clear record of crop circles was in 1678, when they were thought to have been made by the devil!

These circles and designs appear not only in cornfields, but in many cereal crops, also in large areas of grass or other vegetation and in many other parts of the world. He showed photographs from the 1930s and press coverage in the '40s of circles and rings. In the '70s there was a sense that it was a quaint countryside mystery probably caused by weather. But by the 1980s the patterns had become more complex. By the 1990s there was more press coverage and interest. A scientific paper was published demonstrating the difference between manual and unexplained occurrences. More recent designs exhibit a degree of mathematical brilliance, geometry and genius in their sophisticated execution. There are many theories, ranging from flying saucers, climate change and solar phenomena. Aquifers, (over which many appear), changes in electro-magnetic environment, the power of the mind, drones (which have enabled them to be seen more clearly) and divine intervention were other theories put forward. There have been reports of effects on health, electronic equipment, phones not working etc. by people visiting the circles. It is estimated that it would take from nine to ten hours to construct them manually, though there is never any evidence of this. The surrounding crop never shows the disturbance that would definitely occur if people had been at the scene with no trampling of surrounding vegetation and no one has actually witnessed people creating them: they somehow just appear. They are a complete mystery and, if made by man, then how, is still the unanswered question.

At our next meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup> we will welcome Dr Rachel Wood who is Archaeological Manager of the *Historic Environment Research and Delivery Service* for HS2. She will be telling us about some of the finds from our area revealed during excavations for HS2.

### Jazz Appreciation

Danny Robins



Following the request for a new Convenor for the Jazz Appreciation Group, no one has come forward so the final meeting of the group will be on Tuesday, 28 June at the Owen Room, Amersham Free Church, Woodside Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 6AJ.

June 28<sup>th</sup>: Convenors Choice: A reminder of some of the American Jazz personalities it has been my pleasure to see and hear over many years; from Dizzy to Duke, from Adelaide to

Blossom.

I look forward to seeing you.

Danny

### Keep Fit for 60+



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

### Knitting & Other Crafts

Sue Rawbone



The Group continues to meet in members' houses on the first and third Mondays in the month but we have missed quite a number in the last quarter because there have been so many bank holidays!

If anyone is interested in joining our Group, please contact the Convenor, Sue Rawbone.

*Summer Fun Fact 4: Each summer, Looe Key Reef in Florida holds an 'Underwater Music Festival'. The festival includes a pre-selected radio play-list that is streamed live from underwater speakers, to an audience of snorkelers and divers. (bestlifeonline.com)*

## Line Dancing

Chiltern u3a



The Line Dancing Group is run by Chiltern u3a, but we also welcome members from Chess Valley u3a. We normally meet in the Methodist Church, Bellingdon Road, Chesham, HP5 2HA on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 10am. Meetings last one hour and we pay our teacher each time we attend a class. No experience is necessary and the emphasis is on enjoying ourselves, exercising body and mind and having fun. There is parking available at the venue. We currently have a waiting list. Please contact the Convenors if you wish to be put on it.

The Group's Convenors are Lynne Bennett tel. 01494 721622 and Linda English tel. 01494 721366.

Email: [u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk](mailto:u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk)

## Mah Jong

Edward Perrott



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

## MOTO (Members On Their Own)

Mo Barnes

The MOTOs have continued to take pleasure in their fortnightly Sunday lunches at local hostelries and restaurants which include the 'Boot and Slipper', 'Cote Brasserie', 'Elephant and Castle' and 'Ego' at the 'Pomeroy' in Amersham. Finally there's the 'White Hart' in Whelpley Hill. Some of us also enjoyed a day trip to the Thriplow Daffodil Festival and Country Fair and a weekend in Harrogate, which included trips to the beautiful surrounding Yorkshire Dales. We also met up for visits to the Elgiva Theatre for stage productions and films. More social activities are discussed at monthly planning meetings over coffee and biscuits at the Convenor's home. The Group is currently full.

## MOTO 2

Peter, the Group Convenor, has had to retire due to ill health and so sadly the Group is currently suspended, as we have been unable to replace him. Please contact Helen Barnard on [groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk) if you are prepared to step up to the Convenor's position.

## Patchwork & Quilting

Angela Bratton & Janet Moore



Members of P&Q are continuing their projects apace. An amazing hedgehog quilt is nearly completed and many members are continuing to sew for the 'Linus' projects; Sue will be collecting these in. Though it is not strictly 'quilting', Jubilee bunting is being made and sold to raise money for 'Scannappeal'.

