

# **Newsletter**

November/December 2023 No 18

#### Letter from the Chair



Greetings everyone. This will be my last official communication as your Chair, but I am looking forward to seeing lots of you at our fun AGM with the customary Mince pies and Mulled wine on 27 November (it is not too late to book your place. Please do tell us if you intend to come so that we do not run out of mulled wine!)

What a year it has been. Our first overseas holiday. A lot of new groups, some fascinating and enjoyable social activities, and a steady increase in our numbers. There have also been some financial developments which our Treasurer will tell you about at the AGM.

We have another New Members Meeting coming up, and after the influx of new members following our very successful Open Day (congratulations to all involved) I expect that we will shortly need another one!

I thoroughly enjoyed the trip to Portsmouth, especially as the weather was so good (after the terrible forecast, it came as a very pleasant surprise) and am looking forward to another fun evening at the forthcoming quiz. We also have our first visit to the Thursford Christmas Spectacular to look forward to.

Our next foreign holiday is going to be to Germany, and it sounds like a very interesting itinerary, so do contact Deb Skinner if you want more information.

We had a very interesting approach from our friends in Caterham Rotary, who are arranging for a free seminar on Cataract surgery to be available to their members, and they have invited us to attend if we wish. I had to experience that myself last year – as I am sure many of you have – and I must confess that I would have liked to know a bit more about what is involved. It will be at Merstham Cricket Club, RHI 3BB on 13 November, but will be given by a leading Ophthalmic Consultant, so if you wish to find out a bit more do go along. You can call O1883 420954 to confirm attendance.

Now please enjoy reading the latest Newsletter.

Michael Brigden Chair



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# Caterham & District u3a Annual General Meeting. Monday 27th November 2023, 2.30pm

Dear Member,

Once again our Annual General Meeting will be a LIVE event!!

To be held at: The United Reformed Church, Harestone Hill, Caterham, CR3 6SX

You will soon receive, either via Beacon email or letter, an AGM Information Pack containing the following:

- The Meeting Agenda
- Minutes of the 2022 AGM
- Treasurer's Report
- Accounts

Please note that these documents will also be available on the Caterham and District u3a website, together with details of the current committee members and some of the group leader reports.

Please advise us if you intend coming to the meeting as this helps us with setting out the seating and with refreshment catering.

Whether you are able to attend the meeting or not, it would be much appreciated if you could submit any questions with regard to "matters arising from the 2022 AGM minutes" or under Any Other Business ahead of the meeting – by noon on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023. This enables your committee to do any research needed to answer the question ahead of the meeting.

Any nominations for members to serve on the next Branch Committee should also be sent in by noon on the 13<sup>th</sup> November.

Please send questions etc. to Ray Jessop at:

Following the formal business part of the meeting, it is very much hoped that you will join us for a social get together with mince pies and mulled wine.

Your support for the Caterham and District u3a in attending this year's AGM, is very much appreciated.

Ray Jessop

#### Quiz

Our winter quiz is on November 18<sup>th</sup> with Philip Wright as quizmaster and Lyn Robinson–Jones as score keeper. It promises to be another evening full of friendly competition between the teams with a break for fish and chips. We are now fully booked with a small waiting list although I am sure we will have at least one more quiz next year if you didn't get in this time.

Paul Knight Quiz organiser

# Yoga

Although there is a very enthusiastic hard core to the group, the Yoga Group is struggling at the moment with low numbers and would welcome anyone who would be interesting in joining. The group is led by Dimi Booth – a qualified and experienced teacher (https://www.feelgoodyoga.co.uk) We meet at Warlingham Methodist Church on Thursdays at 3pm. Please see <a href="https://u3asites.org.uk/caterham/page/112389">https://u3asites.org.uk/caterham/page/112389</a> or contact me for more information or to join.





## **Groups Coordinator Update**

I'm so excited about all our wonderful groups.

Do you know that we have 76 groups? Isn't that fantastic.

So often when a group is mentioned I get a reaction of "I didn't realise we had that group"! I urge you to take a moment to look on the website at all the groups on offer https://u3asites.org.uk/caterham/groups. Hopefully there will be something of interest for you.

Of course if you can't find what you are looking for do let me know - I'm always happy to get more ideas.

Martin has started an Italian for Beginners group. So successful I think it is full but if you are interested do contact him.

