

ASHINGTON & ROCHFORD

Newsletter



Charity No: 1180576

MARCH 2024

The deadline for contributions to the next Newsletter is Wednesday 28 March 2024

Please send items for publication to the Newsletter Editor

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Hi everyone,

I won't be at the meeting in March so my trusty vice chair Marion will be your hostess. I will of course miss you all. I really enjoy our chats, the speaker and getting to know you all better. Marion will have notices for you. Don't forget the quiz - still time to get a ticket. £5.00 each for a member, March 22nd at 7.30 pm.



We are in the planning stages of getting a beetle drive together; it's a fun game. It will be on May 30th in the afternoon, no night driving, tea and 🍰 cake - details to follow.

In March we are having a trial so tea/coffee etc will be served at the beginning of the meeting not the end; see how that works.

Don't also forget to pay your subs. We have a long waiting list to join us, I am sure you won't want to go to the bottom of that! see Pam about that.

We are still looking for a treasurer, so really think about that, plenty of instruction, I am sure.

Two. People at least standing down from the committee, so think could I do that, we can all do more than we think. It's our u3a, we have to take part, we all have gifts to use.

I am happy as spring round the corner, spring flowers showing, daffs my favourite, tulips growing, grass growing! It's still light at five, winter seems so long, mind you we have been fortunate in our area, lucky us.

Have a great meeting, any committee member can answer all your questions, so any issues please tell someone.

Missing you already

Lady Chair Beryl

NEXT MEETING

7 March

Doors open at 1:15 pm
Meeting starts at 1:45 pm

FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

7 March 2024
Simon Waterfield
An Audience with Mr Dickens

4 April 2024
Stephanie Disch
Talking about the local Dogs
Trust Re-homing Centre

ASHINGDON & ROCHFORD u3a

Charity No.1180576

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6TH JUNE 2024

ASHINGDON MEMORIAL HALL

Dear Member

Please be advised of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting of the Ashingdon & Rochford u3a.

We are calling for nominations for the committee and motions for the AGM which must be submitted in writing to the Business Secretary by 4pm on 9th May 2024 (a form is attached to use for this purpose.) Currently the Committee exists of the following:

Officers

Lady Chair	Beryl Horrex	Vice Chair	Marion Cain
Hon Secretary	Carol Collins	Hon Treasurer	Noreen Bishop

Current Committee Members

Roger Blight	Carole Edwards	Ian Foster	Pam Foster	Anne Hill
Rae Hill	Phil Kelly	Ann O'Brien	Wendy Paternoster	Val Stenson

Two members are retiring this year each having served six years on the committee. Ian Foster who was Chairman and then Vice Chairman, and Roger Blight who is our Speaker coordinator. We thank them for their hard work during this time. The remaining committee members are all willing to stand for re-election and continue in their current roles, but we are inviting members to come forward as nominees.

One very important position that we need to fill is the Treasurer as Noreen Bishop wishes to step down. This would be suitable for someone preferably with accounts experience, or at least be familiar with spreadsheets. Training and help would be given. If we do not have a treasurer, then our u3a will cease to exist.

All nominations must be proposed and seconded (not by a committee member) and the nominee must sign the form to accept the proposal. For expediency you may find it convenient to hand your communication directly to me at the April monthly meeting, or at the very latest at the May meeting.

Details of the committee members responsibilities are available on request and online.

Motions for debate by the Annual General Meeting

Any motions for discussion should also be submitted in writing to the Business Secretary by 4pm on 9th May 2024. If you wish to propose any motion for debate at the AGM this must be seconded by another member in order that it can be included in the Agenda and will be published before the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Carol Collins, Business Secretary

ASHINGDON & ROCHFORD u3a AGM
THURSDAY 6TH JUNE 2024
NOMINATION FORM FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Nominee's Name (print) _____

Nominee's Signature _____

Nominee's Membership Number _____

We wish to nominate _____

For the position of _____

NOTE: if you want the person you have nominated to hold the position of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer or Business Secretary please state this. If not just put Committee Member.

Nominator's Name (print) _____

Nominator's Signature _____

Nominator's Membership Number _____

Second Nominator's Name _____

Seconder's Signature _____

Seconder's Membership Number _____

NOTE: If your name and membership number are not on the voting slip, your vote will be declared void. You must have the permission of the person you wish to nominate.

NOTE: COMMITTEE MEMBERS CANNOT NOMINATE OR SECOND A NOMINEE

Please return to Carol Collins, Business Secretary either by email or by post or hand to any committee member.

Nominations have to be received by the secretary by 4pm on 9th May, 2024

Noticeboard

KNIT AND NATTER GROUP

Barbara Hines, who runs the Monday Knit and Natter Group has a couple of vacancies for members wishing to join.

If you are interested could you send your details to either me or Rae and we will then pass these on to Barbara who will contact you.

Carole Edwards - Joint Co-ordinator

NEW CALLIGRAPHY GROUP

Barbara Baker who runs the successful Calligraphy group in morning of the 2nd Monday of the month, is starting a second group in the afternoon on the same day, if you would like to join this new group could you email me or Ray and we will pass details on to Barbara,

Carole Edwards - Joint Co-ordinator

6 weeks course - Ladder Golf.

Ashingdon Church Hall.

The following weeks are booked.

Tuesday April 23rd 6pm until 8 pm.

Tuesday April 30th 6 pm until 8pm.

Tuesday May 7th 6 pm until 8 pm

Tuesday May 21st 6 pm until 8 pm

Tuesday May 28th 6 pm until 8 pm

Tuesday June 4th 6 pm until 8pm.

8 people have signed up so far for Ladder Golf.

Cost will depend on numbers, the more people will reduce it.

What is ladder golf?

Each player has a 3 golf ball bolas A bolas is 2 golf balls attached to a rope.

The object of the game is to wrap your bolas around the steps of the ladder to gain points.

The ladder consists of 3 steps a top middle and bottom.

Come and have some fun. Refreshments provided. Anne Hill.

07802263154

Sign up at the co-ordinators desk with Rae and Carole.



Trip to Nidd Hall. Yorkshire.

Kirby's have confirmed that we will depart from their depot in Bull Lane, Rayleigh on Monday, April 15th at 8.30 am.

10.00 am approx. We will stop at Cambridge services for a 40 minute comfort break

12.30 approx. We will stop for 1 hour at Newark for lunch.

Estimated arrival at Nidd Hall is between 15.30 and 16.00.

Dinner has been confirmed as 18.00 and breakfast between 08.00 and 08.30.

If you have not received an e mail from us, please speak to Anne at the meeting or contact her.

Any queries please call Anne and Rae or email

Anne, Rae and Beryl.

Members' Monthly Draw

The winner of the February Draw was

Alan McGovern

You too can win £10! All you have to do

"Just remember to SIGN IN"

May meeting change of date

Because of forthcoming local elections in May we have had to reschedule the May 2nd u3a meeting to May 9th - *Roger Blight*

Dates for your diary

Walks with Phil

Phil will be unable to lead any walks until further notice because of sciatica which started on Tuesday 23 January and seems to show no improvement as yet.

Monday Health Walks

Rae, Anne and Richard invite any of our u3a members to join us on our weekly, Monday walks from Magnolia Park. We start walking at 10.am so meet at 9.45.am to allow time to put on boots etc., to enable a prompt departure at 10 am. Walk distance is about 2 to 3 miles at a pace to suit the ability of the slowest walker. Please use suitable foot wear for unmade sometimes muddy footpaths and bring suitable rainwear etc for our changeable weather.

Richard Paternoster

Proposed Serendipity Visits, Calendar 2024.

Some may be subject to change depending on availability nearer the dates.

Thursday March 21st. The Royal Opera House tour.

Thursday April 11th. Two Temple Place, neo gothic mansion and glass exhibition.

June date tba. Chelmsford Cathedral.

Inaugural visit of the Witherspoons Wanderers.

Friday July 12th. Boat trip with commentary to the Maunsell Forts and SS Montgomery from Southend Pier.

August. No visit

Thursday September 19th. Kew Gardens.

Thursday October 17th Eltham Palace

Wednesday November 20th. Tour of Royal Chelsea Pensioners Hospital.

Thursday December 19th. Victoria and Albert Museum.