We are a friendly Group who work on individual projects and get inspiration from each other as well as sharing advice when it's needed. The Group meets in the village hall at Hyde Heath once a month, which gives us plenty of space to work on large projects. New members are always welcome.

(Project Linus is a non-profit making charity that provides handmade blankets to comfort children in need across the world. Ed)

*Summer Fun Fact 5: The longest ever summer barbecue was held by Jan Greef of Columbus, Georgia in 2014. Over 80 hours, 1000 hotdogs, 558 burgers, 526 sausages, 200 corn cobs and 104 chicken pieces were eaten: A Guinness World Record. (bestlifeonline.com)*





Currently, we are very happy to welcome new members: come along to try before you buy!

The Photography Group met on Wednesday 20th April to listen to Jeanette Lendon's presentation on Smartphone photography. The membership was boosted by guests from other U3A groups which had been invited and altogether 26 were present to hear a fascinating talk on how to get the best out of a smartphone camera and to see some superb photographs that Jeanette had taken with her iPhone. There was a set of notes circulated later, as there was a lot of information to take in.

For our May meeting, David asked members to produce some photographs with their smartphones to show what they have learnt from the presentation, and to bring along a selection of prints for members to see. This included ones that members would use for the exhibition planned for November. As usual, members sent up to eight photographs for showing, directly to David at [photography@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk](mailto:photography@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk) using 'WeTransfer'. We also saw photographs that members took before the previous meeting, when the subject was 'blurred and out of focus shots'. Videos on the topic of 'Negative Space' were viewed.

The provisional programme for the next meetings is as follows. Our field trip to Chesham Moor is scheduled for early June.

Early June: Field trip to Chesham Moor.

June 15<sup>th</sup>: Looking at 'Negative Space' and field trip Photos. 'Contrast and angles' (project for next meeting).

July 20<sup>th</sup>: Steve Brabner: *Beyond the Comfort Zone*. Exhibition Photographs.

August 3<sup>rd</sup>: Field trip to Chenies.

## Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Whatever your level of fitness or age, Pilates is great body conditioning to strengthen your core, flexibility and improve balance. This makes it perfect for u3a members. Pilates 1,2 and 3 continue to thrive and we are enjoying being back together in the Jubilee Hall.

This term is fully booked despite our increasing the numbers to twenty per class. There is still a waiting list. Please feel free to contact Christine or Liz if you would like to be added to it.

## Play Reading

Claire Paterson & Linda Hepworth



We all very much enjoyed playing the teenage roles in a short play by Dennis Kelly called *DNA*. A group of young school friends carry out a terrible act in the local wood, which leads to the apparent demise of one of them, an outsider. He doesn't quite fit in and thus is a target for their jibes and dares. Between them and taking their lead from one of them, they plan and execute a cover up for his disappearance, revealing their own flawed characters. At the finale, the boy re-appears. Is he a ghost, a figment of their imaginations or truly re-incarnated? It was an intriguing tale.

Our March reading, *Family Circles* by Alan Ayckbourn, was not the best of his we've ever read, although reading a play cannot compare with it being produced and presented by actors on a stage. Which only goes to show what an achievement it is when their combined skills come together to create the whole: a staged play.

*Family Circles* is based on a hypothetical question "what would have happened if I had married someone else and what would have happened to them?" Based around three couples attending a wedding anniversary celebration, each couple is generally unsuited. At the end of each act, the partners change, though they retain their original characters: Interesting! The final scene sees all variants of the relationships mixed together: Confusing? Yes. There is a sub-plot too: they are sure their father is trying to kill their mother: Even more confusing!

(cont.)

This month's read, *Albert's Plot* by Bob Hartwell, was an uncomplicated one-act play, based around Albert, a retired miner and his allotment, his piece of England, his escape from the world. But the Council has placed a repossession order on the land to build a new road. Although family and friends, one by one, try to tell Albert there is no way out, he is determined to keep his piece of earth. In the end, it is life itself that solves the problem: A very little play that we all enjoyed.

## Poetry

Christine Ogborne

Our Group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month when we read and discuss poems on a theme or poet chosen beforehand. There is plenty of opportunity to talk about the chosen poets and their lives. We have a couple of places available for new members: please contact the convenor for details.

In March our topic was 'Sleep and Dreams' and it was interesting to find that many poets used this theme in some way in their poetry. We heard *I Dreamt* and *To die, to Sleep* by Shakespeare, *All You Who Sleep Tonight* by Vikram Seth, *The Land of Nod* by R L Stevenson, *The Dream* by Rossetti and *The Second Coming* by W B Yeats, among several other choices. April saw us having a change of topic altogether with 'Epic Poems' and we chose *The Jackdaw of Rheims* by R Barham when we went around the room each reading a verse and then discussing the poem as a whole. In May we decided to look at Irish Poets again and some lovely poetry was chosen including verses by W B Yeats, Seamus Heaney and C Day Lewis: very enjoyable.