We now have a Tennis group. Marina will be delighted to hear from you.

I am intrigued by the latest group to be offered – Jassen. Here is an option to try something which for most of us will be completely new – I must confess I had not heard of it. Bruno tells you all about it below.

Swimming is up and running (sorry – I mean 'up and swimming'!). Mike Brigden tells me it is great fun. Do find out more from Mandy

Creative writing is doing well. They are happy to have more members. Dancing has new members but would still welcome more.

I was recently asked about the possibility of a Keep Fit group. In fact there is a great free one for over 55s at Warlingham Sports Club on Thursday mornings at 11am. Open to everyone – we don't need to start a separate one.

As always a huge thank you to all Group Leaders and Administrators - without them our wonderful selection of groups would not exist.

Everything within our u3a runs because members are willing to contribute. If you don't already do so please think about what you can offer.

Best wishes Liz (Whittaker)

# Jass (a Swiss Card Game)

Jassen is very popular in Switzerland and has its origins in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The first playing cards are dated back to 1597 and were printed on a mixture of wood and cloth. Some of these original cards are still on display in the Swiss National Museum. The original game has evolved over the years but the playing cards have only changed slightly and maintained their original themes with Aces, Kings, Lords and Peasants. In a variation of the game when choosing a trump suit, the highest card is the peasant and not a King or Ace which according to history dates back to 15th century Austria when a peasant stabbed a King to death. The most popular version of the game is a 4 player card game played in pairs, but there are variations for 2 and 3 players. The game does have some similarities with bridge, but does not have the complex bidding process and most of the learning comes through playing the game. In the Swiss-German part of Switzerland, the original colourful cards Bells, Roses, Shields and Acorns are still used whereas in the Swiss-French part, it is the more standard cards of Diamonds, Hearts, Spades and Clubs.

So I hope that background has caught your interest and you would like to find out more about the proposed group...



The location for this Group is in Caterham and the timing will be finalised once we have enough interest to start the group. This will be either one afternoon or one evening per week starting in the New Year. It does not take long to learn the basic rules and progress to playing the game which makes for a very sociable afternoon/evening.

To register your interest go to <a href="https://u3asites.org.uk/caterham/page/132055">https://u3asites.org.uk/caterham/page/132055</a>

#### **Bletchley Park Visit**



We set off from Caterham at 9am for out visit to Bletchley Park - once the top-secret home of the Codebreakers of World War II. We had multimedia guides so we could learn all about what went on during the war in the mansion and many huts.

The estate housed the Government Code and Cypher School, which regularly penetrated the secret communication of the German enigma. There were almost 9,000 people working round the clock. The team of codebreakers including Alan Turing, Gordon Welchman, Hugh Alexander. Bill Tutte and Stuart Milner-Barry. Here, unsuspected by the Germans, the famous Enigma codes were broken, almost continuously throughout the war. The nature of the work at Bletchley remained secret until many years after the war. It is said that the work at Bletchley Park shortened the war by up to two years.

We were able to visit the mansion and surrounding huts where the codebreakers worked night and day. There were multiple interactive exhibitions on site and lots of information to take in.

Among the exhibits were the story of the Bombe machines in the actual location that housed the machines which helped break Enigma codes and a working model of the machine.



The time went very quickly and all too soon we were wending our weary way back to the coach for our return journey to Caterham.

Joyce Jessop



# Caterham & District Short Mat Bowls Group



We started this group in June 2021, while still wrestling with the effects of the pandemic, but, undaunted, the group has grown swiftly and is enjoying great success. Although starting from scratch, nine members have now played matches for the London Short Mat Bowls Association, which is a tremendous achievement, and puts us in the top three of clubs providing the most players for London. We are also playing friendly matches against other local short mat clubs and have just joined one of the local leagues, benefitting greatly from

the experience.

Short mat bowls is just like outdoors bowls but played indoors on a mat that is 45 foot long by six foot wide. We play at the Queen's Park Pavilion, Caterham, on

Tuesdays from 15:30-17:30. Very little strength is needed and ladies and gents play equally.



We still have places available in the group so, if you are interested in joining or just finding out more about short mat bowls, don't hesitate to get in touch.

By the way, here are some members in their brand new u3a kit. Don't they look the bees knees!



