







Front Cover: Members On Their Own (MOTO Group 2) meet once a month for meals, drinks and conviviality. Here they are at a local hostelry in August.



Left Top and Centre: The men of the Singing for Pleasure Group step up to the plate for a feature spot in their summer end-of-term concert. Their Musical Director Ali leads the whole choir at Amersham Free Church. The concert raised funds for the charity, Chiltern Music Therapy.



Above: Striders plan a long walk during the summer months. The Group splits into those doing about 8 miles, and those doing 12. These are the long distance walkers, pausing for a picture during their walk around Abingdon; still fresh as daisies.

Left: A visit to the Military Intelligence Museum in Bedfordshire in June also took in the Shuttleworth Aircraft collection... and the truly amazing Swiss Gardens created by the family in the early 1900s.

# Speakers for monthly talks

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



**Richard Marks**

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

## ***Women in World War Two***

Historian Richard Marks will examine how women contributed to Britain's armed forces during World War Two. He will explore 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 will also reveal 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?

**Sian Bourn**

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

## ***The Dogs Trust***

Since 1891, the Dogs Trust has been working for a better future for dogs and the people who love them. "When a dog is in distress, we care for them. When a dog needs a home, we find them a loving family. When an owner needs a helping hand (or paw) – or they just can't cope, we're ready to step in. For every dog, for every owner, we're by their side through thick and thin, throughout their lives. The bond they have is special to us. It changes lives, making each day happier and more complete. It's why we believe "A dog is for life® ". (From the Dogs Trust website)

**Mike Barbakoff**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November**

## ***The History of Bletchley Park***

Mike's talk will provide an overview of the history of the Government Code and Cypher School and Bletchley Park as its WWII war station. Specific areas covered will include: Why Bletchley Park was chosen; the challenge of the Enigma ciphering machine; selection of the workforce and the development of Colossus, the world's first computer. Mike is a volunteer at Bletchley Park serving as a Guide at the BP heritage museum. He is currently writing a second book on the use of Hollerith punched cards in WWII codebreaking.

**Jem Duducu**

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

## ***Hollywood Blockbusters and Bombs***

There is no shortage of Hollywood films about historical events, but what do the movies actually get right, and why do they get so much wrong? Hollywood loves a good guy versus bad guys, heroes winning the day, and the guy gets the girl. But we all know real life isn't exactly like that. In a return visit to CVu3a, Jem will take us through years of global history as immortalised and ultimately fictionalised by Hollywood. Along the way, we will also better understand Hollywood's own history, as it evolved from black and white silent shorts to the multiplex CGI epics of today.



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



# Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our September-November newsletter.

In addition to our usual news from our Groups, this edition includes some reflections on u3a from one of our newer members and a plea from our Groups Coordinator for more people to step forward as Convenors. As I never tire of remarking, the Convenor's role, while not trivial, doesn't have to be that onerous, especially when the responsibility is shared. Please do consider playing your part in keeping our u3a fresh, vibrant and moving forward. And don't forget to 'sell' the benefits of u3a to your non-u3a friends.

*With best wishes*



**James Cadle**  
chair@cvu3a.uk

## New Members

We offer a warm welcome to our newest members:

John Barlow	<i>High Wycombe</i>	Jean Lawson	<i>Amersham</i>
Mel Chapinal	<i>Chesham</i>	Jacqueline O'Curry	<i>Amersham</i>
Helen Doman	<i>Chesham</i>	Carol Popple	<i>Chesham</i>
Fiona Hartwright	<i>Chartridge End</i>	Ann Sollars	<i>Holmer Green</i>
Nicoleta Hookins	<i>Hazlemere</i>	Anita Wallace	<i>Chesham</i>
Paul Jager	<i>Ballinger Common</i>	Gillian Windett	<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 the next page.

## 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	07780 973979
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			

**Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2025**



# From the Groups Coordinator

Chess Valley u3a was formed 18 years ago at an extraordinary meeting organised in Chesham Town Hall by the then chairman of Amersham u3a as their groups were all full and they had a waiting list of people wanting to join. The hall was full to the brim and volunteers were asked to come forward to volunteer for positions on the about-to-be-formed new u3a. Many of our members at that meeting are still amongst us, myself included.

Some of our Groups are still being run by members from that original meeting or very soon after. Now, if we want our u3a to flourish, we are asking others to come forward and do as we did back then and offer to run or help run new and/or existing Groups. We are particularly interested in having someone to help Valerie Garrood, our Webmaster and System Administrator as, should she be unavailable at any time, we have no one to take over the administration of our Simple Membership system. Any techies out there – please help us out.

u3as are based on the principle of 'for the members by the members'. Have you got a skill that others would appreciate and enjoy sharing with you? Please contact me at the address below and either I or another member of the committee will help you to get started.

One completely new Group 'Italian for your holidays' is up and running very successfully, and 'Acoustic Guitar' is still being considered, your new Group could be next.

Please reply to [groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk) or anyone on the committee.

*Sue Broad  
Groups Coordinator  
[groups@cvu3a.uk](mailto:groups@cvu3a.uk)*

## Visit to Westonbirt Arboretum, Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Our next visit is to The National Arboretum at Westonbirt, Gloucestershire, on Thursday 16th October, hopefully to catch the Autumn colours. **By its very nature a lot of walking is involved, predominantly on hard paths unless you want to venture into the woods!** A limited number of free, prebooked mobility scooters are available.

The cost of the trip is £34 per person. Ideally, make payment by bank transfer to the usual u3a account: Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-99-50, account number 81251268, account name Chess Valley University of the Third Age (or as many characters as your bank's system will accept). Please quote WESTONBIRT in the reference. **BOOKINGS CLOSE ON 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER.**

If you wish to pay by cheque please send your cheque made payable to Chess Valley u3a to Geoff Naylor, Treasurer, Chess Valley u3a, 13 Tudor Park, Amersham HP6 5JS.

It's a longish journey, so the start time from Chesham FC Car Park (£2 as usual) will be 8.45, Amersham Lifestyle Centre 9.00 and Amersham Old Town 9.10. We will have a comfort stop at Membury Services (no hot drinks on the coach). We should be at Westonbirt by about 12.00. More details about what's there can be found on the internet. We should be back in Chesham by 18.30.

There are restaurants and cafes on site and plenty of areas to eat your own food.

If you want to come, please send me an email giving your mobile number and confirmation of where you will meet the coach and which u3a you belong to. Also let me know if you want a mobility scooter and I will book them on a first come, first served basis.

*Alan Gray  
[alan.gray177@ntlworld.com](mailto:alan.gray177@ntlworld.com)  
07957422039*

# Thoughts from a new(ish) member

I am a relative newcomer to Chess Valley u3a so I think I am well placed to be able to say congratulations to you all. Congratulations on being members of such an amazing organisation. An organisation that delivers so much, to so many people, in so many different ways.

Let me remind you, we have over 620 members who support over 50 Interest Groups meeting regularly to share and develop hobbies and passions. We have organised day trips, MOTO (Members On Their Own) lunches, and interesting monthly talks delivered by professional speakers. All this is achieved by members themselves volunteering to help in managing and developing the organisation. So a big shout out to you all for joining and attending the many activities, and to our Convenors and Committee Members for the time and effort they put in.

