

Baddow & Galleywood u3a
NEWSLETTER



Spring 2022

U3A COMMITTEE

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

STOP PRESS!

See above for new roles for some Committee members, following the u3a AGM in April

I visited my Grandad last week.

I said to him, "I thought there was something funny Grandad.
You've got your slippers on the wrong feet."
He said, "Oh for goodness sake, so I have.
I must have had my legs
crossed when I put them on."

Baddow & Galleywood u3a Annual General Meeting 2022

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



A year ago we held the 2021 AGM and all attendees were on Zoom. By then Zoom was something we were having to get used to and some, even many, were getting quite proficient at it. Since then the tight restrictions have eased and many of us have taken the opportunity to get together again, perhaps still with some hesitation and some are still very wary of the potential of getting too close to a friend, neighbour or family member.

Today is, I believe, our first ever hybrid AGM with a good number in Keene Hall and a number using Zoom at their, or someone else's home so they can be part of this AGM. (and probably wanting to get on to the second part of the afternoon with our speaker). Being a first, we think we have got it right but we will know later if we really have. As signs in some shops say. "If we please you tell others, if we don't tell us". Like the whole basis of u3a, we want to learn from this.

At the last AGM we were still unable to enjoy the usage of our new venue, Keene Hall here in Galleywood. The hope then was for a return in June – it happened in September and has continued since. To date all have been held with attendance at Keene Hall AND transmitting via Zoom to those who for various reasons can't, or don't want to, attend Keene Hall in person. As I write this, I see that Maurice prophesied this in his report last year. We have made use of the Keene Hall facilities including screen and projector plus some of our own equipment making Keene Hall the equivalent of a Zoom site here so we are able to see each other and hear each other. Also we collaborated with Keene Hall to use their sound system both within the Hall and as part of the Zoom system.

Your Committee wants to facilitate the involvement of as many members as possible that want to be involved in the Main Meeting and this hybrid method seems to work best at the moment. Our ideal would be that all could come together at Keene Hall for the fellowship and togetherness it brings (and the tea and cake afterwards) but we realise that for some, that is still sometime in the future. I should also say that with our speakers being on Zoom it has given us a much wider range of speakers to invite, as distance is no object.

The move from Great Baddow to Galleywood for these meetings was a necessity but we did wonder how it would affect the membership as a whole. Regular feedback from our membership secretary has shown that membership is growing and several Interest groups, along with the Main gathering have benefited. We have put advertising posters up in several premises around Galleywood and use all the modern technology that we can (and this is usually by knowing a man (or woman) who can..... understand it).

This AGM completes my first year as chair and a major part has involved the transition to the third way! Not the Third Age, as in Third Age Trust of which all u3as are part, but the change from us all meeting face to face as the first way, then NOT meeting together at all but seeing the front of everyone and the back of nobody (a saving on haircuts and allowing us to dress only our top halves seeming to be the mainstays of this second way). The third way is navigating a way that mixes the two, the hybrid method, and I want it to be to use chemistry parlance, NOT a mixture where there is intermingling but still the ability to separate, but a compound, where chemical energy joins the elements together to make them inseparable. To remove any "them and us" that may be there. Just to be an us, supporting one another, encouraging one another and thinking of the goodness of one another. It takes time and, like the chemistry, needs energy. Something we all have in various degrees. We can use what energy we have as we want to but there is something greater when using our energy to help others, it seems our own energy increases for our own good.

I'm sure I don't need to tell you that Baddow and Galleywood u3a cannot function without the efforts of many people. Some are known to you, some aren't. I don't want to embarrass anyone but

Firstly I want to thank the Interest Group Co-ordinators. There are too many to name. Without you, your assistants and your deputies, we would not function, attract new members or develop. Thank you.

To the Committee a big thank you from me to you all for your support over the year, especially when most of you didn't know me and I didn't know most of you. In no specific order:

Alan Cullen – our Vice chair, who may have been chair if he didn't have plans that did not come to fruition. A great sounding board! Thank you Alan.

Ted Dyer – Treasurer - who took on the role when the previous treasurer left for pastures new. A big role to step in to at any time. Thank you Ted.

Debbie Collins – Business Secretary – who stepped down because of other commitments and literally is irreplaceable – so far. Her work has been split between other committee members but we really need someone

to take on this role (or even job share). Her experience is still a great value to myself and the Committee. Thank you Debbie.

Mary Cordeiro – Membership Secretary – who took over from Loretta Riddel and expected a job share which didn't materialise. A very intensive job. Thank you to Mary and Loretta.

Wendy Burns - is our Interest Groups Coordinator, temporary (she hopes) Minute taker and treasurer of the No.2 account (the Interest Groups account) A job that takes time and is full on. Thank you Wendy.

Sue Wells – as well as being our Social and Welfare Secretary, giving support to those who need support and those who are without internet access and cannot get to us. She has also returned to her furloughed role of ensuring we are fed and watered at main meetings and other events. Thankyou Sue.