Roger Dale

## British Manufacture u3a Talk, Monday 25th September 2023.

The talk on Monday 25th September was given by Richard Markson: the subject of "British Manufacture". Richard is a professional historian with a big interest in British Manufacture and has worked in defense and aerospace, the rail and automotive industries.

It does seem that only bad news gets reported. The good news, and it does exist, is seldom shown on TV. We do manufacture. to a very high standard, equipment relating to: Ships, (high quality) Electronics, Medical Devices and Drugs. Shall I go on? Tractors, Buses, Trains and Aircraft. There is also Control Systems for Spacecraft.

We actually export more food to Europe than we import from there.

When Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon, they wore





- New factory in Tilbury to employ 1,000 people
- SeAH Wind building new plant in Teesside
- Largest factory of its type in the world. Will create 750 jobs
- SPTS Technologies to build new plant in Newport, Wales creating
- Ford Motor Company invested in a new advanced battery factory in Liverpool to support its global electric vehicle production

special thermal suits under their far more visible spacesuits. These were made in Britian.

Today, the tin mines of Cornwall are being reopened. Not for tin, but for a material that was abandoned/discarded by the tin miners as being worthless: Lithium. A material that is essential in the manufacture of batteries, for electric cars and household usage. The old spoil tips are worth a fortune.

To conclude, with our chests puffed out, Britain is the 8th largest manufacturing nation in the world.

Things are currently Very Good for British Manufacture.

Ray Jessop

# Open Day 22nd September

We had a fabulous response to the request for volunteers and groups in the last newsletter, so thank you to everyone who participated and made it such a great day. We signed up over 20 new members and many of the groups signed up a significant number of new members too.

I was introduced to members from surrounding u3as who said they were very impressed with what we do and were considering joining us in the New Year. A lot of visitors commented on how friendly and approachable we are.

One measure of total visitors is the number of coffee cups used which was about the same as last year.

All in all, a good result with plenty of support from volunteers on the tea and coffee, welcome table and Church Walk.

#### **New Members**

The Open Day held in September attracted a great deal of interest and a large number of visitors wanting to join. As a result we have gained no less than 35 members since the last Newsletter.

We would like to offer a very warm welcome to:

Huw and Marian Wiliams from Bletchingley; Marina and William Barclay, Sue Chapman, Graham Dungate, Helen Hammer, Robert Harris, Susan Ibbetson, Linda Rennison and Christine Ringer from Caterham; Jacqueline Atchison from Coulsdon; Gill Hodges from Godstone; Sue Baxter, Anita Brown, Adrienne Knight, Pam McHardy and Stephanie Nicot from Kenley; Irene Alexander from Limpsfield Chart; Jane Keynes and Janet Overell from Old Coulsdon; Bridget Parry-James from Oxted; Richard Buchan and Alan Morley from Purley; Hazel and Robert Goodbody from Sanderstead; Robert Fairbrother from South Croydon; Geoffrey and Linda Attwell, Pamela Harper and Derek Nickless from Warlingham; Nicolette Lansdowne and Suzanne Phillips from Whyteleafe and Penny Hutson from Woldingham.

# Coach Trip to Portsmouth 20th October 2023



The weather forecast was not good, but two coach loads of members braved up and travelled to Portsmouth and once we were all aboard, the sun shone and it was a beautiful warm sunny day!

There was plenty to do once we got to Portsmouth: some explored the Historic Dockyard,

some took the opportunity for a little retail therapy in Gunwharf Quays, and a few brave souls walked along the seafront to Southsea.

The Historic Dockyard contains several historic buildings and ships including HMS Warrior, HMS Victory and the remains of the Mary Rose. Gunwarf Quays, which is built on the site of HM Gunwharf, is home to designer shops and some great restaurants, where lots of our members enjoyed lunch. Some of

us were brave enough to go to the top of the Spinnaker Tower, which rises above the quays to 560 feet. A glass floor at the top of the tower was not for the faint hearted but a few braved it. I was told by a member of the staff that if you are not keen on lifts it takes a fit person about an hour to climb the 560 stairs.





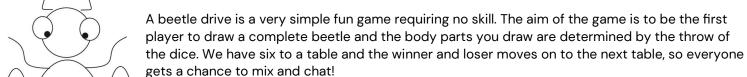




# A date for your diaries..... 20th February 2024

As our last beetle drive was such a success, and many of you have asked us to do it again, we are pleased to announce that we are arranging another one on Tuesday 20th February 2024 at the Surrey National Golf

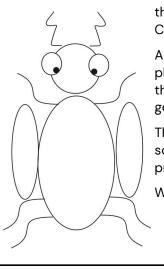
Club in Chaldon.



