

**Copy deadline for
newsletter 107
(August /Sept)
23rd July 2024**

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New Committee Members
Judith Cleveland
Linda Crawley
Clive Turner
Ian West

Regd Charity No 1139443



Monster warning encountered by the Walking Group!

A word from the Chair

Hello and welcome to our Newsletter

The committee were pleased to see a good attendance at our AGM on 1st May, so thank you to all of you who came along.

The plant stall run by the Gardening Group was very successful with £158 being raised towards the group's funds so many thanks to all those who brought plants and to those who purchased them.

We now have four new members elected on to the committee, Judith Cleveland, Linda Crawley, Clive Turner and Ian West and we look forward to their help in running our u3a. I do hope that you feel that it is YOUR u3a as we try to make it as inclusive as we can but if there is anything that you think could be improved in this respect please speak to me or any of the other committee members and we will do our best to change things. For example do you think you receive too much or too little information, is the newsletter too frequent or would you like it monthly.

The content of the newsletter is of course reliant on contributions from members not necessarily just Interest Group Leaders. There are some groups that have regular contributions

but others who appear to keep their activities hidden under a bush somewhere so it would be enlightening to discover what these groups get up to, so make our editor's day and send something in for the next issue.

Following the trial period the committee have decided to continue to serve the refreshments at the beginning of the meeting, from 10.10am. Registration by means of the barcodes on your membership cards does not commence until 10.00am so I would ask if you would allow those people dealing with registration time to set up and wait until then before arriving.

I know that many of you have been away on holiday already this year and many more of you will be going in the near future. We often find when talking to other holiday makers that they are also members of their local u3a so why not exchange ideas with them and see if you can bring back something new for Sarratt as well as giving food for thought to your new acquaintances.

Best wishes

Don

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2024

Monthly meetings in the Village Hall from 10.30am. Doors open 10am.
Coffee from 10.10 followed by notices. Talk to start at about 11am.
Please return empty cups/holders before the meeting starts.

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).

- June 12th • Graham Short - *My Life as a Micro-Artist*
July 10th • Joanna Dewfall - *Mosaic Art*
August 7th • Tim Perkins - *Lowland Rescue*
Sept 4th • Jenny Smith - *Hearing Dogs*

(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

Graham Short is coming to talk to us on June 12th
Known as the 'Hands of Genius' in the art world for his microscopic masterpieces, Graham has spent over half a century honing his craft, going to both physical and mental extremes to produce some of the highest-quality engravings in the world. Graham's desire to produce an engraving so small as to be illegible to the naked eye led to the making of his masterpiece, The Lord's Prayer, engraved on the head of a gold pin.

In July Joanna Dewfall will be telling us about her life-long fascination with the ancient craft of mosaics. She is herself a mosaic artist with many commissions and community projects to her name.

Do come along and show your support.

Future dates of the main meetings in 2024/25 are
7th August
4th September
2nd October
13th Nov
5th December Thursday (note the change of date)
15th Jan
12th Feb

In April Chris Foster entertained us with his tour walking the area of London's Hatton Garden, its history and his memories of his time there on duty as a bobby on the beat (when did we last see one of those!)

After the AGM in May local resident Chris Smith gave us his tips and inspirations for taking creative photos of people and nature. Many of us use our mobile phones to take snaps these days but good results can be achieved and it is worth taking time to learn what settings might be available on your phone, for example portrait setting can help to focus on the main subject while softening the background.

RAMBLES

Following the incessant rain earlier in the year many footpaths have been virtually impassable so we did not have a ramble in February or March. Fortunately the ground has dried out to some extent so in April we walked from Chipperfield and in May from Sarratt. Our next ramble is on:-

Wednesday June 19th.
Meet in the car park next to William Penn Leisure Centre, Shepherds Lane, Mill End, Rickmansworth WD3 8JN at 10.00 for a 4 mile ramble towards The Swillett, Chorleywood

Don

WALKING GROUP

In March we had sunshine at Winchmore Hill and Margaret Stephenson led us along most scenic paths. We came across an unusual "sign" suggesting we kept out of private land (see front page).

Most unusually for this group two walks were cancelled owing to wet weather/waterlogged ground. On May 10, however, it stopped at 10am, as predicted by walk leader John Swainson, and we enjoyed spring flowers, fresh green leaves and birdsong around Chalfont St Giles.

Happy Days, always, with the Walking Group!

Val MacDonald

JAUNTERS

The next trip is to Ely on 17th June. There was an upsurge of interest after it was mailed out to all members and there is now a waiting list. Don't miss out on future trips - if you want to be included contact Julie or Mike Hawkins
juliemike.hawkins@outlook.com you will be very welcome.

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.

Jaunters' Committee



Ely Cathedral's beautiful Octagon Tower

Well done to those who have taken part in No Mow May, PlantLife's annual campaign to let lawns and verges grow wild. Longer grass in the garden encourages wildflowers, and pollinators like bees and butterflies as a result. It also has the additional bonus of providing shelter and nesting material for hedgehogs. So when June comes, please check areas thoroughly before strimming or mowing, to make sure there are no hidden hogs. Or better still, leave some patches long. A patchwork of longer and shorter grass provides both nesting and foraging habitat for hedgehogs – aka bed and breakfast! Hedgehog Street is a joint campaign by People's Trust for Endangered Species and The British Hedgehog Preservation Society.



FREE Hertfordshire Health Walks are led by qualified volunteer leaders, weekdays or Sundays, no advance booking, just turn up 10 minutes before the start time.

Sunday June 30th 2pm Meet on the common outside St Paul's Church Chipperfield WD4 9BS

See hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthwalks or call 01992 555888 for details of the walks programme.

FREE talks on a range of subjects can be found via u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events. Available to members only, early registration is recommended. Here are some forthcoming dates:

June 4th 10am Flight Inspirations Aviation Group Meeting: Sir Geoffrey de Havilland u3a

Sir Geoffrey de Havilland's pioneering designs not only advanced the field of aeronautical engineering but also played a crucial role in shaping the course of aviation history. By pushing the boundaries of aircraft performance, reliability and versatility, de Havilland's innovations revolutionized both military and civilian aviation, opening up new possibilities for exploration, transportation and defence.

Thursday, June 20th 2pm The Olympics:

From Olympia, via Much Wenlock to the World. Learn about the journey from ancient Olympia (776 BCE) via Much Wenlock (1850) and Athens (1896), to the 33rd Olympiad in Paris in 2024.

Tuesday, July 2nd 10am-12 noon

Flight Inspirations Aviation Group Meeting: The History of Royal Flying

Graham Laurie will deliver a compelling presentation on his remarkable career as the pilot for the Royal Family.

Rembrandt at 34: A Mirror to the Soul Friday, July 5th 10 - 11am

Catherine Stevenson of Newcastle u3a presents the third in the series National Gallery Treasures to Celebrate its 200th Anniversary.

Thursday, July 11th 10.30am -11.30 am Live Cookery Demonstration summer recipes

Chef Alex from 'Vegetarian for Life' demos his delicious summer recipes live on Zoom, especially for u3a members.

GARDENING GROUP

On May 11th, the first outing of the season was a shared car trip to Ashridge House Gardens, near Berkhamsted. This was a 'casual affair' as we did not need to take bookings or pre-payments, but everyone was invited to meet up at the café courtyard for 11am. Around 25 people turned up and we were fortunate that the day was dry with sunny intervals.

The gardens were being prepared for an open day the following weekend for the National Gardens Scheme, and so a lot of work was in progress and there were some lovely planting areas to admire. These gardens were first designed by Humphrey Repton for the 7th Earl of Bridgewater in the early 19th century and enhanced later by Mathew Wyatt in the mid-19th century.

The kitchen garden had a good array of herbs and young vegetables growing within box borders, the formal Italian garden had a lovely peach and blue themed display including peach coloured verbascums, and the rose garden was just beginning to show the first blooms. The stars of the show were the Rhododendrons and Azaleas, which were huge and glorious, and the wonderful specimen trees around the landscaped grounds, that included Wellingtonias, Cedars of Lebanon and Gingkos. And in a small garden near the house a wildlife pond attracted a lot of attention as it had a large population of Common Newts swimming around!

On returning to the courtyard and café, some indulged in lunch, others just a cuppa, but there was the added temptation of a very good plant sale, raising funds for the gardens and well stocked with some lovely varieties – I treated myself to a beautiful tangerine Geum; well, it was all in a good cause, and of course I could find a space for it....somewhere!

Pam Litton



National Gardens Scheme Virtual Tours

On line you will find over 190 gardens to visit virtually and whatever the time of year you can go on a virtual garden visit. And, if you enjoy the films please consider supporting Help Support our Nurses with a donation.
ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits



Congratulations to Graham and Nina Austin of Home Farm Plants in Bovingdon for another Gold Award at Chelsea for their Delphinium display in the Great Pavillion. Graham gave us a fascinating talk in February about the work that goes into their consistent achievement of one of the highest accolades in gardening. It is a traditional family run nursery growing and specialising in Elatum Delphiniums and a wide range of perennials.

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

June 10th - Savill Gardens (coach visit). Details have been emailed out via Beacon to those who have signed up for the trip.

July - Following the talk in April about the Luton Hoo Walled Garden we had hoped to organise a group visit but the garden is managed by volunteers and is only open on Wednesdays. If you want to go (a sunny day is recommended) see their website for information.

August 12th tbc - visit to JazzyRose Flowers in Chipperfield. Car share - access to her field is limited and it also needs to be on a day of dry weather. Lisa gave us a fascinating talk in January and by August her field should be full of flowers. Information to be sent out early in June. Lisa sells some of her flowers from her cottage overlooking Chipperfield Common.

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.**

A weed is but an unloved flower.....Ella Wheeler Wilcox



Did you know that the Common Dandelion is a member of the Daisy (Asteraceae) family? The genus name 'Taraxacum' identifies the plant as a Dandelion and its species name 'officinale' means 'herbal medicinal plant'. Dandelion is said to take its name from the French 'dent-de-lion' meaning 'lion's tooth'. [We knew it by another name in my childhood, pis-en-lit from its diuretic qualities! It also attracts seed-eating birds, I once saw a flock of goldfinches feeding on a field full of dandelion seeds Ed.]

The roots provide food for caterpillars of the Orange Swift moth, Muslin Moth caterpillars feed on its leaves, while the flowers are visited by the Small Yellow Underwing moth. nativeflower.co.uk/details

Foxgloves are lovely at this time of the year and are an important source of pollen for bees.

FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP 2

Dieppe May 24.

Our French conversation group finally fulfilled an ambition to go and spend a few days in France together and enjoy French life. We had booked to do so in June 2020 when Covid forced us to cancel our plans.

We crossed the Channel by ferry and stayed in Dieppe for 5 nights. Dieppe is a charming small town full of places of interest besides a delightful marina. The castle, on top of the cliff, doubles up as museum and houses a remarkable collection of carved ivory as well as beautiful paintings of the area by Pissarro.

In the main parish church of St Jacques, we learnt how English pilgrims on their way to Santiago in Spain started the particular branch of the Camino de Santiago passing through Dieppe.

Market day in Dieppe is a wonderful experience: it has been voted the nicest market in France and I wished I had been able to do my food shopping for the week there. However, some of us did bring back some non-perishable bargains!

One day we caught the train to Rouen and enjoyed the capital of Normandy and its historical and architectural past: its medieval timber-fronted houses, the wonderful cathedral so often painted by Monet, its surprising modern church built on the very spot where Joan of Arc was burnt at the stake. To complete the day, we went to the Art Gallery where there was an exhibition of impressionist pictures and a free exhibition of David Hockney, who was confined in Normandy during Covid.

Closer to Dieppe, in a village called Varengeville-sur-Mer, we went to see the Manoir d'Ango, the country residence of Jehan Ango, shipbuilder and great benefactor of Dieppe at the time of François 1er. We also visited the lovely nearby church of St-Valery, beautifully situated on the cliff top overlooking the sea. There we saw the glass windows (L'arbre de Jessé) painted by Georges Braque, and his tomb in the churchyard.

We hope we can do this again.

Annie Williams

Annie is a member of French Conversation Group 2, which meets every Wednesday except when there is the monthly Sarratt U3A meeting. The Contact is tony_gower@btinternet.com



Camille Pissarro (1830 -1903) was born in St Thomas (then a Danish possession) in the West Indies but lived and worked mainly in the Paris area. He visited London in 1870-71. He was an Impressionist and mainly painted landscapes. He was influenced by Millet and Corot.
nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/camille-pissarro.

ENGINEERING GROUP

On St George's Day 10 intrepid travellers journeyed to just north of Leicester where we visited the National Space Centre. All the galleries are inside an iconic 42 metre high Rocket Tower which accommodates the Blue Streak and Thor Able rockets. These exhibitions cover various themes such as Home Planet, Into Space, Our Solar System and Space Oddities- many with interactive features. These are set on four floors which are normally reached by lift or stairs (sadly on our day the lifts were being overhauled and the stairs did a good job of trying to keep us fit!).

The Sir Patrick Moore Planetarium (the largest in the UK) with its show *The Tour of the Night Sky* was not only a welcome sit down but also a spectacular and occasionally interactive experience. This centre is definitely worth a visit if you are in the area (just after 2 p.m. is a particularly good time to visit when all the school parties will have departed!)

Our May visit was to the National Army Museum in Chelsea - easy to find as there is a large Chieftain Tank right outside. Again it is a modern airy building with various exhibitions on several floors (with far less stairs plus working lifts, although a few more seats would be welcome!) Again there are Galleries to explore covering themes such as Shakespeare and War; Foe to Friend (British Army based in Germany over the past 75 years); Formation and Origins of the British Army; plus areas devoted to various campaigns over the centuries.

There are so many stories to keep one interested; some of us overheard a guide telling the tale of a woman who, in the 18th Century, disguised as a man fought in the British Army for 17 years. Her true identity only being discovered when she was wounded. After returning home she lived on to the incredible age of 108.

There is so much to see and it is definitely worth a further visit.

Sheila Malin



If you plan to go to the National Army Museum you might also consider visiting the nearby Saatchi Gallery. The RHS Botanical Art & Photography Show 2024 is on from 14th June to 7th July. Tickets £5 but RHS Members get free entry using the code 'RHS2024' at the online checkout. A valid membership card and photo ID must be shown on entry to the exhibition. saatchigallery.com/exhibition/the-rhs-botanical-art-photography-show-2024
Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York's HQ, King's Road, London, SW3 4RY.

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 107 (August/Sept) should be submitted to the Editor Janet by 23rd July 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.