Di Angel – a founder member of our u3a in 1999 is our Speaker Secretary. A job that has widened as speakers on Zoom can be in any part of the country, even the world, giving wide choice but needs more discernment to fit a larger number of available speakers into 12 speaking slots a year. Thank you Di.

Tony Hollingsworth and Mike Whalley are our Committee members without portfolio but no less appreciated for the wisdom they give to the Committee. Thank you Tony and Mike.

A mainstay outside the committee is **Maggie** - our ever- present Newsletter Editor. Without her there wouldn't be a Newsletter especially one of quality. I would just ask you, the members, to support her by giving her articles, jokes even, letters to the Editor, so she doesn't have to chase as much. Thank you Maggie.

I would also like to thank our 2 retirees from last year. **Maurice** as our previous chair who I quickly realised is an impossible act to follow – so I haven't. But I willingly acknowledge he got our u3a to a position that made taking over the role so much easier. And **Hugh Armstrong** as the ex-Treasurer and now our Equipment Officer (in other words stores all our property at his home and just waits for the time we can go through it and, probably, consign some to the home for old, broken and out of date equipment in the sky). Thank you Maurice and Hugh. Lastly thanks to you, every member, as without you we wouldn't be here today.

Let's show our thanks to the Committee, the Interest Group co-ordinators and their teams, those mentioned and anyone else I've overlooked – My apologies.

In closing I just want to remind us of what the chair said last year and remains true today, that an organisation like ours needs to continue actively recruiting new, possibly younger, enthusiastic members and for this we need a wide range of Interest Groups and interesting monthly speakers; we are looking to use "shared" groups between our local u3as when individual u3a interest in a subject is minimal. Thank you for listening. Roy
Brackley

PLANT SALE

The Gardening Group will be holding a Plant Sale, as part of the Galleywood Village Market on

Friday, 20th May 2022 – 10.00 am - 12 noon

at

The Keene Hall, Watchouse Road,
Galleywood. CM2 8PT

There is plenty of parking and a bus stop nearby at the crossroads with the B1007.

We are aiming to raise funds for our group to continue with our programme of knowledgeable speakers.

Galleywood Village Market usually provides locally produced goods and other small trade items. They also run a Cafe area, which is an ideal place to meet up with friends.

Please come along!

Group Coordinator's Chat

Hi Everyone,

Once again thank you for all your hard work throughout the year especially during the difficult times.

We have had the latest Coordinators' meeting. I felt it was a very positive meeting with coordinators, advising the committee of their requirements.

The need for a projector screen started quite a debate, which has been taken on board & will be acted upon by the committee.

Members commented that BCC should be used in emails when communicating with Coordinators for data protection and Clusters were discussed with the idea of B & G u3a working with Chelmsford & Broomfield. Finding another hall to have our meetings was another discussion. It is quite complicated due to the size of the hall (we won't always be on zoom) & parking needs.

Alas, there was one Co-ordinator who felt unhappy with the meeting. One is too many, but constructive criticism is helpful, I say here we can only do our best. I spent many hours dealing with Coordinators' needs this year & during the pandemic quite a few more.

Alan Cullen noted that new membership, business & minute secretaries were required, as well as other committee members. (See Stop Press—p 2 Ed!)

The attendance at the meeting was disappointing. Coordinators for various reasons were unable to attend, some sent a representative, but I have been asked to host another one this year. This depends on the responses of the Coordinators. These meetings cannot be arranged overnight, it takes a lot of work especially for Sue, who arranges the refreshments.

There was a complaint that we didn't have lunch, but in the past lunch has not been held in March, but I promise at the next meeting, whenever it is, we will have lunch. Some members have stated that they are not worried about lunch, the meeting is important, coffee & biscuits are fine.

Although I am happy to be your Coordinator I need your support, I can't do this job without your help, this means any email I send out needs to be responded to. If you are not happy with my service, I ask you to let me know. All the best to you all. *Wendy Burns*

NB—The Cookery group has closed

A note from the Editor:

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter, which I hope you will enjoy reading.

Thank you to all contributors, and special thanks to Allen for his photographs, and all his help when my printer refused to work! (Crumbs - what a panic!)

There is information on p2 about the new roles some members of the Committee have taken on and the Chairman's report from the AGM in April is re-produced in full on pp3 & 4. Note also the Gardening Group's Plant sale in May and the Medway Queen trip, p7, both open to all members.

Interest Group reports begin on p8; I'd be pleased to receive articles from any u3a member, particularly if you are new to our organisation, for the Autumn issue, see p 15. Eg: 'Why I joined the u3a', or 'I'm glad that my Group is meeting in person once again'. Let's make it a bumper issue.