It really is a fantastic organisation, helping to keep people healthy in mind, body and soul. Whether you partake in physical activity such as walking, or mental activity such as bridge, or come along for the social aspects, all of it delivers health benefits, enjoyment and happiness, increases learning and is great for combating issues such as loneliness and isolation.

Such a wonderful organisation is worth protecting, making sure that it is capable of delivering its many benefits to the people who will be retiring in the coming years. As we all know, the key to this is new members. If nobody new joins us then we will just fade away. We need a steady intake of enthusiastic new members and it would be great if we could attract new members who are open to becoming Convenors of existing Groups or even starting new Groups.

I joined CVu3a when I retired as I wanted to develop my knowledge of music and to meet people. I found that the Eclectic Music Group had folded due to lack of a Convenor. Not to be put off I made enquiries and found that with the help of a previous Convenor we were able to quickly rekindle the Group (now called Music Appreciation) and we now meet regularly to share our musical interests. Of all the members, I am probably the one with least musical knowledge but that doesn't matter. As joint Convenor, my role is to organise the venue and to make sure everyone knows when the meeting is. Collectively the Group runs the meetings. So job done! I am delighted to say my musical knowledge is improving fantastically and I have new friends.

We can all play a part in nourishing our CVu3a. The best way of recruiting is through personal recommendation. Maybe you know someone who is about to retire who would value being a member? Share your experience of being a member, perhaps by using your social media outlet, such as Facebook, if you have one. Pass on the newsletter when you have finished with it. Maybe think about becoming a Convenor or even Co-Convenor like me and give our long-serving Convenors a rest. We have a great organisation, let's protect it.

**Geoff Hayes**

*[Editorial note: As well as re-starting the Music Appreciation Group, Geoff also responded to a recent plea for a Publicity Coordinator and has now joined our Committee in the role. You can contact him using [publicity@cvu3a.uk](mailto:publicity@cvu3a.uk).]*

# An invitation from the Photography with Digital Imaging Group

The Photography with Digital Imaging Group invites other CVu3a members to join them to hear Patrick Hudgell talk about Photographing Brown Hares on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

Patrick has been interested in photography since childhood and after retiring from the IT industry 15 years ago this has become his main hobby. As well as gaining accreditations from the Royal Photographic Society, he has had work published in many magazines and newspapers and has been an active member of Amersham Photographic Society for nearly 20 years. Wildlife photography is his main interest and hares are a particular favourite. This talk, illustrated by many of Patrick's photographs, will explain why it is so difficult to photograph hares, how to overcome these problems and will illustrate many aspects of the secretive, mythical and enigmatic lives of these amazing creatures.

The meeting starts at 2pm on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September in the Little Chalfont Village Hall, Cokes Lane, HP8 4UD.

There is some parking in front of the Village Hall and in the road leading to Dr Challoners School for Girls, as well as pay-parking adjacent.

A donation of £3 is invited (to be given to the Little Chalfont Community Library) and refreshments are included. RSVP to [photography@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk](mailto:photography@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk) by 15<sup>th</sup> September.

## Report of visit to the Military Intelligence Museum and the Shuttleworth Collection

A pleasant 90-minute drive from Chesham took us to Chicksands, Bedfordshire, the home base of the Intelligence Corps of the British Army, a large secure military complex that also houses the Military Intelligence Museum. Strict security meant that all photo IDs were checked at the guardhouse.

The Museum itself houses an amazing collection of intelligence memorabilia going back to the Boer War and up to present times. It is small in area but large in content, a real 'Multum in Parvo'. It was thanks to Helen Fry, who has lectured to us several times and is a Trustee, that the Museum visit (only by pre-booking) was possible.

From there, it was a 10-minute drive to the Shuttleworth Collection where we enjoyed a buffet lunch on arrival. The collection itself was started by the Shuttleworth family and built up from 1870 to 1953, when it was handed over to the current Trust, who continue to make additions. It is housed on the Old Warden airstrip, which is used daily by (very) light aircraft and hosts regular air shows. Five hangars house all forms of old and very old aircraft, cars, buses, and all forms of aviation memorabilia.

In addition we had the opportunity of walking round the Swiss Gardens, founded by the family in the early 1900s, a veritable oasis amidst the buzz of the collection.

All 41 weary members returned speedily to Chesham and Amersham after an interesting day.

*Michael Cohn*

# 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	Helen Barnard	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	
Italian for your holiday	Peter Windsor	italian@cvu3a.uk
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

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# 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



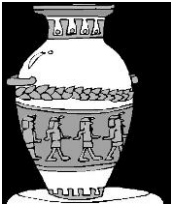
Insects! Not always the most attractive or loved creatures but this was the subject some of our members have worked on over the last few weeks. Our numbers attending were down due to various reasons but those that did draw and paint crawling and flying creatures enjoyed the challenge. August is holiday time so the Group takes a break from the classroom

but arranged a couple of plein-air sessions for those that could make it. Watch this space!

Our Group is currently full, but we are holding a waiting list.

## Art Discussion 1

Angela Bishop



The subject for our June meeting was *Still Life*. Originally thought to be a lowly form of art, our members thought that it does not merit that description. All of us thought Cotán's work of 1561 entitled *Quince, Cabbage and Melon* to be a masterpiece of its time, depicting a variety of ordinary fruit and vegetables in 3D. We could not decide whether Marianne North's extensive Victorian depictions of tropical and home-grown fruits were *still life* or botanical images. Now exhibited at Kew Gardens, they are detailed masterpieces of her subjects. We

looked at the work of the female French artist, Anne Vallayer-Coster and her stunning image *Still Life with Mackerel* 1787. Her depiction of the silvery scales of the fish, a silver bowl and cruet is truly exceptional. We were all cheered by Mary Fedden's works of simple everyday objects displayed most imaginatively, often with a watchful cat present in the work.

In July our presenter asked us to choose an artwork dating from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The most challenging image was that of Joana Vasconcelos's *Stiletto Heels*, made out of stainless steel saucepans, on display at Versailles. Other members chose less controversial works ranging from Banksy, and David Hockney to Antony Gormley.

Our August meeting was a summer lunch, held at one of our members' homes.

Future subjects for discussion include *Food in Art*. Our format remains the same, meeting in one of three members' houses, with one member leading the discussion on a subject of their choice. The rest of the Group then have an opportunity to talk about their selections on the subject. We are ably assisted by one of our members with IT expertise who is able to display all the images on a TV screen. Our Group is now full at 12 members.

## Art Discussion 2

Caroline Jenks



Our June meeting was entitled *Black Artists*. We looked at artists' work from around the world, starting with Henry Ossawa Tanner, an African American painter, who was considered to be the first black celebrity artist. His sensitive portrayal of the relationship between grandfather and grandson in *The Banjo Lesson* (1893) was a way of altering perceptions of black African Americans, away from the 'Uncle Tom' image. It showed noble and graceful people engaged in an intimate act of sharing. Also from USA, we had Jean-Michel Basquiat, an American 'wunderkind', who had collaborated with Andy Warhol. A Neo-expressionist, his work concentrated on wealth versus poverty. He died aged 27 from a heroin overdose, leaving a vast collection of drawings and paintings.

