

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

I love a good quote and often when I read one it brings u3a to mind. 'Change is the key that unlocks new possibilities' and 'People work best when they are connected and contented' seem apt in terms of the spread of Canterbury u3a opportunities and activities available.

Canterbury u3a continues to flourish, which perhaps reflects a growing membership searching for new ways to be active, sharing skills, and continuing lifelong learning. An organisation of our size and complexity relies too on the happy connection between many, many volunteers who make things happen in Canterbury u3a; ranging from leading an activity to serving refreshments. Every volunteer is valuable and important from my perspective and I thank you all for your engagement and involvement.

The collective u3a spirit is pertinent as we head to the AGM on 10th April. You will know that such a meeting should not only consider past performance but more importantly ensure a stable and quality future for Canterbury u3a. In particular you will have noted that there are critical vacancies to be filled on the committee, which I trust is receiving your consideration, in order to maintain the dynamic nature of Canterbury u3a.

Please come along to the AGM, conscious that Canterbury u3a is run by the members for the members. I look forward to sharing the AGM with you.

Robin Terry



Important Dates

Friday 5 April: Monthly Joining Session: 10.30 to 12 at St Peter's Methodist Church, St. Peter's Street, Canterbury (Blue Room). Please let any interested friends know of this opportunity to join or, better still, bring them along.

Saturday 6 April: Gulbenkian Film Showing at 3 p.m.: See paragraph later in the Bulletin.

Wednesday 10 April: AGM at St Mary Bredin Church, Nunnery Fields, 2 p.m.

Thursday 9 May: Open Day 10.30–3.30. — *Please note change of advertised time.* —

The Open Day is our opportunity to 'show-case' activities that our u3a has to offer. It is an excellent opportunity for all members to meet up and bring family and friends along, and for interested people no longer in full-time employment to become members.



Cinema Group

Many members attended the amazing and thought-provoking film 'Anatomy of a Fall' and were treated to some superb acting performances. It was a joy to see so many of you and to feel a real 'getting together' buzz on a grey Saturday afternoon.

We are very grateful to Robin Terry, our chair, who has spent a lot of time and energy to revitalise this group started some years ago by Pam Mc Gregor. The good news is that Doreen Kalideen has offered to take this group on to give Robin some much-needed relief. Thank you, Doreen, from all of us.

The next screening is the acclaimed film 'Origin' on Saturday 6 April at 3 p.m. For more details and how to book see the separate Beacon email sent to you on 18 March.

And here is a notice from the University of Kent. The next Former Staff Association Talk. George Conyne will deliver a presentation entitled 'The forthcoming American election: Does President Biden have any Aces he can play or will he be Trumped in the end?'

WHEN: Wednesday 3 April, 6 p.m.

WHERE: Keynes Lecture Theatre 1

George Conyne was born in the United States and took his undergraduate and law degrees at Haverford College and Tulane University respectively. After clerking for a trial court judge, he graduated from Cambridge with a Ph.D. in History in 1989. After teaching at University College London, Keele and Birmingham, he taught history and American Studies at Kent, 1990–2018.

He is currently finishing a book on the U. S. and is working on a study of 'Quakers and the American Civil War', the judicial integration of the American South and on the historiographical problem of Adlai Stevenson.

After the lecture you are welcome to join us for a drink in Keynes Bar.

For us to have an idea of numbers, if you are interested in attending the talk, please register using the button.



Outing News

We are still stunned at the popularity of the William Morris/River Lee Outing and we now have two completely full coaches for Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th May. We should like to thank everyone for your patience and flexibility as we shuffled you between the coaches. If you would like to go and haven't yet applied we will have a waiting list for both days, as I am sure there will be some people who will need to drop out due to last minute priorities.

If you have already booked we will be confirming spaces very soon, if not already by the time you read this.

Rose and Tim



Holidays: Autumn Holiday 2024. Cheshire and North Wales

5 days from £639: Monday 16–Friday 20 September.

