

u3a
Chess Valley

Registered Charity 1126990

NEWSLETTER

June - August 2025

website: www.cvu3a.uk



Front Cover: Members of our Art Group had a free hand over Spring to work on subjects of their own choice. 'Fruit, veg and Spring' were guide topics, which have been ignored here, but to great effect.



Top right: For May's monthly talk, John Tyler gave a fascinating and beautifully illustrated presentation on 'The Ridgeway', an ancient chalkland long-distance path.

Above: Fellow Striders tuck in at a meal to celebrate Dennis Gambier's 90th birthday during March. Dennis is second from the right.



Centre right: The Walks Into History: Country Group found much more than one might suspect to pique their interest in Uxbridge in March. Here they are at the Non-Conformist Church meeting house, built in 1863.

Lower right: Striders came across this statue during their long walk around Woburn. Well, they're not 'lion' about.



Speakers for monthly talks

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



Rob Brewer

Thursday 12th June

Being a TV/Film Extra

Rob is an ex-soldier and a retired police officer and he fell into the entertainment industry as an extra in TV and film after a visit to his local library. He has been an extra for six years, on over 40 different features. His work has ranged from Hollywood blockbusters to low-budget films, and TV dramas, soaps and comedies, and even a couple of adverts. Rob talks about some of the productions that he's been in, and explains how he became involved in the industry and how anyone can do it. There is a certain amount of audience participation, but not too much.

Neil Sadler

Thursday 10th July

The Clink!

Which country has a quarter of all the world's prisoners? Who were the real three men who escaped from Alcatraz? Did George Best ever play for the HM Prison Ford football team?

All this and more will be covered by Neil Sadler, a former police officer who visited many UK prisons and met some 'colourful' characters. Their stories might surprise you. Let Neil guide you in (and luckily out of) a few well-known prisons.

Tony Long

Thursday 14th August

Midsomer Murders

In this illustrated talk, die-hard fans of the TV show *Midsomer Murders* can tour the picturesque locations where the numerous killings take place. Tony Long, who is also the organiser of Midsomer Tours of Thame, takes the visitor on a journey through Thame and some of the quintessentially English villages used for filming. This talk is based on his book, *A Midsomer Day Out*, that provides a detailed itinerary for more than 60 filming locations.

Richard Marks

Thursday 11th September

Women in World War Two

Historian Richard Marks examines how women contributed to Britain's armed forces during World War Two. He explores the roles and responsibilities of women in the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and the Army, as well as the medical services associated with them. He also reveals how women from different parts of the world participated in Britain's military efforts. Richard addresses questions such as: What kinds of jobs did women perform in the armed forces and why were they vital? Did women face combat situations and if so, where and how?



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



Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our June – August newsletter.

Hopefully, this should arrive before our Annual General Meeting on 12th June. We need about 60 people to attend to be quorate, so do come along if you can. The AGM is followed by our Monthly Talk, which in June features Rob Brewer with *Being a TV/Film Extra*. This is a change from our planned speaker, Dr Helen Fry, who is unable to come at this time; we hope to reschedule her for a later date.

With best wishes



James Cadle
chair@cvu3a.uk

New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

Roy Allcorn	<i>Holmer Green</i>	Carole Humphrey	<i>London</i>
Jon Barlow	<i>Penn</i>	Kay Johnson	<i>Chesham</i>
Sue Beckett	<i>Chesham</i>	Diana Mills	<i>St Leonards</i>
Carole Bourne	<i>Amersham</i>	Betty Oxlade	<i>Chesham</i>
Phyllis Chapman	<i>Chesham</i>	Nora Perry	<i>Chesham</i>
Annette Compton	<i>Bovingdon</i>	Carol Popple	<i>Chesham</i>
Christopher Cooke	<i>Little Chalfont</i>	Ian Reddie	<i>Chesham</i>
Carmen Coote	<i>Chesham</i>	Susan Reddie	<i>Chesham</i>
Helen Doman	<i>Chesham</i>	Michael Shrive	<i>Chesham</i>
Pat Endacott	<i>Great Missenden</i>	Ann Sollars	<i>Holmer Green</i>
Hanne Harman	<i>Chesham</i>	Paddy Young	<i>Amersham</i>

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

From the Groups Coordinator

Our u3a has attracted quite a few new members lately but unfortunately no new groups have been formed.

If you have a hobby, interest or just an idea for a new Group please contact me at the address below. Someone else is most probably looking to join you in your interest. Don't forget a group doesn't have to be large; one or two members could form a group. The possibilities are endless.

However one member has suggested a new Group 'Italian for your holidays'. We have started a list of interested members and if you would like to be included please email me at the address below.

Two other groups are possibilities, 'Ballroom Dancing' and 'Acoustic Guitar'. Please contact me if either of these groups are of interest to you.

Sue Broad
Groups Coordinator
groups@cvu3a.uk

Chess Valley u3a Committee

Chair	James Cadle*	chair@cvu3a.uk	07889 732291
Vice-Chair	Position vacant		
Treasurer	Geoff Naylor*	treasurer@cvu3a.uk	01494 434918
Business Secretary	West Marshall*	secretary@cvu3a.uk	07931 433382
Membership Secretary	Jim Wilkie*	membership@cvu3a.uk	01494 782081
Groups Coordinator	Sue Broad*	groups@cvu3a.uk	01494 718128
Web Editor	Valerie Garrood*	webmaster@cvu3a.uk	01494 433585
Newsletter Editors	John Bunyan*	newsletter@cvu3a.uk	01494 778858
	James Cadle*		07889 732291
Speaker Organiser	Peter Windsor*	speakers@cvu3a.uk	07595 776473
Events Coordinator	Jackie Cobb*	eventscoord@cvu3a.uk	01494 773718
Publicity Coordinator	Geoff Hayes	publicity@cvu3a.uk	07380 353679
Committee Member	Jim Campbell	jim.campbell@cvu3a.uk	07702 982209
*Also Trustee of Chess Valley u3a			

Report of visit to Ely Cathedral and Anglesey Abbey

Alan Gray had managed to arrange on our arrival a very welcome coffee and comfort break at a local pub by the Cathedral.

We then had a very interesting visit to **Ely Cathedral** with a guided tour by the Cathedral Guides who were very knowledgeable. One can only marvel at the work done by medieval workmen with basic tools and in 1083 rebuilding work was started by the Normans. The Cathedral features a central octagonal tower and the west tower measures 66 metres high. It is the only building in the UK considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the Medieval World. It also houses a stained glass museum.

We then went on to **Anglesey Abbey** (still in Cambridgeshire) formerly a priory for Augustinian canons. There were many owners of the house, the last being Huttleston Broughton, later Lord Fairhaven who, with his brother, purchased the house in 1926. They decided that whoever of them was to marry first that person would buy the other out. It was entrusted to the National Trust by Lord Fairhaven in 1960s. It wasn't really an abbey but a Jacobean house with some lovely paintings and silverware.

We had a pleasant walk in the gardens and we were able to visit the watermill which Lord Fairhaven purchased in 1934 to renovate and restore to its original corn-milling condition, which was completed in 1936. In 1978 the Cambridgeshire Wind and Watermill Society restored the mill to working order and by 1982 it was once again milling corn. It was an enjoyable day out thanks to the wonderful organisation by Alan.