There will also be tea or coffee and delicious cakes served during the break. For anyone wanting something a little stronger, the bar will be open. Unfortunately the golf club have raised their prices this year so the cost will be £13 each.

We will email everyone about booking a place and payment details nearer the time.

Rita & Peter Dael Social Committee Members



# **NEW GROUP** Philosophy

I am planning to start a philosophy group in the new year, and understand that there are several members who have already expressed an interest. The date, time and place have not been decided, but I'm currently aiming for a Wednesday afternoon, somewhere in Caterham, probably monthly.

My plan is to probably do most of the talking in the first meeting, but after that, I think the u3a model of everyone contributing as much as they wish will suit nicely. Each subject will, of necessity, be brief, but the initial meeting structure will probably be along these lines:

Philosophy = the love of wisdom. Ancient Greek origin

Three pillars of western philosophy, Metaphysics (the study of reality), Epistemology (the study of knowledge) and Value Theory (the study of ethics and values)

Rather than a strictly chronological line – pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, etc., etc. – I favour taking a subject, say Beauty, or perhaps Truth, and looking at how it has been tackled over the years.

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Resources. What to read/watch/listen to? Original sources, or their interpreters? Novels?

Biographies? All of the above?

We would then discuss a topic, or approach, for the next meeting

To find out more and register your interest, go to the website page <a href="https://u3asites.org.uk/caterham/page/130905">https://u3asites.org.uk/caterham/page/130905</a>

Bill Barclay

#### Visit to Guildhall, 12 October 2023

Guildhall is, essentially, the town hall of the City of London and the Corporation is effectively the town council. On the day of our visit, Common Council was due to meet, and again, think of your local town council meeting. Once you understand this, and multiply that several times, you can begin to get how the City of London operates and how Guildhall plays a part in the City's life.

The history of Guildhall dates back to medieval times, when citizens of the city would come here to pay their taxes, or 'geld', which is where we get the word 'guild' from. Today the Guildhall complex is a mix of architecture ranging from the medieval crypts to the Art Gallery designed by Richard Gilbert Scott built in the 1980's.





Our guide Kate began by giving

us a history of the complex, explaining how the City and Guildhall came into being before showing us into the Old Library, which is now used for City events. We saw the Crypts, with their beautiful stained glass windows depicting historic figures who had had an impact on the City as well as remembering the Blitz of 1940 which had a devastating effect on the building. Finally, we saw the Great Hall where City Guardians Gog and Magog watch over events in the Hall.

Guildhall Great Hall is the third largest civic hall in England and has been the setting for famous state trials, including that of Lady Jane Grey in 1553. Today, Guildhall plays an important role in the City, providing a venue for great ceremonial occasions such as the annual Lord Mayor's Banquet, elections of the Lord Mayor and meetings of the City's elected assemblies, Common Council, as well as being hired out for corporate events.

Lesley Day

# THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE - BACKSTAGE TOUR, 18th OCTOBER 2023



Fifteen members of the London Discovery Group enjoyed a back-stage tour of the Royal Court Theatre.

Our guide, Harvey, was very knowledgeable about the theatre and its history, and, before we set off, he showed us lots of photos detailing some of the changes that had been made to the building over the years.

We were shown into the two separate theatre spaces, and marvelled at the flexibility of the place, which is famous for putting on plays by new writers; often quite 'edgy'.

In one of the theatres we were able to watch staff at work as they were rigging up for the next production.

We also saw plenty of the back-stage areas (what a warren!) including the dressing-rooms, the wardrobe area and the teams responsible for marketing and liaison.

Harvey was able to answer all of our questions, and did not mind over-running his allotted time, as we spent nearly ninety minutes on the tour.

A very worthwhile visit.

Phil Wright

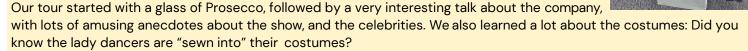
## London Discovery Visit to DSI London.



