



## **IMPORTANT**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE  
MONTHLY MEETING ON  
FRIDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024 HAS  
BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO THE  
CLOSURE OF THE FRIARY HALL**

**The next monthly meeting will take  
place at the Friary Hall on  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 2.30pm**



Crawley u3a

## Monthly Newsletter: March 2024



*Where was I in Crawley when I took this photo? (Answer on page 17)*

### Monthly (and other) meetings

Dates for your diaries below. All meetings start at 2.30pm, with the exception of the coffee mornings and the annual fees meeting, and are held at the Friary Hall, Haslett Avenue:

- **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March** – **Monthly meeting cancelled (see note on page 6)**
- **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April** – Martin Lloyd, *Becoming a Famous Author*
- **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May** – Andy Smith, *Prosthetic Perils*
- **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June** – Derrick Hughes, *More Heads and Tails*
- **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July** – Coffee morning at 10.30am
- **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July** – Neil Sadler *'(Almost) Death in Paradise: The Caribbean, Pirates and Rum'*
- **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July** – Annual Fees Meeting at 11.00am (provisional)
- **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September** – Open Afternoon
- **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October** – Dr Janet Pennington, *Sussex Inn Signs*
- **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October** – Coffee morning at 10.30am
- **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November** – Annual General Meeting
- **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Party

### **Coffee morning on 20<sup>th</sup> February**

As it was a cool, damp morning, we were delighted with the turnout for the coffee morning. Some of us (no names!) were unable to resist the temptation of the book stall. It was a perfect opportunity for members to meet up with friends for a chat as well as make new friends.



The next coffee morning will be held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July at 10.30am at the Friary Hall. There will be a book sale and a jigsaw puzzle and DVD swap.

### **u3a Festival 24**

You may remember that I mentioned this Festival, which will take place in York from 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> July, in a previous newsletter. The u3a are expecting high demand for tickets for the festival and suggest that if anyone is interested in attending, they should secure a festival ticket before booking accommodation. If you would like more information, follow this link: [u3a - Festival 2024](#)

## Crawley u3a Spring Outing 2024

Weald and Downland Museum

Wednesday 15th May 2024



Depart 9.30am Crawley Bus Station stand E

Please call my mobile number if you are going to be late  
although we will only wait for a maximum of 10 minutes

On arrival at the Museum, we will split into two groups for a private tour by the Curator of the Gridshell workshop and artefacts store.

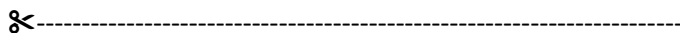
You will have free time to have refreshments in the Cafe at your own expense or bring a picnic. The Museum doesn't provide a walking guided tour and you will be given a map of the buildings to wander at your own pace. There are many uneven paths and narrow staircases in the historic buildings and your walk will be mainly outdoors so please wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

The coach will leave the Museum at 3.00pm and the approximate time of return to Crawley Bus Station will be 4.30pm.

The cost of £30 includes coach travel and tip, Museum entrance and Gridshell entrance.

Please use the booking form on page 5 and send it with your cheque payable to Crawley u3a with your membership number and date of the outing on the back of the cheque to Liz Tennant, 1 Woodcot, High Street, Partridge Green, RH13 8HX **by 31st March 2024**. Please keep this part of the sheet so you have the booking details. There is no need to send a stamped addressed envelope. Bookings will be allocated on a first received, first confirmed basis and confirmations will be sent by email or phone.

Bookings are non-refundable. [Liz Tennant](#) 01403 711468 or 07394 653430.



### **BOOKING REQUEST FORM**

#### **Weald & Downland Museum 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

Name and Membership Number:

Email Address:

Your Landline Number:

Your Mobile Number:

Emergency Contact Name and Number:

### **Photos and articles for the newsletter**

I would like to encourage more of our members to send me photos and articles for the newsletter.

However, one thing to bear in mind is that if you take photographs of people, especially ones taken indoors, it is important to seek their permission first and also to tell them where the photograph(s) will be placed, e.g. in the newsletter, on our Facebook page and/or the website.