Jackie Cobb

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22nd August 2025

Chess Valley u3a Convenors

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
Art	Angela Spittle	art@cvu3a.uk
	Janice Gray	
Art Discussion 1	Angela Bishop	artdiscuss@cvu3a.uk
Art Discussion 2	Caroline Jenks	artdiscuss2@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 1	Caroline Jenks	bookgroup1@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 2	Alison Pullinger	bookgroup2@cvu3a.uk
	Sarah Organ	
	Georgina Mead	
Book Group 3	Eileen Overton	bookgroup3@cvu3a.uk
Book Group 4	Jackie Cobb	bookgroup4@cvu3a.uk
Bowls (Short Mat), (Chiltern)	Sue Spalton	shortbowls@cvu3a.uk
	Peter Williams	
Bridge	John Curtis	bridge@cvu3a.uk
Canasta	Linda Hepworth	canasta@cvu3a.uk
	Sue Hawksley	
Chess	Caroline Jenks	chess@cvu3a.uk
City of London Churches	Jackie Cobb	londonchurches@cvu3a.uk
Current Affairs	Eileen Overton	currentaffs@cvu3a.uk
Dinghy Sailing	Wendy Barnes	sailing@cvu3a.uk
	Judith Young	
French Conversation	Morag Robertson	frenchcons@cvu3a.uk
French Intermediate	Hilary Alleston	french@cvu3a.uk
Fun Quizzes	James Cadle	quizzes@cvu3a.uk
Gardening	Jenny Beirne	garden@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
German	Jenny Lee	german@cvu3a.uk
History	Claire Paterson	history@cvu3a.uk
	Ian Hutt	
Keep Fit for 60+	John Bunyan	keepfit60@cvu3a.uk
Knitting & Other Crafts	Jo Biggs	knit@cvu3a.uk
Line Dancing (Chiltern)	Linda English	linedance@cvu3a.uk
Mah Jong	Ed Perrott	mahjong@cvu3a.uk
MOTO	Mo Barnes	moto@cvu3a.uk
MOTO 2	Brian Harding	moto2@cvu3a.uk
Music Appreciation	Geoff Hayes	music@cvu3a.uk
	Colin O'Rourke	

(continues on next page)

Chess Valley u3a Convenors (continued)

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

Group	Convenor/s	u3a email address
Patchwork & Quilting	Angela Bratton	patchquilt@cvu3a.uk
	Dee Watson	
Photography with Digital Imaging	David Hurd	photography@cvu3a.uk
	Pippa Greensmith	
Pilates (1, 2 and 3)	Christine Ross	pilates@cvu3a.uk
	Liz Howlett	
Play Reading	Joan Barton	playread@cvu3a.uk
	Linda Hepworth	
Poetry	Christine Ogborne	poetry@cvu3a.uk
Railways	Graham Yellowley	railways@cvu3a.uk
	James Cadle	
Singing for Pleasure	Angela Bratton	singing@cvu3a.uk
	Stephanie Rothwell	
Spanish Conv (Inter)	Hilary Alleston	spanishconv@cvu3a.uk
Stamps & Other Collectables	Steve Epps	stamps@cvu3a.uk
Tai Chi	Sue Broad	taichi@cvu3a.uk
	Meg Brinton	
Theatre	Geoff Naylor	theatre@cvu3a.uk
	Helen Barnard	
Ukulele	Jeff Naman	ukulele@cvu3a.uk
	Heather Sprake	
Ambler	Susan Osborne	amblers@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 1	Stuart Stanley	walkers1@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 2	Sue Rawbone	walkers2@cvu3a.uk
Walkers 3	Catherine Haridi	walkers3@cvu3a.uk
	Jill Thomas	
Striders 1	Andrew Brown	striders@cvu3a.uk
Striders 2	Ian Lee	striders2@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: Country	Peter Schweiger	walkshist@cvu3a.uk
Walks into History: London	Angela Shipley	walkslondon@cvu3a.uk
Wildlife	Harry Howlett	wildlife@cvu3a.uk
	Keith Sonley	
Wine Appreciation 1	Pauline & Tom Hohenberg	wine@cvu3a.uk
Wine Appreciation 2	Graham Hitchenor	wine2@cvu3a.uk
Writers	John & Helene Bunyan	writers@cvu3a.uk

News From The Groups

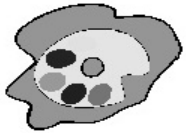
GROUP MEETINGS

Most of our Groups meet in person and are open to enquiries from new members. If full, they will hold a waiting list. Groups that are inactive generally do not have an entry in the newsletter.

In public buildings it is important that the Convenor knows who is at the meeting in case of fire. Please, always sign in to the building. Also, make sure you know where the fire exits are.

Art

Angela Spittle & Janice Gray



The members of our Group have had a free hand lately for their choice of both subjects and medium. Fruit, veg and spring are the topics that have been thrown in for good measure!

Future topics are yet to be decided on, and we are looking forward to trying out new techniques!

Despite various members' ills and spills, or holidays occasionally reducing numbers, our Group is currently full, but we are holding a waiting list.

Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



The subjects for our March meeting were Augustus and Gwen John. Welsh-born siblings, they became talented artists, each demonstrating their individual styles. Augustus became a leading portraitist of his time depicting Lloyd George (1916), Dylan Thomas (1935) and Thomas Hardy (1923), deftly capturing their different personalities. We particularly liked *Two Jamaican Girls* (1937), painted when he went to Jamaica, showing their sadness and defiance. His sister, overshadowed by her brother in her lifetime, is now seen as more talented. Working mainly in Paris, her 1902 self-portrait in which she is depicted 'serene and troubled', is her best-known work. She worked with a more muted palette than her brother as seen in her interior *A Corner of the Artists Room in Paris* (1907-9) and *The Cat* (c 1908).

In April we looked at the life and art of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, two Mexican artists whose work was very much entwined with their politics and their relationship. Rivera is best known as a muralist, with large-scale works in the USA and Mexico. They are amazingly detailed as in the *Detroit Murals* (1932-3), depicting industry at the Ford Motor Company. Nearer to his home are those of his fellow Mexicans celebrating their dead as in *Day of the Dead - City Fiesta* (1924) and the *History of Mexico* (1953). It was a surprise to view his tender work from 1916 in the Cubist style entitled *Motherhood*. His wife, Frida Kahlo, is mainly known for her recognisable self-portraits, of which she painted over 50. Suffering a life threatening and permanently disabling accident when aged 18, she managed to work for most of her short life; she died aged 47. We particularly liked her oil *Frida and Diego Rivera* (1931) and *The Two Fridas* (1939), but our favourite was *The Bus* (1929) showing the different classes of Mexican society sitting side by side on a rickety bus.

In May we looked at Portraits spanning the 19th and 20th centuries. We considered afresh some very well known examples such as Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, Graham Sutherland's destroyed portrait of Winston Churchill (1954) and two of Lucien Freud's self portraits (1946 and 1963). One member introduced us to a recently discovered Tanzanian artist Evelyn Nicodemus now aged 72, with her 1982 portrait of three African women. Currently, she has an exhibition in Edinburgh. We appreciated the character of the individual as in William Nicholson's portrait of Gertrude Jekyll (1920) in old age, shown resting in a chair, as well as John Singer Sargent's provocative image of his friend Dr Giuseppe Pozzi (1881) at home in a full-length bright red dressing gown. Comparison of the 1988 US presidential campaign photograph of the Dukakis family with that of the 1845 Henry Darby painting of *The Reverend John Darby and his Family* proved an interesting exercise.

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Future subjects will include 'Still Life' and we will have a social gathering during summer on what we hope will be a warm dry day.

Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



Our March meeting was entitled *The Art of Russia*. Russian art represents an exciting blend of the traditional and avant-garde and we looked at a diverse selection of art from traditional icon paintings from the Byzantine era, portraiture and historical artwork across the centuries, through to modern movements, including Constructivism and Suprematism. Apart from a few well-known artists (Chagall, Kandinsky and Malevich), we looked at a stimulating cross-section of work by artists who were not so familiar to us. This included a painting of Boyars who were old Russian aristocrats, by Konstantin Makovsky, tragic pictures of peasants by Nikolai Kasatkin and Russian art influenced by the Impressionist movement, by Konstantin Korovin. This meeting was an interesting and educational insight into Russian art and the history of the Russian people.

