



Crawley u3a

Monthly Newsletter: May 2023



Monthly (and other) meetings

Dates for your diaries below. All meetings start at 2.30pm (with the exception of the Coffee mornings and fees meeting) at the Friary Hall, Haslett Avenue:

- **Friday 12th May** – Choir & Ko (see page 18 for more details)
- **Tuesday 30th May** – Coffee morning, 11.00am
- **Friday 9th June** – Kathryn Ferry, *The History of the British Seaside*
- **Friday 23rd June** – Midsummer's Eve Celebration, 11.00-am-2.00pm, Bandstand, Memorial Gardens (see page 18 for more details)
- **Friday 30th June** – All members meeting on 2023/2024 fees, 10.30am, Friary Hall
- **Friday 14th July** – Sue Hicks, *Tissues and Tena Lady*
- **Friday 8th September** – Open Afternoon
- **Friday 13th October** – William Avenell, *I never knew Geography would be so relevant, why didn't I concentrate more at school?*
- **Monday 30th October** – Coffee morning, 11.00am
- **Friday 10th November** – Annual General Meeting
- **Friday 8th December** – Christmas Party

Mary Russell (1926 – 2023) and her contribution to Crawley u3a

Members will be saddened to learn of the death of Mary Russell on Friday 14th April 2023. Mary's funeral will take place on Friday 12th May at 11.45am in the Memorial Chapel at Sussex and Surrey Crematorium, Balcombe Road, Crawley, R10 3NQ. Members are welcome to attend but if you would like to do so, can you please let me know via email: sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk

The family would prefer that rather than send flowers you might like to donate to Barnardo's or the Alzheimer's Society c/o Freeman Brothers, Holly Lodge, 25 & 27 Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AE, 01293 540000.

I would like to thank Mary's son, **Ian Russell**, for kindly sending me the two photographs featured in this article and to our secretary, **Margaret Lloyd**, for writing the article. For reasons of space, I have had to condense Margaret's article. The full version can be found shortly under Links on the right hand side of our Events page: [Crawley u3a: Events \(u3asites.org.uk\)](https://u3asites.org.uk/Crawley%20u3a/Events)



Mary Russell



Mary Russell in her twenties

Mary Russell joined Learning in Later Years (LILY), the organisation which was to become Crawley u3a, in autumn 1986. Her membership number was 19. LILY was a Crawley based organisation and was founded in 1981 by representatives of various local organisations involved with either adult education or the care of the elderly. The aim was to provide facilities for the elderly in Crawley to continue their interests in life and to develop new ones.

The second edition of LILY's newsletter, October 1982, featured an article on the University of the Third Age (U3A), a concept which originated in France in 1972 and the UK version of which had only been established in 1981. LILY soon realised that its aims were not dissimilar to those of the U3A and formally affiliated to the Third Age Trust (TAT) in March 1985, becoming one of the earlier groups in the UK to do so (its certificate was number 26) and the first U3A in West Sussex. At that point membership was around 50.

Crawley U3A still continued to use the LILY name until a decision was made at the July 1987 AGM to drop this in favour of Crawley u3a. It was at this AGM that Mary Russell first assumed a Committee position, that of Membership Secretary, and two years later she assumed the role of Honorary Secretary. By 1992 Mary was jointly leading the new Art Appreciation group.

Mary continued in the role of Honorary Secretary until 1998, and it is obvious from the newsletters that she put a great deal of work into the role. Back then there was no committee member in charge of either events or outings and she organised the speakers for the monthly meetings, the seasonal outings, and attended the then annual Third Age Trust residential conference and AGM in addition to undertaking the secretarial function. It was during Mary's years of secretaryship that Crawley u3a formally registered as a charity.

After stepping down as Secretary in 1998 Mary immediately took on the role of Vice-Chairman, and in 1999 became Chair in place of Arthur Earl. In 2001 Mary became Vice-Chair of SUN (Sussex U3a Network) with particular responsibility for u3as in West Sussex. During the period from 2002 to 2004 Mary took a break from Crawley u3a Committee duties, perhaps because she was now acting as Chair of the Sussex u3a Regional Association. Her husband Douglas took on her previous role of Secretary in 2003. They both attended the various u3a summer schools and together led the Crawley Art Appreciation 1 group.

By 2004 Mary was once again acting as Vice-Chair and in March 2006 Crawley u3a celebrated its 21st anniversary with a special edition of the newsletter.

Sadly, Arthur Earl died suddenly in September 2010 and Mary, as Vice-Chair, became acting Chair. Mary was reappointed again as Vice Chair at the 2011 AGM, with Gillian Pitt becoming Chair. Membership stood at 543 (it is currently only around 20 more than this). Mary finally stepped down from the Committee at the 2013 AGM, and it was immediately proposed that she become the President.