(cont.)

*The Sugar Shack* (1976), by Ernie Barnes, depicted a moment from Barnes' childhood when he had sneaked into a segregated dance hall; a joyful scene full of fun, laughter and exuberant dancing, it was a complete contrast from Basquiat's social commentaries. Australian Aboriginal art was represented by Emily Kam Kngwarray who began her artistic career at the age of 80. She paints Native Abstract Art, with echoes of 'dreamtime'. They are enormous canvasses that art academics have described as equal to the work of great abstract artists like de Kooning, Pollock and Rothko. We looked at an installation, *Freedom and Change*, by Lubaina Himid, who was the first black woman to receive the Turner prize, and another Turner prize winner, Chris Ofili, who disturbingly incorporated elephant dung in his *The Holy Virgin Mary*, a mixed media painting that caused considerable controversy when first displayed. Many of the examples we looked at had thought-provoking undertones of colonialism and cultural identity, which made for a very enlightening afternoon meeting.

The rather jaunty-sounding 'I do like to be beside the seaside', was the theme of our July meeting. We each chose examples of marine-themed pictures, which included some oil sketches of beach scenes by John Constable demonstrating his use of light and shade, a luminous picture of Pegwell Bay by Victorian artist William Dyce, painted in Pre-Raphaelite precision, and a picture of breaking waves by the American artist Winslow Homer, best known for his dramatic seascapes. It could not be a meeting about the seaside without featuring the Spanish artist Joaquin Sorolla, the 'Master of Light'. His beach scenes are bathed in bright Spanish sunlight and typically include women in floaty dresses, which billow in a gentle breeze. Another American artist who painted in the Impressionist style was Edward Henry Potthast. He too was able to capture the joy of the seaside on a sunny day; sublime, unlike Jack Vettriano's *The Singing Butler*, which seemed rather crass in comparison; an extremely interesting meeting, introducing our Group to many lesser-known artists.

We had an all-day meeting in August. We had hoped to be in Caroline's garden, but the changeable weather meant we were inside. We discussed how our views on art had changed, if we had begun to appreciate something that we had previously dismissed and why this had happened. We talked about our earliest memories of art, which more often than not were pictures that had been hanging in our childhood homes. Although we were inside, we thoroughly enjoyed the day, fuelled by buns and coffee, lunch and afternoon tea and cake!

Gill Biddle

## Book 1

Caroline Jenks



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

Authors recently recommended by members included Samantha Harvey, Maggie O'Farrell, Susan Fletcher, Bruce Omar Yates, V V Ganeshanathan, Chris Cleave, Christy Lefteri, Elizabeth O'Connor and Claire Keegan. One member reviewed the most recent Robert Harris book *Precipice*, and highly recommended all his novels for gripping, fascinating reads. Another member went back to a classic, *Our Man in Havana* by Graham Greene and was delighted by how good it still seems: well worth reading.

We cover mainly fiction, but also non-fiction; whatever a member chooses. You never have to read anything you don't want.

We could now consider taking one more member, so please contact the Convenor if you are interested.

*"The Great Library at Alexandria in Egypt didn't contain a single book! Called 'The Mouseion', it was dedicated to the nine goddesses of the arts, the Muses. Built in the reign of Ptolemy II, at its height in 200 BCE, it may have housed up to 400,000 texts in the form of papyrus scrolls."*

(Wikipedia)



**Book 2****Alison Pullinger, Sarah Organ & Georgina Mead**

Our fully subscribed Book Group continues to meet at Amersham library on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month.

Two of our books this quarter are set on the African continent. *Teatime for the Traditionally Built* by Alexander McCall Smith is set in Botswana. It is concerned with themes of loyalty, relations between the sexes and often the need to dig deep to uncover the goodness of the human heart. Although it was an easy read, it was one that split our Group. The fact that this is the tenth novel in a detective agency series suggests that there is a large fan base out there. Try the book and see what you think.

Our other African book, *Sankofa* by Chibundu Onuzo, is set mostly in West Africa. The title is a Ghanaian word meaning 'go back and get'. The main character is Anna, a mixed-race British woman who grew up in Britain never knowing her father. After her mother dies she goes in search of her West African father.

Anna finds that her family is wealthy, influential and also corrupt. She discovers their powers are tied to patriarchal structures that limit women's freedom. Throughout the novel we also see Anna's struggles with identity and race. This makes for an interesting read.

Our third book this quarter was *Heroes* by Stephen Fry. *Heroes* is Fry's second book dealing with the retelling of Greek myths: the first being *Mythos*.

Fry takes us on eight journeys with eight heroes: Perseus, Heracles, Bellerophon, Orpheus, Jason, Atlanta, Oedipus and Theseus. As such, it is a book that you can dip into at different points. Each retelling of the myths is detailed and often witty with a nod to the present day. Each of the heroes teaches us different lessons and adds a new layer to our understanding of history and Ancient Greece. This book divided our Group; some felt that the stories are far too complicated with too many characters whilst many of us were in awe of Fry's research, his expressive powers and ability to bring the Greek myths to life with such style and humour. Another book to try for yourself!

Georgina Mead and Alison Pullinger

**Book 3****Helen Barnard**

The Convenorship of Book Group 3 Has transferred to Helen Barnard. Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the third Tuesday of each month. We are presently reading *In the Days of Rain*, with *Golden Hill* as our book for next month. Our recent books have not necessarily been enjoyed by all but have sparked lively discussions.

We have recently welcomed two new members to the Group, so have no vacancies at present.

**Book 4****Jackie Cobb**

We meet in members' homes on the third Thursday of the month at 10am. The books we read are chosen by each member in turn and we purchase our own paperback copies. As the book choices are varied it makes for a good discussion each month.

These are some of the authors whose books we will be reading in the coming months: Satoshi Yagisawa, Pat Barker, Velma Wallis and James Robertson.

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

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

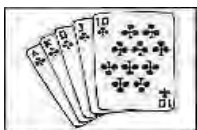
Chiltern u3a extends an invitation to our members to join them in playing Short Mat Bowls. In the summer we meet each Monday from 13.50 - 16.00 pm at Holmer Green Sports Association for Outdoor Short Mat Bowls. In the winter we meet each Friday from 13.15 to 15.30 pm at Chesham White Hill Centre for indoor sessions.

The cost is £3.00 in the summer or £4.00 in the winter, including a cup of tea per session. So, if you would like to "try your hand" then get in touch: experience not needed; tuition given; bowls available. Please contact the Convenors before attending, for more information and season start dates:

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 are continuing to meet at one another's houses on the afternoon of the third Monday of the month. We still have room for a couple of new members so if you're familiar with the game do come along. Please contact us at: [canasta@cvu3a.uk](mailto:canasta@cvu3a.uk)

## Chess

Caroline Jenks



The Chess Group is running successfully, but we would love to have a couple more members. Do come for a taster session, no commitment. Meetings are held in the Convenor's house and are now on the fourth Friday morning of the month, 10.30 to noon; morning drinks and biscuits provided.