28 lady members of our u3a and 2 brave gentlemen went on a visit to DSI London. This may not sound very exciting, but they are a very successful local Croydon company that makes all the

costumes for "Strictly Come Dancing". Founded by Geoffrey Hearn and Peggy Spencer (I knew Peggy quite well and some of you may remember her too), it was doing reasonably well supplying ballroom and Latin dresses for dance enthusiasts, until the advent of "Strictly". DSI won the contract to supply the costumes when the show was launched, and have held that contract ever since.

The show producers are very demanding, and during the time that the series is running, DSI are extremely busy. It is obviously time critical, but they cannot prepare in advance, due to the nature of the show. An interesting fact is that the dresses for the show are hired, not purchased, so they remain the property of DSI.





Then there was a tour of the production facilities, for which we were divided into two groups, as the factory is quite cramped. The group that was not doing the tour were invited to try on some of the

dresses (although they were not sewn in!)

During the tour we were encouraged to speak to the craftsmen and women, although we obviously tried not to distract them. I think that everyone was amazed at the quality of the workmanship, especially the gentleman who sewed all the sequins on the dresses by hand! I have selected some of the most interesting photos, with perhaps the star exhibit being the dress that was worn by one of the celebrities for "Movie Week" and was then exhibited in Harrod's: "The Wicked Dress"!



## The Bus Pass Adventurers' Visit to Crystal Palace Park

On Monday 23rd October the Bus Pass Adventurers went forth from Caterham to the beautiful Crystal Palace Park, taking two buses to get there: a 407 and a 410, changing at West Croydon.

We were very fortunate to have with us u3a member Grete Hauge who is an experienced guide who lived in Crystal Palace for 25 years.

We started our tour at the train station, built for the Crystal Palace itself, in 1854, to serve the 2 million annual visitors when it was moved from its original location in Hyde Park! (From one park to another). The station has recently been refurbished and now looks terrific.



From here we moved on to the location of the palace itself. Sadly, only the foundations are now there to be seen after the Crystal Palace itself was destroyed by fire in 1936. You can see

by the size of the foundations how enormous the famous "glass box" would have been.

We moved on for a walk around the park, taking in the National Sports Centre, Olympic Size swimming pool and the Grandstand for music concerts: the Crystal Palace Bowl, where Bob Marley and the Wailers played their largest and last London concert in 1980. The Bowl fell into disrepair and was replaced by the Crystal Palace Concert Platform,

which has an angled oxidized steel roof above a hardwood stage, known locally as the Rusty Laptop. Well, it is rusty!!





important of all are the world famous Dinosaurs!! Commissioned in 1852 and unveiled in 1854, they are still to be found there!

In the past, the park has been used for motor racing events, FA Cup finals, and the mighty Crystal Palace football team played there before transferring to Selhurst Park. (Yet another Park).

Following the very educational visit to the park, the group slipped off to the White Hart pub for a spot of lunch before walking to the bus station to retrace our steps, on the bus that is, to Caterham.

Many thanks to Grete Hauge for her help and guidance through the park.

Ray Jessop











#### Caterham and District u3a Festive Lunch

We look forward to welcoming you to our annual Festive Lunch

on **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024** from 12:00 noon with lunch served at 1:00pm at Bletchingley Golf Club, Church Lane, Bletchingley, RH1 4LP

Please use the attached Booking Form to let us know your requirements. (Include the optional drink order if required).

This year we are providing a Two-course lunch (with tea or coffee and Mince Pies) for £27.50.

You can choose between a starter and main course, or main course and dessert. (Main courses are served with seasonal vegetables).

You can add an optional drink, £3.50 for a glass of red or white house wine or £1.00 for a flute of non-alcoholic sparkling elderflower. Please note that the optional drink can only be ordered in advance and will not be available on the day at that price. Other drinks can be purchased from the bar on the day at normal bar prices.

£27.50 - 2 courses

£31.00 - 2 courses and a glass of wine

£28.50 - 2 courses and a glass of sparkling elderflower

We shall have our usual Quiz and free Raffle.

#### Payment:

Make your payment using BACs transfer:

A/C name Caterham & District U3A, account number 11067721 and sort code 60 04 35 using "Festive" and your name as the reference.

Email your order and confirmation of payment to Sheila Frost

Alternatively, you can pay by cheque:

Send your booking form or order request, with a cheque made payable to Caterham & District U3A to Sheila Frost

You will receive a confirmation that your booking has been received.