Future meetings planned will be on the topic of 'Music and Dance', 'American Poets' and 'Farewells'.

## Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



We have received a lot of very positive feedback about our March speaker, Nigel Lowey, who gave a talk on St Pancras Station. Indeed some said this was "our best talk ever". Bit of a challenge for the next set of speakers then...

March 18<sup>th</sup>: Nigel Lowey: *St Pancras Station*. What a talk, full of information delivered in such an entertaining and interesting way that everyone was glued to their seats and desperate for the talk not to end. Nigel delivered a wonderful talk mixing social history, architecture, money, beer barrels and even a little bit of Railways, in such style. Hopefully he will be back with us in 2023 and, if he is, then don't miss it!

April 27<sup>th</sup>: Pendon Model Railway Museum visit. Thanks to John Bratton for identifying and organising our visit to Pendon. The Museum is about 20 minutes south of Oxford and contains three very large and really interesting model railways (Madder Valley, Dartmoor and The Vale). As interesting as the trains were, the layouts were just as impressive, based on 1930s rural England and with incredible attention to detail. It was fascinating to see milk churns, foxes, bicycles, horse and carts as well as a golfer and an old-style petrol station: A thoroughly enjoyable visit.

May 20<sup>th</sup>: Keith Hoffmeister: *HS2 and its Impact*. Another enthralling talk by Keith, who is really up to date on HS2 and what is happening in the local area. It's always good to know which areas to avoid when driving in Buckinghamshire. Keith delivered another excellent talk with fantastic pictures of the HS2 sites in Buckinghamshire and as a bonus, also included HS2 sites up to Calvert. We look forward to next year's update, Keith.

The Programme for the next few months of 2022 looks like this:

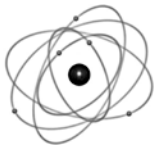
June 7 <sup>th</sup> :	Acton Depot visit	Graham Yellowley
June 26 <sup>th</sup> :	Beeches Light Railway visit	Peter Oakden & Graham Yellowley
July 15 <sup>th</sup> :	Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway	Roger Fagg

Our talk by Christian Wolmar on Crossrail is now on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

Please contact the Convenors if you wish to join the Group. You will be very welcome.

*Summer Fun Fact 6: 'Tug-o-War' is a staple of the summer village fete. What is not commonly known is that it featured in the Olympic games. It first appeared at the 1900 Paris Olympics, and continued through to the Antwerp games of 1920.*

*(bestlifeonline.com/summer-facts)*



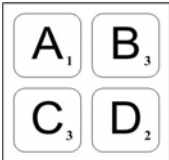
Here is the schedule for the Group's next three months' meetings:

June 20	David Hurd	<i>The Nearest Star</i>
July 18	Gillian Eastmond	<i>The Predictive Brain</i>
August 15	Colin O' Rourke	<i>Time Measurement through the Ages</i>

Our May meeting was back at Amersham Free Church on Monday 16th at the usual time of 2pm. Subsequent meetings are planned at the church on the third Monday of the month at 2pm, unless otherwise advised.

### Scrabble for Fun

Tony Muir



The last Scrabble Group meeting before the summer break was not well attended as several Group members went down with the dreaded Covid, my wife and me included. Let's hope that when we resume again in October, Covid will be a thing of the past.

### Singing for Pleasure

Stephanie Rothwell & Angela Bratton



The next highlight in our concert programme is on 30<sup>th</sup> June when we shall be performing with Vintage Brass at the new Community Centre in Amersham. The occasion is to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Amersham National Trust. However, the concert is two years behind schedule due to the pandemic, but better late than never!

We are busy rehearsing a variety of pieces especially for this performance as well as tackling some newer material. Our pièce de résistance is *Hymn to the Fallen*, the theme tune to the film, *Saving Private Ryan*. It is still proving to be a challenge but we're making progress according to Ali, our choir leader!

At a later date in July we shall be giving a more informal concert to the Lunchbreak Club, which meets at Amersham Free Church on Tuesdays. This was a regular occurrence in our diary pre-pandemic, so we are looking forward to resuming our concerts there.

Now that we have moved into the larger hall, we are able to accommodate more members, so if you would like to join us then please contact one of the Convenors, or via the CVu3a website. Full details of our rehearsals can be found on the Singing for Pleasure webpage.

### Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



We are happily settled back into our normal routine, and never run out of things to chat about. We look forward to sharing anecdotes of holidays as we start to travel a bit more. The Group is still full, however.

### Stamps

Brian Feakes



The Group met on the 28th March and more recently on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. At the March meeting we were shown a comprehensive collection from British Central Africa (later to become Nyasaland). The presenter's knowledge of the subject was excellent as was the material being shown.

At the May meeting, the subject was 'Postal History', covering Amersham, Chesham and Great Missenden. Early letters dating back to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century were on display and featured some of the earliest postmarks for these towns.

A speaker is still being sought for the July meeting. Looking forward to September, the postal history of Bristol and Somerset will be the subject for discussion.

## Tai Chi

Sue Broad



Our members continue to practise under our instructor's very strict guidance and are being tested weekly on the names of the movements, which are eventually getting through to us, well, some of us!

Our summer term continues now from 7<sup>th</sup> June to 12<sup>th</sup> July, after which we have a break till autumn. We have a full class of 17 at present.

## Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



The Theatre Group had its first outing for over two years in May. An enthusiastic coach load set off from Chesham to see *Drifters Girls*; a wonderful musical telling the story of the band and starring Beverley Knight: An outstanding cast with lovely old songs like *Under the Boardwalk* and *Save the Last Dance for Me*. Our next trip is on 9<sup>th</sup> June to Sonning to see the whodunit, *Busman's Holiday* and then on 7<sup>th</sup> July to see *Anything Goes*.

If you enjoy theatre, please join the Group. A coach will take you there and back from either Chesham or Amersham and we get good prices. The above two shows are sold out but if you are interested, do get in touch as we sometimes have cancellations. Enquiries to: [theatre@cvu3a.uk](mailto:theatre@cvu3a.uk)

## Ukulele

Jeff Naman & Heather Sprake



Our Ukulele Group is meeting, with mainly full attendance, on a fortnightly basis on Tuesday afternoons from 2.30 to 4pm at the Methodist church in Bellingdon Road. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, following requests, we are opening our session to family and friends to attend and hear us play.

If you are interested in finding out more about learning and playing the Ukulele, please contact either me or Heather, for more information. Jeff

## Walking Groups

Walking Groups are now active and working within the government guidelines concerning social distancing and risk assessment. Individuals from the Groups are also walking individually to scout new routes.

## Amblers (3 - 4 miles)

Sue Osborne

On a drizzling morning in May our Group met at Halton Tennis Club for a circular walk along and around the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal. Despite the weather, we enjoyed the natural beauty of our surroundings. Masses of cow parsley stretched along the edge of the canal and into the distance through the trees. Lively mallards frisked, even fought, in the water: disappointingly we were too early for ducklings. We admired the unusual colouring of several mandarin ducks, while in the fields, cute little new born lambs gamboled poetically.

But before I become too Wordsworthian, thanks to Liza Wormell for leading the walk. (Colour photo in this newsletter by Laurie Batten; Ed)

## Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

### Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

The Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10:00. Walks are usually between 4 and 5.5 miles long and are led by members. We usually meet for a picnic or pub lunch (optional) after the walk. Walks are planned with walk leaders and published every three months, and members advise the walk leader if they wish to participate. For the first quarter of 2022, we held walks at Ley Hill, Ashley Green, Christmas Common, Naphill and Littleworth Common.

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

## Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

The Group walks on the fourth Thursday of the month but we are often able to walk with Walkers 3 on the first Wednesday of the month if places are available. There is also an open invitation from Walkers 1 to join them on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, but please contact the Convenor, Stuart Stanley, if you wish to do so. Walks are between five and seven miles long with numbers limited to about 20 and it is up to the leader as to whether to offer to organise a pub lunch at the end.

New members are welcome, but please contact the Convenor if you would like to join the Group.

## Walkers 3

Jane Towers

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

Individual members of the Group arrange each walk and there are spaces for anyone to join the Group. New members are very welcome: just contact the Convenor. Walk information is circulated to members about two weeks before each walk.

## Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



All our walks are led by different members of the Striders Group, which leads to some interesting locations. Striders 1 recently discovered the lido in Ruislip: Who knew there was so much countryside in suburban Pinner and Northwood! Generally our regular walks are closer to home in the Chilterns, with recent examples starting in Monks Risborough, Cholesbury and Bovingdon. By the time this is published Jill Smith will have led the second of our 'long walks' (about 6 hours instead of the regular walks of about 3 hours) on the 5th Tuesday; our first of the year started at Aston Clinton and took us to the Tring Reservoirs for lunch break, before heading back via Drayton Beauchamp Church.