So in total Mary served 24 years in Crawley u3a committee roles, two as membership Secretary, nine as Secretary, nine as Vice Chair, and four as Chair. This represents an incredible amount of work.

During her period on the Committee Crawley u3a grew and changed enormously and the number of activity groups multiplied by a factor of ten. Without her efforts over so many years we would not be where we are today.

Meet the Committee: Peter Beckley, Groups Coordinator



Peter moved to Crawley in the early Seventies and worked as a Community Pharmacist in 3 local chemists until retiring in 2011. He suddenly found he had lost his circle of friends and had a lot of spare time. A talk at the Hawth by Gillian Pitt inspired him to join Crawley u3a, joining the Walkers group and Out & About 6, and he was amazed how friendly and welcoming everyone was. He also volunteered at St Catherine's Hospice shop until Covid made this impossible. To fill the empty space, he took up the vacant post of Groups Coordinator. It was a big career change, but he has found it very rewarding. A glutton for punishment, he is also a Committee member of Friends of The Hawth, volunteers at the Hawth, loves going to music gigs, and helps to run Quiz group 2 and Out & About 6 group, as well as being a grandad to three very lively grandchildren. Never a dull moment!!

Attendance Fee – Deferment of Fees: Note from Graham Friday, Treasurer

For those Members who attend Room based activities, that meet on a fortnightly or monthly basis and who pay their Attendance Fees in advance; the rules regarding reclaiming those fees when you do not attend have changed.

The change is to comply with the new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Policy. There will be no automatic right to reclaim the fees as they are still required to cover the cost of the room hire, plus the general no refund policy will still apply. But the Group Leader can now determine when a deferment of fees already paid for the current term can be transferred into the following term. This will follow a direct request from a member. It can be applied if one or more meetings have been missed for any of the following reasons:

- Illness (especially if of an infectious nature, such as Covid) or hospitalisation.
- Bereavement.
- Caring for a close family member due to illness or bereavement.
- Attending a funeral.
- Where a member is unable to physically get to a session, due to either bad weather or lack of transportation making it impossible for them to attend.

Deferral will not normally be permitted:

- When members miss meetings due to holidays or clashes with private social events.
- In cases where a member wishes to participate in two different activities that are scheduled to take place at the same time. In these circumstances the two Group Leaders and member should agree the appropriate level of fees to be charged for each Group at the beginning of each term.

Our new Crawley u3a leaflet

Our new leaflet is now available. If you know of any friends or neighbours who might be interested in joining us and would like a copy of the leaflet, please contact me via sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk

Exercise Afternoon and Sports Evening: Note from Graham Friday

The importance of staying active to both our physical and mental wellbeing is well known. To help that along we are starting to develop our plans for introducing two new activities.

Exercise Afternoon - This will combine some gentle Pilates, Yoga, and chair exercising with the opportunity to have a tea, coffee, and chat with other members. The sessions will be held at either St Paul's or The Friary.

Sports Evening – This will a 3-hour session during which you will have the opportunity to try out and take part in a range of different sports. These will potentially include Pickleball, Badminton, Walking Football, Walking Cricket, and a new walking netball/basketball which will be a combination of both these sports and any other sport that anyone wants to suggest. The timings of each sport within the session will be fixed, but Members will be free to mix and match what they want to do.

Both of these new activity sessions will take a lot of planning and organising, so before we start any detailed planning, we need to establish what the potential support will be for these activities. So, at this point in time, we need to know from yourselves who might be interested in attending either of these sessions.

If you are interested, then please contact our Treasurer **Graham Friday** and register your interest. This can be done in a number of ways.

- See Graham at the regular monthly meeting or other forthcoming events
- Telephone or text him or 07982 424533 (just leave a message if it goes to answerphone)
- Send a message to his u3a email address (treasurer@crawleyu3a.org.uk)

Or give your details to another Committee member who will pass them on.

All Graham will need from you is your name, what session you are interested in, and if you have any other sports we could consider including in the Sports Evening.

Running the combined sports evening will be a significant undertaking, so we will be looking for volunteers to help, especially if you have an interest or experience in coaching or running any of the sports. If you would like to offer your help, then please let Graham know.

Report on 14th April monthly meeting: talk on *Secrets and Lies*



At our monthly meeting, **Dr Frances Hurd** delivered a most entertaining talk on adventures in family history. Frances has explored family histories for private clients and as part of research projects. Along the way she has made some surprising discoveries. For example, she advised us that when you are researching your family history, you should never take any document at face value. Her research has uncovered all sorts of lies, such as people lying about their age when getting married, or on joining up papers. People also lie about their real name or even the colour of their hair.

However, illegitimacy is the commonest cause of secrets and lies. The stigma of illegitimacy was terrible, so it was hardly surprising that people were keen to cover up the truth about their parentage.