On p15, I have included an extract of a poem written by Ben Okri, as I'm sure we are all appalled by the horror and destruction in Ukraine - it really moved me, and I think it helps us remember the children and their suffering.

Maggie



The Big Sing

Ever since our u3a “Singing for Pleasure” group was killed by Covid, I’ve been looking around for another choir to join, and during a recent keep-fit walk around Baddow Recreation Ground I spotted the merry crowd shown in the photo giving their lungs some exercise. They are part of a fast-growing organisation called The Big Sing, with choirs in Chelmsford, Brentwood, Maldon, Witham and beyond, with an occasional practice in the GB Millennium Centre.



I’ve registered with them on www.big-sing.com and intend to attend one of their practice sessions soon in the Millennium Centre (Sunday 2-4.30 pm). The 1st session is free, then £7 per week (pay as you go). I think the GB choir sing gospel songs only, but other Big-Sing choirs cover pop, soul & contemporary songs too. They include all ages, so I am not too sure about their Covid credentials compared to our age group, but since we are heading towards “herd immunity”, attendance is probably not too risky.
Allen

The trouble with having an open mind, of course, is that people will insist on coming along and trying to put things in it.

Terry Pratchett

This is Me

I consider myself to be fortunate to be able to participate in the activities that give me pleasure. Yes, I am elderly, but I am not Old, and I intend to pursue them until that day comes. u3a is a brilliant organization and I have made so many friends because of it. We are spoilt for choice with so many interest groups to participate in, and without doubt there is something for every member. I have chosen Photography, Strollers and have the privilege of being the Co ordinator of the Weekenders assisted by my partner Sara. There are a couple of others that I would like to join but I have other interests outside u3a.

Our garden gives me so much pleasure particularly this time of year when it is time to get things growing. I love baskets and planters and spend many hours in the winter planning what to have in them. It’s too early to fill them yet but I have many “coming on” in my tiny greenhouse. My favorite flower is the Begonia. There are so my varieties and vibrant colours to choose from. This year I am planting mesembryanthemum onto the outside of the baskets, just to be different.

Short Mat Bowls is my sport, and for those of you who are unfamiliar it is played with standard outdoor bowls, but we play indoors in venues that can accommodate a 45 x 6ft mat. It’s a game everybody can play 17yrs to senior age, any gender all year round and against each other as individuals or as part of a team The Galleywood Short Mat Bowls Club plays on Wednesday afternoons in the Keene Hall and Monday evenings in the Barnard Road infant school. If you require more information, please contact me at denisiketley@outlook.com

Now with gardening, strolling, and short mat bowls one would think I get enough exercise, but no, we have acquired ourselves a dog and dogs need walks, luckily we live near Galleywood common so very handy for it to have a good run around, and I said right from the start I am elderly but **This is Me.** Denis Ketley

It is not living that matters, but living rightly.

Socrates

u3a Trials and Tribulations

I was inspired by Mary's article The Joy of Zooming in the Winter 2021 Newsletter to write a few notes on B&G's use of the technology.



Our chairman at the start of the Covid pandemic, Maurice, spent much time looking at what was going on in the u3a movement and spotted that video conferencing was becoming practical. There were several apps available, and he selected Zoom which turned out to be the best choice although this was not initially obvious. Indeed it was tempting to follow major names such as Google and Facebook. However Zoom has since demonstrated that it is sufficiently robust, secure and many of our members can use it.

We experimented with a committee meeting by Zoom, where we were all learning not only to use the app but also about etiquette such as raising hands when we wished to speak. We also learnt to be patient, because almost everybody had problems at first. I even failed to discover that my laptop had a microphone, and started wearing gaming headphones which led to sarcastic comments when I finally appeared 'ear free'.

Next we tried a main meeting, with me as guinea pig giving a presentation about the HMS Belfast. The free Zoom licence limited us to 40 minute sessions, and after a slow start as members joined I had just reached the point where the ship entered the navy when the first half was interrupted by the Zoom clock counting down. However after a short break the second half went much better, and then we decided to purchase a Zoom licence thus overcoming the time limit.

Since then we have restarted monthly main meetings, first all on Zoom and more recently hybrid meetings running Zoom alongside increasing numbers of members at the Keene Hall, at least until Omicron struck. After initial teething problems members at the hall started to benefit from human contact and refreshments (thanks as ever to Sue), while Zoom supports those who have mobility difficulties or are in a rush. Zoom also gives us access to a broader choice of speakers, and Di has exploited this well, and we have also recorded some presentations.

Several of our groups have also been "meeting" with Zoom.

Zoom has entered our vocabulary, and it is not only older people who have found it difficult. Remember the lawyer whose children had set a cat filter? Remember people who appeared in dressing gowns? And we enjoyed Jackie Weaver's skilful handling of the Handforth Parish councillors.