In April Gillian gave us a fascinating and detailed talk on Suzanne Valadon (1865 – 1938). She grew up in poverty in Paris and taught herself how to draw. Working as a model for artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, she observed and learnt from them, going on to become a successful artist in her own right. She was never confined within any set tradition or style of art. She shocked the art world as the first woman painter to depict a male nude and was best known for her candid female nudes. Her most scandalous nude was her realist self-portrait at the age of 60; to show a young woman was bad enough, but in old age, was simply awful! She had a colourful private life with a marriage and several affairs and had a son who also became an artist.

Book 1

Caroline Jenks



Thank you to Gillian who has convened this Book Group since 2020; the role has now been handed on, but the Group will continue to run as before. We have ten members, so the Group is full, but are happy to add anyone who wishes to join to our waiting list.

We are different from the other Book Groups in that we all read and talk about what we wish; there is no set book. The variety of books and topics covered makes the meetings stimulating as well as fun. However, we are keen readers who often find in the discussion that we have read other books by the same author, or on a similar theme. It is surprising how often books we have chosen to talk about are linked in some way. For example, in March two members reviewed books translated from Japanese: *Butter* by Asako Yuzuki and *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi. The latter could also be called a 'portal' story as was *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid, an unusual take on immigration issues.

Our May meeting included reviews of books we highly recommend, set in a variety of countries: *Brotherless Night* by V.V. Ganeshanathan (Sri Lanka); *The Muslim Cowboy* by Bruce Omar Yates (Iraq); *Our Man in Havana* by Graham Greene (Cuba); *Songbirds* by Christy Lefteri (Cyprus); *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan (Ireland); and *Whale Fall* by Elizabeth O'Connor (Wales), to name but a few!

Both fiction and non-fiction are covered: biographies are popular, such as of monarchs and artists, but also more general history books such as *The Faber Book of Reportage* or books by the historian Helen Fry.

Book 2

Alison Pullinger, Sarah Organ & Georgina Mead



Our books are selected from sets held by Bucks Library Services and in this last quarter we travelled to Ancient Greece, Japan and the USA.

Our first book, *The Silence of the Girls* by Pat Barker, retells the Iliad from the experiences of the women who survive in slavery when men destroy their cities and kill their fathers, brothers and children. The central character is Briseis, the woman awarded to Achilles as his concubine after her home and life are destroyed by the Greek army. It is a powerful book that invites us to examine how stories of the past and present are told and how anger and hatred play out in society. You do not have to be familiar with the Iliad to enjoy this book.

(cont.)

Our next book was *Kafka on the Shore* by Haruki Murakami. This was a long book to read and is virtually impossible to review in a short paragraph. It was not one of our favourites, but as always we begin our books with open minds and if we don't read them, then we can't have an opinion or a discussion. The main characters are Kafka and a fifteen year old boy who runs away from home on his birthday. He is running from his Oedipal curse and meets some very interesting and unlikely people along the way. The other central character is an old disabled man, Nakata, who surprisingly talks to and understands what cats are saying. This unlikely duo meet up and spend much time together. This novel is described as a metaphysical tale, which is concerned with the nature of consciousness and the gap between thoughts and actions. Not a holiday read. Be prepared to have plenty of time free before embarking on this one!

Finally we read *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls. It is a memoir recounting Walls' experiences growing up with her eccentric, and often dysfunctional, parents (dad an alcoholic and mum an artist) and her siblings. Her childhood was nomadic and poverty stricken. Reading her experiences felt at times inconceivable; how could those events happen and how could those children thrive? But happen they did! The title, *The Glass Castle*, represents a symbol of hope for both the parents and the children. The main message of the book is that resilience and determination overcome adversity. A film of the same name has been made which I have now also watched because I was fascinated by the family dynamics. This book gave us plenty to discuss and was definitely my favourite of this quarter. If you are interested in people, this is a good one to read.

Allison Pullinger

Book 3

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Our choice of books is governed by the ten books we get each month from Chesham Library. We now have a vacancy in the Group, so if you are interested, please contact the Convenor. We are currently reading *Girl Woman Other* by Bernadine Evaristo and our next book is the classic *Far from the Madding Crowd* (Thomas Hardy), followed by *How to Stop Time* by Matt

Haig. We will have lots to discuss in our summer meetings.

Book 4

Jackie Cobb



Book Group 4 meet in members' homes and the books we read are chosen by each member in turn. We purchase our own copies. As the book choices are varied, it makes for a good discussion each month.

Our next meeting is on the 19th June for which we will read *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. For July we will read *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey.

We would be happy to have new members. Do get in touch should you wish to join our Book Group.

Bowls (Short Mat)

Sue Spalton & Peter Williams (Chiltern u3a)

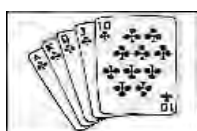


Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. The cost is £3.00, which includes a cup of tea per session. In the summer we meet each Monday from 13.50 - 16.00 pm at Holmer Green Sports Association, for Outdoor sessions.

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

Bridge

John Curtis



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

Canasta

Linda Hepworth & Sue Hawksley



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

Chess

Caroline Jenks



Did you watch *Chess Masters* on TV? I don't think we're up to that level, but it was good seeing chess get publicity. The Chess Group now has a healthy number of members, but we always welcome more. Whether you are an expert, or have never played before, we don't mind. There's always coffee and a chat even if you lose your game! The big news is that we have just changed our meeting time from afternoon to morning, still on the fourth Friday of the month, but now from 10.30 am to noon. I do hope you can join us. Contact me if you are interested. Happy playing!

Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We discuss all sorts of topics that are in the news and we listen to everyone's point of view. We learn so much from our fellow members with various skills and knowledge. We are a small but very friendly Group; this means that everyone has a chance to speak which is not always possible in a large Group. We try to solve the world's problems but have failed so far. If you are interested, please get in touch with the Convenor for details of the next meeting.

Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



We are well into our season and (so far) have enjoyed lovely sailing weather on Troy Lake where we have the use of the dinghies, which belong to Rickmansworth Sailing Club. Our members can also make use of the kayaks and paddle boards to explore the further reaches of the lake, which we share with all manner of water fowl, including herons, swans, coots, moorhens and geese. We normally meet on the second Tuesday and fourth Wednesday of the month between 1pm and 5.30pm (but check the website for variations), and all levels of expertise are welcome. Please contact either of the Convenors for more information.

French Conversation

Morag Robertson



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

French Intermediate

Hilary Alleston

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

Fun Quizzes

James Cadle



The Fun Quizzes Group is currently in abeyance for the summer (as people have other things to do in the evenings) and it will resume for the 2025/26 Season on Tuesday 11th November. Quizzes usually take place on the second Tuesday of the month, starting at 7:30pm, with people being admitted to the Zoom meeting from 7:15 onwards. The Zoom invitations are sent out by the Convenor a few days before each quiz. Each quiz lasts for about an hour and has five rounds of ten questions each. If you would like to join in, please contact: quizzes@cvu3a.uk.



In both March and April the speakers originally booked unfortunately had to cancel due to ill health. But we were fortunate in both months to acquire excellent substitute speakers who agreed to come at short notice.

At our March meeting, Kerrie Lloyd-Dawson and her husband, Pete Stevens, spoke on the topic 'Variegated Plants'. Kerrie began by informing us that their real love in a garden is for foliage, rather than blooms. They have created a garden from scratch in Welwyn, which is now opened under the NGS scheme annually. Pete is a superb photographer and we were given an excellent photographic introduction to numerous plants (mainly shrubs) with distinctive foliage. There was a comprehensive hand-out accompanying the talk, complete with botanical names of the various plants discussed.

The topic at our April meeting was very seasonal, as the meeting took place a few days after Easter/Passover. Anne Luder, the speaker, introduced us to many of the plants found on the Passover plate, explaining how these have been adapted over time. She spoke about the symbolism of various dishes, and then took us on a journey looking at plants used in the ancient world, and in different parts of the world today for such celebrations. It was fascinating to hear that beetroot is found all over the world, often substituting for lamb at Passover as it bleeds a dramatic red on the plate.