There will be some small changes to how we organise holidays, but I am still in charge of bookings and liaison with our travel agent. — HN

Our autumn holiday departs from and returns to Canterbury bus station. The setting-off time is likely to be around 8 a.m. (to be finalised with the tour company nearer the date). We try to get back to Canterbury around 6–7 p.m., but this is highly dependent on the traffic situation on the M25 on a Friday afternoon. There will be regular stops for coffee etc on the outward and return journeys. The coach always has a toilet on board.

We will be based in the 3* Best Western Hotel in Frodsham, Cheshire.

On the way to Cheshire we stop at the National Space Centre (entry included). The itinerary includes a walking tour of Chester and Chester Cathedral plus an afternoon in Llandudno and a morning in Port Sunlight with a tour of the Lady Lever Gallery. We also visit Jodrell Bank Observatory, National Trust Tatton Park and Bodnant Gardens. Our return journey is broken by a visit to the Pottery Museum in Stafford. All entry fees except NT are included in the cost of the holiday. A donation is anticipated for Chester Cathedral.

There are 20 single rooms at our disposal for which the single supplement is £79.

Enquiries and bookings are now open. For the most reliable receipt of further details, with brochure and booking form, email is the best. Contact me on helennatgrass@btinternet.com

For those who don't use the internet or email, please write to me with a stamped addressed envelope. I will send you a paper copy of the brochure and booking form. Helen Natgrass

Note that we do not include personal details in this web version. They are included in the information sent to you on 1st April.

Information about the Main Programme of Courses and Activities for Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025

The process of preparing our next Main Programme of Courses and Activities for Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025 is now underway. We hope to publish the programme in June and to open bookings in July. Should you have a course in mind that you might wish to offer as part of this programme and haven't already submitted the details, please get in touch the appropriate subject coordinator or Ursula, usteiger@u3acanterbury.org.uk.

We shall soon be moving towards the testing phase. This means that after Easter if you log in to the u3a booking website, <https://bookings.u3acanterbury.org.uk> you will find that the current programme has disappeared. At various times in the next couple of months all or part of the new programme will be visible for testing purposes. Anything booked during this testing phase, before formal booking is opened in July, will be deleted.

As ever, should you have any queries, or concerns about booking courses please do not hesitate to contact me.

Angela Tippett, Course Administrator, atippett@u3acanterbury.org.uk.



Forthcoming Meetings of Interest Sharing Groups

Knit and Natter: — 11 April 2 p.m. at The Dolphin, St Radigund's Street.

Folk Group: — 16 May 2.30 p.m. at ASDA Community Room.

English Heritage interest group.

In this proposed group I suggest initially we visit the 27 sites in Kent and the three sites in East Sussex. This could be achieved by planning one day a month. We could either visit one or—as some of them are quite small—two or three places in one day or half a day.

We would travel in our own cars, but possibly sharing the petrol costs between four or five people. English Heritage members can gain free access. Non-members would have to pay an entrance fee. However this may be a chance to see if you like visiting these sites. 3 or 4 entrance fees would cover your annual subscription.

In the first instance please contact Chris Plant so we can gain an idea of how many would be interested. Once numbers are established we can then plan a monthly outing for the rest of the year.

LEADER: Steve Casey



Summer Programme Activities and Courses

We should like to remind members that Summer Activities and Courses are free of charge unless otherwise stated in this programme.



Take the Plunge! Sea Swimming Group

Our summer sea swimming group will be on the beach and in the water as soon as the weather warms up a bit. Our recent 'inland' fish and chip lunches have been fun—some of us did not recognise each other dry and with normal clothes on!

Our friendly group meets at Seasalter, on the beach near the public toilets. There is a small parking charge from April–September 10–4. We are very far from triathletes. Absolutely anyone who wants to enjoy the beach and sea is welcome. Some people paddle, some jump up with the waves, some swim. Some don't go in the water at all. Bring your deck-chair and a flask of something warm to drink.

I circulate a monthly list of high tide times. Unless shown otherwise these will always be at Seasalter. You just come and join whoever is there. I do not co-ordinate who is going to swim every day.

We will be making some occasional variations to our programme this year. There will be a few swims at Tankerton (lifeguard hut) and some away-days. We are planning an away-day in the warmer weather to Sheppey to swim with Sheppey Blue-Tits, and one to Sandgate near Sheila's new abode.

We will have at least one swim at Herne Bay. We may also go to one of the tidal pools in/near Margate. We will organise a monthly 'fish & chips' on the beach. The centre of our activity remains Seasalter. There is no sewage outfall there, parking is not a problem and the quieter ambience suits us (there is also a convenient chip-shop nearby).

For those already in the group—let me know if you are no longer able to join in and I'll take you off my list. For those who never tried it before, get in touch with me and you will receive our monthly list of swim times. Come and try it—at least once!

Helen Natrass



Skiffle Group

MAXIMUM: 12, SESSIONS: 5. TUTOR / LEADER: Rob Fisk

DESCRIPTION: I call it a Skiffle Group because of the instruments we use, such as tea chest base, guitars, ukuleles, keyboard, harmonica etc. However we play a wide variety of popular music. If you play an instrument please bring it along. If not, singers are very welcome. (Remember—only two of the Abba Group played instruments).

I will provide song sheets with chords and lyrics, and I am happy to answer any queries.

WHEN: Weekly on Thursdays 10:30–12:00. 27 June to 25 July 2024.

VENUE: Chartham Hatch Village Hall, Bigbury Road, Chartham Hatch, Canterbury CT4 7NH

DIRECTIONS: There is parking at the hall and close by.



Reading Old Churches

This group is continuing for a further three months, April to June. We have one church visit each month, followed by a class to share our findings. The planned visits are in the East Kent area.

We look at architecture, windows and other important features including history and people associated with each church. We are a group of non-experts who are seeking to add to our knowledge and interest.

Occasionally there are charges for visits and members are responsible for their transport to venues.

The dates are: visits: 10 April, 8 May and 5 June and

discussion groups: 17 April, 15 May and 19 June at St Mary Bredin Church.

We can accept a few additional members at present.

For further information and to book a place please contact Chris Plant.



Canterbury Croquet Club would like to invite u3a members to taster sessions and refreshments. (A green fee of £5 per session would apply.)

VENUE: Polo Farm Sports Club, Littlebourne Road (A257) Canterbury, CT3 4AF. Bus stops nearby.

There are 3 laser level lawns and all the equipment necessary to play.

The taster sessions are to be held on: Wednesdays, 17 April; 1 May; 8 May starting at 10 a.m.

Saturday 4 May starting at 2 p.m.

If you are interested, please contact Jim Godden.



A journey into the world of Blood Transfusion.

I will give a potted history as to how I got into the world of blood transfusion and the places I have worked, followed by some of the challenges that are faced to ensure blood is available when required.

WHEN: 22 May, 10–12 and 3 June 2–4. Both sessions cover the same information.

VENUE: St Mary Bredin Church, Nunnery Fields, Canterbury.

TUTOR: Keith Kolsteren

BOOKING: to book a place please contact Chris Plant.



Nature's Meanings—a Symposium advertised in last month's bulletin had very few takers so Malcolm Andrews has re-worked the presentation of this subject and will now present it as a series of three lectures described below. Please note the **changed dates**.

A U3A Course of three online lectures: Tuesdays 11–12.30 on 16, 23, 30 April.

"Nature is perhaps the most complex word in the language" (Raymond Williams, *Keywords* 1976)

What is it that we mean when we think of 'going out into nature'? What are we hoping to experience? The whole issue of the value of the natural world—psychologically, ecologically, etc—resurfaced with significant intensity during the Covid period. At the same time we have constant reminders that 'nature' is becoming more fragile, more imperilled than ever before. So, given that people these days may be reflecting more often on various aspects of this 'nature', it seems timely for a kind of stock-taking, which we hope this course will offer.

Over 3 meetings of about 1½ hours each (a lecture plus discussion time) we will explore ideas of 'nature'. What has the word meant in the past? What are and what have been the implications of 'back to nature'? How do we understand and value nature today?