As well as playing games, we try (very easy) chess puzzles together. The Group is open to anyone, those who want to learn and those who can help teach us.

Apparently Byron said, "Life is too short for chess." Not true!

## Current Affairs

Eileen Overton



Meetings are held in members' homes at 2pm on the first Thursday of each month. We are a small informal Group; this means that everyone has a chance to speak which is not always possible in a large Group. We learn a lot from our members as well as informing others. If you are interested, please get in touch with the Convenor for details of the next meeting.

## Dinghy Sailing

Wendy Barnes & Judith Young



It has been a good summer for sailing and we have had five boats sailing at some sessions. The lake water is very warm at the moment as one crew found when they capsized recently! Our safety boat was quickly alongside to help them right the boat. There is always a competent helm in the boat, but accidents do occasionally happen! We recommend that you always bring a change of clothes just in case!

Experience is not necessary...we can teach you! Contact one of the Convenors if you would like to give us a try, or just come to see what we do.

## French Conversation

Morag Robertson



We have taken a break over August and will restart in September.

The French Group meets twice a month and chats informally about many topics, keeping abreast of events avoiding politics or controversial subjects! We try to keep up to date with any films or television programmes in French. The Channel 'More 4' is proving a useful resource for foreign language programmes.

## 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.

*"The Eiffel Tower is the most visited monument with an entrance fee, in the world. Nicknamed "La dame de fer" (The Iron Lady), it gets 6m visitors a year. (Wikipedia)*



The Fun Quizzes Group will start its monthly meetings for the 2025/26 season via Zoom on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November, starting at 7:30pm.

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](mailto:quizzes@cvu3a.uk).

## Gardening

Stephanie Rothwell &amp; Jenny Beirne



Our May meeting welcomed Colin Roberts, the Head Gardener of the Adwell Estate in Oxfordshire, who talked to us on the subject of salvias and how to grow them. Apparently the Adwell estate boasts 70 different varieties of salvia in a range of colours. Colin's excellent photos whetted our appetites for a possible visit to Adwell in the future, and he brought along several plants for sale, always popular with our members.

In June we had a private visit to Bledlow Manor Gardens, home of Lord and Lady Carrington. The Carringtons have created beautiful 'rooms' in various parts of their garden, and June was the perfect time to enjoy summer flowers and grasses in profusion. Most memorable was their stunning collection of statues, mainly contemporary, many of them on wildlife themes. A recent addition to the collection is Elvis the Elephant, a life-sized model made in India, using an invasive weed called lantana around a steel rebar. Group members posed by the elephant looking for all the world as though they were on safari!

In July we had a fascinating talk from Clare Waters about the start of the National Garden Scheme. Clare had done much original research on this topic for her Masters in Garden History, and is in conversation with the NGS about her material being used when they celebrate 100 years in 2027.

The Group takes a break in August, but on 24th September we look forward to Timothy Walker speaking to us on autumn gardening: his talk is entitled *A Blaze of Glory*.

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 web page, together with the programme for 2025.

Jenny Beirne and Stephanie Rothwell

## German

Jenny Lee



Our small friendly German Conversation Group continues to meet on the first and third Wednesday morning of each month. We meet in each other's houses. It never ceases to amaze me how much we have to talk about! Natürlich auf Deutsch. We also read from our German novel.

## History

Claire Paterson &amp; Ian Hutt



Our speaker for June was unable to join us so our Convenor Ian Hutt stepped into the breach with a presentation on *Sir Thomas More - Saint or Tyrant*. More (1478-1535) was an English lawyer, philosopher, statesman and a close confidant of Henry VIII. He is best known for his book *Utopia* and his eventual opposition to Henry's divorce and break from the Catholic Church. More was a devout Catholic and served as Lord Chancellor of England from 1529 to 1532. However, his refusal to acknowledge Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon enabling him to marry Anne Boleyn and his appointment as the Supreme Head of the Church of England all led to his downfall. He was arrested, tried for treason and executed.

Saint or tyrant? Canonised as a saint by the Catholic Church in 1535, he is celebrated as a martyr for religious freedom. But as Lord Chancellor he persecuted Protestants, ordered the burning of heretics and was unwavering in his defence of the Catholic Church. (cont.)



In July we welcomed Dr Beth Rogers, Chairman of the John Hampden Society. She gave an entertaining and informative talk about John Hampden, a man not as well-regarded as he should be. He proved to be a leader of outstanding and physical courage. He was revered by the American Founding Fathers, and several towns in the USA bear his name. He was scrupulously honest in an age when power enabled the accumulation of wealth. He refused to purchase a peerage as he wished to remain in the House of Commons. He refused to pay Ship Money to Charles I on the principle that it was not the king who should claim taxes but Parliament. It was said that the whole nation mourned when he was mortally wounded at Chalgrove Field, fighting for the Parliamentary cause during the first English Civil War. His enduring popularity as a symbol of Parliamentary freedom continues.

Our choices for our traditional August visit proved to be difficult. As a follow-up to a talk we had in December, we visited the beautiful Verulamium Museum in St. Albans situated in Verulam Park, site of half of the Roman City. The Museum Curator, David Thorold gave an introductory talk on the Romans and the foundation of the City of Verulam, which became one of the largest Roman cities in Britain, giving a degree of self-government for its citizens. Sacked and burnt on the orders of Boudica in AD61, by the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century it covered 125 acres.

David gave a good insight into the daily lives of the citizens, which gave us a better understanding and appreciation of the exhibits when we walked around the Museum afterwards. The well displayed and labelled artefacts and the recreation of period rooms gave a good feel of the Roman times in Britain. The collection of large-scale intricately designed mosaics were wonderful, and it was so good to see them close-up. They are amazing creations and a testament to the skilled craftsmanship of their creators.

Our September talk will be given by our Group member, Eleanor Phillips. Her talk is entitled *Women of Chesham who have made a difference*.

### Italian; Get By on your Holiday

Peter Windsor



The new class has taken off quite well, meeting once a month at the White Hill Centre where we are led by our great teacher, Elisa, who has provided workbooks (see right), to support our learning. Let's see if we can order our vino bianco (or rosso) in Italian, on our next holiday!



### 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](mailto: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.

We were pleased to welcome two new members, Elaine and Fiona, to the Group in August. They are both enthusiastic knitters.

We currently have a waiting list. Please contact Jo Biggs if you are interested in the Group.

*"Knitting was once a male-only occupation. The knitting machine was invented in 1589 and knitting was considered a national duty during times of war."* (lovecrafts.com)



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](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 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 Group have had a couple of lunches lately but unfortunately some emails haven't be getting through to their recipients so they have missed the meetings. A coffee meeting is to be arranged after the August Bank holiday when the Group will discuss their future plans. An update of the membership is also planned but no new members are able to join at present.

## MOTO 2

Brian Harding

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 a recent shortage of members we now have two people on the reserve list. The front cover photo shows all who were able to attend in August.