Our May meeting is on the topic of Salvias, with Colin Roberts as our speaker. We are also planning a Group visit to Lord Carrington's garden at Bledlow Manor in June.

Our thanks go to Michael Ferraro, one of our members, who has kindly offered to organise a system whereby members of the Group who have spare plants can offer them to others.

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

Jenny Beirne and Stephanie Rothwell

German

Jenny Lee



Our very friendly German Group continues to meet every first and third Wednesday of each month in each other's houses. At this time of year we talk about holiday plans and where we've been. It's amazing where the Group members get to!

Viel Spaß. Have fun.

History

Claire Paterson & Ian Hutt



Chris Simmonds from Chiltern u3a visited us in March and gave a very well presented and researched talk on The Knights Hospitaller, a vast topic. In the 11th century merchants from Amalfi founded a hospital in Jerusalem where Benedictine monks cared for sick, poor or injured Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. In the 12th century they were established as the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem.

It became a military religious order, charged with the defence of the Holy Land. The first Crusaders journeyed to the Holy Land on foot, which took three years. Knights, who came from noble families, joined the Order for life, took monastic vows and lived in a convent.

The Order's vast history covers many parts of Europe and its conflicts, culminating in settlement in Rome in 1834. Hospital work again became its main concern, particularly in the two World Wars.

In 1831 a British order known as The Most Venerable Order of Saint John was created, subsequently receiving a royal charter from Queen Victoria in 1888. Today, St. John Ambulance is the most recognisable association stemming from this.

(cont.)

Did you know: "The Hospitallers were one of the smallest groups to have colonised parts of the Americas, acquiring four Caribbean islands in the mid 17th century." (Wikipedia)

In April James Cadle introduced us to a character many of us had never heard of, but who deserves greater prominence for his navigation and seamanship in charting the continent of Australia. He was in fact *The Man Who Named Australia*. The story of Captain Flinders and his cat Trim sounds like a fictional tale for children, but is in fact a true-life story about the man who circumnavigated Australia, formerly New Holland.

He was born in Donington, Lincolnshire in 1774 and in his own words "was induced to go to sea against the wishes of my friends from reading *Robinson Crusoe*". He joined *HMS Alert* as a servant at age 15. He soon transferred to other ships as an able seaman and then midshipman, culminating in being appointed as Post-Captain in 1810. He sailed under Captain William Bligh on his expedition to Jamaica, experiencing his first meeting with local Aboriginal people while docked off the eastern coast of Bruny Island off what is now known as Tasmania. His experience of battle during the French Revolutionary Wars made him decide to pursue exploratory naval commissions, rather than military.

Keen for expeditions, he joined *HMS Reliance* and with the ship's surgeon, George Bass whom Flinders had befriended, organised a small boat exploration of Botany Bay and the George River. His next expedition was the circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). Now a lieutenant, he was given command of a colonial sloop and, together with Bass, they proved that Van Diemen's Land was in fact an island. He named the strait between it Bass Strait for his friend, and the large island off the north coast, Flinders Island, for his brother Samuel.

Returning to Britain in 1800 he had come to the attention of Sir Joseph Banks who had accompanied James Cook on his first voyage in 1768. Banks convinced the Admiralty that the coastline of New Holland needed to be charted and that Flinders was the man to do it.

Flinders became Commander of the survey ship *HMS Investigator* and carried out two voyages of discovery. The first was off the southern coast in 1801/2 and the second, to the north in 1802/3 where he encountered difficulties with 'barrier reefs' as he put it. He charted the coast of Arnhem Land and the western and southern coasts of the continent. He went on to chart and name more of the coast, until the un-seaworthiness of his ship forced him to abandon the task.

Taking command of another unseaworthy ship, and intending to return to Britain, he had to put in to the Isle de France, (now Mauritius) for repairs. The French Governor was suspicious of him and he was incarcerated for more than six years. During this time he completed his chart of the continent of 'Terra Australis' or 'Australia' which he preferred as an umbrella term.

Flinders health had suffered, and he died in London 1814. The location of his grave had been lost but archaeologists discovered his coffin and plaque when the former Camden Burial Ground was being cleared for the new Euston station for HS2. He has been reinterred in his home village of Donington, with full military honours, attended by top officials from Australia.

And what of Trim the cat? As a kitten, she had fallen overboard and was hauled back by clinging to a rope thrown to her. She then became his companion and is featured in statues of him in this country and Australia. Captain Flinders is very well known in Australia with over 100 geographical features and places bearing his name. These are in his honour, as he never put his own name to discoveries himself. He also appeared on a bank note and a stamp.

Our May meeting was most enlightening and quite concerning: Lesley Thomas, a member's relative, came to speak about *The Winchester Geese*. This title and the hard-hitting story were unknown to many of us.

Southwark on the south side of the Thames in London was well known as an 'Outlaw Borough'. It was formed in Roman times when slave girls, known as 'Night Moths', were shipped in and accommodated to serve the soldiers. It laid down the pattern of Southwark's development, which has remained unchanged for 2000 years.

The Bishop of Winchester in 1161 under Henry II, was granted the power to license prostitutes and brothels in the area known as 'The Liberty' as it was exempt from the jurisdiction of the County and housed the infamous Clink prison.

(cont.)

The women were known as 'Winchester Geese' due to the goose bumps caused by venereal disease. Brothels were known as 'stews' and brothel keepers, 'stewholders'. The girls had to wear uniform clothing to distinguish them and bodices with easily undone lacing unlike their 'straight laced' betters. Henry II brought in rules that gave the girls recognition and protection. Many were buried in Cross Bones, an unconsecrated graveyard still there today, though closed.

The scene Lesley painted was pretty gruesome as these women, throughout the area's history, had a terrible life, not living much beyond the age of 30. It was good to remember them, however harrowing.

Keep Fit for 60+

John Bunyan



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

Knitting & Other Crafts

Jo Biggs



We meet 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.

Sue completed a fabulous piece of work that was much admired by us all. Christine, Sue and Jo are working on crochet projects. We have needlecraft and knitting ably represented by Kath, Ellen, Helen and Mirit.

We have space for one more person, so contact Jo Biggs, the Convenor, if you would like to join us.

Line Dancing

Linda English



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

Email: u3alinedance@chiltern-u3a.org.uk

Mah Jong

Edward Perrott



Mah Jong is a game played with tiles, which originated in China. It's a very sociable and fun game played by two, three or four people. There is no competition involved as each person plays their own game and any mistakes are easily hidden!

Don't worry if you haven't played before: If you have ever played the simplest of card games, you will quickly pick up the basics of Mah Jong. This is a friendly group of people who enjoy each other's company for an afternoon playing and chatting with a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. Anyone is welcome from beginners to more experienced players. We meet on the second and fourth Mondays (except Bank Holidays) at 2pm in the Free Church, Amersham. The Group is currently full.

MOTO (Members On Their Own)

Mo Barnes

The MOTOs continue to socialise over their convivial fortnightly Sunday lunches at local restaurants. These have included 'The Barracuda' and 'Pomeroy' in Amersham, and the 'Jasmine Thai Kitchen' in Chesham. Numbers of diners were somewhat reduced over the Easter holiday period. The Group is now full.

"It's funny because you meet these people and they make you laugh and they give you hope and they make you realise that there is so much more to life and when you're with them you forget how empty you felt before."