Got to stop writing, there is a Zoom calling! *Alan Cullen*

LEGACY LEFT BY ALAN SHEEHAN - RAMBLING

After many years of leading the Rambling group, ill health forced Alan to give up his role in 2016. Determined to ensure that the considerable knowledge of walks around Chelmsford that he had built up in his lifetime, Alan compiled a file of 48 walks - with maps and a brief description on each walk to pass on to his successor. I am happy to loan out Alan's file to any members of the U3A who would like to learn more about walks.

If anyone u3a member would like to borrow the file, please contact John

Coach trip to the Medway Queen

Paddle Steamer

Wednesday 24th August 2022

Follow up on the 2019 talk on the **Heroine of Dunkirk**
by Mark and Pam Bathurst



Estimated cost £15/20 includes:

Return journey by coach from Baddow Millennium Centre to Gillingham
Free time in Rochester in the morning to visit the cathedral, the castle or the Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham and have lunch (at a local pub at own cost, or bring a packed lunch)
Guided visits of the Medway Queen itself, the Visitor Centre and the workshops
Tea/coffee and biscuits on board the ship

Please contact Trevor or Martine

INTEREST GROUP REPORTS

Strollers' Diary

My last Diary notes in September finished with the promise of a stroll through Danbury in October. Ten of us met at The Cricketers' Arms- a delightful public house on the common. Our walk also took in a tourist type visit to the largely Victorian Danbury Church.

November saw us at Norsey Woods. A beautiful and scenic nature trail with variable terrain: being Strollers, we are seldom in a hurry and we had a well-earned refreshment and lunch at The King's Head, Billericay. Our strolls often have a short-cut option for anybody who does not wish or feel able to do the whole "mile".

Our annual Christmas lunch was held in December again at The Chimes Restaurant, Rettendon. Fourteen of us had a seasonal feast. I thank Isobel and John for organizing a splendid occasion.

January was left blank in view of the weather and general lethargy following Christmas and New Year celebrations.

We woke from hibernation in February with a visit to The Blackwater Navigation Canal off the River Chelmer at Springfield Basin and Lock. A short walk alongside the river brought us back to the town centre for lunch in The Slug and Lettuce.

Rivers are always a delight for me, so in March, we walked alongside the River Can from Admirals Park towards Writtle and back again where half our party had lunch. Chris C. actually made it all the way to Writtle, but she settled for a cup of tea and a bun.

The rest of the year looks promising and I hope to bring you some more snippets in due course.

Best Wishes to all, *Ted*.

Gardening

On 3rd March 2022, with the end of Government Covid19 restriction and with "Spring in the Air" it was nice to meet in the Millennium Centre for an afternoon with David Gilliam of Abercorn Plant & Garden Centre, Beehive Lane. David had unpacked a whole table of gardening items for 24 members to look at.



He said that Covid had rearranged the whole business of gardening starting with the tremendous increase in transportation costs which have increased most prices.

Picking up some plastic containers he pointed out that many of the traditional garden chemicals had been replaced with more natural products which generally no longer eradicate a problem but stop it from getting worse.

He showed us a pack of translucent 12 cell starter seed trays which replace the black versions which are not recyclable. Seeing the growing roots is a surprise but you can now tell when to transplant without tugging the plant out of its pot. He also showed a rolled-up heating mat - this provided a more uniform temperature for bringing on your seeds than a house central heating radiator.

Switching to compost – he said it was a pity the UK was not covered in Coconut trees because Peat was to be phased out – it was a major element in the storage of C.O.2. There were problems using non-Peat based compost but they could be overcome with care, and it was better for the planet.

Plants were next on his list. Did you know Herbs sold in the garden centre are VAT free? This means small Lavender was VAT free while its larger version was 20% dearer.

David often had customers asking about Box Hedges – "I think mine has Box Blight, do I dig it up?" Box Blight is brown and slowly spreads, killing the hedge as it goes – there is really no answer, just dispose of it.

He then explained the various attributes of each of the plants he had brought.

A very interesting presentation, thank you David.

The Gardening Group Co-ordinators: Sue & Tony, served tea and biscuits which enabled members to chat and catch up.

At the December meeting Sue had given those who attended a Tete-a-Tete dwarf daffodil bulb with the instructions to "plant it in a pot and bring it back in March to see who has the best". Nine pots were on show and a winner was chosen

The proposed summer schedule was discussed, which included a visit to Green Island Gardens near Colchester. *Pauline & John*

Early Popular Music

EPMIG for short. So, how does it work?

We hold our meetings via Zoom as this works particularly well for the subject. The common interest is in popular (often pop) music from before 1980 and its usually from the period 1950-1970 during which members passed through their formative and teenage years – ah those memories.

True to U3A principles we all contribute: it's not just one person doing all the work. We do have a host who acts as session organiser sending invites etc. For each session, we agree a topic in advance. For March it was tracks we associated with 'place'. Every member chooses two personal tracks, one of which is advised to us all beforehand plus a 2nd secret choice. This means we get a chance to listen to it before the meeting.