We are looking forward to seeing you on Friday 12th January.

With best wishes
Sheila Frost
Social Committee





## Festive Lunch, Friday 12th January 2024 Booking Form

+<del>1</del>+ Name 1 Name 2 Name: tick tick Starter LEEK, POTATO & ROSEMARY SOUP Served with fresh bread and butter PRAWN COCKTAIL Prawns in a Marie Rose sauce, served on a bed of lettuce with brown bread and butter SMOKED SALMON & CRAYFISH TIMBALE Served with lemon mayonnaise and brown bread and butter TOMATO & MOZZARELLA BRUSCHETTA With fresh basil and a pesto drizzle All served with a selection of seasonal vegetables and potatoes Main TRADITIONAL ROAST TURKEY Traditional hand carved roast turkey crown, gammon, roast potatoes, roast parsnips, seasonal vegetables, sausage wrapped in bacon, stuffing ball and turkey gravy ROAST BEEF AND YORKSHIRE PUDDING Served with roast potatoes, roast parsnips, seasonal vegetables and a rich red wine gravy SALMON FILLET Succulent salmon fillet served with a lemon and white wine sauce, crushed new potatoes and a selection of seasonal vegetables ASPARAGUS, RED ONION AND VEGAN CHEESE TART served with a salsa verde crushed new potatoes and a selection of seasonal vegetables Dessert TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS PUDDING with brandy sauce RICH STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING with toffee sauce and vanilla ice cream LEMON TART served with raspberry coulis CHEESEBOARD served with crackers and chutney Drinks Glass of House Red Wine £3.50 Glass of House White Wine £3.50 Flute of Sparkling Elderflower £1.00 Dietary Requirements Sit with Group/Friends

Email your <u>order</u> and confirmation of payment to Sheila Frost (If sending by post, it would be useful if you could also let me know that you are booking this way).

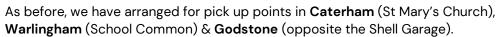
## Berlin Explorer Saturday 8 — Friday 14 June 2024

As I'm sure you know, we're planning a coach trip to Berlin next June. As with the one to Versailles this last summer, we're using Woods Travel of Bognor, a long established (over 50 years) family-run coach operator.

This seven-day tour includes all coach travel, cross-channel ferry crossings (with meal on board) and half-board hotel accommodation as well as a guided tour of the Möhne Dam, a 2-hour guided walking tour of Berlin, entry to Sanssouci Palace with audio guided tour, entry to Charlottenburg Palace, again with audio guided tour and a 90-minute boat trip from Charlottenburg Palace back to Berlin. You will also have free time to explore Berlin &

löhne Dam

Potsdam.



Currently we still have space available on the coach. The trip is fantastic value at £1,089 per person in a twin/double room. There is a single room supplement of £290. Deposit, due now, £100 per person. Full payment due in the u3a account by 5/4/24.

Should you not have travel insurance, it can be arranged by the coach operator, Woods Travel at £67.



I have had questions from people worried about travelling alone. Please don't be worried! We have a number of people travelling alone/in single rooms. One of the beauties of a coach holiday is that whilst you may have an allocated seat,

where you can stow your bits and bobs around you/overhead, you can move and sit with other people (provided all parties agree to moving seats temporarily). I know from past experience that lifelong friendships can be made on this type of trip – you chat on the coach, whilst at lunch/supper/breakfast and when going around the various venues.

On this trip, for instance, there's a guided tour of the Möhne Dam, with time for a coffee break too (great time to chat and admire the scenery) a boat trip – another great opportunity to mix with different people, a walking tour (you can leave part way through, or not do it at all if walking's not your thing – so long as you tell someone that you're going!) and two palaces!



Charlottenburg Palace



As it's half-board (with meal on the ferries too) you only have to worry about the cost of lunch, drinks and souvenirs! Don't forget to send me a postcard...

If you'd like to see the full itinerary, hotel details etc., please drop me an email and I'll send it out to you

Deb Skinner

# Online Talks and Learning Events

Talks and Learning opportunities on subjects such as: Stay Safe Online/Climate Change/Hadrian's Wall events/Philosophy and Sport/World Faith/Bletchley Park/Family History and much more....

www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events

Copy date for the next Newsletter is **3rd January 2024**Send to **Deb Skinner**