(tumblr.com)

Members of MOTO2 (Members on their own) meet on the second Saturday of the month for lunch at a local pub/tavern to eat and discuss various topics. Each month the members collectively agree on the venue for the next meeting. Following the passing of Convenor Rodney Newth and the loss of two other members we are down to a total of seven ladies and three men. Given the inevitability of members not always able to meet Saturday dates we need some new members to help swell the party. Please contact me if you are interested or would just like to try it. brharding@talktalk.net

Music Appreciation

Geoff Hayes & Colin O'Rourke



Our recent meeting in May had a different format to our usual arrangement of everyone bringing their own choices for the Group to listen to. Instead, and in honour of Colin's 80th birthday, we were treated to a Gala Concert compiled and presented by Colin himself, my Co-Convenor.

Delving into his immense knowledge and his love of jazz, we were entertained by unusual renditions of classical numbers throughout the ages, with recordings from the 1940s through to the present day, a cornucopia of musical interest. We had Duke Ellington's version of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, Kenny Ball playing Beethoven, Stéphane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt playing Bach, and many more.

Our meeting in June is back to our normal format where everyone gets to choose something and explain what is interesting about it. We have a theme of the letter 'J' on which to base our choices. Maybe we will hear something from Janis Joplin, J.S Bach, or Juliet's theme from Prokofiev's ballet.

If you have a favourite that you'd like to share then please come along. We have room in our Group for more and the more people we have, the greater the diversity, which is the richness of our meetings. We meet on the first Thursday of each month between 2 and 4pm at the Town Hall, usually in the Lowndes room. We play the selected pieces through the audio equipment and usually have a film clip to go with them. Do come along: Our next meetings are 5th June, 3rd July and 7th August.

Patchwork & Quilting

Angela Bratton & Dee Watson



Monthly meetings continue to be held on the third Wednesday of the month at Hyde Heath Village Hall, which is a great venue for those who wish to join a group of like minded people who love to sew, ranging from small projects to very large quilts. Patchwork is not just about taking some fabric, cutting it up and sewing it back together. It can be that of course, but it can also be an outlet for just sewing for pleasure, or creating something different. Many techniques can be used, whether it is something familiar such as hand sewing, embroidery and appliqué, or new and exciting patterns of stitches, such as Sashiko (Japanese) or Kantha (Indian). Projects might be hand sewn or machine stitched but we never run out of ideas nor pass up the opportunity to try something new.

Patchwork is not a new craft so it can be traditional or vintage, but it also embraces new ideas to give a modern look to our work, with fabulous fabrics in any colour, whether for decorative or functional purposes. If you would like to see what we do, then come and see us, but please call Dee on 07889 263207 for a chat to find out about us and let us know when you would like to come. It doesn't matter if you have never done patchwork before; maybe you would like to try it or perhaps return to this lovely pastime. An interest in sewing of any kind is the starting point but the ability to use a sewing machine is important. There's no obligation but we would love to welcome anyone to join us in our Group to share the pleasure. We learn from each other and are very friendly. We would welcome a visit from you.

"A quilt will warm your body and comfort your soul."

"We stitch together quilts of meaning to keep us warm and safe."

"A bed without a quilt is like a sky without stars."

(reddit.com)



There were 10 members at the meeting in March, not bad for a sunny afternoon! We looked at members' candlelight photographs and a variety of images ranging from monks and teddy bears to 1964 box camera photographs. We also looked at members' efforts to improve the RAW images that Pippa sent out from the last meeting. This resulted in some very different ideas.

We looked at a video on RAW Processing at (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7Do7xtY0Ow>) using Photoshop, and a video at (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HADcZUZTIZs&t=3s>) which gives tips on landscape photography. We had discussed some of these ideas before, but it's always useful to have some reminders.

Our meeting in April was attended by 11 members. We looked at the photographs we had taken since the last meeting and the ones taken during our field visit to Chalfont St Giles and Milton's Cottage. Our visit to Milton's Cottage was made all the more interesting by an excellent tour guide. We met outside 'Merlin's Cave' and took a quick coffee and pastry at 'The Deli' a few doors down. Unfortunately the church was not open.

We planned to visit London in May, but unfortunately this had to be postponed. However, with this in mind we looked at some examples of Street Photography (What is Street Photography? A Complete Guide for Beginners), concentrating on interaction with people, and a video: '4 Light & Shadow Tips to Elevate Your Street Photography!' on YouTube. The four tips were examined: Framing, Contrast, Silhouettes and Mystery.

We had some time to look at the quality of the projected images from the projector we have been using and decided that it did not give the best representation of our photographs. It was decided to revert to the hall's overhead projector, which did give a closer representation of our photographs.

Lastly we reflected on the death of Lal Smyth. Lal has been a stalwart member of the Group since its inception, giving a huge amount of help and encouragement to members and our projects, applying her experience, especially in the use of Photoshop. She will be greatly missed. I think it would be a fitting tribute sometime in the future to have a retrospective of her work.

Future projects will include 'Street Photography' and 'Producing a CD cover using our knowledge of digital imaging techniques'. We will recap on 'Layers and Masks'. Our future programme will include a field trip Highgate cemetery, a field trip to St Albans / Verulamium, a session on table-top photography and a print competition.

Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



Our three Pilates classes continue to thrive, and at the beginning of this summer term we have managed to clear the waiting list, which is great! The downside of meeting on Mondays is that we have to circumnavigate so many Bank Holidays. But there is an upside to this; not only are we improving our fitness, balance and mobility, but by having to remember when to turn up at the Scout Hall for our class, we're also exercising our cognitive skills! It's a win- win situation.

Play Reading

Joan Barton & Linda Hepworth



We've had a very varied few months of play readings so far this year. As always, it's a compromise between what we decide we'd like to read and what we can get from the library. The March meeting was at Mavis's house and I'm afraid I can't remember which play we read that time!

(cont.)

"Great theatre is about challenging how we think and encouraging us to fantasise about a world we aspire to."

(Willem Dafoe)

In April we read *Clerical Errors* by Georgina Reid with Jan as the hostess and for May, we went to Linda's and read *One O'Clock from the House* by Frank Vickery. We thought this would be difficult as there were so many characters; however it transpired that some of them had so few lines that they were easily managed between us and it turned out to be far more enjoyable than we had anticipated.

Our next meeting is in June. We are still full but have a waiting list for any potential new members.

Poetry

Christine Ogborne



We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month and read and discuss poems on a theme or poet of our choice. In March our poet was U A Fanthorpe and we read a variety of her work: Choices such as *Not My Best Side*; *On Worms*; *Waiting Gentlewoman*; *Atlas*; *What the Donkey Saw* and *Being Lucky* were among the ones we enjoyed. April saw us choosing poems on the theme of 'Truth and Lies'. *The Art of Deception* and *White Lies* were balanced out with a reading of *O Tell Me The Truth About Love* by W H Auden.

Appropriately our meeting in May closely coincided with V E Day memories and the poetry of Rupert Brooke.

Our future meetings are

June: Humour

July: Gillian Clarke

August: Film

Railways

Graham Yellowley & James Cadle



More great speakers and excellent attendance for our recent talks, which were:

March 21st: Murray Brown: *Preserving The King of Diesels: 40 Years of Deltic Preservation*. The Deltic Preservation Society has been running for 45 years and is dedicated to preserving the fabulous Deltic locomotive. Murray showed some evocative photographs of the locomotive through the ages and explained the issues of keeping the Napier Deltic engine in good order in its unusually arranged three bank triangle of cylinders (in a Greek Delta shape hence the name Deltic). Images ranged from those of fire through the top of the locomotive, through excursion trains to a gathering of Deltics. This was all beautifully explained and a delight to watch and listen to.

April 25th: Mike Brookes: *Highs and Lows on the Narrow Gauge*. It was great that one of our Group, Mike Brookes, gave us a talk and what a talk it was! We whizzed around the world, stopping in Malaysia, Argentina, India and twice in Australia. It was really interesting to learn about these far off narrow gauge railways, which were certainly off the beaten track (Australia's Gulflander and Savannahlander are definitely remote), but Mike brought them to life with great pictures and lovely anecdotes. He was so good, we would like another talk from Mike next year.

