

**Copy for next
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In a Pickle! Players from the combined Chorleywood/Sarratt & District group

A word from the Chair

Hello and welcome to our Newsletter

I am extremely pleased to see that the attendance at our main monthly meetings has continued to be very good and I hope to see many more of you to enjoy one of our variety of very interesting talks as well as meeting up with friends, old and new.

Having made a few tweaks to the arrangements for serving the refreshments at the beginning of the meeting we will continue with the trial in April before the committee makes a decision as to whether we continue with this or revert to having a break after the notices etc. From the responses to our survey there was an almost even split of opinion as to which members would prefer so it is clear that whatever the committee do decide will not please everyone.

We had a few members tick the survey box to say that they would be willing to join the committee and four of them came to our last meeting. Having agreed to join they have been co-opted on and will stand for election at the AGM on 3rd May. If anyone else feels they could help us please complete the nomination form and hand or send

it to Kerry, our Secretary. The nomination forms, together with the notice of the AGM and other paperwork have been sent out and are available via the website.

In the last newsletter I commented about the wet weather and hoped that the worst was over, however I think it has actually been even wetter since, with large areas flooded locally. It has been necessary to cancel some of our walks and rambles because of the dreadful conditions. Even if there is an improvement in the weather it will take quite some time for all the flooded areas to return to normal. Hopefully the nesting birds and other wildlife will not be affected by it too much and we can get out into our gardens and enjoy Spring. While planting your seeds and cuttings please remember to do some extra ones so that you can bring them to the plant stall, run by the Gardening Group, at the AGM. It will be equally important that you come with your wallets and purses full to purchase the plants that have so lovingly been tended by other members.

Best wishes

Don

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2024

Monthly meetings are in the Village Hall at 10.30am. Doors open 10am.

Remember to wear your u3a badge and to register when you arrive. If you have to leave early sign out in the book (in case we should need an emergency headcount).

April 3rd • Chris Foster - *On The Beat in Hatton Garden*

May 1st • AGM, Plant Sale, Chris Smith - *Travel/Nature Photography*

June 12th • Graham Short - *My Life as a Micro-Artist*

July 10th • Joanna Dewfall - *Mosaic Art*

(The programme may be subject to last minute change due to circumstances beyond our control).

You are invited to bring your own mug to the monthly meetings as it helps to save on cups but we will continue to make disposable cups available if you forget or do not wish to bring one.

Also bring your used stamps (separated into British/foreign) to put into the RNIB collection box (not printer ink cartridges as we have no means of recycling them)

FORTHCOMING TALKS

In April former police officer Chris Foster will talk about his experiences during his time when he was on the beat in London's Hatton Garden.

May 1st is the AGM - notice was sent out by email on the 27th March and the relevant papers are available to view on the Events section of the website.

Nominations for election should be sent to Kerry by Friday 19th April. After the AGM there will also be a talk by Chris Smith on travel/nature photography and the plant sale being run by the Garden Group.

If you think some of the subjects for talks are not your 'cup of tea' do keep an open mind, you may be surprised! Whatever the topic we can learn something outside our own range of experience and, hopefully, keep our minds flexible even if our bodies are less so! Do come along and show your support.

Future dates of the main meetings in 2024 are

12th June

10th July

7th August

4th September

2nd October

13th Nov

5th December Thursday (note the change of date)

Help wanted:

Interest Groups Co-ordinator

- It is time to hand over my role as Interest Group Co-ordinator; to kick off that process, the Committee will need to recruit a replacement (or perhaps 2 people to share) to shadow me, so that the role can be handed over gradually.

- Basically, the role involves attending the bi-monthly committee meetings, encouraging new groups and helping them with admin, and liaising where necessary with other local u3as' Co-ordinators.

- If you think you might be interested do let me know, I would love to hear from you. Speak to me at the main meeting or call me for a chat, I can email you a more detailed "job description".

Sue Bussey

sue.bussey@ntlworld.com

01923 245454.

In February our own u3a member Pam Litton enthralled us all with her talk about her first safari in Africa last year, showing us many wonderful pictures of the wildlife she encountered. In March Tricia Thompson gave us the lowdown with a very entertaining talk all about the history of underwear!



ART GROUP

In 2023 we decided as a group to enter a joint picture to The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. After much deliberation we submitted a picture called *A Sign of the Times*.