Session 1 Defining 'Nature', & Nature vs Culture:

1. Gardening Nature: the C18 Landscape Garden
2. The Picturesque: making Nature into Art.

Session 2 Communion with Nature:

1. Wordsworth and the Worship of Nature: 'Tintern Abbey' poem (1798)
2. Lifescapes: Experience of Landscape in C19 & C20 Britain.

Session 3 Nature Virtualised, Nature 'Therapy', and the 'End of Nature': examples from e.g. John Constable, *The Cornfield* & its legacy. Richard Mabey, 'Nature: The new Prozac?'

CONTACT: Chris Plant

Malcolm Andrews



Canterbury Bowling Club

Did you know that 63% of people playing bowls are over 65? There are 125,000 regular players in England of whom 35% are women.

It is a proven fact that bowling is good for your health. Bowls stretches and conditions your muscles. In a game of bowls you may bend 42 times, walk 1,250 metres and swing your arm over 40 times to send a bowl down the green. More than that, it is fun, social and a good way to meet new friends.

Why don't you just turn up at our Open Day on Saturday 27 April any time between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m? You will be made welcome. The only preparation you need is to wear shoes with a flat sole. All coaching is free.

We are just before Kent & Canterbury Hospital on South Canterbury Road.

More information on our website www.canterburybowlingclub.com



Climate Café

LEADER: Helen Howard.

Single session, Face to face.

Want to talk about climate change but not sure where to start? Perhaps if we talk to each other about our hopes and fears for the future of the planet it will be easier to take a positive approach. Join the conversation. There are two separate meetings. For either contact Helen Howard for details

a) Monday 22 April, 10.30 a.m.–12 noon. Baptist Church, Canterbury.

b) Thursday 2 May 2.30–4 p.m. The Ivy Barn, Littlebourne



German for Absolute Beginners — Taster Sessions

A small group of keen students have been meeting for the last two terms and will have some less formal meetings during the summer. Places are limited, but if you are interested and would like to join us please contact Ursula for dates, times and venue: usteiger@u3acanterbury.org.uk or 01227 711536.



Egypt's Western Desert, the Oases and Great Sand Sea

This four-week Zoom course will cover the Oases of Fayoum, Baharia, Siwa, Farafra, Dakhla and Kharga, and will include a journey through the Great Sand Sea close to the Libyan border. The sessions will deal with archaeology, geology, pictorial material covering each Oasis, and personal experiences gained during travel in desert regions.

Materials used have been gathered during many years of residence, travel and lecturing on the Middle East, which included a period of four years living and travelling throughout Egypt.

TUTOR: Roger Sharp, with Zoom Host WHEN: Thursday: 25 April, 2, 9, 16 May; 10.30 to 12.00.

Could members who intend to take part please let Roger know.



Latin Dance Tasters

WHEN: Tuesday afternoons, 7, 14, 21 and 28 May, 2–3:15 p.m.

VENUE: Canterbury Baptist Church, St George's Place Canterbury (opposite Waitrose).

In this course I shall be focussing on a different Latin dance style each session, including Merengue, Salsa and Rueda, Bachata and Cha Cha. The aim is to get ourselves moving, learn some new dances, and above all to have a lot of fun. Strictly this isn't! All welcome, whether you've done some of the previous Salsa classes or not. Men particularly welcome, to try and balance out the numbers a little! If attending wear smooth soled shoes if you can, and bring along a smile. Contact Tony Ullman.



Dress with the Planet in Mind

LEADER: Helen Howard.

DESCRIPTION: How do we make decisions about what clothes to buy and which brands to avoid?

What is green-washing and how do we recognise it? When fashion brands say their products are sustainable, what do they mean? What is our role as consumers if we want to protect the planet?

WHERE: Asda Community Room, Sturry Road; contact Helen Howard for details

WHEN: A single session: Thursday 23 May, 2.30–4 p.m.



Disco Dancing: In The Summertime (When the Weather is High) 2024

Once again there will be some Disco Dancing taster sessions during the summer. The dates are:

Monday 13 May 14.00–15.00

Tuesday 11 June 11.15–12.15

Wednesday 17 July 14.00–15.00

Tuesday 20 August 14.00–15.00

You are invited to attend any number of the sessions, or all four if you prefer.

If you've never joined us before, do come along and give it a go. Dance to tunes of the '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s and even some from this century. If you don't want to dance, come along and tap your feet, do the hand jive or just sit and listen.

VENUE: Baptist Church Hall, St George's Place, Canterbury CT1 1UT

MAXIMUM NUMBER: 30, MINIMUM: 10

BOOKINGS by email only to M Scott.



Waste Colonialism

LEADER: Helen Howard

COURSE DESCRIPTION: About 11kg of textiles per person are discarded each year by people living in Europe. What happens to the clothes we donate to charity shops or put into recycling bins? Where do they end up and what impacts do they have on the environment? What options are open to us as consumers? How realistic is recycling and the circular economy for fashion?

WHERE: Asda Community Room, Sturry Road; contact Helen Howard for details.

WHEN: A single session: Thursday 13 June, 2.30–4 p.m.



Greek Tragedy Euripides' last plays: Tradition and Innovation.

LEADER: Dr S. A. Barlow

WHEN: Wednesday 12 June and Wednesday 26 June, 10 a.m.–12 noon.

We shall study the *Bacchae* and the *Iphigenia in Aulis* in an attempt to find out how and why these late plays play so memorable a part in this poet's overall output and how the blend of old and new elements in the treatment of dialogue, character, chorus and plot create what have long been agreed are lasting tragic masterpieces.

Handouts on topics for discussion will be circulated before the classes.

VENUE: St Dunstan's Canterbury CT2 8AU.

BOOKING: by phone only.

MAXIMUM NUMBER: 10



Book Review: *The Secret Hours* by Mick Herron

I confess to make; I think I'm a great fan of Mick Herron. He may be no Le Carré, but his idiosyncratic metaphor and simile-rich style produce stories head and shoulders above most of the other writers in this genre that I tried. This particular book is primarily set in contemporary London but it begins in rural Devon with the line 'The worst smell in the world is dead badger'. That opening sentence was enough to capture me. The rest of the book is a well-paced hike through civil service bureaucracy used by cynical politicians in cahoots with the security services—and the mess that one person can make to what is, in essence, a cover-up. If, like me, you're a reader of spy stories I think you'll enjoy it.

This is what happened by Mick Herron

When I picked this up I was expecting the reliably constructed spy thriller written so well by the author. It's not like that at all. I shouldn't have ignored the four-word *Sunday Times* review on the front cover which read 'a chilling psychological thriller'. It is exactly that. Sure, the word 'spy' is used now and again but the story is actually about self-delusion, sociopathic wickedness, family alienation and pitiable naivety. The experience of reading it is like watching an elastic band being over-wound. The writing style is gripping however and I couldn't put it down once started. I simply had to know how it ended, whilst at the same time hoping it all ended well. I was trying to map out the possible twists and turns that might conceivably lead to the final pages. Thankfully, the worst didn't actually happen!

Reconstruction by Mick Herron

A nervous young man with a security services gun acquired by happenstance holds as hostages a nursery school teacher, the school's cleaner and two four year old pupils who'd been brought in early by their self-pitying father. The thirty-something teacher, Louise, arrived there from a high powered job in bank finance, the embittered cleaner hates her and everybody else, and the father fantasises about Louise as a way of giving himself 'life'. The Gun has a mystery to solve which requires the presence of a particular woman and a certain member of said security services. Although the bulk of the story emerges from the interactions within this small group closeted in one part of the school, key events unfold in parallel outside. Beyond the armed response unit, the press and the gawping onlookers there is a nasty piece of work by the name of Bad Sam Chapman digging and ferreting and trying to make sense of the merest hints of information. The title comes from the backstory, which centres on the so-called reconstruction work in the aftermath of the Iraq war. There are enough suspicions, twists and turns that the final chapter is both longed for and unwanted. This is a superbly written, well-paced bit of story-telling from an author I like a lot.

Bob Newport



Thank you for all your contributions, from a couple of sentences up to 250 words.
Keep them coming, as this is your News Bulletin.
Send them to Ursula Steiger: ursulae@btinternet.com.