May 30th: Elizabeth McKay: Talk by the Director of the London Transport Museum and visit to the Museum. (This event is too late for the June Newsletter and a report will appear in the September edition.)

Our next meetings are:

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

July 18th, 10:00: Part One: *HS2 Update*: Keith Hoffmeister

July 18th, 15:00: Part Two: Visit to the Inspiration Train at Waterloo Station.

August: no meeting

September 18th: Talk by the COO of Transport for London (Southwark).

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.

"Railway termini are our gates to the glorious and the unknown. Through them we pass out into adventure and sunshine, to them, alas! We return."

(E M Forster)



Since the start of the new term the focus of rehearsals has been on practising our repertoire for two forthcoming performances later this year:

On Monday 14th July we shall be giving our usual end-of-term concert for family and friends and on Thursday, 17th July we shall be performing for the Amersham Group of the National Trust. Our repertoire for both concerts will comprise new as well as familiar pieces.

Thanks, as always, to Ali, our Musical Director, for her excellent teaching and to Gwen, our accompanist, who gives freely of her time to keep us on the right note and tempo.

So please come and support us on Monday 14th July at Amersham Free Church. Entrance is free but there will be an opportunity to donate to Chiltern Music Therapy. The concert is from 5.45pm to 6.30pm

New members are welcome. If you enjoy singing and would like to join the choir, then please contact one of the Convenors. Full details can be found on the Singing for Pleasure webpage on the CVu3a website.

Spanish Conversation (Intermediate)

Hilary Alleston



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

Stamps & Collectables

Steve Epps



The Stamps and Other Collectables Group meet every two months and either Group members or outside speakers talk about items from their collections, which could be anything collectable. If you are interested in coming to a meeting to show something you collect, please let me know.

Tai Chi

Sue Broad & Meg Brinton



We are continuing to try to remember our 24 movements, giving our tutor a headache. It is one thing knowing the name of the posture, but another remembering how it should be performed. We have now managed to find some pictures online of the postures to help us out while practising at home.

It's been a short term owing to bank holidays. 20 May is the end of this term. We are restarting on 3 June, continuing until the break on 8 July for the summer holiday.

The Group has been full for some time and we could start another one if we could find a qualified tutor. If you know of any suitable tutor please contact us at: Taichi@cvu3a.uk

Theatre

Helen Barnard & Geoff Naylor



Our trips include theatre tickets and coach transport from Chesham and Amersham to the theatre and back. New members are always welcome, so get in touch if you wish to join us. Usually, we are allocated about 50 seats for shows but you do need to respond to notifications promptly as places are taken up very quickly.

Our trip in May to see the new production of *Les Misérables* was enjoyed by all. July will be a busy month for the Theatre Group as we will be seeing *Fiddler On The Roof*, *Operation Mincemeat* and *The Winter's Tale* (at the Royal Shakespeare theatre in Stratford).

These will be followed by a trip to *A Man for All Seasons* in September and we have also taken up a presale offer for *I'm Sorry, Prime Minister* in February 2026.

All the tickets we have for these shows have been taken but it is always worthwhile having your name on the Cancellation List as, invariably, tickets become available.

We will soon be planning trips for later in the year so watch out for notifications.



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

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

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

Jeff Naman 07976 633798

Walking Groups

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

Amblers (3 - 4 miles)

Sue Osborne

On a sunny May morning a group of six amblers set off to explore the eastern half of Great Missenden. This involved the small Boug's Meadow Nature Reserve, the Buryfield, the path under the A413, Frith Hill and a short detour to the parish church. After that we descended into Abbey Park and walked its length to a point opposite the Chiltern Hospital. Half of the group navigated a narrow plank bridge over the Misbourne and the other half retraced their steps, meeting up at the bridge at the bottom of Warren Water, with its views towards Missenden Abbey. We walked along a wild garlic lined path to the High Street and back to the start. Horse chestnuts, lilac, dog roses and lots of wild flowers were in abundance and apart from one climb it was a gentle stroll.

Walkers (5 - 7 miles)

Walkers 1

Stuart Stanley

The Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 10:00 and walks are usually between four and five and a half miles long and are led by members. We generally 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 2025, we held walks in Hawridge, Studham, Ashridge, Cookham, Cholesbury and Burnham Beeches. For the second quarter of 2025 our walks were or will be in Sarratt, Tottenhamhoe, Aldbury, Wiggington and Ley Hill. Others are to be confirmed.

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

Walkers 2

Sue Rawbone

We walk on the fourth Thursday of each month, except for December when we join up with Walkers 3 on the first Wednesday. We have other opportunities to join Walkers 3 when spaces are available. Our walks are mainly between five and six miles, and the routes are chosen by those who have volunteered to lead the walks. On the day of the walk the leaders collect a donation of £1 from each walker, which goes into our fund for replacing old stiles with gates, through the Chiltern Society. We also donate to the local Air Ambulance service.

We mostly do circular walks but occasionally they are linear, as was our walk on the 22 May, which started with a train ride to Chorleywood, then a walk back to Little Chalfont station through woods that included some beautiful views around Westwood Park. We have also enjoyed walks around Whippendell Woods and Chesham.

(cont.)

Recently we have joined up with Striders and Walkers 3 to donate some of our funds to a gate in memory of Antoinette Ferraro who unexpectedly passed away last year. This gate has now been installed near Reddings Farm in the South Heath area (picture right). It's just off the B485 between Great Missenden and Chesham.

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

Walkers 3

Jill Thomas & Catherine Haridi

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

Our March walk, led by Pauline, was around the pretty Rickmansworth lakes. Then in April, we were at the National Trust in Ashridge. There we had a lovely coffee stop at the Ashridge Hut. Michael very kindly led the May walk around the Ivinghoe Beacon, with its great views, and we were fortunate enough to witness a spectacular halo effect in the sky.



Striders 1 & 2 (7 - 15 miles)

Andrew Brown & Ian Lee



It is a pleasure to be able to report that Striders' walks have regularly been taking place in that most elusive weather: hot sunshine!

Whether walks have been locally in the Chilterns or, in the first long walk of 2025, further afield in the Woburn area, it has been a pleasure to be out in good weather walking over dry footpaths. More recently a group of 16 Striders (including a few Walkers) also enjoyed a weekend of walks along stretches of the North Somerset coastal paths, often encountering herds of wild Exmoor ponies en route. On returning, our attention has turned to planning the 2025 Summer Walk, which this year will be on 15 July and will involve circular walks round a loop of the Thames Path in Oxfordshire. We are hoping it will once again be well attended by our members, doing one of two walks of differing lengths.

(Picture right, Editor's note): In the last Newsletter Andrew mentioned that the Striders Christmas lunch had raised £290 for the Chiltern Society. Later in March this year the cheque was presented at a visit to the Society's Headquarters. Here they were made welcome, introduced to staff and volunteers, and shown around the offices. The money will go towards new tools for the South Chilterns Path Maintenance Volunteers who clear pathways and install gates and signposts. What better location to hold the presentation than the Society's toolshed.

From left to right in the picture: Striders Ian Lee and Andrew Brown, and from the Chiltern Society, Chief Executive Tom Beeston.

The Chiltern Society has now posted this story on its own facebook page.



It would be remiss of the writer to fail to tell CVu3a members that Striders have in the last few months been responsible for replacing two more stiles in the Chilterns with more user-friendly gates, to encourage more people to enjoy the undoubted benefits of walking in the Chiltern area. The gate in memory of Antoinette Ferraro, co-sponsored by Walkers, has been covered in their report. The second will be installed on the path along Hawridge Bottom. We have also made a £500 donation to the Thames Air Ambulance fund, and received in return a very grateful acknowledgement explaining how the donation will be utilised for the benefit of the public. Both donations have been made possible by the generosity of the members of both Striders Groups who voluntarily donate £1 on each of our regular walks.