Some of us had visited The Van Gogh Immersive Exhibition, we went by train and a photograph was taken which sparked the idea. Unfortunately our application was unsuccessful, but we had lots of fun drawing ourselves. Trevor Knight hinged some canvasses together and Steve Cavalier, a local photographer took the digital image. We have submitted art previously to this annual exhibition and in 2016 actually got through to the final selection but, sadly, not this year.

Carole Maddison

JAUNTERS

As Spring approaches, we are pleased to announce our plans for this year. For members new to the U3A, the aim of the Jaunters' Committee is to organize a range of day trips each year by coach.

Unfortunately a few issues delayed the publication of our programme. The main difficulty we faced is that our usual coach company is unable to provide coaches for our chosen dates, having had huge problems in employing suitable drivers. Consequently, we have had to change the days on which trips will run, trying wherever possible to avoid clashes with other groups. Another consideration is that costs for both the coach hire and potential venues have risen considerably. Despite this we hope that you will be interested in our programme for 2024 and continue to enjoy our days out!

Proposed visit dates are:
Tuesday 21st May – Portsmouth
Monday 17th June – Ely
Friday 19th July – Arundel
Friday 22nd Nov - Knebworth Christmas Market

Full details re each trip including costs etc and booking forms will be circulated a few weeks ahead of each outing. We will keep the cost of these trips as reasonable as possible, however, it does mean that we must have a full coach of 33 members. If this is not possible then we may have to cancel the trip.

If you would like to be added to our email circulation list, please contact us at juliemike.hawkins@outlook.com you will be very welcome.

Jaunters' Committee

"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing!"

George Bernard Shaw

You've Got Friends

You can sign up to a monthly events mailing to get information on online events straight to your inbox. If you are already a u3a monthly Newsletter subscriber you're automatically part of the *u3a Friends Community*. Talks, workshops and courses are led by members with a passion or talent to share, or sometimes led by specialist speakers. Don't miss out - it's free for u3a members and you might find something of interest! sign up at u3a.org.uk/newsletter.

WALKING GROUP

February 27 found 13 group members in Kings Langley, happy to see Clive Butler and Frances Ashley on their first walk with us this year.

Colin Harrison and John Guy led us through fields and farms to Langleybury for the best choice of benches we have probably ever been offered for a relaxing coffee stop. The moment captured perfectly by John. Returning to Kings Langley along the canal we clocked up 5.5 miles with No Rain!

The walk on 12 March was rained off, unsurprisingly. Fingers and toes crossed for a nice day on our next trip as we head to Winchmore Hill for fine Chiltern views.

Val MacDonald





THE BRIDGE GROUP is happily returning to pre Covid numbers. We welcomed back Sheila Milbank in January, just in time for our seasonal lunchtime gathering at The Cock. And we are equally pleased to have Clive Butler taking part again.
Val MacDonald

NEW INTEREST GROUPS

Some members are unable to come to our monthly meetings regularly, so miss out on seeing the range of sign-up sheets for new Interest groups, although we do try to publicise them in this Newsletter. Some lists have been round for a while with only a couple of signatures, so we'll ditch those if I don't get any more response from this message. Some seem viable so we'll get together and see if we can get them off the ground, and some are listed as the current group/s is/are full.

If anyone would like to make some suggestions for more groups, please let me know.

At the April meeting on display will be those for: Armchair Travellers, Art 2, Book Group 3, Croquet, London Walks 3, MOTO 3 (Members On Their Own), Pickleball (Joint with Chorleywood), Racketball (Joint with Chorleywood), Snooker (not beginners - Joint with Watford & District), Walking With Your Dog, Wine Appreciation 3.

If you want any of these to happen, sign up!

Sue Bussey,
Interest Groups co-ordinator

All u3a groups are run by the members for the members - we need you, come on in and join us!

WE ARE IN A PICKLE!

A Pickleball group has been set up by Chorleywood u3a which is open to Sarratt u3a members. We play at William Penn Leisure Centre in Mill End, Rickmansworth on Friday afternoons.