On the day, the Co-ordinator will play the first track to everyone using Spotify and the chooser gives a background to their choice. This will often include a little about when, where, who made the recording and why it was chosen which is often the most interesting part. Once we've listened to the first choices, we move onto the 'secret' choices.

Part of the fun is sharing past high points and experiences and memorable tunes, part trying to guess who chose the track – I think we have all worked out by now who loves Van Morrison and who is the psychedelic fan, but sometimes people spring a surprise on us. Occasionally we learn something entirely new, for example how versions of well-known swing numbers were used by the Germans during the war as propaganda, changing the lyrics.

We have been sharing out who has organised the sessions and so far Jeff and I have acted in that role for 6 months each. As Jeff is busy over the summer others are standing in and it is a real co-operative exercise.

You might think we must run out of topics, but it hasn't happened yet, as many tunes can trigger memories so we have not yet had to repeat a topic. So far these have included – Elvis Presley, blues, comedy, big band swing, The Beatles, Christmas

So play it again Sam *Ken*

I was eating in a Chinese restaurant downtown. There was a dish called Mother and Child Reunion. It's chicken and eggs. And I said, 'I gotta use that one.'

Paul Simon

Early Popular Music

A snapshot of one of our meetings:

It's the second Wednesday in February at 2.00 pm. Sitting at our computers we are joining the Early Popular Music Group via Zoom. This month's topic is DIVAS.

We've all chosen two tracks. The first has been communicated to all the group and the second is a secret until it's played at the meeting. Jeff coordinates the group and plays part of each chosen track. There's a chance after each recording for the contributor to give some background, relating it perhaps to personal past experiences and why they chose it.



DIVAS from Joan Baez, Dolly Parton, Dusty Springfield to Ella Fitzgerald and Shirley Bassey are all there! Just some of our chosen artists today.

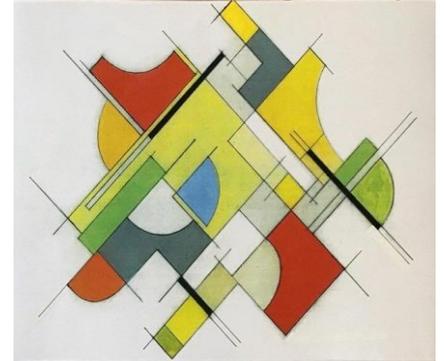
We've learnt lots, gone on an interesting "musical" journey and all in one and a half hours. *Helena*

Painting and Sketching



After Seurat—Jane

Over the winter and now into early Spring we've had a pretty good period of activity in our group, with a spell largely uninterrupted by shutdowns of one kind or another. We've dabbled in various styles and periods of painting, notably Post-Impressionism (Seurat), French Impressionism (Monet and Pissarro), and Spanish Impressionism (Joaquin Sorolla). These themes have all been pretty enjoyable to work on, and it's always interesting to learn something of these gifted individuals. How good they could be as artists, and how deceptively easy their art sometimes appears.

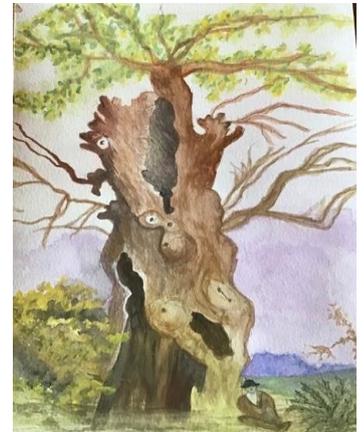


Geometric abstract—Terry



Three Miners—Elspeth

And of course, we hope now for a good summer weather-wise, (don't we all), so that we can venture outdoors for a bit of 'plein air' painting. A very pleasant thought. *Ron*



Tree Study Jacquie

Music Performing

After the December Music Performance, the members of the group reformed into new ensembles and prepared a new set of pieces to play at the February meeting. We have to time our practices to fit in with busy schedules and to ensure that we reach our peak on the day of the performance. All was going swimmingly until the week of the performance, when the storms started hitting the UK. The day before the concert storm Eunice was looming so it was decided to postpone.

But all that hard work did not go to waste and one month later the performances had been repolished and were presented to other members of the group. As always there was a really varied programme ranging from classical to jazz, from beginners to more advanced, from well-known to new pieces, and all played in a variety of combinations of instruments.

We were delighted by a duet for harmonica and guitar (who would have thought that they sounded so good together?) and we are following with keen interest Davina's progress on the accordion – impressive runs and trills abounded in the two pieces that she chose. The strings were well represented with solos, duets and trios, and the woodwind with flute, saxophones and a 'cor anglais.'