(cont.)

While our membership remains at a good level, both Convenors would like it to be known that we would welcome approaches from any other CVu3a members who would be interested in joining one or other of our friendly Groups. Walks take place on the first and third Tuesdays of every month (Striders 2), and on the second and Fourth Tuesdays (Striders 1); but generally it is possible for members of one Group to take up spare places on the other Group's walks too. At this time of year, whenever there is a 5th Tuesday in the month, there will also be a long walk on offer for members of both Groups, spread out over a full day, and usually in a location slightly further afield. Should any CVu3a members wish to join Striders 1 or Striders 2, or simply find out more about the Groups, please contact one of the Convenors: Andrew Brown (Striders 1) or Ian Lee (Striders 2) for further information.

Walks into History: Country

Peter Schweiger



Uxbridge: March 2025

Uxbridge surprised us. It has all of the 'real' banks and a proper Post Office. It's the capital of the London borough of Hillingdon and this ancient market town boasts the European headquarters of Coca Cola, Brunel University, and the Battle of Britain Bunker.

The manager of the 'Swan and Bottle' kindly opened up at 10am so we could have coffees and free parking, before we headed up the High Street to see the new police station, which looks like a modern country club house. Just beyond was the Congregational Church built in 1716, but unfortunately was not open. Being a cold day we were glad to get into the Quaker Meeting house, where questions about Quakers were answered by Peter Schweiger. The small park outside had been opened by Boris Johnson when he was the Member of Parliament for Uxbridge.

Uxbridge station has stained glass windows depicting the coats of arms of both Buckinghamshire and Middlesex, being close to the border between the two counties.

Lord Uxbridge lost a leg at the Battle of Waterloo and it was displayed in the Waterloo village inn in Belgium for many years until the landlady cremated it in the stove, because it made her feel sick.

There was a time in the early 1960s when the town was redeveloped and Marks & Spencer were helpful in restoring the shopping centre. The huge Civic Centre was built then, but the offices now house the town library.

The highlight of the tour was at the 'Crown and Treaty' where we went up to the rooms used by King Charles I when he tried to negotiate a peace treaty with Parliament during the Civil War. The oak panelling had been sold to an American to use in his offices in the new 1920 Empire State building, but his son generously had it shipped back to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953. There were pictures of King Charles on the walls and the barman showed us the hidden doors to priest holes.

We had a very real Walk into History.

Walks in London

Angela Shipley

Treasurer: Mick Rothwell



In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: April 2025

We couldn't have picked a colder day for our April walk, trooping around the Charing Cross area with pipe and magnifying glass, doing a bit of detective work of our own, hunting down some of the locations featured in the stories of our most famous detective Sherlock Holmes, his sidekick Dr Watson and arch enemy Prof.

James Moriarty. We all know of course that he lived with Dr John Watson at 221B Baker Street from 1881 to 1904. Holmes showed remarkable skill and intellect but was probably autistic, and Watson was a doctor in the army in Afghanistan. Have I got you convinced about these intriguing and famous men? Of course not, because however real they appear to their avid followers over 150 years, they were never alive, never lived in London but are fictional characters from 62 stories written by Arthur Conan Doyle; more of him later.

(cont.)

"The lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside."
(S H / A C D)

We set off from Embankment Station, through the familiar and very spring-like Victoria Embankment Gardens and York Watergate, to pause at many locations included in the books: The 'Charing Cross Hotel' (the setting for *The Bruce Partington Papers* where Holmes and Watson lay in wait for the villain Hugo Oberstein in the smoking room), the 'Charing Cross Hospital', now a police station, (where Holmes was treated when attacked by thugs in *The Illustrious Client* and where Dr James Mortimer practised before moving to Dartmoor to protect Sir Henry Baskerville in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*), the 'Lyceum Theatre' featured in *The Sign of the Four* in which Dr Watson met Mary Morstan whom he later married, and 'Rules Restaurant' where Holmes dined amongst the famous and infamous. Over the years, many films and stage productions have been based on the stories with notable actors including William Gillette, Basil Rathbone, Peter Cushing and Jeremy Brett playing Holmes.

The real life creator of these prolific tales hasn't had much of a mention so what of him? Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh in 1859 and studied medicine at Edinburgh University under a Dr Bell, whose remarkable powers of observation so impressed him that it is believed he based Holmes' character on him. Once qualified, he practised in Upper Wimpole Street and when the waiting room was empty he started to write his first story, *A Study in Scarlet*. More followed and were published in magazine form, becoming very popular. He later got fed up with the detective, wanting to write medieval histories instead, so against his wife's advice, he contrived to kill him off by drowning him in a waterfall. His fans were having none of it, some setting up vigils for the dead detective and sales plummeted to the point that Doyle was forced to reincarnate him.

He married twice, first to Louise Hawkins who died in 1906 after giving him two children and then again to Jean Leckie, producing two more sons and a daughter. He lived in Crowborough until his death in 1930. Despite having five children, there were no grandchildren. In his later years, having lost his son (also named Arthur) to Spanish Flu in 1918, Doyle became rather obsessed with spiritualism.

Angela Shipley (with a little help from an enthusiast who has the complete set of stories! Thanks James)

Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



We continued with our series of talks from some really interesting speakers. In March we were honoured to have the Keeper of the Kings Swans to tell us all about Swan Upping; its history, the process, the current situation and the Royal connection. We also learned of the work done in education and conservation.

In April we learned about 'Linescaping'; re-mapping and re-connecting Britain's fragmented wildlife. As our lives and our land are being fenced in and threaded together, so wildlife habitats have been cut into ever smaller, and increasingly unviable, fragments. But there are ways that we can open things up to help wildlife. This talk looked at the impact on hedgehogs in particular.

For May we had planned a talk about squirrels but the hall was being used as a polling station and we realised that by putting it back a week it clashed with our CVu3a monthly meeting, so we are looking to re-arrange this for later in the year.

June sees us paying a visit to Gadespring Cressbeds near Hemel Hempstead. Managed by the Boxmoor trust, this old watercress farm has been turned into a nature reserve and is now a thriving attraction for viewing kingfishers, little egrets, water rails, and signs of otters. We continue to look for options for July and August, and have confirmed bookings for September when we have a returning speaker talking about the River Thames; restoring a lovely waterway following major pollution with devastating consequence on wildlife, and for October when we have a talk entitled *Galapagos; a life on the islands*. We also have a number of other speakers and topics lined up but details and dates are yet to be confirmed. Possible subjects are 'amphibians and reptiles', 'hidden wildlife in our gardens' and of course the re-arranged talk on squirrels.

If these subjects are of interest, or for that matter, wildlife, habitat or the farming environment in general, come and join us. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at Amersham Common Village Hall starting at 2pm.



February's meeting was at the Hohenbergs, where the theme was 'South American wines'. We started with an Argentinian *Torrontes* '24 from Tesco's Finest range. This was closely followed by a *Diablo Golden Chardonnay* from Chile at 13.5% and then a *Cerro Fuerte Chardonnay Mendoza Norton* from Argentina available at M&S. Moving on to the reds, we had a *Quimay Cabernet Franc* from Mendoza, grown at 4000ft, from the Wine Society and finished with a *Catena Malbec*, also from Mendoza via Waitrose.

In March we met at the Connors, and this was a very special one, falling on the Clarke's Diamond Wedding Anniversary, which they were gracious enough to spend with their friends in WAG1. The theme was 'any wine appropriate for a special anniversary'. The room was beautifully decorated with balloons and the guests wore sparkling attire. We started, naturally, with a *Martel Brut Prestige Champagne*, closely followed by *La Folie*, a sparkling French Rose. The anniversary celebrants treated us to a *Chablis Premier Cru* by Laroche in Northern Burgundy, worth every centime of the £39 price. This was followed by a white *Viognier Condrieu* at 14%. The reds included a 2019 Baron de Rothschild *Los Vascos Cromas Gran Reserva* from Chile via Waddesdon, made from Syrah grapes at 14.5% and we concluded with a *Chateaufort du Pape* from Avignon, also at 14.5%. A truly memorable evening!

In April at the Clarkes, the theme was 'wines from countries you don't normally buy from'. This provoked an eclectic mixture starting with a *Chapel Down 'Champagne'* from England. We then had, from Austria, a *Domane Wachau Grüner Veltliner* from Tesco at 12.5%, followed by an excellent Uruguayan *Albarino* at 13%, also from Tesco. The reds were both from Waitrose: first, a Romanian *Pinot Noir* at 13%, then a Chilean *Errazuriz Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon* at 13.5%.

Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchener



Ian and Jenny showed a selection of Aldi Specially Selected French wines. The winning wine was a Ventoux, which was enjoyed by all members and great value at just £7.69 a bottle.

Andrew showed, I think for the first time, wines from Asda. The winner and this quarter's recommended wine is *Diablo Dark Red Valle del Maule*. It's a slightly unusual blend of Syrah and Malbec grapes.

Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



Again, we have had a series of good meetings with the occasional absence due to holidays etc. Our March topic 'De-cluttering' raised some household issues that struck close to home. April's subject, 'The First Day of School' then drew some revelations and insights into our childhood experiences. 'Remote Control', the subject of May's meeting, was interpreted by our members in a wide variety of ways. We will have to see how our members treat June's topic: 'Familiar Objects'.

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 a topic for our next meeting but members can present from any work that they may have in hand.

A SHORT QUIZ

Who was Gwen John's brother and what are they both famous for?

'Acol': What game is this term associated with, and what does it refer to?

Captain Flinders, who mapped much of Australia, had a pet cat. What was its name?

What was a 'Winchester Goose'?

A certain type of locomotive has a name that refers specifically to the triangular arrangement of its engine cylinders. What is that name?

(All answers are in the Group News text: ed.)

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)	James Cadle	
Laptop computer (Windows 10, Office 2016)	James Cadle	
Companion speakers for laptop	James Cadle	
PAT-tested extension cable/surge adapter		Ian Hutt 01494 583955 history@cvu3a.uk
Projection screen 1 (5 ft)	James Cadle	
Projection screen 2 (6 ft)	Ian Hutt	
Pinboards x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	Keith Hoffmeister 01494 766990
Easels x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	
Portable PA systems	James Cadle	

Musings on communication

Oh to be political now that June is here. However, even in this fervid time of political rocks and hard places, u3a is quite rightly apolitical, so I can only rue the missed opportunity and return to my favourite territory of communication, whether it is irrelevant, redundant, over the top or just plain wrong.

Communication, like sculpture, is a matter of both the message and the gaps in between. Speech is very much concerned with the said and the unsaid. For example, the absence of any TV voice-over, when football commentators struck in support of one of their own, hollowed out the games and killed them from a viewer's perspective, whereas the now common day-after summaries that include commentator and crowd reaction to a single goal is just plain dumb.

I have always harboured a wish that commentators could be switched around, so that a modern-day unperturbable Peter O'Sullivan could cover soccer and a reincarnated manic Murray Walker would cover snooker. Like pictures taken out of their frames, this would change things completely. On this subject, it is worth relating that the former could remember and relate accurately the different names of trainers, owners and jockeys, weights, handicaps, form and colours for every one of the 14,000 races he covered in his career, whereas Murray Walker barely managed to correctly identify the same 20 cars and drivers for a dozen or so races annually.

Quiet, contemplative commentary is one thing, but a ventriloquist on radio, as Peter Brough was successfully employed for two decades, is akin to listening to juggling.

But a more recent trend on television is to refer all of us to counselling after a programme or to warn us before a programme about scenes of 'a distressing nature'. As these often relate to one or other war, I find it patronising to attempt to water down our emotional reaction to something that should rightly shock us. There are for example, several Shakespeare's plays, famously *Titus Andronicus*, that could be bookended by these trite messages, but I have yet to hear them given in any theatre.

Reverting under the cover of darkness to politics, I would like to suggest a move to simultaneously buttress democracy and assist the hospitality industry. Compulsory voting for all, with votes cast not in schools but in licenced premises.

'Timewaster'

Mini-quiz

- History:** Who succeeded Queen Anne as British monarch in 1714?
- Lech Wałęsa was the first directly-elected President of which country following the collapse of the Soviet Union?
- What Act of Parliament was passed in 1832 that significantly changed how the British Parliament was elected?
- Sport:** Prior to 2012, when did London last host the Olympic Games?
- Which football club is known as the 'Blades'?
- Which female player has won the most Wimbledon Singles titles?
- Music:** What was the title of Dusty Springfield's only No. 1 hit in the UK, in 1966?
- Who composed his *Rhenish* symphony, his Third, in 1850-1851?
- Wynton Marsalis is a leading exponent of which musical instrument?
- Travel:** The Prado Museum is located in which European city?
- Which US city is known as the 'Mile High City'?
- Which major city in Sri Lanka has a temple said to house a tooth of the Buddha?
- Art:** Which British artist is the creator of *A Bigger Splash* (1967)?
- Whose series of self-portraits started with one of him laughing in 1628 and finished with one of him aged 63 in 1669?
- Whose bronze bust of Winston Churchill was completed in 1947 and cast in an edition of about 10, one of which has been displayed in the Oval Office?
- Transport:** George Shillibeer, an English coachbuilder, introduced what form of transport to London?
- Which major airline was formed in Berlin in 1926 by the merger of two other airlines?
- Which British canal starts in London, with one branch going to Leicester and the other to Birmingham?

Answers will be included with the e-bulletin at the end of June 2025 or, if you aren't on email, call James Cadle on 07889 732291 to have the answers posted to you.

Chess Valley u3a Groups Schedule

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

SECOND in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
History (pm)	Amblers	Walks into History (Country) OR	Art Discussion 1 (am)	Writers (pm)
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders 1	Walks into London (alternate months)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Monthly Talk (pm)	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	French Conversation (am)	The Chess Valley u3a Committee meets on the first or second Tuesday of each month, two days before the Monthly Talk	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Dinghy Sailing (pm) (April-October)	Bridge (pm)		
	Fun Quizzes (eve) (November-April)			

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

FOURTH in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mah Jong (pm)	Striders 1	French Conversation (am)	Walkers 2	Chess (am)
Pilates Classes 1, 2 and 3 (pm)	Art (am)	French Intermediate (am)	Keep Fit (currently suspended)	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Tai Chi (am)	Line Dancing (am)	Poetry (pm)	
Singing for Pleasure (eve)		Dinghy Sailing (pm) (April-October)	Wine 1 (eve)	
		Gardening (pm)	MOTO (Members On Their Own) have an 'anchor meeting' on the first Saturday morning of each month MOTO2 meets for lunch on the second Saturday of each month	
		Bridge (pm)		



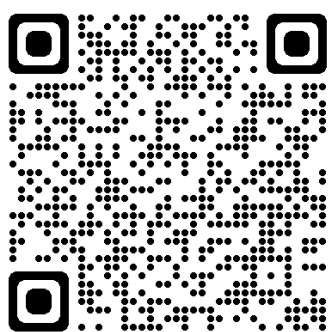
Top: Walkers 3 decided to explore the Ashridge Estate during April. They made it to the summit of Ivinghoe Beacon.

Centre: An inverted rainbow? A halo? Walkers 3 had never seen anything like it, on the same walk.

Above: Striders came out in force for their March walk around Misbourne Abbey during a very welcome spell of sunshine.

Left: Striders doing what they do best; resting! This was during their first long walk of 2025, further afield than usual in Woburn, near the game reserve.

There's no stopping our Art Group as they continue to produce truly amazing work. Members have been working on an open brief over Spring.



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