## **Cancellation of March monthly meeting and talk**

As you may know, we had to cancel this month's talk and monthly meeting due to the closure of the Friary Hall for maintenance work. Given the short notice of this closure and the lack of suitability of the alternative venue offered, the Committee felt that they had no choice but to cancel the meeting. I apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause you. I am delighted to report that [Graham Crozier](#) has been re-booked to give his talk on *Mark Lemon and his Circle* in March 2025.

## **Report on February's monthly meeting**

As I left the hall on Friday, after the monthly talk, several people said, "Good luck with writing that up, Jean". Well, yes, where do I even begin to do justice to this performance? To call it a "talk" doesn't seem right, but here goes ...

Over 100 people were in the hall to welcome the splendid figure of Henry VIII, dressed in Tudor finery and sporting a squeaky codpiece (don't ask!). He told us about his six wives, putting paid to many myths about the marriages, and telling us some interesting facts that I certainly had forgotten, if I ever knew. For example, he was married to his first wife, the Catalan Catherine of Aragon, for 24 years; he dearly loved his third wife Jane Seymour, mourning her for several years after she died following the birth of his son, the future Edward VI. He had loved, and hoped to marry, Christina of Denmark before making a misguided fourth match instead, with Anne of Cleves, misled by Holbein's flattering portrait of her. He called her "the Flanders Mare"; there's no record of what she called him! Catherine Parr, who survived him, was the first published female author in the modern world, and thanks to her women are now included in the line of succession.

The room was filled with laughter for most of the time. Sellar and Yeatman, in "*1066 and all that*" describe Henry VIII as "a strong king with a very strong sense of humour", and I'm sure we who were there would agree that Tony Harris fits that description well. We look forward to seeing him again, in one of his other guises. William Wallace, Donald Trump, Margaret Thatcher? Whoever he becomes I know they will be warmly welcomed.

[Jean Austin](#)

### Monthly meeting (continued)

The good news is that Tony Harris will be returning in February 2025 to speak to us again. Watch this space for who he will appear as next time!



Thanks to [Monique Tovey-Mansfield](#) for this splendid photo of Tony Harris. If you would like to see more of Monique's excellent photos of Tony then why not head over to our Facebook page: [Crawley u3a | Facebook](#)

### **Air Rifles: new afternoon sessions**

I am delighted to announce that our Air Rifles Group can now offer afternoon sessions, in addition to the morning ones, with effect from Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March. The afternoon sessions will run from 2.00-4.00pm. If you would like to know more about the group follow this link:

[Crawley u3a: Air Rifles \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://Crawley u3a: Air Rifles (u3asites.org.uk)). There are still some places left for the afternoon session. Expressions of interest to [peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Bridge for Fun 1 and 2**

A reminder that we have two Bridge Groups: Bridge for Fun 1 which meet every Thursday morning from 9.30am to 12.30pm and Bridge for Fun 2 which meet every Tuesday afternoon from 1.00 to 4.00pm. Both groups meet at Three Bridges Cricket Club.

The first session is free but if you decide to join the group then the cost for each session is £3 per person plus 30p for refreshments. There is no need to bring a playing partner as there are plenty of people to play with. The emphasis is on fun and the groups do not take themselves too seriously. Beginners are welcome.

For people who have not played Bridge before, the group are offering Bridge for Beginners sessions at their Tuesday afternoon meeting.

If you are interested in joining one of the groups or going along for a taster, then please contact **John Wynter**, the leader of both groups, on 01293 546667 or via email: [johnwynter24@gmail.com](mailto:johnwynter24@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Singing for Fun**

Another group which I would like to draw your attention to is our Singing for Fun group. The Group meet on the second and fourth Mondays of the month from 9.45am-12.00 in the Main Hall at St Paul's, Northgate. The group sing, seated, to a guitar and banjo accompaniment, with a break at half time for a cup of tea and a chat. The first visit is free. Expressions of interest to [peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk)

### Italian for Beginners

Here is an opportunity that does not come along very often to join our Italian for Beginners Group. **David Devere**, the Group's leader, has been running the group from his home in Pound Hill for nearly two years. Spaces are limited to five and David tells me that there is now one vacancy.