With changes to the technology available to plan and track walking routes, in early May, Jeremy Wyman gave us an excellent talk about apps and a detailed introduction to 'Outdoor Active' and then, with his wife Janet, led us on a walk around the Chesham Outer Ring using the route already published on the app. We could then use the app to follow the route and know we were on the right path. Due to time constraints, one shortcut was taken, which led to a plethora of alerts from the walker's phones, indicating that we were deviating from the path: at least it demonstrated one of the functions of the app.

Our Brecon Beacons weekend (originally booked in 2020), was enjoyed by about 30 members, although the weather did not co-operate on the second day as low cloud removed the chance of good views from the walks at higher levels. Looking ahead to July, nearly 40 Striders will be heading off to Seaford for a Covid-postponed summer outing to walk over the Seven Sisters to Eastbourne.

In the last Newsletter, we mentioned that Striders had cumulatively totalled over 3,400 miles on walks between the resumption of regular walks in mid-May 2021 and Christmas. Since then, the total has grown to over 5,600 miles over the full year to mid-May 2022 (including long walks and the Brecon Beacons weekend walks). Much to the amusement of the original Striders Convenor Alan Gray, that total would be sufficient to take us from Amersham to Brazzaville in the Congo: a work location for him for several years, although in those days he cheated by travelling in an aeroplane!

The Convenors of Striders 1 (Andrew Brown) and Striders 2 (Ian Lee) will welcome any new members from the Chess Valley u3a membership. Striders 2 walk on the first and third Tuesdays of each month; Striders 1 walk on the second and fourth Tuesdays. Jill Smith's longer walks with a picnic lunch en route will be on any 5th Tuesdays in the months ahead and a few other days besides. Please contact Andrew or Ian if you would like to join one of the Striders Groups, or for further information.

*Summer Fun Fact 7 (Here's one for the Ukulele Group): The biggest Ukulele festival in the world has been held in Hawaii since 1971. It attracts around 20,000 visitors each year and artists from around the world participate. The centrepiece of the festival is a band of 800 musicians.*  
([bestlifeonline.com/summer-facts](http://bestlifeonline.com/summer-facts))



### ***A Walk around Old Beaconsfield in March***

The weather smiled on us on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March when 10 of us met at 'Prelibato' in Windsor End for Coffee. Parking is free nearby being on common land, but it's hard to find a space. Beaconsfield is pronounced 'Beckonsfield' like the miniature village, because the name derives from 'beech' and the local logo is a beech tree. The big roundabout in the middle is where there used to be fairs and building was not allowed too close to the centre. The four roads that lead from it are The Windsor End, The Wycombe End, The Aylesbury End and The London End. No prizes where the roads ended.

We looked at the Old School which is now a Masonic Hall and went into the Church. The kneelers added a splash of colour and we admired the big chair given by Benjamin Disraeli when he became the Earl of Beaconsfield.

On our way along the London End there were old mews and one had a Cookery School. Many of the buildings had been hotels and had yards at the back for stabling horses overnight. Travellers from London to Oxford would stay there, as it could take two days for the journey before the railways speeded up travel. We took another detour away from the London Road into the back where there was a large green surrounded by modern houses, on our way to 'The White Horse' where we had a very pleasant lunch. Plenty of pictures graced the walls of the pub, which completed our walk. Peter

### ***Chipperfield Common in May***

On May 11<sup>th</sup> it rained all day but, undaunted, 12 of us and three dogs met at the 'Two Brewers' Pub on the common for a walk into the history of Chipperfield. This dates back to the bronze-age through to 1066, Tudor England, the world wars and up to the present. We were introduced to the Dominican Friars pond and ancient trees of over 400 years in age as well as 15<sup>th</sup> century houses and ancient tumuli. We walked along a bridleway, which was once used by the sheep drovers on their way to Watford market, and saw the 17<sup>th</sup> century manor house once owned by Peter Sellers and then by Raine: Barbara Cartland's daughter and Lady Diana's stepmother. The Lords of the Manor were the Blackwell family who were related to the 'Cross and Blackwell' company. After losing their sons in the Great War, they gifted the common lands of Chipperfield to the village and instituted a village club, now a café called 'Blackwells'.