It was another celebration of music making and friendship and we are all busy preparing for our May performance. New members always welcome – just give Pam a ring if you are interested. *Debbie Collins*

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Family History

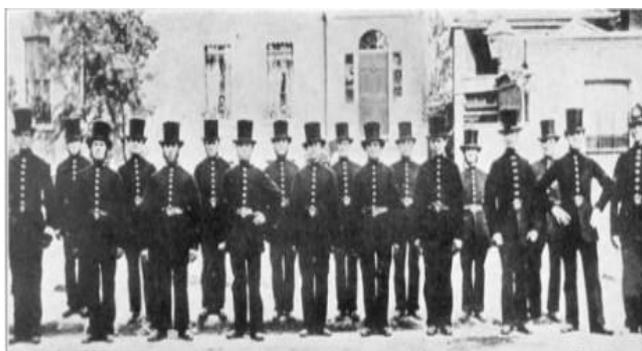
We had such a good meeting in March, thanks to Rodger. It was so good to be together again, with 'old' members, new members and two of Lesley's group. There were 22 of us, well-spaced out!

Rodger told us about his police training where there was an emphasis on bulling boots and creating a good crease in trousers, and how his first equipment was a truncheon, handcuffs, and a whistle. So different now! Once radios were introduced the police officers knew what to do if they were told about a stray cow [milk was needed] or that information was required [they wanted newspapers]. So many good stories!

Rodger also told us about his and Mary's decision to buy a house [20 New Road] and were asked to increase their offer of £2,500 and they did – by £100 and got the house. [Two years later, after working hard on the house, they sold the house for £9,300.] Many postcards found in the house, which had been owned by Mr Amos, were passed round, plus photos of Rodger in the police force, once when he was part of the group of officers who escorted the judge from Guy Harlings to the Assizes in the Shire Hall.

When Rodger left the police force to start teacher training, he worked in his spare time to bring in more cash, including several years working for Pennacks, not only in his painting and decorating company, but also the undertaking side of the business. There was so much more which made for such an interesting afternoon.

Margaret brought a wonderful Victorian photo of a group of policemen including one of Brian's ancestors – similar to this one -



By the way Google helped again - *The term 'panda car' was first used to refer to **black police cars with panels that had been painted white to increase their visibility**. It was later applied to blue and white police cars.* Linda

A Family History

I volunteer at the Imperial War Museum. They opened a new Second World War gallery at their Lambeth site last year on the theme of Total War, making the point that many countries were involved as were many people from all walks of life. Much of the information is presented as short personal stories, and amongst these I spotted a Wren with a familiar surname, my grandmother's maiden name. After some family history research my wife established that Eve Albu was probably my mother's second cousin.



The museum curators put me in contact with Eve and her son Jamie, and we visited them at her home outside Salisbury recently. She greeted me by saying that I looked like her younger brother, and we spent a lovely afternoon chatting. There were no relations that we both knew, but we both are aware of some more famous relatives including an MP and another who had married John Logie Baird.

Eve and Jamie have written a detailed account of her life during the Second World War. She started as a 15 year old schoolgirl who helped soldiers write letters home, and then joined the Wrens spending much of her time in dark rooms training pilots for night vision. Our conversations included the war, Ukraine and also the Russian link to Salisbury following the poisonings with nerve agents a few years ago.

Eve's wartime story is called Brave Faces, written under the nom de plume Mary Arden. Alan Cullen

Art Appreciation (Feb)



At this Zoom meeting we looked at pictures from various stages of the life of the South African painter Gerard Sekoto, and we all had to admit our ignorance of South African history and the treatment of the blacks in South Africa before apartheid. We admired his use of a limited palette in each picture and saw how his paintings changed from the peaceful scenes in the townships through the pictures showing the relationships between blacks and whites and, from his exile in Paris, the brutality of the beginnings of apartheid. And there was also a picture of a jazz band in Paris which promoted much discussion about its artistic merits.

We then looked at some random pictures including a set from a New Zealand painter, full of light and brightness, a Berthe Morisot, and a really amazingly interesting picture by John Zoffany called *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*. If you look it up in Wikipedia, it shows you a table of all the pictures on the walls and all the statues, with the originals.

Finally we looked at some statues by Antonio Canova, learnt a few Greek myths which helped us understand them, and marvelled at how expressive marble and plaster can be. *Debbie*

Art Appreciation (March)

8 of us managed to meet in the Plum room at Meadgate Church Orchard centre. The technology did not let us down and everyone was able to see the pictures clearly on the wonderful HD screen. We looked first at depictions of Adam and Eve in paintings ranging from the 13th to the 19th century, and from Germany and Italy through to Canada.



It was very interesting to see the similarities and differences between the different interpretations of the story. All seemed to paint Eve in much paler tones than Adam and all had a serpent in some form or another. The trees varied from a simple outline to ones laden with fruit and we found out why a tree with fig leaves bore an apple as its fruit. We talked about the fact that although we needed to have the symbolism explained (why should there be a parrot in the picture?) and why the artists had chosen to depict consistently some animals and not others, in the time that these pictures were produced, the church-going

public would probably be very aware of the significance of all the details of the paintings. My favourite painting from this set was the “**The Rebuke of Adam and Eve**” by **Domenico Zampieri**, not because of its artistic merit, but because of the ‘blame game’ going on in it.