The Group meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month during term times between 10.00-12.00. The style is conversational: they work from a humorous story book in order to make it more enjoyable and sometimes do some essential grammar. They are a self-funding group and members are invited to put 50p into the pot to cover tea and biscuits and to defray some photocopying costs.

Expressions of interest to [peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk)

### Art Appreciation 3

If you enjoy art, why not consider joining Art Appreciation 3? The group meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10.15-12.00 in Room 6 at St. Paul's Northgate. Expressions of interest to [peterbeckley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peterbeckley@yahoo.co.uk)

### Scamwatch

West Sussex Country Council are running 'Are you scam savvy?' events, both online and in person at Crawley Library. Details for the Webinars are as follows:

- Tuesday 5th March 2024, 10.00am. Book your space via [Eventbrite](#)
- Wednesday 22nd May 2024, 1.00pm. Book your space via [Eventbrite](#)
- Friday 5th July 2024, 11.00am. Book your space via [Eventbrite](#)

There is also a Library hybrid session (webinar and in-person event) at Crawley Library on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 from 10.00-11.30am. A space can be booked via [Eventbrite](#)

## Afternoon Exercise Group

Thank you to **Graham Friday** for sending me the photo below of the Afternoon Exercise Group at a recent session at the Friary Hall.

The Group meet every Monday afternoon with registration at 3.00pm and the session runs from 3.15-4.00pm. The cost per session is £3.50. Places are still available in the group and if you would like to join please contact Graham via [treasurer@crawleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@crawleyu3a.org.uk) or his mobile phone 07982 424533.

As you can see from the photo, the exercises can be done standing or floor based on a chair. For more information, please follow this link:

[Crawley u3a: Afternoon Exercise Group \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://Crawley u3a: Afternoon Exercise Group (u3asites.org.uk))

**PLEASE NOTE:** the sessions on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> and Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March will take place at St. Bernadette's Church in Tilgate Way.



### **Amblers walk on 2<sup>nd</sup> February**

Amblers enjoyed a winter countryside walk on Reigate Heath on a bright and warm February morning, followed by an excellent lunch at The Skimmington Castle.

Thanks to [Phil Light](#) for the photo.



### **u3a in the press**

According to the recent u3a monthly newsletter, the u3a has featured several times in the press in the past few weeks. This includes:

- an article about u3a, and how it can be a cure for loneliness, featured in multiple publications including [London Daily News](#) and [The Phoenix Newspaper](#)
- two letters from members heralding the benefit of lifelong learning through u3a were featured in The Guardian on [Monday 29 January](#) and [Tuesday 6 February](#)

Follow the links above if you would like to read the article and letters.

## O&A7's visit to the Royal Opera House on 13<sup>th</sup> February: Report by Jan Morris

Members of O&A7 enjoyed an extremely informative "Behind the Scenes" tour of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Our guide James led us through the history of the building from its first opening as a playhouse, the Theatre Royal, in 1732, followed by Ballet and finally Opera in 1735 when the first season of Handel began. The building was twice destroyed by fire (in 1808 and 1856) and rebuilt; the façade, foyer, and auditorium date from the 1856 rebuild. An extensive reconstruction in the 1990s saw an expansion incorporating the old Covent Garden flower market.

Our behind the scenes tour saw us work our way through a maze of corridors, around the building, under the stage, looking down on back stage from 5 floors up and across the Bridge of Aspiration which links the building to the Royal Ballet School. We saw Edward VII's smoking (and entertaining!) room behind the Orchestra Pit and enjoyed hearing their practice.



The building contains many practice studios and we were fortunate to see two Principal dancers during their rehearsal.

All their productions are arranged in house with extensive costume, scenery, wig and shoe departments extending through the building. There are a number of Principal dancers for each production and we saw part of the huge range of costumes needed for each ballet and opera. The seamstresses can be seen at work from the café/viewing gallery open to the public on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

We were treated to a video of how easily the scenery is changed between productions with huge lifts transporting items as required. There is also a lift which can hold an articulated lorry!

The highlight of the tour for me was when we were allowed to sit at the back of the auditorium and watched a rehearsal (with a large number of dancers) of a new production premiering this week.