Three miles long, and steeped in history, our walk took about two hours. We ended back at the 'Two Brewers' to enjoy lunch and drinks in good company. Val Littlejohn



### ***Old Westminster: Wednesday, April 13th***

This walk focused on the clutch of historic buildings at the centre of Westminster, and tells the last thousand years of Britain's history from the perspective of the ruling elite. However before the walk could start we needed our guides! Unfortunately one of them was trapped on a train in Kent, following an earlier incident. After some frantic three-way phone calls it was agreed we should go ahead with just one guide who quickly had control of the group of 57 and guided brilliantly.

We started by the refurbished Big Ben, although in reality this is the name of the 13ton bell, not the tower, originally known as the clock tower, but renamed in 2012 as the Elizabeth Tower to mark the Queen's diamond jubilee. Half way up the tower there is a small prison cell designed to hold errant parliamentarians, which has only been used once! The main building is usually referred to as the Houses of Parliament because it is home to the House of Lords and House of Commons, but its correct name is the Palace of Westminster. Finally, the tower on the southeast corner is the Victoria Tower, and surprisingly is slightly taller than the Elizabeth Tower. This complex has undergone a major restoration over the past several years, but with the scaffolding now all but down, the splendour of the Barry/Pugin design, rebuilt following the 1834 fire, can be enjoyed again. (cont.)

This building blends well with the more medieval Westminster Hall, but there must be a question mark over the £250million Portcullis House opposite, commissioned in 1992 to provide more office space for MPs, complete with bullet proof windows sitting atop the modern Westminster tube station.

Statues abound, notably that of Oliver Cromwell staring across the road at his enemy, Charles I and in Parliament Square there are those of Mahatma Gandhi and Winston Churchill, amongst others.

Westminster Abbey was conceived by Edward the Confessor and work started on a monastery, which was continued by William the Conqueror and his successors, until it was dissolved by Henry VIII. The Abbey became, in effect, a mausoleum for the Tudors. They are all buried here apart from Henry himself, who is buried at Windsor with his third and favourite wife, Jane Seymour. Since the Tudors, Westminster Abbey has become the resting place for the great and the good, but space is now at a premium so modern burials are confined to cremation ashes.

We wandered round the back, where we gazed at the houses of the famous and infamous and met Sue and her dog, Mozart, who live in the onetime HQ of the Liberal Democrats. She regaled us with stories that only neighbours can know.

John Shipley

## Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



The Wildlife Group is up and running and now fully into field visits with the arrival of spring. In April, our programme allowed us to visit the Horse Trust at Speen and some 38 members took advantage of this outing. Sunny, windy and chilly were words to describe the day, but we were treated to lots of 'inside information' about the centre from very helpful presentations by the admin staff, the resident vet and the yard manager. Whilst it is a home for some 120 of our equine friends, including donkeys and Shetland ponies, the

Trust not only offers sanctuary for animals with welfare issues, but also offers research and educational activities. Take one example: How do you manage horsebox incidents in road traffic accidents? The Trust advises all the policing and environmental services that might be involved in such scenarios, with practical exercises using actual size models.

The month of May brought us back to Amersham Common Village Hall and an insight into the work ongoing in the Chilterns on the development of wildlife corridors. Under the direction of the 'Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership', Nick Marriner gave us a very enthusiastic account of their success story in bringing farmers together in the Chilterns to generate hedgerow and field margins for wildlife. His talk complemented that of Norman Shepherd in March, who presented the work of BORG (Bucks Owls and Raptor Group) creating better habitats and accommodation in the Chilterns for our feathery friends.

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June, we will be off to Molesey Lock on the Thames to find out more about the European eel-monitoring project run by London Zoo. Then it's a trip round Stockers lake in Rickmansworth to understand better ecological systems working in harmony, on 7<sup>th</sup> July. Finally we have a visit to Hockeridge and Pancake Woods near Berkhamstead, to learn more about forestry and the identification of trees, on 4<sup>th</sup> August. If you feel that some of these activities might be of interest to you, then give us a try.

## Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In February we drank *Canti Prosecco* from Waitrose, *Le Fief du Temple Chenin Blanc* from Aveyrs, *Pazo de Villarei Albarino* from Galicia, a Naked Wines *Cortese di Gavi* from Piedmont and two Merlots: *Turner Road* from California and *Kimbao Gran Reserva* from Chile.

In March, the theme was 'French' and we started with a *Cremant de Bourgogne Blanc de Blancs* from Waitrose, followed by *Macon Villages Chardonnay* from Tesco, Avery's own brand *Haut Medoc*: a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. We finished with a 2018 Chateaufneuf du Pape, *Chateau de Beaucastel* from the Rhone Valley.