We then heard about the life of Maud Lewis, a Canadian folk artist who painted in the naïve style, and looked at some of her colourful paintings.

It is well worth looking up some of her other work on the internet. Her pictures use amazing colour and are beautifully balanced. We all need something to make us feel good in these dark times, and this set of pictures certainly help.

There is space in the group for anyone who might be interested in looking at pictures from the art world. Some of the group are quite expert and others are beginners, but everyone enjoys the meeting and finds out about different ways of looking at things, and how it is very possible to hate some pictures and love others without really knowing why. We certainly follow the u3a slogan of learning, laughing and living. *Debbie*

Success for the Mahjong Group

Our little group is getting bigger! We now have 19 members and our bi-monthly sessions at the White Horse pub in Great Baddow have been well attended ever since we resumed playing in May last year.

I am always amazed how many people actually know how to play this game, and although not everyone has the same abilities at getting a “Special Hand”, the luck element often enables more ordinary players like me to achieve good scores and even win!

Some Mahjong sets are little works of art, but some very nice ones can also be found at a very reasonable price, such as in a charity shop recently for £19.95 for a brand - new set. However, you do not need your own set to start playing with the group. Previous experience is an advantage though, even if you have not played for a while. *Martine*

Tact is the ability to describe others as they see themselves.

Abraham Lincoln

German Conversation

The German conversation group continues to meet in members' homes on the second Monday monthly. Although a reasonable level of fluency is desirable to enjoy our sessions, no perfection is either expected or achieved. The group (normally 5 - 6 members) discusses informally any topic of general interest - no particular theme is recommended, and no written preparation required.

Despite this unstructured approach, we touch on various topics, e.g. recently a member brought copies of an article circulated on the internet, concerning vocabulary which had evolved in the former East Germany. The word "Trabi", to give an example, refers to the much-maligned Trabant car manufactured in the GDR.

Conversation will normally touch on our recent activities/outings, together with books read or films seen. Kaffee und

Kuchen naturally form an integral part of the meetings of this very friendly group. *Rita*

A Pop Music Group session revealed:

We travelled from the Caribbean to The South Pacific via Belfast, London, Paris (surprisingly) and Berlin.



We learnt that it doesn't rain all the time in Belfast. That great singing stars age the same as all of us. That end of year school dances were the same back then as they probably are today. That 'Hi Ho Silver Lining' stills gets everyone up on their feet and, as an emotional Ken said, the Brits can still host a great event with passion and pride, even if it is for just one day.

Here is the track list for the session:

Set the controls for the heart of the sun - Pink Floyd : Ken
Singing the blues - Guy Mitchell : Rosemary
Cyprus Road - Van Morrison : Maurice
Sock it to 'em J.B - Rex Garvin and the Mighty Cravers: Jeff
Itchycoo Park - Small Faces : Dave
All I have to do is dream - Everly Brothers - Maggie
In the summertime - Mongo Jerry : Hilary
Bali High - Juanita Hall : Brenda
High Ho Silver Lining: Jeff Beck : Hilary
Streets of London - Ralph McTell - Rosemary
Only the Lonely - Roy Orbison: Maggie
Guantanamo - Celia Cruz : Helena
Heroes - David Bowie : Ken

Jeff

Book Group

WHILE PARIS SLEPT ... RUTH DRUART

I saw this book whilst in the supermarket and thought it looked interesting.

I particularly like the period in which it's set which switches from Paris 1944 to America 1953.

It features two couples, both French, one Jewish: Charlotte and Jean-Luc and David and Sarah.

Jean-Luc is sent to work on the railway in Drancy which transports Jewish people to Auschwitz. He tries to sabotage the line and in so doing sustains an injury and is taken to hospital where he meets Charlotte, a nurse there. On his recovery and return to work a Jewish woman being deported hastily thrusts her new-born baby son into his arms and begs him to save his life.

Then follows the escape from the Nazis of Charlotte and Jean-Luc with Samuel, the baby, and their subsequent life in America until their peace is shattered when they are informed by the Police that Sarah and David have survived the concentration camp and want their son returned.

I don't want to give more away but there is more details online if you are interested in reading this debut novel, which I finished it some weeks ago, but find I'm still thinking about it.

Another book I liked is The Dressmaker's Gift by Fiona Valpy which is set during the French Resistance.

Marian

If only we could do this we would all be happier

Over 70? A little something to ponder...