[brharding@talktalk.net](mailto:brharding@talktalk.net)

## Music Appreciation

Geoff Hayes



It is always fascinating and pleasantly surprising to listen to the variety of music that members of this Group select to share at our meetings and the reasons behind their selections. The themes for the last three months have been Keyboards, the letter 'J' and the number '8'. We have had a huge variety of music including contemporary classical composers such as John Adams with *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and a baroque classic *Tocatta and Fugue* by Bach, played not on a magnificent organ, but on an accordion; definitely worth investigating. We were treated to a largely unknown ABBA piece called *Intermezzo* which none of us had heard before, and well known pieces by John Williams, Mozart, James Blunt, Billie Eilish; I could go on but I'm sure you get the picture... This is a meeting that always lifts my spirits. I can sometimes turn up in a grump but always go home cheerful. We do have room for new members and if you want to come along and see what it's like, please do so. We meet on the first Thursday of the Month in Chesham Town Hall at 2pm. The meeting lasts a couple of hours with a refreshment break in the middle. Our next meeting is on 4<sup>th</sup> September and the theme is the letter 'S'. *Sounds of Silence* by Paul Simon maybe?

I do have some sad news to share. Colin O'Rourke, my fellow Convenor, will no longer be able to attend our meetings and 2<sup>nd</sup> October will be his last one. Living in Milton Keynes the journey, especially in winter months, has become too onerous. Colin has been a great help in re-establishing this Group and his musical knowledge is encyclopaedic. He will be missed. Thank you Colin for all you have done for the u3a in the years you have been a member.



Our ladies had a break away from the monthly workshop in August, which happened to be busy for everyone with other claims on our time. We look forward to getting together in September and seeing what we have already made, or are currently working on, or maybe sharing plans for future projects.

During the year, there are several quilting shows or exhibitions held around the country including some recently in London, which some of our members visited. They included an unusual exhibit in the Royal Courts of Justice featuring quilts made by the staff during Lockdown, and Liberty of London displaying an exciting feature made from their famous Liberty prints, showcased in their iconic building in the West End.

In July, a few of us made a trip to a Quilt Show held at a new venue for the organisers at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire. Considering the days and weeks of sunshine we have been enjoying this summer, that day was the complete opposite, but torrential rain did not stop our enjoyment. The Hall and its gardens were not open to the public that day but the very large stable block and courtyard hosted the show, featuring some fabulous quilts made by very talented people. We were also able to indulge in a little retail therapy with the traders. The writer is always swayed by Christmas designs and came away with a lovely little Christmas wall hanging pattern. Will it be done by November? I live in hope.

We have the capacity to welcome anyone wishing to join our Group. We meet on the third Wednesday each 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. If you would like to see what we do, 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 and maybe would like to try it, or perhaps you would like to 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 it is a very friendly Group. We would welcome a visit from you.

### Photography with Digital Imaging

Pippa Greensmith & David Hurd



Our June meeting in the Little Chalfont Village Hall was a practical session on Table-top photography. Members used light boxes, mirrors, coloured filters and a light table to take fascinating images of familiar objects. The subjects ranged from flowers through cars, model dinosaurs and fantasy scenes to tinned tomato soup.

Earlier in June a small group travelled to Brick Lane to photograph the ever-changing graffiti on local buildings.

In July we looked at images captured in the Table-top Workshop. We also examined and discussed members' prints, ranging from wildlife and street art to scenes from Japan. Several members had produced advertisements from their table-top images, using a range of techniques to produce some interesting images. There is no meeting in August so we reconvene on 17<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm, when we will be treated to a talk by Patrick Hudgell: *Photographing Brown Hares*. We have opened this meeting to all. Please contact Pippa or David at [photography@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk](mailto:photography@chessvalley-u3a.org.uk)

### Pilates

Liz Howlett & Christine Ross



**!BREAKING NEWS!**

No breaks for Pilates members in 2025!

By popular demand, classes continued to run through August this year. This makes it a seventeen-week term running until December. Everyone should be well stretched, supple and balancing like ballerinas at the Christmas Party. Thank you to Sue, our Instructor, who has endless patience, and somehow keeps us all in line.

A big thank you too to all our members for their support, encouragement and good humour. We are a great team.





The Play Reading Group is now up to full strength as we welcomed a new member, Chris, at the July meeting, bringing us up to ten.

In June Mavis welcomed us into her garden where we read the first act of *Separate Tables* by Terence Rattigan. As the first and second acts are in fact two separate plays we were able to do this, although some of the characters who had very little to read in the first half would have benefited by carrying on where their characters were developed. However I think the heat made us all rather apathetic!

For July we read *According to the Evidence* by Felicity Douglas and Henry Cecil, at my house. Henry Cecil has written some good courtroom yarns but this was a bit complicated and probably needed re-reading (or acting!) to really understand it.

In August we read *Roar Like a Dove* by Lesley Storm. I have seen this performed and it was an amusing play but, reading it now, it seems rather old fashioned and chauvinistic! It's still quite funny in parts though, and it was nice that everyone attempted their Scottish or American accents... I think Eleanor's Scottish child won the day! This was also at my house because nobody wants to venture into Little Chalfont at present with all the road works along White Lion Road! Thanks to Chris for providing the refreshments. Joan Barton

## Poetry

Christine Ogborne



Our Group meets on the fourth Thursday each month and we read and discuss poems on a theme or poet of our choice. In June our subject was 'Humour' and we all had fun choosing such poets as Wendy Pope, Roger McGough, George Caldwell, C A Duffy, Clive James and Spike Milligan. July saw us looking at the Welsh award-winning poet Gillian Clarke whose superb poetry surprised us and inspired us all to read more of it.

For our meeting in August we had 'Film and the Movies' as a theme and among many choices enjoyed was *The Weepies* by Paul Muldoon.

Future Meetings are as follows:

September: Edward Thomas

October: 'Travel'

November: Fleur Adcock

## Railways

Graham Yellowley &amp; James Cadle



The UK is celebrating 200 years of Railways in 2025 and we are pleased to be part of *Railway 200*. Our visit to Waterloo on the 18<sup>th</sup> July and attendance at the Great Gathering in Derby in August were part of those celebrations.

We have had some excellent talks and visits in this period as detailed below:

May 30<sup>th</sup>: Elizabeth McKay: A talk by the Director and CEO of the London Transport Museum, and a visit to the Museum: The London Transport Museum is in good hands. Elizabeth McKay gave a very good update on the Museum, its funding and activities, and plans for the future. The Museum had over 427,000 visitors last year with a further 1.9m online. The *Hidden London* visits and the Museum Shop are very popular and raise a lot of money for the Museum. Graham Neil then gave us a run through of his role in Heritage Rail Operations: so anything that leaves the Museum or Depot to run on the live network is Graham's responsibility, from maintenance and signing off that the train is fit to run, to preparing all the necessary paperwork to ensure compatibility with the live network and staffing the specialist crews to operate the trains. Graham then gave us a tour of the Museum amidst a cacophony of noise due to the numerous children who were visiting during their half-term.

June 27<sup>th</sup>: Andrew Martin: *The Paris Metro*: The author Andrew Martin seems to have visited the inside and outside of every Metro station in Paris and has the photographs to prove it; a very interesting talk on the Paris Metro, its lines, trains and architecture, brought to life with comments and anecdotes. (cont.)