Pickleball is a fun sport that has grown in popularity since its invention in the USA. It combines elements of badminton, tennis, and table tennis and can be played both indoors or outdoors on a badminton-sized court with a slightly modified tennis net. Two or four players use solid paddles (a bit like rectangular table tennis bats) made of wood or composite materials, to hit a perforated polymer ball over a net. It is a useful and enjoyable racket sport for older players, although many younger people are joining in the fun. No special equipment is required and any comfortable clothing is fine. Trainers/tennis shoes are recommended.

We can accommodate some extra players and our next term starts on Friday 19th April from 2pm to 3.30pm and runs until Friday 14th June.

Interested? Then contact Richard Bulgin at richard.bulgin@outlook.com.

A Remarkable Woman: The Arts and Crafts Designs of May Morris 2-3pm Thursday 11th April

Overshadowed for many years by her more famous father, May Morris is now beginning to gain the recognition she deserves as being an incredibly talented craftswoman in her own right. Teacher, lecturer, editor, jeweller and designer, May was accomplished in a wide range of crafts, but it is her work as an embroiderer that is considered to be her greatest achievement. May's knowledge of needlework, her talent for designing and her brilliance with the needle led to raising the status of embroidery to fine art. This talk will cover May's life and work, with a focus on her beautiful designs and completed embroideries, demonstrating why May should be regarded as one of the most significant artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Presented by Helen Elletson, curator of Research and Development at the William Morris Society.
 2-3pm Thursday 11th April on line via Zoom - book a free place via u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events For u3a members only



Easter Treat - a chocolate nest!
 Including edible flowers.

GARDENING GROUP

Our February meeting saw a return visit by Graham and Nina Austin of Home Farm Plants.

Graham first exhibited delphiniums at Chelsea in 2022.

He subsequently won Gold and again in 2023.

We were given an illustrated talk on *The Road to Chelsea*, where he detailed the precise and stressful preparations needed to exhibit at Chelsea, starting in the October of the preceding year. Even before that there is a staggering amount of work to be done in cross-breeding, selecting the best seedlings and growing them on for 3 years, at the same time protecting them from variable weather conditions until they reach maturity. Finally the logistics of managing them to flower at the right time and to arrive in tip top condition.

We wish Graham well for his 2024 exhibit with fingers crossed for another Gold and that elusive *Best in Show*.

Doreen Jones

Garden Group Meetings and trips out are scheduled for the second Monday of the month. All members are welcome. Dates for your diary are:

April 8th - Luton Hoo Walled Garden. A talk in the Village Hall. We hope to arrange a group visit (by car) later in the summer

May 1st - Plant Sale at the main meeting and AGM

May 13th - Ashridge House (by car share)

To see formal and landscaped gardens. The plan is to meet there at about 11am and pay individually on the day (that means if the weather is poor we can cancel). The garden entrance fee of £9 includes a hot drink in the Bakehouse cafe, where you can have refreshments indoors or out in the paved courtyard. If you want a lift or can offer a lift please let us know, we will try to match you up.

June 10th - Savill Gardens (coach visit).

During June Savill Gardens have a partnership arrangement with the RHS. This means the cost is £18 (coach only) for RHS members, it is £29 (coach and admission) for non RHS members. **The deadline for booking with payment to secure your place is at the main meeting on 1st May.**

Sept 9th - Hyde Hall (coach visit) Our group has affiliation with the RHS so entrance is free for this visit so all you need to pay for is the coach £18.00 (and no doubt the lovely plants which you will be tempted to purchase!) **The deadline for booking with payment to secure your place is 7th August**

Spring Craft Fair RHS Wisley 2-6 May - free entrance for RHS members and their guests *who will be able to view and purchase contemporary craft and art whilst also enjoying the beautiful spring garden with its huge plant collection. The event will include craft demos, a food village and live music.*

At our March meeting, Ian Barrow from the Sunnyside Trust described the wonderful work that this charity does in providing training in horticulture and life skills for many young adults with learning disabilities. At its three centres, Sunnyside Trust grows plants for general commercial sale and local authority parks contracts, as well as keeping hens and other smallholding livestock; also selling eggs and other produce in its farm shop and cafes. Of the hundreds of students helped by the Trust, many have gone on to obtain horticulture qualifications and secure jobs in the trade. Ian's commitment and involvement of over thirty years was evident in his inspiring talk. He brought along some of the lovely bedding and perennial plants grown at the Trust, and demonstrated their use in creating hanging basket displays, whilst giving us a masterclass in horticulture tips and answering any questions thrown at him. Here are a few tips:

- If you buy a plant with very compacted roots, especially if the roots have grown in a spiral inside the pot, plant it out in a square hole rather than a round one; this will encourage roots to grow outwards rather than continuing round and round.
- To make an organic aphid spray, steep rhubarb leaves in a bucket of water until they start to break down. Strain the 'juice' and spray it on aphid infestations. Wash your hands, as this juice contains cyanide!
- When planting up a hanging basket don't firm up the compost around the plants too much, causing compaction. Watering in will settle the compost around the roots and you can add more compost later. He reckoned on about 9 plants for a 14" basket.

Ian's remaining plants were offered to the audience in return for donations, and he very generously donated the two planted-up demo baskets for our own fundraising efforts. It was a brilliant talk and demonstration, enjoyed by all.

Sunnyside Trust nurseries are open to the public daily, see sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk for details. The nursery at Hemel is open also for the National Gardens Scheme on June 29th.

Pam Litton

These two lovely hanging baskets will be raffled at the Garden Group meeting on April 8th.



ENGINEERING GROUP

For our meeting in February our speaker, Dr Rudi Newman, gave us a presentation entitled *Steaming to 60 – A History of the Watford Miniature Railway* situated in Cassiobury Park.

Starting life in the late 1950's we learned that this miniature railway is now one of the oldest of its type still operating in Britain. It was conceived when a personal hobby was put into practice to become what is a very fine community asset. From its original simple circular track it has developed into a vastly more complex layout with several stations and a variety of engines in operation. A most informative and enjoyable lecture.

In March we met at the Royal Albert Hall, where our excellent guide started the tour by outlining the vast array of different artists, genres and events that take place there. These range from concerts-classical/jazz/pop to sports such as tennis, boxing and even sumo wrestling. For the most part audiences for rock and pop concerts are well behaved but following a riot in the 1960's poetry was banned for a substantial number of years- until about 2014!

We sat in boxes next to the Royal Box and were taken into the special ante-room where Royalty would gather pre-concert. Another interesting fact we learned was that Queen Elizabeth II only used the lift once - and that on her last visit!

Our guide told us that the RAH only took 4 years to build and much of it was paid for by people buying seats which would be theirs for 999 years; these incidentally can now be sold and can cost millions to purchase.



The Hall was originally to have been called the Central Hall of Arts and Sciences, but the name was changed to the Royal Albert Hall of Arts and Sciences by Queen Victoria upon laying the Hall's foundation stone in 1867, in memory of her husband, Prince Albert, who had died six years earlier at the age of 42. It was said that 10,000 people attended that event.

The RAH has a seating capacity of about 5,000 and a total capacity of 6,000 when events such as the Proms have standing in the Arena and the Gallery. The layout is based on a Roman Amphitheatre design which means that everyone has a clear view of the stage. When the organ was first installed it was the largest in Europe having 999 pipes!

There is actually a lot more to the RAH than you see on TV or if you visit - our guide informed us that it is as deep underground as it is high above ground - there are 5 floors underground and the logistics of managing more than 350 events annually are staggering. When the *Cirque du Soleil* comes to the RAH they bring 60 lorryloads of equipment into the underground areas!

A thoroughly absorbing tour which we can highly recommend!

Sheila Malin



Setting up for a concert that night by *The Stranglers!*

Beacon, the national database is used by many u3a branches, it keeps the data secure and separate for each u3a. We maintain your data and send emails via Beacon in order to keep costs down. If the newsletter is not reaching you call Penny on 01923 776143 she will be pleased to get your details updated. If you don't have access to email, arrangements can be made to post the newsletter to you in return for a small administrative charge to cover costs - speak to Penny.

Copy for next newsletter no 106 (June/July) should be submitted to the Editor Janet by 23rd May 2024. It would be lovely to have input from some of the other groups. If you have any comments about the newsletter or items you would like to see contact Janet at j.taylor0402@ntlworld.com

Please remember to take photos of your u3a activities which we might be able to use on the website or the rolling screen or in the newsletter. Some 'action' photos would be welcome and try different perspectives sometimes. If you enjoy what you are doing it will show. If you take pictures of people please check that you have permission as it is assumed that any u3a members shown in photos submitted for the newsletter are happy to be included.