Our guide James was informative, entertaining and amusing and the use of headsets enabled our large group to all be able to hear his narration.

A thoroughly enjoyable morning out and one I would recommend to other groups!

PS We were only permitted to take photos in certain areas so the one of the auditorium is courtesy of Wikipedia.



### Strollers Lunch on 15<sup>th</sup> February

The Strollers Group had a most enjoyable lunch at Goffs Manor on a beautiful, springlike day. Not only was it an opportunity to become better acquainted with each other over a delicious meal, but it also gave us the chance to plan more outings.

Several of our members have already booked places on a Premier Coach trip to Rye on 4<sup>th</sup> April and other coach trips in March and April are being discussed.



I am delighted to report that although the group now has 30 members, there is still room for people to join. Expressions of interest to:

[sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk)

### Lego

One of our members, **Heather Allen**, is seeking to buy some Lego to have for grandchildren to play with when visiting. If anyone can help, please contact Heather via [heatherallen475@gmail.com](mailto:heatherallen475@gmail.com)

### Walkers One walk on 16<sup>th</sup> February

Walkers One enjoyed a sunny, if slightly muddy, walk on Reigate Heath followed by lunch at The Skimmington Castle. Thanks to [Jackie Bateman](#) for the photograph.



### u3a Online Learning Events

Glancing through this month's u3a online learning events, this talk on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March from 10.00-11.30am caught my eye: *John Snow and the hunt for the source of cholera in Victorian London*. If you would like to book a ticket for this Zoom event, follow this link:

[John Snow and the hunt for the source of cholera in Victorian London Tickets, Wed, Mar 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)

For details of other u3a online learning events, follow this link:

[u3a - Online Learning Events](#)

### Walkers Extra walk on 22<sup>nd</sup> February

Anyone notice a common theme for February's walking group photos featured in this month's newsletter? Well done to those who spotted that it was Reigate Heath: so good they walked it thrice. Thanks to [Jan Morris](#) for the before and after photos of the handful of intrepid walkers who braved the rain and the mud to do the walk before heading to The Skimmington Castle for a well-earned lunch.



## **Crawley WORDfest**

I would like to thank [Marie O'Donnell](#) for bringing Crawley WORDfest 2024 to my attention.

Crawley Writers' Circle have created unique poems for the poetry trail – Light and Life in Crawley. The poems are available from 29<sup>th</sup> February and will not be taken down before Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April.

The poems can be found in the following locations:

- Crawley Library
- Broadfield Library
- Crawley Museum
- County Mall
- Ancient Priors (old Ask building in the High Street)
- St John's Church
- Memorial Gardens bandstand
- St Margaret's, Ifield

You can find out more about the event, as well as buy tickets, by following this link:

[2024 Events Programme — WORDfest Crawley](#)

Scrolling through the programme, a number of events caught my eye but I will share with you below the ones I am most tempted by:

- Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March: The Crime Series with Elly Griffiths and Barbara Nadel at Crawley Library from 7.00-8.30pm
- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March: The Acid Bath Murderer – The Live Experience at Hounds Immersive Experiences (12-13 Queens Square). Not one to go to on your own!
- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March: Dark Corners of Crime, 7.30pm at the Ancient Priors in the High Street – Crime writers collide with live theatre as three authors read dark crime short stories in an ancient building
- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March: The WORDfest Quiz from 7.00-9.30pm at Crawley Library. A quiz with ten rounds of questions related to books and words, this sounds perfect for any bibliophile quizzers in our midst

## **Welcome to new members**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members:

Lesley Cameron, Peter Craig, Terry Davey, Francis Mawejje, Eileen O'Hara

## **Front page photo: where was I?**

Congratulations to those who guessed that I was in Goffs Park, one of my favourite places in Crawley, when I took the front page photograph last month. The daffodils by the Light Railway are usually the first to start flowering in late January, with daffodils blooming in succession throughout the Park until well into March.

The April newsletter will be emailed to members on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April and posted or hand delivered to those without email shortly thereafter.

Sue Parker

Newsletter Editor

[sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk)