

# Baddow & Galleywood u3a NEWSLETTER



**Winter 2021**

## YOUR U3A COMMITTEE

<b>Chairman</b>	Roy Brackley Alan Cullen
<b>Vice Chairman &amp; Webmaster</b>	
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Mary Cordeiro Thelma
<b>Assistant Membership Secretary</b>	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ted Dyer
<b>Treasurer No 2 a/c</b>	Wendy Burns
<b>Speaker Secretary (n/c)</b>	Di Angel Wendy Burns
<b>Interest Groups' Co-ordinator</b>	
<b>Business &amp; Minutes Secretary</b>	Debbie Collins
<b>Social &amp; Welfare Secretary</b>	Sue Wells
<b>Committee members</b>	Mike Whalley Tony Hollingsworth Loretta Riddel
<b>Newsletter Editor (n/c)</b>	Maggie Nutt
<b>Tea Monitor</b>	Sue Wells
<b>Logistics (n/c)</b>	Roger North



The Ice Queen was photographed by Maurice, at the Writtle Church annual Christmas Tree festival a couple of years ago. Different groups around the church and village decorate a tree (or create something different and unique like the ice queen) for the 2-day festival which attracts large numbers of visitors. It's not made of ice (!), but a white chiffon-type material.



## THE CHRISTMAS WANDERING THOUGHTS OF OUR CHAIRMAN

Several years ago, I wrote an article at Christmas about Loneliness. At that time things were pre-Covid and probably life had some normality about it, but loneliness existed then and does now. Perhaps for some, Covid has not made any difference as they were lonely before and are still lonely. One of your committee recently said at a meeting that we, of Baddow and Galleywood u3a, are individuals making up a community. Many differences but common threads as well. I realise that for some this is not a happy time, there are memories, sad memories, memories that come to the fore every year as we again reach the time of Christmas. A great book says we should weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. That means doing both of these things as those around us, our friends, our family, our group members and those we barely know, as each of them (and each of us) have situation after situation, good and bad affecting us. Health matters, finance matters, personal and family matters. Let those of us who can, support those who need support because for all of us those roles may be reversed sooner or later.

I'm sure if our Discussion group discussed the subject of Christmas there would be as many views as those participating. With my wife and I, she began viewing Christmas films in October whereas I'm an "all things relating to Christmas should not begin before 1<sup>st</sup> December" person. I get taken for Christmas shopping (when I can't get out of it) and look around for what I would like. She takes on the family buying (and I love her for it!). And, the truth be known, I do enjoy Christmas, just not the lead up to it.

So, I hope you are reading this before your Christmas meal because, if you are not, I have been responsible for it being late and Maggie will not be happy with me.

There are so many to thank for what they do for our u3a: those who participate in so many different ways to make Baddow and Galleywood u3a work so well and be so popular. You know who you are and who they are. Give them your thanks at this special time.

Do have a restful, peaceful time and I look forward to seeing you all again very soon. To all of you, I wish...

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Roy Brackley



### A note from the editor:

Welcome to the Winter issue, which I hope you will enjoy reading.

Thank you to all our contributors, old and new, and also to those who sent photographs, notably Maurice and Allen. (If you receive it online, you can zoom into the photos.)

Important information about renewal and fees is on p 4 – are you paying too much? As many members felt they had not said a proper goodbye to Maurice due to lockdown restrictions, I decided to have a 'chat' with him to catch up on his retirement news, which was interesting, as you can imagine - see below.

Interest Group reports begin on p 6; it would be good if more members sent in articles for the next issue on what they enjoy in their group or simply what they have been doing. I'd really welcome more from any u3a member – it doesn't have to be your Co-ordinator every time! See p 15 for details. I would also like to thank some of the Committee and other u3a members who sent me contributions when I was short of articles, although I have not been able to squeeze them all in to what has turned out to be a bumper edition.

Christmas Greetings

Maggie

## A note from the Membership Secretary

Coinciding with the removal of Covid lockdown restrictions we have seen an influx of new members. Between August and early November I have processed ten applications for membership, bringing our total membership to just over 350 plus 26 associate members.

I will have a stack of membership renewal forms at the general meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup>. If you bring along your chequebook or cash, you will be able to complete your part of the renewal process during or after tea time.

Here is a plea, below, which will save some of you a little cash!

If you pay by Standing Order please take time to review the amount, which is £9.00 per person for membership and £6.00 per person for associate membership. Our records indicate that, last year, there were a few members who overpaid.

If you enjoy our range of u3a activities, please spread the word to your friends and acquaintances.

I look forward to meeting many more members face-to-face in the coming months.

Mary Cordeiro - [bgmembership15@gmail.com](mailto:bgmembership15@gmail.com)

## Group Co-ordinator's Chat

Hello Everyone,

Finally, we made the Co-ordinators meeting in October, and it was an actual meeting rather than a zoom. It was great to see so many of you there. Unfortunately, whatever day of the week is chosen, it will not be convenient for everyone, however, we hope we have kept you all informed with Debbie's minutes, including Alan's talk on GDPR, email etiquette, meeting safety & John Weir's explanation of not using personal accounts to bank U3A groups' money (especially when hall hire fees need to be paid) but using the No 2 Bank Account. This is quite important, as a charity, we need to be compliant with the Charity Commission rules. A working party will meet, hopefully, to set up some guidelines which will be passed on to the groups.

Quite a few of the groups are now meeting physically, some are remaining on zoom. We have a few new members & new groups. Many members are not actually aware of the Co-ordinators groups & their subjects. Prior to the pandemic we had meetings, especially for members to meet their Co-ordinators to discover the joys, contents & interest in their subjects. It was raised at the meeting that this return would be a good idea, but rather than having a special meeting it was proposed that after each main meeting, Co-ordinators in rotation, would stay to chat with interested members. It could take three or four meetings to converse with all the Co-ordinators.

We have lost a few groups: History 1 & 2, Singing for Pleasure, Reading 1. We had new groups begin, Early Popular Music, Puzzles & Quizzes, Cookery (closed temporarily) & Exploring Exercise (difficult on zoom, also closed) also a potential new group, The Golden Years of Hollywood, contact me if you are interested. Some groups have changed their titles, Book Group 2, now simply Book Group, Italian Language & Conversation, now Italian Language & Culture & Needles & Pins, now Knit & Natter.

I am grateful to all the Co-ordinators for all their hard work, not only have they kept their groups going during this awful time, but also for the personal time they spend preparing for their groups. 2022, whatever it brings, I wish you all the best. *Wendy Burns*



**Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childhood days, recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and transport the traveller back to his own fireside and quiet home!**

*Charles Dickens*

## In Conversation with our previous Chairman



The Committee felt that it might be of interest to our members to hear from our previous Chairman, Maurice, about his three years in the chair and how he's enjoying his freedom since. Here is a rough transcript of my conversation with Maurice. As you might expect, some of his replies are a bit tongue -in-cheek! [Maggie – Editor, aka “Ed.” In the following, just in case you thought we'd got a new newsletter reporter (chance would be a fine thing).]

**Ed.** : When you first joined B&G u3a, did you ever imagine yourself becoming Chairman?

**M** : That's a definite No! In fact, when Stella and I first joined, it was hard to even imagine remaining in the organisation after our first couple of meetings. Everyone already seemed to have their groups of friends and trying to break into these tightly-knit circles seemed a daunting prospect. It really didn't seem the most welcoming place in the world. However we persevered – mainly because Stella was very keen on the Photography Group and I was happy to keep her company. In fact if it hadn't been for some of that groups' members, then it would have been easy to walk away.

**Ed.** : How did you then end up on the Committee?

**M** : Following an AGM where there had been a heated discussion about the presentation of accounts following an organised event for the Jubilee, I was talking to a member who had been involved and was invited to “do something about it if you think you could do better”. Well I did think that, so persuaded Allen and Diana B. to nominate and second me for the Committee.

**Ed.** : How did you become Chairman then?

**M** : I'd been on the Committee for about 18 months when some of the stalwarts decided it was time for them to escape. The remaining few members stood in a line as the out-going Chair asked for a volunteer to follow in his footsteps. Being a bit hard of hearing, I just stood there, not realising that my colleagues had all taken a pace backwards.

**Ed.** : What do you think your biggest contribution to our u3a has been?

**M** : Hopefully to have made it feel more welcoming and less intimidating to newcomers and created a harmonious and participative environment for the Committee to work in. Also managing to start up 4 new groups during Covid lockdown and helping our members through that difficult period.

**Ed.** How are you managing to find ways to fill all the spare time you must have since standing down

**M** : Stella will be pleased to tell you that I've finally managed to clear out our garage (some of you may have seen the skip! And the charity shops were delighted with the many boxes of -a-brac that went to them.) Also, with our granddaughter now at primary school, we have her after school two days a week. Plus watching lots of Youtube videos to learn how to work my new camera.

**Ed.** : And finally? ...

**M** : Couldn't really help yourself there, could you Maggie? So, In tribute to the legend that was Frank Carson, this one's a cracker!



When you are courting a nice girl an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder a second seems like an hour. That's relativity.

Albert Einstein

## INTEREST GROUP REPORTS

### Art Appreciation

Following monthly Zoom meetings during the past 18 months or so, the Art Appreciation group reconvened in September for a live meeting in a room in Meadgate Church – The Orchards in Great Baddow.

We used to meet on a Friday afternoon, but the morning was now more convenient, and what a bonus with the change of time. The church is a thriving community centre with a café. So we were able to get together half an hour before our meeting started for a welcome cup of tea and pre-order our lunch. At the end of the meeting we returned to the café and there on the table were our paninis and sandwiches, with china teapots and teacups for the tea. What a treat.

Although the venue was the highlight of the morning, the art was pretty good as well. I think it was a voyage of discovery for everybody. I discovered two new artists in Samuel Palmer (19th/20th century), who painted richly coloured idyllic pastoral scenes imbued by his religious feelings (although apparently later he became disillusioned) and William Patrick Roberts, a British cubist whose depiction of a family on the beach made us smile and was quite nostalgic for some members of the group.

We looked and admired how Pissarro, an impressionist could use just paint to create so much light and depth in a landscape painting.

We had an interesting discussion about Lowry's industrial landscape and came to no real conclusions about how well it conveyed the truth about the industrial North. We were also most surprised to find out about his rather creepy erotic drawings which were discovered after his death.

Other surprises were some hidden meanings in the famous 'Creation of Adam' in the Sistine chapel, some hidden music in Leonardo's Last Supper and a hidden theme in a Van Gogh night time café scene. All of these 'hidden meanings' were discovered by art academics – we suspect with rather too much time on their hands and some very generous funders!

For further details of these enigmas you need to join our group. All are welcome.

It was so satisfying to be back meeting 'for real'. The room was airy and spacious and I hope that everyone felt as safe and comfortable as I did. *Debbie*

### Rambling Group – Alan's Legacy



My predecessor, Alan, provided me with a file of maps of 48 walks within a 12 mile radius of Chelmsford, along with a group of a dozen members who were eager to keep fit by completing some of these walks. Advancing years, and COVID lockdowns, have reduced numbers to eight, and the pace of walking has slowed - with some ramblers over the age of seventy five having to resort to walking poles for support!!

During our walks, members chat on a range of subjects including gardening, sports and TV - but not religion or politics. We have time on each walk to enjoy the sights - as can be evidenced by the attached

photos taken by the group photographer (Marjorie) on the August walk around the Heybridge Basin.

It would be nice to swell the numbers back to a dozen or so, in order that Alan's legacy can be preserved. The group rambles on the 4th Friday of each month after meeting up at 9.30 at the Millennium Centre car park in Gt Baddow Recreation Ground. If the chosen walk involves a drive, car sharing is possible.

U3A members interested in giving it a go are invited to contact the Rambling coordinator *John*

(Ed: For more details, check the u3s Website : [www.u3asites.org.uk/baddow](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/baddow))

### IT and Computing

I was hosting the meeting. Members became more and more interested as the afternoon went on. I started talking about Octopus and how I buy power at 5p per kWhr, from them. They showed polite interest. Then Andrew, my son, who lives next door turned up and he talked about Daisy, his robot lawn mower. This got everyone's complete attention (later on we saw her in action, purposefully mowing his grass).

Cont over/



Then the group went next door to Andrews's garden. I showed them my Trampler mobility scooter. It goes anywhere, apart from a supermarket because it is too wide to go around the aisles. They were impressed and tried it out. It got even more fascinating when Andrew demonstrated his tricycles and bicycles. This was a big hit. From the photos, I have never seen riders concentrating so hard, to keep themselves moving.  
*Richard*



**Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.**  
*Maya Angelou*

## **Weekenders**

Pre -covid it had been a long tradition that we spent a yearly coach break to a seaside resort. We have had groups going to Cromer, Eastbourne, Bognor Regis and Bournemouth. Now that most restrictions have been lifted we can now renew our trips. In mid -October this year 11 of us were checked in to a hotel in Exmouth. Usually the weather is unkind but this time we were blessed with tropical like sunshine every day. Trips to other resorts were part of the deal. Teignmouth, Dawlish, Sidmouth and Seaton gained the pleasure of our company. Most mornings before breakfast several would start the day with a stroll along the promenade. On the morning of our free day we were offered a boat trip out into the Estuary. The sea was calm with very little wind, we had a commentary pointing out the local points of interest and were even treated to seeing a large seal basking in the sun whilst lying on the back of a moored dredger. In April next year we return to an old favourite Bognor Regis. All single rooms have been taken but hopefully early in the year they will release some double rooms for single occupancy. *Denis*



**Winter is an etching,  
Spring a watercolour,  
Summer an oil painting.  
and Autumn is a mosaic of them all.**

*American poet, Stanley Horowitz*

These are quite clever and engaging lines I think, and it seems plain where the writer is coming from, both in his linkage of the seasons with painting mediums, and in the arrangement of the lines of the poem. Starting with winter and ending with Autumn is not how we would normally order our seasons - spring would be first in our minds I think - but he set out to award autumn the primacy of the seasons, and leads us to that peak. And why not? Autumn colours can be wonderful - are our trees more spectacular than they used to be, and closer to the famed New England fall displays? It seems so to me.

### **Winter is an etching.**

Winter with its leafless trees and it's low-colour palette fits well with the limited colour and shades shades of etching. The blacks and the greys. Winter can be quite atmospheric, and so can etchings.

### **Spring a watercolour.**

Yes, I think this works. We think of spring as a light and fresh season, and these same qualities are often associated with a good watercolour painting.

### **Summer an oil painting.**

Again that seems a good allusion, simply because there is no paint medium to equal oils in portraying glorious summer scenes and vistas. Sunshine, and light. The paintings of Joaquin Sorolla for instance, who was known as the Spanish impressionist, or the Master of Light, painted many of his oils outdoors by the Mediterranean around Valencia, and they are wonderful examples of oils capturing the special qualities of summer. His paintings are well worth seeking out - they're a joy. *Running Along the Beach, Valencia from 1908, is an example of Sorrolla's art.* Cont over/



## Autumn is a mosaic of them all.

In this country we can of course occasionally get several seasons in the space of a week, certainly a spell of summer - an Indian one at any rate - and a taste of winter, all in our autumn, so that line works in that sense at least.

All in all its pleasant poem, he packs a lot into a few short lines, does he not?

*Ron - Painting Sketching*

## Good News from the Table -Tennis Group



At last we can meet again face-to-face, bat-to-bat for lots of chat and fun around our 3 table-tennis tables. Covid has denied us the best possible exercise during lockdown, but the merry band of U3A TT enthusiasts are enjoying their best 2 hours of the week on Tuesdays between 1pm and 3 pm at Meadgate Church, next to the Co-op on Meadgate Avenue. We even have a few vacancies, so why not join us, whether you are a veteran player or a beginner? We try to make the experience as enjoyable as we can. You can loan a bat, just don suitably comfortable clothing and trainers. If you would

like to give it a try, get in touch with our coordinator Janette to register your interest. *Allen*

**Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.**

*Edmund Burke*

## Family History

We have kept busy throughout the time of lockdown/isolation or whatever you want to call it and have held many zoom meetings and have also joined with Chelmsford u3a's family history group, so have had many useful family history sessions. We had hoped to get together for a 'real' meeting in September, but there was reluctance, so we are carrying on with zoom meetings until December when we hope to meet again for a social and planning meeting.

We already have three meetings arranged for next year – 'Crash! Bang! Wallop! – a session on dating old photos; a visit from Lieutenant Joseph Taylor Clark, 28th (North Gloucestershire Regiment of Foot), a soldier in the Napoleonic War – 'from Cumberland to Waterloo'; and a session on memories of Great Baddow – starting with memories of the village policeman. [So, lots more ideas are needed!]

We look forward to getting together again and sharing our meetings and theirs with Lesley's group.

Linda

## Music Performing



© Can Stock Photo

"WE'RE BACK!"

The Music Performance group is back! In the (properly clad) flesh! We met on Friday 17th September at Christchurch to make LIVE music! And we all - observing COVID protocol of course - thoroughly enjoyed the experience!

We played and sang the usual eclectic mix of styles and genres- ranging from two piano solos from "new boy" Eric Withams, to our lovely singing group. Music included baroque trio-sonatas, romantic lieder, jazz and a couple of gentle pop songs.

Geographically, we started in Austria with a movement from a Mozart Piano sonata, and progressed through Germany, Argentina, London, France, Venice, Poland, Spain (through the eyes of a Russo/ German), ending up in Dixieland! Almost a circumnavigation.

The next meeting will be on Friday 10th December at 2pm- our Christmas special! *Ken*

## Weekenders

On Saturday 9th October eight members set off for a break to Exmouth. It was a warm sunny day and after an enjoyable, comfortable journey we arrived at our hotel which, in a prime position, overlooked the sea.

Several trips were included in the price of the holiday and these included: lovely Dawlish, where eventually we sought out these black swans who were, when we found them, very protective of their young.

Charming Sidmouth and Seaton, busy resorts but watch out for those pesky sea gulls! Some folks enjoyed an hour and a half trip on the beautiful river Ex. It was an excellent hotel, and an extremely good value package. Good company, good weather, what more could one ask for? *Kay*

## Gardening

'Things happen' is a popular quotation, one so appropriate for us all during the last twenty months Pandemic. For U3A coordinators (Tony and I share the role) it was especially difficult to keep in touch with all group members and keep everyone interested. With our monthly meetings consisting of speaker, competition and afternoon tea cancelled for so long, what could we do?



To combat this we sent regular newsletters to our members and arranged garden visits during summer 2020 and in the summer 2021 we asked members to open up their gardens; we visited four very different gardens. Throughout our wet and cold May we invited our members to our small courtyard garden in Billericay. Many plants were late this year resulting in winter, spring and summer flowers all blooming at the same time. It was delightful sharing our garden and beloved plants, having a cup of tea with our friends.

In June, members were invited to Maike and Gerhard's organic garden at Downham. It is a large country garden, with plenty of flowers, vegetables and an orchard of many ancient fruit trees as well as modern varieties. Margot invited us to her NGS garden: 'Dragons' at Boyton Cross. This is one of my favourite gardens and worth visiting throughout the seasons. There are always fabulous plants and planting, it is inspirational and for one glorious day it was warm and sunny, *and* we had cakes with our teas.

The Baddow garden of Jan and Alan provided our venue for August. They are experienced and committed gardeners and their garden is explosion of summer flowers. The tea and homemade cakes made quite an impression, especially Alan's buns.

Thank you to the members who shared their gardens, and thank you to members who made the visits special and worthwhile. In September it was good to return to the Millennium Centre for our monthly meetings and be back to our normal Gardening Group Programme. *Sue and Tony*

**The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it.**  
*Chief Joseph*

## Strollers Diary

Since we have been released from the lockdown restrictions in May, the Strollers have had five opportunities to meet as a group since the previous October when the weather was so bad only two of us, Pat and I, turned up to visit the flower garden and canteen at Hylands Park.

The Strollers kicked off this year in May where we finished last year, in Hylands Park. This time, the weather was rather better and with more members present we included a tour around the new and improved lake. One of the major attractions being a family of young geese (goslings?). I am sure the new landscaping has since matured and is very attractive. I hope to get back to it before long.

The month of June saw us at Goldhanger. A beautiful sunny, summer day when six of us walked a circular route along the estuary and lunched at the Cricketers. July found four of us taking a very leisurely stroll around Galleywood Common with lunch at the refurbished restaurant, formerly, The Running Mare pub. Those outings were the hors d'oeuvre for our BBQ in August. A delightful day when ten of us got together to enjoy, fun, drinks and food without having to walk for it. The sun came out to make up for being away the year before.

In September, nine of us took a trip to Leigh-on-Sea. An interesting venue although a little steeper in places than I remembered. In October our stroll will be in Danbury and hopefully a better weather day than I opened with. *Ted*

## German Conversation

The German conversation group continues to meet monthly in members' homes. We are a group of 6-7 members keen to practise our knowledge in a friendly group. In the spirit of u3a we have no formal teaching or written work, but have fun and learn from each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Our conversations are not structured or themed. For example, a recent meeting covered a wide range of topics such as theatre visits, life in the former East Germany, fairy tales, Covid restrictions, and current reading matter.

After 90 minutes of chat, including a Kaffeepause, we leave with plenty of food for thought (in German natürlich). *Rita*

## Book Group

Gosh, how we missed our meetings during the lockdowns! As soon as restrictions were lifted, during the summer, we decided to meet in the park. It was lovely to see each other again, but in fact this wasn't an easy place to talk, as we had to sit socially distanced and it was often difficult to hear what people were saying. (We are all probably a little deaf, though we don't like to admit it!)



We then tried meeting at the 'semi - open air' café at Abercorn garden centre; group members preferred this, but again it's a noisy place which made it hard to hear what we were saying. We stuck it out for two meetings but were so pleased when it got too cold to meet outside, and we met in my house for our October meeting – more civilised, more comfortable, no loud noises and our own tea and biscuits. (And of course, sanitised and socially distanced)

Books we've read this year, some good, some disappointing, include **Earthly Remains**, (Donna Leon), **Bridge of Clay** (Markus Zusak), **Thin Air** (Val McDermid), **Olive Kitteridge** (Elizabeth Strout), **House of Lies** (Ian Rankin), **The Museum of Broken Promises** (Elizabeth Buchan), and **Sacred Country** (Rose Tremain). As you can see, our reading ranges across a variety of genres and authors, which I guess is the purpose of belonging to a Book group! *Maggie*

## The Joy of Zooming

So much, yet so little has happened to so many of us since Covid 19 emerged in early 2020. Everyday life has been changed, with restrictions, lockdowns and shortages. However, 2020/21 may well be remembered as the age of Zooming - a shining light in an unfamiliar world.

I have taken part in a number of zoom calls ranging from Church, Book club and Choir meetings, to the many and varied U3A meetings and Groups hosted by members. Linda and Lesley have enhanced my interest in Family History and Jeff has organised a fun and challenging Quiz group. There have been so many opportunities to participate in various groups and my thanks go to everyone involved.

Virtual meet ups, via Zoom, with family and friends, for chats and quizzes, have been such a delight, even when occasionally, "Can you hear me" "Are you there?" "No, I think you've vanished" can be heard.

I am, of course, looking forward to meeting in person and resuming normal activities when the time is right but for me, zooming has been a new and positive method of communication which I have enjoyed using immensely. *Mary*

## Our u3a

I would like to say how important being in the u3a has been to me during this ongoing pandemic. Living alone hasn't been easy, I often felt like climbing the walls BUT having so many friends and acquaintances through u3a meant I was able to spend hours (for free) on the phone knowing other people were alone too. I would like to say a huge thank you to ALL the people involved with the Zoom meetings, they must have spent hours setting things up. It was especially nice to have open invitations to join in with other groups. Once the restrictions were lifted, the u3a meant just seeing familiar faces, although not necessarily knowing names, was really uplifting as well as the excitement of going into shops again!



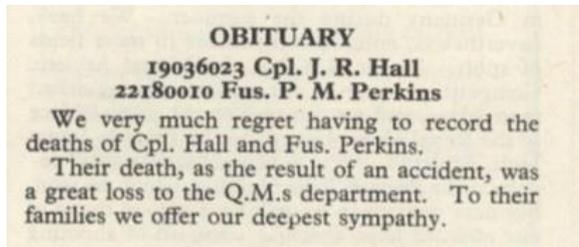
Thanks to everyone for keeping us sane! *Maria*

**Despite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart.**

*Ann Frank*

## The power of social media!!

During the time when we had to keep our distance I looked carefully for 'quiet' places to walk and I enjoyed several walks in Writtle Road Cemetery. There I found a grave that looked like a war grave on a family grave. The headstone had the following information – **22180010 FUSILIER P. M. PERKINS, AGED 20, ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS, 30TH JULY 1951 AGED 20.** I looked carefully at what it said - the fact he died in 1951 intrigued me! I built a family tree for him and discovered that he was the only son, his mother was Irish and his father was a gardener; he had three sisters – two older than him and one younger; and the family lived in Upper Bridge Road. I decided to put the information as a puzzle on a Facebook group for people who were interested in memories of Essex. This is what others posted there –



*'Fusilier Perkins was serving with the Quarter Masters Department in the 1st Battalion of the RIF in Germany as part of the British Army of the Rhine in Gottingen in West Germany and along with Cpl JR Hall was fatally injured in an accident. His grave marker is a standard Commonwealth War Grave headstone with the corners cut off signifying that he was killed on military service but not in a war.'*

*'Further to this story and my previous post regarding where Fusilier Perkins was and how he died. This did ring a bell with me, my father who lived in Great Baddow chose to do his national service in the Royal Irish Fusiliers, as there is an Irish family connection, my dad was born in 1929 and joined in 1946, he served until 1948 and was in Palestine up until withdrawal, I remembered a story that my dad told me many years ago, that as an Irish Fusilier on leave in Essex his uniform was very distinctive and unusual and it attracted attention and that of a young man that my dad knew, he often commented on the uniform and said that when he did his own national service he would volunteer for the same regiment and be as smart as my dad. I remember my dad telling me that one day a couple of years later he received a knock on the door at his mother's house in Baddow (my dad had finished his national service by now) and there were two young ladies standing there, they had found my dad because they had heard of him through their brother, they told my dad that he had been killed. They asked him if he had any mementos of the regiment he could give them and my dad gave the girls his badges. I remember him saying years ago what a nice fellow he was and that he always felt guilty that the young man had followed him into the regiment and was killed and how sad his sisters were. Remembering that old story I phoned my dad, who is now 91, this morning and asked him if he knew of Peter Perkins from the Royal Irish Fusiliers who came from Chelmsford, after a pause he said yes, and then told me the story again that he told me 40+ years ago. He was in tears remembering the young man who looked up to him and his two loving sisters that were devastated by his tragic death at just 20. As they say in the Regiment 'Faugh a Ballagh'! I hope this fills some blanks and puts a story behind an old grave stone.'*

Since then I have searched other local cemeteries and if you visit the Lawns you will find at least one of these graves there. *Linda*

### EVERY LITTLE HELPS

We are all, I imagine, familiar with this advertising slogan from one of our biggest supermarket chains. It was invented to underline how prices on individual items were being reduced, but it can equally apply to our individual efforts

We all know the harm discarded plastic does to our environment, so it's good to know that there are now **more opportunities locally to recycle plastic.**

Many items of plastic can of course be recycled through the City Council's fortnightly collection of plastic sacks (eg plastic bottles, drinks cartons such as Tetra Pak foodtrays and carrier bags), but some had to be put in the black bin and had to be incinerated or go to landfill. That was the situation until the autumn, when both **Tescos** at **Wood St** and the **Co-op Group** store in the **Vineyards** offered an in-store collection point for the collection of "soft" plastic items (eg crisp packets, pet food pouches, thin plastic wrappers around vegetables, such as cucumbers, bread wrappers, plastic film lids on soft fruit punnets and on ready meals).

If you have grandchildren, you could encourage them to save their crisp packets and take them to the new recycling points – they might even spread the word in their school amongst their friends. Who knows, we might even see less litter as a result in the recreation ground and around the village! Cont over/

Of course, there is a better alternative to recycling plastic and that is to avoid items, wrapped in plastic, whenever possible. Shopping for fruit and veg at a local greengrocer's or at a local Chelmsford market usually means very few items in plastic and your shopping bag full of brown paper bags instead; these can be recycled in your City Council cardboard sack, emptied fortnightly.

**Gt. Baddow Library** also offers some recycling facilities; you can recycle small electrical items such as toasters and if you run out of recycling sacks, you can usually get a replacement here. *Mike Whalley*

**Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.**

*Leo Tolstoy*

### Museums re-open

I volunteer with the Imperial War Museum (IWM) and, like other museums, their sites were closed by the second COVID lockdown that started in late 2020. Reopening of museums commenced in May 2021, although there had been a degree of uncertainty because of the "data not dates" element of the government plans.

IWM's main museum at Lambeth reopened two days after the government's announcement because it had changed to a five -day Wednesday to Sunday week. Visitors had to pre-book timed arrival slots, as was the case for most other museums, although "walk up" visitors were admitted if the slots were not full. Of course, their Test and Trace data was collected. Visitor numbers increased as time passed, and facemasks became optional after Freedom Day in June.

I also volunteer on IWM's second world war cruiser HMS Belfast. Lockdown had been an opportunity carry out some important rust treatment on the upper decks as well as a new Dazzle coat of paint, and she was not ready for reopening until July. I visited the ship prior to reopening for re-familiarisation, and it was both amazing and pleasing to see large areas of deck covered in cans of paint. The ship is now open and receiving many happy visitors, although unfortunately missing the usually large numbers of foreign tourists.

IWM had some significant events in October. New second world war gallery and Holocaust galleries were opened at Lambeth, a world first integrating the two galleries using the V1 Doodlebug as an instrument of war, built by victims of the Holocaust. These galleries have received excellent reviews and are attracting large numbers of visitors.

The other significant event was the 50th anniversary of HMS Belfast which arrived in London in October 1971 and opened to visitors on Trafalgar Day. She has now been in London roughly twice the time she served at sea.

I would encourage readers to visit museums, which need visitors to survive, continue telling their stories and showing their collections. Many are still quiet midweek during school terms so this is a great time to visit. *Alan Cullen*



### Speakers' report

Now that we are able to meet in Keene Hall, Galleywood, Covid restrictions having been lifted, we hope more members will feel confident to attend the monthly meetings. There will still be Zoom meetings which will now be called **Hybrid meetings** as this enables me to get speakers from around the country without travel or accommodation costs. I try to choose speakers of interest to the majority of our members, some from the Essex Speaker list and others who have contacted us through our website.

In June and July, we had good talks with presentations on '**Wildlife in Epping Forest**' and '**Waterway Wonders**'.

In August **Steve Short** reminisced on '**The life and career of Morecambe and Wise**. This brought back many memories for us all, to brighten up our afternoon at home.

In September **Alan Clark** gave an interesting zoom talk on '**The History of Rayleigh Town**' Alan is a Trustee of The Rayleigh Town Museum and if we get our Local History group running again, that would be a good place to visit.