The vast majority of the Metro stations have no buildings on the surface and are only a flight or two of steps down to the platform from street level. Andrew also explained why trains on some lines have rubber tyres! His book *Metropolitan*, about the Paris Metro, is very entertaining.

July 18<sup>th</sup>: Part 1 (10:00): Keith Hoffmeister: *HS2 Update*: Another excellent update by Keith, a superb narrator as well as photographer, Keith brought us right up to date with local HS2 sites and the changes thereto. How Keith gets access to these sites is his secret but we get the benefit of it with great pictures and a wonderful narrative. Keith even brought his own lectern, which shows you how professional he is.

July 18<sup>th</sup>: Part 2 (15:00): Graham Yellowley: Visit to 'Inspiration' (Railway 200 train) at Waterloo Station: The train is of four carriages of which one is a generator, the other three being 'Past, Present and Future'. The Past carriage had a lot of information about the Railway history and while we probably knew a lot of it there were some interesting facts there as well. The Present Carriage was ok but the Future one was the highlight for me; a tank full of sand on which a train and track and villages etc. were projected. The train would only move when the sand was level so you had to work out how to move the sand to make the train continue. They also had a section on train wheels and you could build your own set of wheels and try them on a windy track to see if your design would work. The final carriage addressed recruitment for the railways: it listed a series of jobs on the railways and what those roles were. It was actually quite interesting. The volunteers on the train were present on 'volunteer days' from work, and were quite informative. Nearest the platform was Locomotive 35028, a Merchant Navy Class 'Clan Line' which was due only to be open to the public the following day. But a number of our Group were allowed onto the footplate!

Our next meetings are as follows:

September 18<sup>th</sup>: Talk by the COO of Transport for London (Southwark)

October 17<sup>th</sup>: *George Gilbert Scott*: Nigel Lowey

November 21<sup>st</sup>: *San Francisco Cable Cars*: Tom Ingall

December 19<sup>th</sup>: *South Africa*: Adrian Palmer

January 16<sup>th</sup>: *Back to Brunel*: Francis Gomme

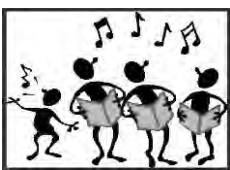
February 20<sup>th</sup>: *Watkins Dream*: Francis Gomme

March 20<sup>th</sup>: Waterloo Station Tour: Rachel Kolsky

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, usually at 10am on the third Friday of the month.

## Singing for Pleasure

Stephanie Rothwell & Angela Bratton



We celebrated the end of the summer term with two performances. The first, for family and friends, was held in 'The Sanctuary' at Amersham Free Church. Our programme was a mixture of country, classic and popular

songs. David Barnes and Paul Beswetherick gave resounding solo performances while David Hurd blew his whistle exuberantly in Chattanooga Choo Choo! As usual the concert was very well attended and donations from members of the audience raised £223.60 for Chiltern Music Therapy, a charity whose team of professional musicians supports children and adults with diverse needs (certificate above).

The second concert was in aid of Amersham National Trust and was held at the Chiltern Leisure Centre. Ticket sales raised an impressive £496.24. After the summer break, the choir will be looking ahead to its annual Christmas concert and Ali, our musical director, is busy during her holiday selecting suitable pieces for us to perform.

None of the above would be possible without Ali's excellent teaching and Gwen's superb piano accompaniment. Thank you, both! 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 Chess Valley u3a website.





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 &amp; 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 &amp; Meg Brinton



Our Tai Chi teacher is taking a well-earned rest from us until 9 September when we return to our weekly sessions.

Again, if you know anyone whom we could approach to run a beginners class please let the Convenors know as we have members interested in joining.

## Theatre

Helen Barnard &amp; Geoff Naylor



Our trips include theatre tickets and coach transport from Chesham and Amersham to the theatres and back. The Group continues to grow in popularity with trips fully booked in a fairly short time. Our most recent trips have been to see *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Operation Mincemeat* and, most recently, *The Winter's Tale* at Stratford. Upcoming trips (now all fully booked) are *A Man For All Seasons*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Oliver!* and *I'm Sorry, Prime Minister*. The Group accepts new members. Inevitably there are cancellations, so if you would like to be added to the cancellation list for any of the future shows, please contact the Convenors.

## Ukulele

Jeff Naman &amp; Heather Sprake



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

I am hoping that a lady who contacted me recently about joining the Group is reading this, as unfortunately we had some problems with our emails and lost a number of them. I do not have the lady's email address or details to follow up on. Please re-contact me if you are still interested in joining.

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

Jeff Naman 07976 633798

## Walking Groups

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 10th June a small group of amblers explored the 170 acre estate of Chorleywood House:

We set off past the eponymous manor house that was built in 1822. After being used for a variety of purposes including to house evacuees from London and troops during the war, it has now been converted to privately owned flats.

(cont.)

We passed some varied and lovely scenery as we went across picturesque fields and down narrow footpaths through the woods, until we reached the river Chess, which we admired from a small bridge. We walked parallel to the river for a while then returned to our cars via the romantically named 'Footpath 35'. The weather was kind and we all had a very pleasant, and not too strenuous amble.

### **Walkers (5 - 7 miles)**

#### **Walkers 1**

**Stuart Stanley**

Our Group meets at various locations on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 10:00 and walks are usually between four and five and a half miles long, 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. Group members advise the walk leader if they wish to participate.

In the second quarter 2025, we held walks in Sarratt, Tottenhamhoe, Aldbury, Wigginton, Chesham, and Latimer. For the third quarter 2025 our walks were or will be in Penn Street, Prestwood, Sarratt Green, and Little Gaddesden.

New members are always 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.

The walk leaders have taken us on walks around Penn, Wendover and Winchmore Hill, with not a drop of rain to be seen which has made walking very much easier.

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 June Walk was led by Jan and Bernie, all around Ashley Green. With many paths that were very new to us, we passed the ruins of the St Mary Magdalene chapel. In July Joe very kindly led us around Winchmore Hill and the beautiful Penn House estate. And our latest walk in August, led by Alan and Muriel, started at Great Hamden Common and went through Monkton Woods. Many thanks go to all our walk leaders.

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

**Andrew Brown & Ian Lee**



In July, 23 members of Striders enjoyed a summer walk a bit further from home than is normal for our walks. This year we started in Abingdon with some members heading off on an eight mile walk while others did a 12 mile route. All stopped in the village of Sutton Courtenay to visit the gravestone of Eric Blair (aka George Orwell) and a lovely church. The short route walkers enjoyed a lunch stop in 'The George' in the village while the long route walkers took advantage of seats at Clifton Lock for a lunch stop and later enjoyed a post-walk drink at the 'Nag's Head' pub on the bridge at Abingdon. While the day was overcast, we were lucky to have only a slight drizzle during the walks. Our trial of keeping the costs down by car sharing rather than booking a coach seemed to be successful. So where do we go next year?

In the meantime our weekly walks continue. Strictly speaking, Striders 1 walk on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays and Striders 2 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, but lower numbers of members wishing to walk mean they can generally join any walk that they want to. So if you enjoy walking in a friendly Group covering between six and eight miles on our regular walks, do consider joining us. If you are interested or would like to know more please contact one of the Convenors: Andrew Brown (Striders 1) or Ian Lee (Striders 2) for further information. Why not join us for a walk one Tuesday morning to see how you get on? (cont.)



July had a fifth Tuesday and we use those days in the summer to do longer walks. On this occasion Keith Pittman led us on a 12-mile walk from Goring, first along the Chiltern Way through some beautiful beech woods, before dropping down to the River Thames and following the Thames Path back to Goring.

As always, we use a wide variety of starting-points for our walks with recent ones being from Chorleywood, Asheridge, Shardeloes, Christmas Common, Bridgewater Monument (Ashridge), Seer Green, Chesham and Great Hampden. We make good use of the wide variety of footpaths available in the Chilterns! But walk leaders are good at finding routes that do not involve big climbs or many (or any) stiles. So do consider joining us for a healthy dose of activity in pleasant company.

### **Walks into History: Country**

**Peter Schweiger**



#### ***Bovingdon: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025***

Eighteen of us met at 'The Bell' in Bovingdon for the second tour of the area. Unfortunately our expert local guide had to pull out the evening before, so Val Littlejohn did some quick online research and turned up trumps!

It is thought that a church has stood on the site of the present one since at least 1200 CE, but fell into such disrepair that only one monument of the original remains. It has the largest open churchyard in Hertfordshire at 4.5 acres.

Straw plaiting was the local industry before WW2. The village was a beneficiary of the Ryder family, who paid for St Lawrence church to be rebuilt in 1845, and gave land and a grant to build the village hall in 1921. The well in Bovingdon is a memorial to a family member.

The former Bovingdon airfield became an American training base and 2000 US troops arrived during WW2. Part of the airfield was later used to build a prison, and a racetrack.

Contributions of local knowledge from within the Group gave added colour to our tour, and we ended up with a very agreeable lunch back at 'The Bell'.

Mirit Douglas

### **Walks in London**

**Angela Shipley**

**Treasurer: Mick Rothwell**



#### ***Life in the Swinging Sixties: June 2025***

This walk was eagerly anticipated as we all felt it was of our time, some of us having been students living in London, with very fond memories, during the 60s. And a bonus: Both Groups got the benefit of one of London Walks' best guides as Adam Scott generously did it twice over the day. The feedback I received singing his praises said it all, his enthusiasm, sense of humour and infinite knowledge entertaining us superbly.

We stood outside the BBC headquarters with the usual noise of Central London buzzing around us, to which Adam added some of his own with a loudspeaker belting out pop music of the day. The BBC refused to play pop music, in response to which in 1964 Radio Caroline illegally transmitted from offshore in international waters, playing what we as teenagers wanted to hear. But Tony Benn put a stop to that by extending territorial waters so Radio Caroline couldn't be picked up from the mainland. Finally the BBC caved in and in 1967 Radio 1 was created, led by Tony Blackburn, one of Radio Caroline's ringleaders. We moved on along Great Portland Street to arrive at a stunning view of The Post Office Tower, glimpsed in the sunshine between buildings. Opened in 1965, it was architecture ahead of its time, the revolving viewing gallery open to the public until the IRA placed a bomb. It will open again soon as a hotel.

Within the 90° angle between Oxford Street and Great Portland Street lies an area full of surprises which none of us knew existed; quiet, peaceful, traffic-free mews residences, if you can afford them. Adam enjoyed the name dropping of past and present owners: Patrick Macnee (John Steed in *The Avengers*) in Dickens Mews with Terence Stamp and Michael Caine sharing a corner property in another, signifying social class mixing in the sixties, since Michael Caine was born in Bermondsey as Maurice Micklewhite, son of a fishmonger. Adam promised us sex and scandal and we got it in Wimpole Mews where a certain Steven Ward bought a flat and lived with Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice Davies.

(cont.)

Steven Ward was an osteopath with Churchill and the Duke of Edinburgh as clients, but the public shock at the sexual orgies and parties that went on there brought down the Government when nineteen-year-old model Christine Keeler linked up with Government Minister John Profumo in 1963. Steven Ward killed himself before charges could be brought.

We crossed Oxford Street from Marylebone to Mayfair, passing an art gallery owned by Robert Fraser, friend of the Rolling Stones. He was jailed for three years for heroin abuse while Mick Jagger and Keith Richards also found themselves behind bars for a couple of nights. Then on into Grosvenor Square, former home of the US Embassy where in 1968 a peaceful anti-Vietnam War march took place, led by Vanessa Redgrave. She deviated from the police approved route towards the Embassy and what followed were shocking, violent clashes between the police and 25,000 protesters. We stood outside the Jimmy Hendrix museum, which he shares with an unlikely companion: musician and composer, George Frederick Handel, who lived in the same building a few centuries before. This building was said to be Jimmy's first happy home after serving in the US military. Lastly we saw in a little back street, a small copper statue of the queen of the sixties, super-model Twiggy.

Angela Shipley

## Wildlife

Harry Howlett & Keith Sonley



Wildlife members have enjoyed field visits to Gadespring Nature Reserve in Hemel Hempstead, managed by the Boxmoor Trust, and to Camley Street Natural Park near Kings Cross Station, run by the London Wildlife Trust. Here was a chance to come face to face with both rural and urban wildlife settings.

Weather conditions could not have been more different for these visits: torrential rain at Gadespring and t-shirt weather at Camley! At the former, we spotted kingfishers but relied on footage from track cameras to see otters and water voles. Refreshments nearby on the Grand Union Canal were hugely appreciated.

Camley Street Natural Park projects an image of a tranquil idyll next to the Regent's Canal with a habitat for plants, birds, amphibians, animals and insects. We were perhaps a little underwhelmed by its overgrown nature and absence of wildlife, despite sightings listed on the notice board of some forty species! I guess that living in the Chesham / Amersham area has spoilt us. The location of this park however has historical significance. Used as part of the coal drop yard from 1820, the Clean Air Act of 1956 meant that it fell into disrepair until the early 1980s when the London Wildlife Trust was started. Its future was, however, not secured until the decision was taken to run Channel Tunnel trains from St Pancras rather than Kings Cross. It is now an educational centre.

Looking forward to the rest of the year, we have a full programme of talks. In September, we will learn how to resolve sewage pollution in chalk streams, using the River Thames as an example. In October, we will take a wider view of wildlife interests and hear from a speaker versed on issues affecting the Galápagos Islands. As a key member of the Chiltern Botany Group, she will paint a picture of plant and animal life in these protected habitats. In November, we will have a speaker to advise on how to adapt our gardens for the benefit of wildlife. Finally in December, we will have our customary social with a review and quiz, accompanied by wildlife photos from one of our keen photographic members. Why not sign up to join the Wildlife Group to hear more about what is happening in our neck of the woods to promote the habitat and to support wildlife? We meet on the first Thursday of the month at Amersham Common Village Hall starting at 2pm.