Royal Opera House visit on Thursday, 21 March 2024

We will catch the 9.18am from Rochford and members can also board at Hockley approx 10 minutes later. The guided tour will start at 11.45am, therefore we will aim to catch the train on the Central line changing at Holborn, from London Liverpool Street. Instead of stopping for refreshments at our usual Wetherspoons, we can get coffee at the Royal Opera House cafe before the tour.

Shelagh Nicholas - Visiting Coordinator

3 hour Redsand tour with commentary to Maunsell Fort and SS Montgomery from Southend Pier. Friday, July 12th.

Meet at the Pier entrance at 10.15.

Seniors ticket £26.50, includes access to the pier and train to the pier head and back.

It is not possible to board wheelchairs and scooters. Mobility: if you are able to climb a flight of stairs unassisted then joining the vessel should not be an issue.

Bookings are being taken at the Serendipity desk March 7th meeting.

Anne and Rae Hill. Serendipity Organising Group.

Flower Arranging Demonstration

There will be a **Flower Arranging demonstration** with **Linda Kingott** the local NAFAS flower arranger and demonstrator on

Friday 22nd March 2.30pm to 4.00pm

at Stambridge Memorial Hall.

Linda will demonstrate a number designs which will then be raffled for the winners to take home.

Tickets will be on sale at the March monthly meeting - members **£7.00** (guests £8.00)



This event is open to all members and guests



QUIZ NIGHT

on 22nd March 2024

7:30 pm for prompt 7:45 pm start

at Ashingdon Memorial Hall

Bring own nibbles, drink, pens and pencils

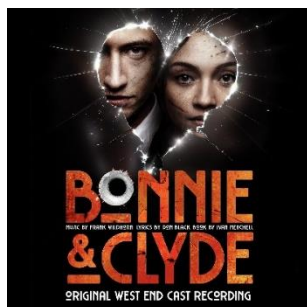


Tickets - **£5 per person**. Katherine Lake will be selling them at the next u3a meeting.

Please feel free to ask friends and family. If you don't have enough people to make up a **table of 8** don't worry. we'll be able to fit you in and you will still have a good evening - there are plenty of people coming in twos and threes so there's nothing to worry about.

THEATRE GROUP - NEWS

Coming Up.....



Bonnie and Clyde The Musical

Wednesday 22nd May 2024 2:30pm Cliffs Pavilion

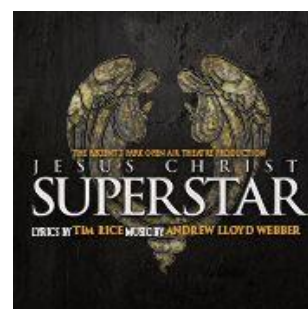
Tickets are to be collected at March Meeting.

Jesus Christ Superstar (Musical)

Wednesday 10th July 2024 2:30pm Cliffs Pavilion

An album that inspired a revolution. A revelation that changed the world. A reinvention for this millennium. This reimagined production won the 2017 Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival, with unprecedented reviews.

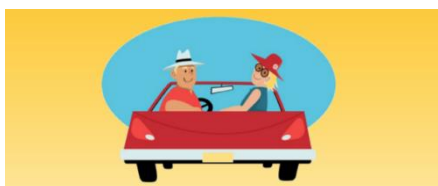
£44 Payment at the **May** Meeting.



Waiting for God (Play)

Saturday 13th July 2024 2:30pm Dixon Studio, Palace Theatre

Amateur Production by the East Essex Players



Based on the BBC sitcom, Waiting for God explores the challenges that come with growing old disgracefully in the era of the "silver surfer". At Bayview Retirement Village, battle-axe extraordinaire Diana Trent conspires with new resident Tom Ballard to give the conniving manager his comeuppance through a hilarious conspiracy with unexpectedly heart-warming results...

£16.50 Payment at the **April** Meeting.

Hairspray (Musical)
Wednesday 11th September 2024 2:30pm Cliffs Pavilion

Welcome to the 60s, where everyone's grooving to a brand-new sound! Enter Tracy Turnblad, with big hair, big heart, and big dreams to dance her way onto national TV.

This fun-filled, feel-good show is bursting with show-stopping numbers, dazzling costumes, and dizzying dance routines that you can't help but shimmy to!

£TBC Payment at the June Meeting.



Everyone is welcome to join us! We are a friendly bunch, so if you wish to come alone or with a friend, you are more than welcome.

Claire Ham

Hello all U3A Members

There are 18 places left on the coach for Cambridge on Thursday, 23 May 2024.

If you have never had the opportunity to visit there is plenty to see and do in Cambridge from a punt on the river, visiting the museums and, of course, shopping.

The price is £13. You have a choice of two pick ups, 9.00am at Ashingdon Memorial Hall and approx 10 minutes later at Hockley Spa bus stop. We do have a short walk from the coach because of the fresh air zone but anyone who has difficulty with mobility, are welcome to bring their walking aid or scooter which will be stored in the boot of the coach. We return home at 5pm.

Shelagh Nicholas

Group News Roundup

Local History 2

Karen Hunter was our speaker this month. She gave us an interesting talk on English Music Halls. This was a very popular form of theatrical entertainment in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Although we had some technical problems with the powerpoint, we were able to hear several of the popular songs, and we heard about the stars such as Little Tich with his big boots, and Wilson, Keppel and Betty with the Sand Dance.

Thank you Karen for an interesting afternoon.

Carol Collins

Calligraphy Group

As my Calligraphy Class progresses there seems to be more members who would like to join.

As I am limited to space I have decided to open another class on the second Monday of the month from 2:00 until 3:30 pm.

If anyone is interested please let U3A Group Coordinators know and they can pass on the information to me.

This writing is not as easy as one thinks it takes practice to attain a good standard and one has to commit themselves to coming along each month to go a step further.

Everyone is doing well at present albeit I have four new members who are learning the skill and doing well.

I am sure one would benefit from the calligraphy writing in producing lovely cards and notes to friends and family.

Barbara Baker

Our January and February 2024 Arrangements



The Flower Arranging Group chooses a different theme for our arrangements each month.



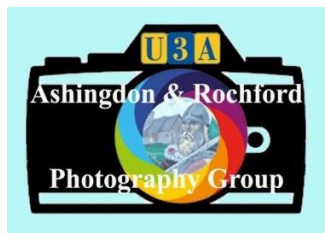
In January we made arrangements using only three main flowers and in February we used Spring flowers to make seasonal arrangements.

Maureen Pointer

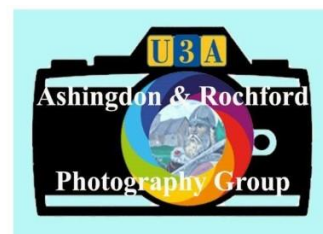
Bird Watchers

We are meeting for the first time this year on Monday 11th March. The trip will be to Hanningfield, so we will meet at Ashingdon Hall at 9:30 am for car share. Paul

Paul Nice



U3A Photo Group Feb 2024 Flowers Dispel any winter blues



In this very wet and muddy February, I asked the Photo Group to capture pictures of spring flowers emerging from the saturated soil. Typically, frost poses challenges when photographing early flowers, but this rather mild winter has left us dealing with soggy ground, puddles, and mud. Balancing precariously while attempting to get a close shot of delicate primroses often results in wet, muddy clothes and the wrath of the person in charge of laundry duties.

On the next page, you'll find a collection of delightful spring flower photos taken by the group—from the depths of Priory Park to the rural Warwickshire home of Shakespeare and the hatching of the Gunpowder Plot.

This Snowdrop photo encapsulates February: its pristine white petals pierce through the damp, muddy soil, standing tall against the rain. With the camera positioned low, the lens inches from the ground, it captures the tiny raindrops clinging to the petals — **Click!** The moment frozen in time.



As for the Crocuses, another captivating shot showcases a clump of purple petals surrounding delicate yellow stigmas. No wonder the bees are drawn to these flowers. They're undeniably pretty, but it's essential to note that the bulbs are toxic to most animals.

As you explore the photos below, keep in mind that Will S mentioned daffodils nearly 190 years before Will W even learned to wander.

Here is a collage of flower photos taken by our photographers

U3A Photo Group 2024

February Flower Photos



Photography 2nd Friday of month T.B.A.
Roger Young

Garden Group

Our March meeting is an outing and guided tour of Warley Place, near Brentwood, this was the home of Ellen Willmott around the turn of the 20th century. She was an influential horticulturalist and breeder of hundreds of Snowdrops and Daffodils, many of which can still be seen growing there although the house and other buildings are long gone.

At the last November's meeting Paul made up a trough with Spring bulbs, they are growing well, as are the two blue pots, one containing Tulips the other Daffodils.



Paul and Marion.

Cards and Papercraft Group

This month, Claire introduced us to Starpower Inks which are bright and full of sparkle! We created unique backgrounds and hearts using the 'swooshing' technique before adding ribbons and gems. Unfortunately, the vibrancy and glitter does not show in the photo's, but they were certainly shining bright. The group produced a beautiful array of cards to be proud of. Thank you to Claire for the inspiration this month.



Looking forward to seeing what the group creates in our March meeting.

Wendy Paternoster – Group Leader.

A Horse, A Horse, My kingdom for a Horse! - Alan Perkins

When I, my late wife and children lived in Thundersley, we had a semi-detached house in a quiet road just off The Common. The estate was made up of pairs of such houses; ours was the right hand one of a pair.

Over time, we discovered that what we had thought of as a quiet backwater turned out to be a far more incident prone area than we could ever have imagined. One incident I particularly recall involved our neighbours from the nearest one of the semi-s to our right. They were John and Sheila. Sheila had a pre-school-age daughter, Vicky, from a previous relationship.

Somehow, at some time, Sheila had apparently acquired a New Forest pony, which was kept at a stable down one of the unmade roads leading off from the common. She and Vicky spent a lot of time caring for this 'pet' and went off together, by car, most mornings laden with buckets blankets and all sorts of livery, presumably to feed, clean and probably, ride, said animal.

John did not appear to be involved in these activities and indeed seemed perhaps, to be of a rather different background to Sheila. He had an office job in London to which he commuted daily. Nevertheless, they seemed to get on well together and John appeared to accept a parental role with Vicky.

One Saturday morning, Sheila and Vicky had gone off to the stable as usual, and John was at home. Suddenly I became aware that a large car was making its way slowly down the road, heading towards our houses. It stopped in the road face on to John and Sheila's place and 4 or 5 very large men got out. By their dress, appearance and general demeanour I identified them as being of the "Traveller" community. They knocked on Sheila and John's door, which was answered by John. The next moment he was being pushed, shoved and generally thumped into his hallway by the men, with shouted demands from them to know where their f---ing horse was. A bewildered John clearly had no idea what they were talking about. He told them that Sheila and Vicky had gone to the stable to attend to their pony and beyond that he knew nothing about horses. The men claimed that Sheila had stolen a horse from them and they wanted it back pronto. They had been to all the stables around the Common and had found no trace of Sheila or their horse. They must have gathered by this time that John genuinely had no idea what they were on about because they began slowly to withdraw, saying that they would be back in the morning and there had better be some answers by then, or else...

There had been some very colourful and graphic language used during these exchanges, which delighted our children (then aged 6 and 9), who had been watching and listening from an upstairs window. Somewhat concerned however, by the nature of the threats made which included words like "slitting" and "cutting" and the fact that a woman and a young child were concerned, I contacted the local Police, explained what had happened and asked if they could put in an appearance in the morning to ensure no real harm was done.

The following morning, somewhat to my surprise, a Police car appeared and parked discreetly round the corner. Not long after another car drew up, from which emerged 4 or 5 very burly ladies who, from their appearance and speech, seemed to be the counterparts of yesterday's male visitors. At that moment Sheila turned up and got out of her car. Before she could move, the group of women surrounded her and had her by the throat up against her car. With many expletives, they demanded the return of their stolen horse. Thereupon 2 male Police Officers made their way gently from their car and joined in the discussion. Sheila evidently claimed that she had not stolen their horse at all, but had rescued it when she had found it straying near a busy road and feared for its welfare. It was now safely tethered and currently grazing on the cliffs near Hadleigh Castle and she would lead them there to collect it. At this, all the contestants in this little drama got in their cars and left. Sheila returned not long after, still in one piece, so we concluded that the matter had been satisfactorily settled.

There had been no sight of John throughout all this excitement. Subsequently, we witnessed two other incidents concerning our neighbours. Each occurred shortly after John had returned home from work. Suddenly, there was a sound of running footsteps coming from the flat roof which ran below next door's bedrooms and a man, clutching clothing, jumped off their garage roof onto the driveway between our two houses and made off at haste down the road.

Not long afterwards John disappeared altogether. We moved to Leigh and never saw any of them again!
Alan Perkins. February 2024.

Committee Members Contact Details

Lady Chair	Beryl Horrex
Vice Chairman	Marion Cain
Business Secretary	Carol Collins
Hon. Treasurer	Noreen Bishop
Joint Membership Sec.	Val Stenson
Joint Membership Sec./Beacon Admin	Pam Foster
Joint Group Coordinator	Carole Edwards
Joint Group Coordinator	Rae Hill
Committee member	Phil Kelly
Committee member	Anne Hill
Committee member	Roger Blight
Committee member	Ann O'Brien
Committee member	Wendy Paternoster
ExOfficio/Minutes Sec	Janet Berry

GROUP MEETINGS CALENDAR			
MONDAYS			
Walking	Weekly	9.45	Richard Paternoster, Anne and Ray Hill
Are you Curious	4 th Monday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Dave Lazell & Graham Collins
Beer Appreciation	2 nd Monday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Terry Lake
Bird Watching	2 nd Monday of the month	TBA	Paul Nice
Calligraphy Group	2 nd Monday of the month	10:30 am	Barbara Baker
Card and Paper Craft	3 rd Monday of month	1:30 pm	Wendy Paternoster
Discussion	3 rd Monday of month	2:30 - 4:30	David & Barbara Hine
Knit and Chat	4 th Monday of month	2:30 - 4:30	Barbara Hine
Petanque (Boules)	2 nd and 4 th Monday of month	10:00	Linda Deadman
Rummikub	Weekly	2:00 – 4:00	Pam Leys
Supper Club	1st Monday of month	6:00 pm	Val Stenson
TUESDAYS			
Book Club (2)	3 rd Tuesday of month	10:30	Maureen Pointer
French Conversation	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday of month	2:30 - 4:00	Sue Horncastle
Local History (2)	2nd Tuesday of the month	2:00	Graham Collins & Carol Collins
Petanque (Boules)	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday of month	2:00 – 4:00	Beryl Horrex/Janet Toms
Short Mat Bowls	Every other Tuesday	2:00 – 4:00	John Stenson
Ten Pin Bowling	Fortnightly	11:00	Jacqui & Keith Baker
WEDNESDAYS			
Knitting & Sewing	4th Wednesday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Katherine Lake
Line Dancing	2 nd and 4 th Wed of the	2:00 - 3:00	Jill Nettleship
Local History (1)	2 nd Wednesday of month	p.m.	Sandra Dawson
Table Tennis	Weekly	7:30	John Owen
THURSDAYS			
Cribbage (cards)	4 th Thursday in month	10:00 - 12:00	Keith Baker
Gardening Group	2nd Thursday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Paul Nice & Marion Cain
Knitting (2)	Fortnightly	2:00 - 4:00	Sue Dodkin
Serendipity	Monthly (Normally a	All day	Various
Snooker	2nd Thursday of month	11:00 - 1:00	David Lazell
Snooker (2)	3rd Thursday of the month	11:00 – 1:00	Peter Saville
FRIDAYS			
Canasta	2nd Friday of the month	2:30 - 4:30	Ian Foster
Book Club (1)	2 nd Friday of month	1:30	Wendy Paternoster
Flower Arranging	4 th Friday of month	2:00 - 3:30	Maureen Pointer
I.T.	4 th Friday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Robert Nickless
Local History (3)	1 st Friday of month	10:00	Sue Morris. Sue Mitchell & Karen Hunter
Photography	2 nd Friday of month Inside Outside	2:30 - 4:30 2:00 - 4:00	Roger Young
Solo/canasta	4 th Friday of the month	7:00 - 9:00	Ian Foster
Walking	2 Fridays per month	Mid	Phil Kelly
SATURDAY			
Petanque (Boules)	2 nd & 4 th Saturday of month	10:00 - 12:00	Rosemarie Barrows
SUNDAY			
Sunday Lunch Club	Monthly, various dates	1:00 - 3:00	Carol Collins
Other Various Dates			
Garden Visits			Janet Arrowsmith
Theatre Trips			Claire Ham