- 1 After loving my parents, my siblings, my spouse, my children, my friends, now I have started loving myself.
- 2 I just realized that I am not "Atlas". The world does not rest on my shoulders.
- 3 I have now stopped bargaining with vegetables & fruits vendors. A few pennies more is not going to burn a hole in my pocket but it might help the poor fellow save for his daughter's school fees.
- 4 I pay my waitress a big tip. The extra money might bring a smile to her face. She is toiling much harder for a living than me
- 5 I stopped telling the elderly that they've already narrated that story many times. The story makes them walk down the memory lane & relive the past.
- 6 I have learned not to correct people even when I know they are wrong. The onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.
- 7 I give compliments freely & generously. Compliments are a mood enhancer not only for the recipient, but also for me.
- 8 I have learned not to bother about a crease or a spot on my shirt. Personality speaks louder than appearances.
- 9 I walk away from people who don't value me. They might not know my worth, but I do.
- 10 I remain cool when someone plays dirty to outrun me in the rat race. I am not a rat & neither am I in any race.
- 11 I am learning not to be embarrassed by my emotions. It's my emotions that make me human.
- 12 I have learned that it's better to drop the ego than to break a relationship.
- 13 I have learned to live each day as if it's the last. After all, it might be the last.
- 14 I am doing what makes me happy. I am responsible for my happiness, and I owe it to myself. Happiness is a choice. You can be happy at any time, just choose to be! *Annick*

u3a Speakers in 2022

We began our year with a presentation from **David Allen** called '**The Amazing Mr Dickens!**' reminding us all of Victorian etiquette especially at Christmas.

In February we welcomed **Emma Boyd, Keeper of Art and Place at Gainsborough's House** who took us on a tour of this historical museum in Suffolk.

In March **Karl Lumbers**, an ambassador from **Trinity House Lighthouses** gave us an interesting insight into the history and current importance of the lighthouses around our coast.

In April following our AGM, Roger Smith gave us a presentation on the history of '**Sea Planes over Southampton Waters**' an area where he lived for many years.

The May meeting will be on the 2nd Monday in May due to the early Bank Holiday. We look forward to welcoming Jim Holmes who will show us photographs of his 7 years documenting industrial projects, copper mining and dam construction in South East Asia called '**Dig it Deep and Dam it up**'

In June our speaker will be **George Lockwood** who will tell us about '**Perennials in a Royal Garden**'

In July **Jim Stebbings** will talk about **The D'Oyly Carte family and The Savoy Hotel**

As I booked the speakers last Autumn, the committee decided all speakers would be on Zoom. This also enabled me to obtain speakers from around the country without the need for travel fees.

Now we are able to hold our meetings at Keene Hall, we hope that more people will feel confident in attending the actual meetings during the summer.

In August we will have a Garden Party on **1st August at The Galleywood Heritage Centre** and hope that many members will attend and that our Interest Groups can display their activities for everyone to view. *Di Angel*

Hi Everyone

FAREWELL.....

Just to let you know that Loretta is taking over as Groups' Coordinator, so please contact her should you need help & advice & also to give her your group list. May I thank you for all your contributions over the last three years & all the hard work you have put into your groups, I have really enjoyed meeting you & wish you all well for the future. All the very best, Wendy

MAIN MEETINGS : SUBJECTS / SPEAKERS

9th May	Jim Holmes	Dig it Deep and Dam it up Copper Mining and Dam Construction in S.E. Asia
6th June	George Lockwood	Hardy Perennials in the Garden Plants in a Royal Garden
4th July	Jim Stebbings	D'oily Carte, Savoy Hotel and Theatre Memories of these iconic venues
1st Aug		Garden Party at Galleywood Heritage Centre A Celebration for all u3a members
5th Sept	Steve Herra	The Iconic QE2 Story From launch in 1967 to departure in 2008



The next Newsletter will be published in September, as this one is later than usual, due to the AGM. I'd welcome articles at any time but they must be with me on or before July 26th for publication.

Look out for information from The Chairman or Groups Co-ordinator
Maggie



To Katya, aged seven, in a bomb shelter in Kyiv

All around you missiles
Are falling. Churches
You once knew won't
Be there anymore.
The streets you walked
Will be changed by
Blood and shelling
And bombs. It seems
The world's gone mad.
As the earth shakes
Not because of the rage
Of the Gods, but that
One man wants to
Win back his lost empire,
You will think that
Your world is being
Shattered forever. It is.

But out of this destruction,
Out of all this thunder, something new will
Come. And whatever happens
Your land will know
The courage of its soul,
Its people; and history
Will be re - written not
With the force of an autocrat
But by the steadfast hope
And desire to be true
To the beauty of your earth
And all you have
Suffered. Katya in your
Bomb shelter, we're with you
We're there in the shadows
We're there in the silence
Between the explosions...



Ben Okri

(extract from The Guardian -2.4.22)

War is a defeat for humanity Pope John Paul II

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			

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Music Performing: May 6th, July 15th, Sept 23, Dec 16th