## Wine Appreciation 1

Pauline & Tom Hohenberg



In May at the Curtis's, the theme was 'Wines beginning with C'. First up was a Tesco Finest *Chablis* reduced from £18 to £13.50. This was followed by a McGuigan *Family Release Chardonnay* from Waitrose. We then had a double C: *Chateau Pigoudet La Chapelle Vin de Provence Rose*, £13 from Waitrose. Moving on to the reds, we had a *Chateau Beaumont Haut Medoc Cabernet Sauvignon* from 2018: powerful stuff at 14.5% and available at the Wine Society. Then we tried a *Domaine du Tariquet Cotes de Gascogne* 2017 with Petit Manseng grapes at 11.5%; finally, a *Cinsault* 2022 from Fairview, from Paarl, South Africa at 12.5%. (cont.)

June at the Broombys saw wines suitable for a barbeque. Starting again with Tesco's Finest *Chablis* 2023 at 12.5% with Chardonnay grapes, we moved on to Tesco's Finest *Pouilly Fume* 2023 at 13% with Sauvignon Blanc grapes. This was followed by a *Maison Castel Cotes de Provence 2023 Rose* from Waitrose; finally a red *Galodoro Vinho Tinto* from Portugal via Naked Wines at 13%.

July at the Hohenbergs featured Wines from Portugal. We started with a *Porto Cruz white Port* and Tonic to get us in the mood. Then there were two whites: *Porta 6*, a blend of Chardonnay, Aristo and Viognier at 12.5% and a bargain at Tesco at £8.50 less 25%, then a *Terras de Moncao Alvarino* at 13% from Naked Wines. Moving on to reds there was Tesco's Finest *Douro* at 12% and *Silk and Spice* from Waitrose at 13.5%

## Wine Appreciation 2

Graham Hitchenor



Mirit's meeting featured wines from Waitrose with a wide range of both prices and members' votes. A couple of the whites scored well but the *Gaia organic Malbec* ran out the winner on the night.

Althea and Laurie's July meeting featured Morrison's 'The Best' range with an old favourite, *Primitivo from Puglia* topping the votes.

For August's get together hosted by Fiona and Richard, we enjoyed wines recommended by the Times wine expert, Jane MacQuitty. We broadly enjoyed the recommendations with some Aldi and Lidl wines scoring well but, again, it was a *Primitivo*, this time from Waitrose, 'Old Vines', which got the highest score and is our recommended wine for the quarter.

Happy slurping!

## Writers

Helene & John Bunyan



The activities of the Writers Group continue apace. Car trouble, holidays, hospital visits and picking the wrong venue for the meeting are the reasons why we have been slightly short on numbers this quarter. Even so the contributions have been consistent and of very high quality. 'Familiar Objects', 'Emails' and 'Growing' have been the three topics covered. Our September topic is 'One Person Missing'. I wonder if you can guess why we chose that one?

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.

## Fall, Leaves, Fall

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;  
Lengthen night and shorten day;  
Every leaf speaks bliss to me  
Fluttering from the autumn tree.  
I shall smile when wreaths of snow  
Blossom where the rose should grow;  
I shall sing when night's decay  
Ushers in a drearier day.

Emily Brontë

# You have received a secure platform notification!

This heading of an email I recently received essentially meant that it was unopenable to which my reaction was to make a phone call and obtain the information insecurely and certainly not by using a platform.

On which subject, the other day I was musing on the LT warning that we all know or thought we knew: 'Mind the gap'. It originated in the 1950s as a warning then shouted out by LT staff that was subsequently recorded by an LT sound engineer (as opposed, one supposes to an unsound one), in 1968. Initially intended to be recorded by an actor, the repeat fees required made this unaffordable and the voice you heard was the sound engineer himself. The message is clear, simple and effective and therefore in need of an urgent update, rather like the message given only to tube train occupants and not those waiting to board, 'Please let the passengers off first'? Anyway, now our gap warning states 'Please Mind the Gap between the train and the platform', but on close observation there really isn't another gap to mind, putting people of a curious disposition in danger of missing the only one that it could be.

Still on the LT theme; as the ageing process becomes a little more obvious, declining the offer of a seat is a delicate matter. To decline such a kindness should always be accompanied by polite and profuse thanks to avoid any offence, while internally railing at the obviousness of one's proximity to the final curtain.

Although recently I was a tad annoyed with a kindly soul who offered to take my Tesco trolley (I much prefer the French 'Chariot' - altogether a finer description), back to its resting place. I then realised that this was not an incidental kindness, but one offered to me on account of my perceived decrepitude. I had a sore head for a week.

*'Timewaster'*

## Chess Valley u3a equipment

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

Equipment	Custodian	Contact details
Data projector 1 (Epson)	James Cadle	<b>James Cadle</b> 07889 732291 <a href="mailto:chair@cvu3a.uk">chair@cvu3a.uk</a>
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		<b>Ian Hutt</b> 01494 583955 <a href="mailto:history@cvu3a.uk">history@cvu3a.uk</a>
Projection screen 1 (5 ft)	James Cadle	
Projection screen 2 (6 ft)	Ian Hutt	
Pinboards x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	
Easels x 3	Keith Hoffmeister	<b>Keith Hoffmeister</b> 01494 766990
Portable PA systems	James Cadle	



# 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	
Monday Groups' schedules are sometimes interrupted by public holidays; contact the Convenors for more information		Bridge (pm)		
		Wine 2 (eve) (pm)		

SECOND in month				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
History (pm)	Amblers	Walks into History (Country) <b>OR</b>	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)	<b>The Chess Valley u3a Committee meets on the first or second Tuesday of each month, two days before the Monthly Talk</b>	
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)	<b>Stamps and Collectables</b> meets in members' houses every two months	
Bowls (Short Mat) (pm)	Book 3 (pm)	Photography with Digital Imaging (pm)		
Singing for Pleasure (eve)	Ukulele (pm)	Play Reading (pm)		
		Bridge (pm)		
		Italian for your holiday (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)	<b>MOTO (Members On Their Own)</b> have an 'anchor meeting' on the first Saturday morning of each month <b>MOTO2</b> meets for lunch on the second Saturday of each month	
		Bridge (pm)		

When members of the Photography with Digital Imaging Group met in June for a practical session on Table-top photography, who could have imagined the fantastic results they would come up with. I do believe that is a model Citroen 2CV Charleston below. Do you remember them? (ed.)

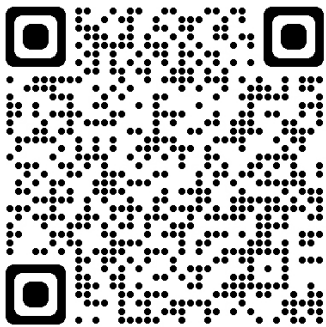






Left: Our Art Group, as always, produce wonderful work. 'Insects' is one of the topics they have concentrated on over summer.

Below: In August, Striders walked through the Getty Estate at Wormsley towards Christmas Common, and came across this.



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

Right: The Gardening Group went on safari to Bledlow Manor gardens in June. The big guy in the middle is called Elvis. A life-sized model of an Indian elephant, he is made from an invasive weed in India, lantana, worked around a steel rebar.

