

Message from the Chair.

Dear Friends,

I usually review my diary (yes, I run a hand written Filofax, ha ha); before I write my monthly message. This time I was surprised at the number of opportunities where I had enjoyed your friendship in recent weeks.

From a business point of view the AGM on 12th April successfully eased Canterbury u3a into our new year 2023/4; thanks to your support. I particularly thank my committee colleagues for working with me to lead the various responsibilities key to the operation of a successful u3a. Many of the current committee (and non-committee) members have served long and intensive terms in their roles and would like to enjoy a break. Can I encourage you to consider helping us?

The annual lunch to say thank you to tutors, co-ordinators and hosts took place on 13th April. Prior to lunch, Ursula led a fascinating and highly participative discussion on a number of topics central to u3a course activities. Thank you for the many ideas expressed which will be considered at committee level in the next few months.

In terms of courses, I have personally enjoyed studying Charles Dickens; and playing Bolivia Canasta. Learn, Laugh, Live.

I was also privileged to meet many of you, at a meeting I hosted on 17th April, and learn of your involvement with research activities, through our links both with University of Kent, and Canterbury Christ Church. This is an area that I will work on sharing with you more in the next few months.

Please do come and support our Open Day on Thursday 18th May. I'm a fan of the concept that traditional ideas of retirement are being rejected. We remain productive and capable of sharing our knowledge, interests, and skills with others. Please bring along your non u3a friends to the Open Day to experience all that they are missing out on.

Robin Terry

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Important Dates

Thursday 18 May — Open Day at St Peter's Methodist Church and Hall. Please come along and bring friends, especially those who do not belong to u3a and are thinking of joining.

The details: Open Day will be held between 10.30 and 3 p.m. on Thursday 18 May. We still need volunteers for distributing leaflets before and on the day, helping to welcome visitors, setting up and clearing away, and generally being at hand to talk to visitors and promote our u3a.

If you can help—and please consider this seriously—contact Mary Laslett by phone or by email mems@u3acanterbury.org.uk as soon as you can. Many thanks.

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Invitation from University of Kent

Dr. Simon Scott is the lead organiser of the public engagement in the 'Pint of Science' research initiative for the University of Kent.

He has sent us an invitation to two public events to be held 22–23 May. Details are to be found here:

<https://pintofscience.co.uk/event/improving-your-breathing-ivf-optics-and-man-vs-ape>

<https://pintofscience.co.uk/event/phonetic-language-ai-humour-and-the-genetics-of-food>

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Canterbury and District u3a's first outing for years: Hidden London

The weather was kind to us all day, and the travel without incident, and on a route past so many fascinating buildings and other structures offering glimpses of London's multifaceted social history and development. At a 'Spoons' on Holborn we enjoyed a welcome tea or coffee with biscuit before a short drive to Smithfield.

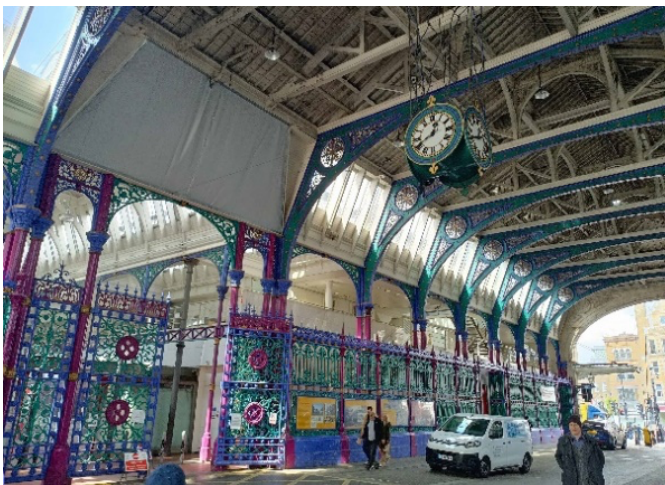
An area little visited by tourists perhaps, this (originally 'Smooth Field', a marshy area outside the city walls) is rich in history, and reflects some episodes of our history which are distinguished, and some we would rather forget. It was the site of numberless executions for well over a thousand years from the Romans on, some of the most historic commemorated with wall-plaques. Here was founded the world-renowned St Bartholomew's Hospital under Henry I in 1123 with the nearby St Bartholomew the Great: London's oldest parish church. Here too the Carthusians founded a monastery in 1371, which, after the Reformation, became mansion, school, and almshouse by turn. Here it was that the young Richard II met Wat Tyler during the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, and Tyler was slain. Here lived Sir John Betjeman once, and here is the meat market.

This imposing building was new to most of us, finished in its present guise in 1868, though with a history reaching back over eight centuries. Its grandiose ironwork construction is as splendid as one of the nearby magnificent railway termini of the period, and although its significance for the meat trade is less today than previously, it is still one of the sights of London.

Next came a leisurely trip on a narrowboat from 'Little Venice' through the Maida Tunnel and past Regent's Park and the Zoo to Camden Market. In this seemingly endless medley of stalls, kiosks, booths and shops, selling food of all provenances, garments of every type and description, and paraphernalia from the hippy era onwards (nostalgic for Third Agers?) we browsed and marvelled, or just retreated into a coffee-shop until the departure time.

Many thanks to Tim and Rose for arranging this their first day-trip so efficiently, and procuring such high-quality driver and guide.

Robert Mathews



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The ironwork roof of Smithfield Meat Market.

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'Sir John was here.'

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Charterhouse

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And a note from Rose & Tim

Thanks to everyone who made our last outing so memorable and enjoyable.

Reserve the date for our next outing in your diary: Tuesday 4 July. It will be to Romney Marsh and Dungeness. This is just a 'reserve the date' note as we'll be sending out more details and booking instructions in the next few weeks; also we hope to have a table at the Open Day to give out more information and to take bookings.

Rose and Tim

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Comic Relief

Members of the Canterbury and Herne Bay U3A came together to brave the elements again this year to raise some money for Comic Relief.

Luckily the weather was fairly kind to us, and we managed to raise £220.52 for the cause. Despite the rising cost of living, people were very generous, and we managed to exceed last year's total. I like to think that it was the quality of the singing and playing that swayed it, but sadly it brought home to me that this sort of fundraising is becoming a thing of the past.

It seems that fewer and fewer people are carrying cash, and some were asking if we had a card reader. I notice that the recent trend is for charities to get people to sign up for direct debits. Clearly they are recognising the need to change. However, for the now we were very well appreciated, with one person saying that it was refreshing to hear real music for a change. It brought to mind the immortal words of the bard: 'Roll over, Beethoven, and tell Tchaikovsky the news: Ukuleles are here to stay.' (Actually, I wrote the last bit—Chuck Berry forgot to add it!)

Rob Wood.



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Mixing of the generations.

It took a thoughtful recorder ensemble player, an enthusiastic school teacher, a helpful Church administrator, and our ensemble leaders, Janet and John, to create a wonderful mix of inter-generational get-togethers. Young recorder players from St Peter's Methodist Primary School visited our u3a ensemble and listened attentively to introductions, explanations and our playing.



Their questions were thoughtful and their interest infectious; we hope for more such sessions.

Thanks to all who made this happen.

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Note that we do not include personal details in this web version of the bulletin. Please refer to your personal copy for contact details.

Walks for the Summer

Rearranged walk to Chilham cancelled in March because of bad weather. The rearranged date will be Monday 15 May: 10:00. Canterbury to Chilham. 8 miles (16 if walking back).

MEET at gates of Canterbury Cemetery, Westgate Court Avenue, Canterbury, CT2 8JL. Parking on road.

A mostly flat walk to Chilham over fields (wear sensible shoes and be prepared for changing weather conditions!). Either bring packed lunch, or refreshments available in Chilham village as well as toilet facilities.

An alternative route back is by train from Chilham to Canterbury West station.

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE, please contact Philip Knight, either by email or phone, leaving a contact number.

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Friday 26 May at 10:30. Stour Valley and Canterbury Trail Walk

Around 2 hours and approximately 3½ miles long. There is a slight incline in a few places but nothing too onerous. Depending on the weather it can get a bit muddy underfoot if it has rained heavily. Meet by the George and Dragon Pub, King Street, Fordwich, CT2 0DB. The pub car park can be used if anyone is going to use their facilities, if not, there is parking in adjoining streets.

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE, please contact Paul Shakespeare.

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Thursday 15 June at 10:30. Goodnestone Park CT3 1PL

Join us for Jane Austen's 'Serpentine Walk' (just under 4 miles) around Goodnestone Park, where Jane used to stroll when visiting her brother.

A very nice café awaits us afterwards. 18th Century dress optional, but walking boots would be a good idea. To BOOK YOUR PLACE please contact Penny Stevens by email or text and leave a contact number.

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Tuesday 11 July at 10:30

Botany Bay Hotel, Kingsgate Ave, Broadstairs. CT10 3LG.

5½ miles

Ever wanted to see John Buchan's actual 39 steps? Or where Billy Bunter lived? Or where 1920s Hollywood golden couples spent their honeymoon? Then put on your walking boots and meet me outside the Botany Bay Hotel. After our walk, we can lunch or have a coffee overlooking the sea.

To BOOK YOUR PLACE please contact Penny Stevens by email or text and leave a contact number.

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Book Review

Two Hundred Years of Muddling Through by Duncan Weldon

If, like me, your knowledge of national economics is shallow, this book may be a help. Planning is changed almost every decade and policies rise and fall with the arrival of new governments. In Weldon's view, ideas matter more than brute political reality and it is these which are 'dangerous for good or evil'. At present, it seems that governments are voted in mainly by the elderly, by virtue of the fact that they vote more diligently than do the young and this will continue as they comprise the largest portion of the populace (unless, of course, the birth rate should rise).

I was pleasantly tickled by the following facts:

- 1 The Industrial Revolution was helped by Britain's riches in fast-flowing streams;
- 2 In the early sixties Britain's balance of payments was assisted by the enormous amount of foreign currency earned by The Beatles;
- 3 Queen Victoria interfered more actively in the work of government than any modern ruler would attempt to do.

For me, I shall profit from a re-read of this book but for the moment, I feel that I have benefitted from Duncan Weldon's readable text.

Barbara Vosper

★★★★★

Summer Programme Opportunities

Skiffle Group

MAXIMUM: 16, SESSIONS: 5

TUTOR / LEADER: Rob Fisk

Contact by email Music@u3acanterbury.org.com or phone.

Do you enjoy playing or singing pop music (or both)? If so, please come and join us.

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. DATES: 1 June to 29 June.

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

There is parking at the hall and close by.

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Read On?

For obvious reasons writers usually take particular pains with their first page. In each of these sessions we shall look closely at the first page of three or four classic or more recently successful novels. We shall look for hints as to what may follow, how our interest is engaged, how the writer guides our response, plus style, point of view and whatever else crops up. It doesn't matter whether you've read the books. I shall choose aiming for contrasts and supply copies of first pages.

WHEN: Two Fridays: 2 and 9 June, 10.30 a.m.–12 noon.

MAXIMUM: 8; MINIMUM 5

VENUE Bridge— more directions later by e-mail.

CONTACT: Carol Stewart, email (preferred), or telephone.

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Accordion Taster Sessions

WHEN: Monday 12 June, Monday 10 July and Monday 14 August from 1 p.m.

VENUE: Newport Court, Cowdrey Place, off Old Dover Road, Canterbury, CT1 3PB. On-site parking.

All levels welcome, accordions will be provided for these taster sessions if required.

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The Silk Roads: a Zoom course with host. LEADER: Roger Sharp

This, the first of a two-part overland adventure from Xian in China to Venice, will follow the Silk Road across Central China to the tribal market at Kashgar, before turning south to Pakistan, the Karakoram Highway, the Indus Gorge, Taxila and Islamabad. Given time we will also visit the spectacular Islamic monuments at Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva.

The course will be visually based, using materials gathered during my time as Tour Leader and traveller in these areas. Many aspects of local culture will be covered, including history, architecture, art, religion, geography and local customs.

The second part of the course will be included in the U3A winter programme, and will continue the journey through Iran and the Middle East to Istanbul, and then on to Venice.

BOOKING: email or phone. MAXIMUM: 60; MINIMUM: 20

WHEN: 5 sessions: 19 May, 9 & 23 June, 7 & 14 July, all at 10.30–12.00.

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Take the Plunge — Sea Swimming in May

Our group begins to gather momentum at Seasalter over May and I have sent out the swim rendezvous times. I have been recovering from foot surgery over the past weeks, and it is possible your 'wish to join' message has escaped my attention. If you have not received the May swim times and you would like them, contact me and I will include you in the group. There is likely to be a beach fish & chip night towards the end of May, so if you want to know more get in touch by email.

Helen Natrass

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Autumn Holiday to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Sunday 3 September to Thursday 7 September 2023.

With just over a third of the places already booked, there is still good availability of single and double rooms.

We have five days in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight staying in a Four Star hotel on the outskirts of Winchester.

The itinerary includes Stonehenge, Winchester Cathedral, The Hospital of St Cross, Butser Ancient Farm, a day on the Isle of Wight with Osborne House, a day in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, and RHS Wisley on the way home. This is another no-single-supplement holiday.

Cost: £689 per person, which includes the day-ticket to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Due to a number of factors, there is a limit of 10 double rooms and 15 single rooms on this holiday.

Taking into account the unreliability of the post at the moment, for efficacy, please email me for a copy of the brochure. If you are not connected to the internet, please write requesting the brochure with a stamped addressed envelope to Helen Natrass.

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