In April, the chosen country was Australia. After considerable searching, a Yellow Tail sparkling rosé was found. There were two Chardonnays: *Olive Grove* from McLaren and *Two in the Bush*. Both were enjoyed. There were then two Shirazes: *The Butterfly Effect* from Virgin Wines and Penfolds *Bin2*: both very good, with the Penfolds thought to be a serious dinner red and the *Butterfly*, more a drinking wine.



Whilst researching for his 'Indigenous/Traditional' wines theme in April, Ian Lee discovered there are over 10,000 grape varieties in the world, of which the Group managed to name 42; a very creditable number for a group of amateurs. That aside, Ian's tasting, comprising of three whites and four reds, proved very successful, with every wine gaining the Group's approval. Once again it was shown that the most expensive is not always considered the best. The winner for the whites on this occasion was a blend of three Portuguese grape varieties: *Esporao Monte Velho Branco 2020*, retailing at £7.75. With four excellent reds to choose from, the winner was (by a whisker) a *Luna Beberide 2020* made from the Mencia grape in the Bierzo region of north-western Spain, at £9.25 per bottle.

In May, newcomers to the Group, Mike and Tina Michael, hosted their excellent first wine tasting. They chose three whites and three reds, all from the Wine Society selection. With the whites coming from South Africa and France, the Group's favourite was a blend of Chenin Blanc and Viognier from South Africa called *Percheron*, retailing at £6.95 a bottle. However it was a very different thing when it came to the reds, when the resounding winner of the evening was a wine made from Tannat grapes, called *Ode d'Aydie* from the 'La Place' estate in the south west of France, at £11.95 a bottle. Apparently Tannat grapes are number one in Uruguay and grow better there than in France!

## Writers

Helene &amp; John Bunyan



Writers were able to meet in person from March, at last! Our topic was, predictably: 'Spring'. We made a departure from our normal format in April when each of us wrote a story of exactly 100 words. With time to spare after our readings, we each chose a passage of prose from a newspaper, magazine or book to explore in detail. This generated some lively discussions. With the Quaker Meeting House booked for another group in May, we repaired to the summerhouse in Peter's garden. The topic was 'Wildlife', which made itself evident in his lovely garden, as well as in our readings. Our June topic is 'Poetry'.

We are still short in number so please contact us if you are interested. You will be made very welcome. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month in the afternoon.

*Loveliest of Trees*

*Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.*

*Now, of my threescore years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again,  
And take from seventy springs a score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.*

*And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow*

*(from 'A Shropshire Lad',  
A. E. Housman - 1859-1936)*



# Chess Valley u3a equipment

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

Equipment	Custodian	Contact details
Data projector 1	James Cadle	<b>James Cadle</b>
Data projector 2	Ian Hutt	07889 732291
Laptop computer (Windows 10, Office 2016)	James Cadle	chair@cvu3a.uk
Companion speakers for laptop		<b>Ian Hutt</b>
PAT-tested extension cable/surge adapter		01494 583955
Projection screen 1 (5 ft)		history@cvu3a.uk
Projection screen 2 (6 ft)	Ian Hutt	
Pinboards x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	<b>Keith Hoffmeister</b>
Easels x 3		01494 766990
Portable PA systems x 3		photography@cvu3a.uk
PAT-tested 6-gang 2-metre extension leads (x 2)	David Hurd	<b>David Hurd</b> digimaging@cvu3a.uk
PAT-tested 4-gang 5-metre extension lead		
PAT-tested 4-gang 8-metre extension lead		
Rubber mats to protect extension leads (x 2)		

## Mini quiz

- History:** Which King of England had the nickname 'Longshanks'?
- Who led the Russian provisional government of 1917?
- Geography:** Which is the highest capital city in the world?
- The Alps stretch across eight European countries. Four are Monaco, Liechtenstein, Austria and Slovenia. What are the other four?
- Science:** Which star (apart from the Sun) is the closest to the Earth?
- Which branch of physics is concerned with the study of sound waves?
- Art:** The painter Domenikos Theotokópoulos is better known by what name?
- What form of painting involves applying paint to plaster while it is still wet?
- Music:** What was the first Beatles studio album, released on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1963?
- Whose eighth symphony is known as 'the Unfinished'?
- Literature:** What was Jane Austen's last novel, published posthumously in 1871?
- Who wrote the three Gormenghast novels?
- Theatre:** Which English playwright wrote A Chorus of Disapproval (1984)?
- Which London theatre was originally the Royal Coburg Theatre, then the Royal Victoria Theatre, then the Royal Victoria Palace and then the Royal Victoria Hall?

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

# Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

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

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

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

FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Digital Imaging (am)	Striders 1	French Conversation (am)	Bus Pass Adventures	Chess (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Walkers 2/3	Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Poetry (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)		Dinghy Sailing (pm)	Keep Fit (pm)	
Stamps (odd months only)		Gardening (pm)	Wine 1 (eve)	
		Bridge (pm)		
		Folk Music (pm)		

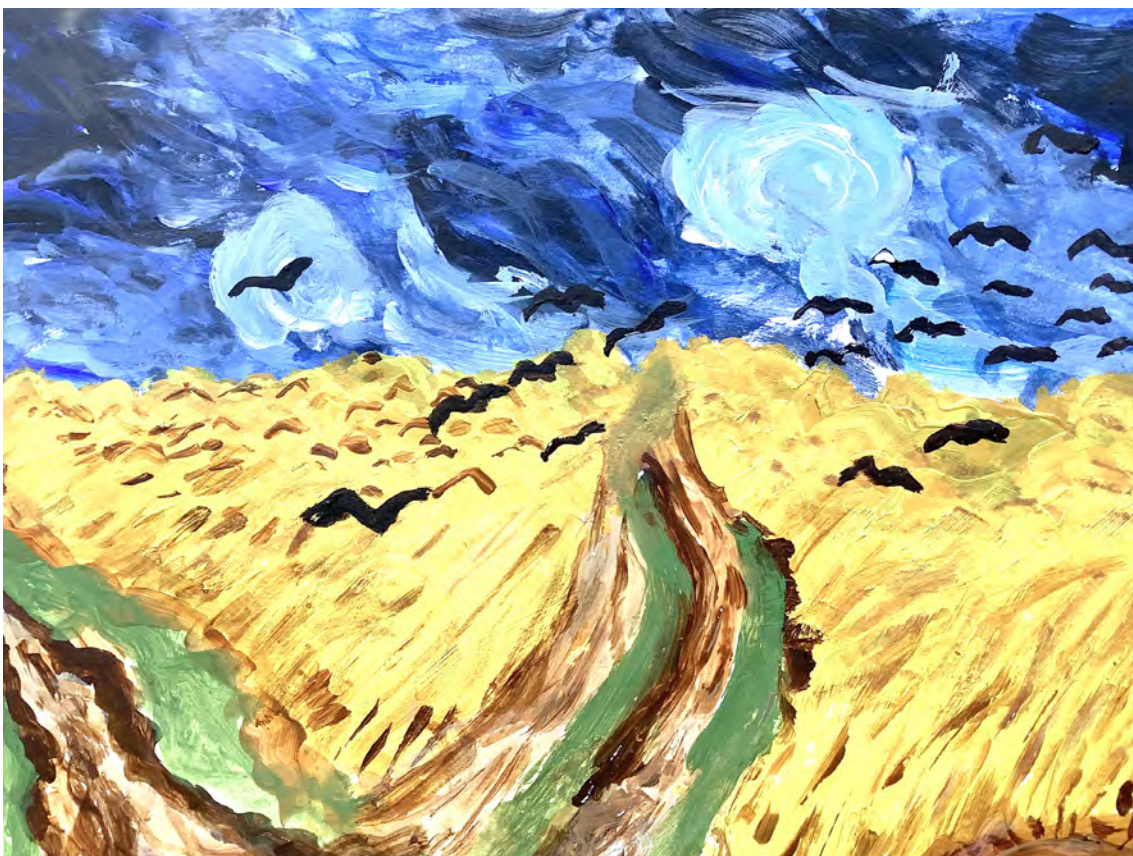
Top right: After two years of national restrictions, our members were glad to get out again, to the 'Museum of Brands' in Notting Hill in this case, in March: So many wonderful and familiar items from our past!



Centre right: 38 members of the Wildlife Group took a trip to 'The Horse Trust' at Speen in May. The trust looks after 120 horses, donkeys and ponies and the Group can be seen here listening to a presentation on the Trust's history, in their magnificent Meetings Barn.



Below: Members of the Art Group continue with their 'Art for Fun' project. Vincent Van Gogh has been a recent subject and this is a wonderful recreation of his famous painting, *Wheatfield with Crows*.





Top left: As well as working on 'Linus' charity and Jubilee projects, Patchwork and Quilting members continue with wonderful work, such as this magnificent bedspread.

Top right: The Walks Into History Group gather for coffee in 'Prelibato' in March at the start of their exploration of Old Beaconsfield.

Above: Two guides were meant to be present, but in the event, just one managed to command the attention of all 57 in the London Walks Group in April, in Old Westminster.

Right: Another 'bright' idea: Fantastic work from a member of the Digital Imaging Group.