In October we welcomed **Mark Mitchels** who gave us an interesting talk through over 2000 years of geology and history in East Anglia. The Dunwich Museum is another place which we may like to visit on next summer.

In November **David Williams** recounted the history of '**The City Livery Companies**'. Some members may have watched The Lord Mayor's Show on TV shown in November.

In December Andy Thomas will tell us about 'The Festive History of Christmas'. Speakers for 2022 are now being arranged. *Di Angel*

Brian is a 90 year old u3a member who wanted to share some of his life story here

## **My Working Life 1945 – 1993 Brian**

### **'Being in the Right Place at the Right Time'**

I was fourteen years old in May 1945. During the war I had attended Moulsham Junior and Secondary schools, and had a paper round in 1942 at Rippons paper shop in Moulsham Street, and I remember trying to deliver papers to houses which had been bombed during the night.

In August 1943 my mother told me of the position of a butcher's delivery boy, to deliver meat to customers after school on a Wednesday afternoon and on Saturday mornings. The pay was four shilling and sixpence a week – two shillings more than the paper round. Had I known what the delivery route covered, I might have had second thoughts, but as my mother was a single parent, every penny was precious. It included Springfield Road, quite a number of houses in the area of Essex Police headquarters (where little did I realise I would spend eleven happy years working), along Sandford Road, across the Baddow Meads (watching the V.I.s (doodle bugs) on the way to London, hoping they wouldn't crash onto the town), up Baddow Road into Great Baddow. It continued up Galleywood House, down Wood Street (where my daughter was born, my son would be saved from Meningitis and my dear wife recover from Cancer), down London Road and back to the butcher's shop. I left school in July 1945 with a piece of paper which said that I was of tidy appearance, of good behaviour and was proficient in English and Maths to algebra standard.

One day in 1946 walking along the road nearby, I saw a young lady with long brunette hair – we later bumped into each other at work; dear Pearl Adams was later to become my wife in September 1953.

My father knew the manager of Eastern Garages, where I got a job helping out Dennis, a mechanic who had been badly injured in the war and was unable to carry out fully the required work of a mechanic - I became his arms and legs! Nobody could have had a better apprenticeship at that time, and the foreman in our sister dealership – Eastern Automobiles - taught us trainees the theory of motor vehicles. In the last week of work, the police inspector in charge of the Police workshops asked me if I wanted a job in their workshop. As I was eighteen I had already been called up to join the R.A.F, was selected to be a motor transport mechanic and passed out as a senior aircraftman - top of my trade and with a City and Guilds certificate.

But after I was demobbed in 1951, I got a job with the police, working on newish cars including those of the advanced driving school: Jaguars, Humbers, Sunbeams etc. I also gave support during the Canvey Island floods of 1953, and was chosen to maintain the Police Patrol launch on the River Thames, which made me very proud. Pay was poor: I got £9.00 a week! During this time, I became a Scout Master with the Sea Scouts and Pearl was a Sea Ranger and had been a Guide Patrol Leader. She later took on the job of Akela Cub Master.

When she left work to have our daughter Julie, we started to struggle financially. Another Police mechanic, George and I teamed up to do private work in our spare time and reluctantly we realised we would need to look for work in the private sector. George found a position at a service station for £12.00 per week and I got a job at the Mobil Oil service station on Broomfield Road earning £18.00 a week. To say the site was a success is an understatement, the workshop was booked from the word go for servicing and repairs. During this time, I was a part-time lecturer in motor vehicle maintenance at Brentwood Evening Institute as well, for seven years.

A while later my brother -in-law told me about a job as a workshop supervisor at the Easter Electricity board in Beehive Lane, which I applied for and got. They didn't tell me then that I was also responsible for vehicles at the Braintree depot too, and I soon discovered that the maintenance work at both sites was slapdash. This led to a complete overhaul of existing services and I was offered the new job of Visiting Transport Engineer whose responsibilities included doing spot checks on vehicle maintenance, service records and roadworthiness over a number of garages in the Essex group. I was based at Waltham Cross but could work from home. Eventually, soon after the Falklands war, I was appointed to the role of North London \*CSU Transport Officer.

I think that I did my best to fulfil my duties, that I took no advantage of my position and treated all staff under me with respect and consideration. I was forced to retire two years before time when the company was privatised; after ten years in the post and twenty- two years' service, as I shut my door for the last time my phone was still ringing. *Brian* \*Central Service Units

## My Other Passion

The other passion in my life apart from U3A, is the Women's Institute. Started in Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada in 1897, it found its way to the UK where the first meeting was in Anglesey (Wales) in 1915. It was originally set up to help in the Great War & is based on the idea of establishing a strong female community, offering women opportunities to make a difference in their communities. The WI is set up as a charity, with a constitution that allows membership only to women.

Before I joined, I thought it to be Jam, Jerusalem & tweedy skirts, not for me. How wrong I was. I soon learned about friendship, the environment, caring for other countries & our own. Changes have been made with the yearly Resolution adopted on various subjects e.g. Global Warming, poverty, & presented to No 10, creating as much publicity as possible in order to improve life.

We always sing "Jerusalem" at the beginning of our meetings. This was composed by Hubert Parry in 1916 "to brace the spirit of the nation in the depths of the First World War". Millicent Fawcett asked Parry if the women's suffrage movement might use it. He agreed, & "Jerusalem" was first sung by massed women in a suffrage rally in the Royal Albert Hall in 1918. Heard by Grace Hadow, one of the founders of the WI, she had the idea of transferring it to the WI & so in 1924 it became our anthem.



I had the privilege of being voted in as the President of WI Sandon & whereas I don't wear a hat like the Queen, I feel honoured to be a member of such a wonderful organisation. *Wendy Burns*

## Machine Beats Man

You know when you're at your computer poised ready to order tickets for a show, or give a donation to charity? Thank goodness for modern technology you say, this kind of thing's a piece of cake nowadays. What a palaver it all was once, and you smile as you remember the olden days of Basildon Bond and cheques and postal orders, (oh yes, I am that old), and cover letters with envelopes, and stamps to lick. No need for all that malarkey nowadays, and you get going on your swift and efficient digital transaction. A five -minute shift, and it's done and dusted.

I'm immediately asked: "Are you a registered customer or do you want to continue as a guest?" I can't actually remember if I'm registered or not, but anyway I'm definitely not falling for that one. If I say I'm a previous customer, the next demand will be for a password, and that can be a massive minefield for me. I am not Mr Memory Man as those who know me can attest to, and my dog-eared pages of passwords (yes, I know I shouldn't write the darned things down, but...), have been amended so many times that it's hard to tell whether the password I fix on belongs to Tesco, Ticketmaster or Thomson and Morgan.

I'm all for making life easy, so a guest I'll be. I start typing and get as far as "r.", which in my case is only the beginning of a pretty lengthy email nom de plume. At which point the whole address magically and conveniently appears on the screen. For a millisecond. Then it disappears again. Only now do I remember this game, introduced I suspect, by a sadistic software developer. You're teased with the offer of a labour -saving short cut, but it's one which you can never be quick enough to use. A Catch 22 situation perhaps? I believe it is. I have a few goes at beating it but the tantalising short cut option flickers on and off as speedily as an MP claiming his expenses. So, not having lightning fast reflexes in the keyboard department, I finally accept that I'm beaten and do it the hard way. Then and only then do the blighters tell me that I am already registered as a customer and can't continue as a guest. Dread. Password required.

The first password which I apprehensively take from my suspect list of candidates is: "Not recognised." I can't say I'm surprised. I try another couple but they're rejected too in what seems to me to be a quite haughty manner.

Not happy, I reluctantly fall back on the "Have you forgotten your password?" option, and create a new one which is instantly deemed: "Not acceptable. Your password must contain at least 8 characters, and include lower case letters, upper case letters, a number and a symbol."

Oh right, I'll try again, I realise that I should have to work really, really, hard to allow you to accept all the money I'm trying to give you. But sarcasm is wasted on a computer and it remains implacable. I eventually concoct a password with, I am confident, the correct mix of all the mandatory elements, but by then I'm so highly strung that I can't actually type this complicated combination twice, correctly, as I am commanded to do. It seems the two attempts never match, and I feel despondently that they probably never will.

I sink back in my chair all but defeated, and think back wistfully to the good old days of paper, pens, and cheques and actual people on phones eager take your order. Before all this computerised malarkey.

RCM

## MAIN MEETINGS: SUBJECTS / SPEAKERS

Monday 10 Jan

The Amazing Mr Dickens

Monday 7 Feb

Gainsborough Art

Monday 7 March

Trinity House Lighthouses

Monday 4 April

AGM — followed by Seaplanes of the Solent

**NB** - All meetings above will be held at Keene Hall, and will also be on Zoom. Depending on Government Covid restrictions, the Committee may have to make changes to the arrangements



Copy for the Spring Newsletter should be sent to me on or before February 25th 2022

Contributions from new members, Group Coordinators or the Committee are welcome, should preferably be short, on any topic about your group or u3a activities. Please send photographs as separate attachments.

Thanks, Maggie — Editor



### I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day  
Their old familiar carols play  
And mild and sweet their songs repeat  
Of peace on Earth, good will to men

And the bells are ringing  
Like a choir they're singing  
In my heart I hear them  
Peace on Earth, good will to men

Longfellow



**A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
to all our readers**



[www.u3asites.org.uk/baddow](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/baddow)

INTEREST GROUP PROGRAMME					
DAY		1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH
Monday	a.m.				
	p.m.	General Meeting	Photography German Conversation	I.T. & Computing	Poetry Appreciation
Tuesday	p.m.	Table Tennis Scrabble	Canasta Table Tennis	Table Tennis	Table Tennis Canasta
Wednesday	a.m.	Italian Language & Culture Walking 1 Painting & Sketching	Italian Language & Culture Painting & Sketching	Italian Language & Culture Strollers Painting & Sketching	Italian Language & Culture Painting & Sketching
	p.m.	French Conversation Mah-jong	Early Popular Music	Mah-jong	Spanish
Thursday	a.m.		Papercraft		Papercraft
	p.m.	Bridge Gardening	Bridge	Bridge Discussion	Bridge Paper Craft
Friday	a.m.		Arts & Crafts	Walking 2	Rambling
	p.m.	Music Performing Book Group Creative Writing	Family History Cribbage Art Appreciation	Knit and Natter	
Saturday				Weekenders	
Sunday		Weekenders			

Published December 2021



**A day without sunshine, is like, you know, night!**

Steve Martin