The Census is a useful tool if you are trying to trace your family tree. Frances shared with us the history of Henry Bull who married Sarah Powell in 1869. In the early days of their marriage they were able to afford a servant but by the time of the 1881 Census, they were living with Sarah's mother. By 1891, Henry had moved out and was living with another woman and their two illegitimate children. Not only was Sarah calling herself a widow but when she married a younger man, her age was shown on the Census as 39 when in fact she was 54!

Frances concluded that it was important to explain the past, get the skeletons out of the closet.

Report on the Spring Outing on 26th April

Our Blue Badge guide Owen took us into Holland Park which surrounds the ruins of Holland House build in 1605 and destroyed during the blitz in 1940. In the Park is the beautiful Kyoto Garden which was opened in 1991 as a gift from the Government of Kyoto in Japan.

After lunch, Owen introduced us to Leighton House, home and studio to Victorian artist Lord Frederic Leighton. The Holland Park Circle was an informal group of 19th century artists homes and studios. Leighton commissioned William de Morgan to design the Arab Hall to display Leighton's collection of Middle Eastern tiles.

If you would like to have a look at the exhibition of the Evelyn De Morgan Gold Drawings then please follow the link below:

<https://www.demorgan.org.uk/exhibitions-2/gold-drawings>

With thanks to **Liz Tennant** for kindly supplying photos and a report of the trip.



Amblers' Saltdean walk on Good Friday

On Good Friday Amblers took the train to Brighton then a bus to Roedean from where we walked nearly 3 miles to Saltdean, enjoying a carvery lunch at the Saltdean Tavern before catching the bus back to Brighton. As the photo shows, the weather could not have been better!



Amblers near the start of their sunny walk to Saltdean

Art Appreciation 3: new Group Leader required

Margaret Daniels will be stepping down as Group Leader of Art Appreciation 3 in July. As there is no-one in the group able to take her place, would anyone be willing to join the group and take over the role of Group Leader? It is not an onerous task, and you would be supported by the Groups Coordinator and the rest of the Committee. The Group meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10.15pm-12.00 at St Pauls, Northgate. Expressions of interest to peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk

O&A7 visit to Winchester on 14th April

Out and About 7 paid an enjoyable visit to Winchester on 14th April. It was a do as you please day, so we broke up in to small groups and went where the fancy took us. I joined a fascinating guided tour in Winchester Cathedral and visited the Great Hall. Sadly, I missed the merry band below who got there before me.

Thanks to [Kathy Rawlings](#) for the photo.



The Merry Wives of Winchester!

Petanque & Picnic

I am delighted to inform you that the first meeting of our new Petanque and Picnic Group will be held on Thursday 18th May at 5.00pm in West Green Park, weather permitting. (The petanque court is close to the car park by Crawley Horticultural Society.) We have several sets of boules available. Why not come along and try it out, bring a picnic with you and something to sit on? If you would like to have a go, please let peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk know so that we can have an idea of how many would like to play, or just come along to watch and socialise.

O&A6 visit to Arundel Wetlands on 17th April

On a glorious Monday, 19 members of Out & About 6 visited the Arundel Wetlands Trust. After a two hour stroll around the various areas, spotting the numerous varieties of birds, we lunched *al fresco* at the Waterside Cafe. The two highlights of the day were the guided 30 minute boat ride around the parts of the site which were inaccessible by foot (a bargain at £3), and the two pelicans who delighted in showing off their 3 metre wingspans. Everyone agreed it was a thoroughly enjoyable day, well worth visiting. It's accessible by train or car, and there is no need to book. Spring is probably the ideal time, when all the birds are doing their courtship displays, and the baby ducklings are around. Thanks to [Jean Elmer](#) for the photograph and to [Peter Beckley](#) for an account of the trip.



Walkers 1 Knepp Estate walk on 21st April

Walkers 1 enjoyed a walk around the Knepp Estate, which is a 3,500 acre estate south of Horsham. On their way round the estate, they passed a large number of deer as well as spotting a heron and a stork, before an excellent lunch at The Crown at Dial Post. Thanks to [Phil Light](#) for the photo.



Walkers 1 in front of Knepp Castle

Crawley u3a Facebook page

A long overdue plug for our Facebook page. Have you joined yet? If not, why not? Take a look and if you like what you see then join us! If you want to see more photos of the spring outing to London than I have been able to fit in to this newsletter, then follow this link: [Crawley u3a | Facebook](#)

Walkers Extra Balcombe walk on 27th April

On an unseasonably cool, but mercifully dry, morning, Walkers Extra walked five miles around the Balcombe area. There was mud, bluebells and a distant view of the Balcombe Viaduct followed by lunch in the Half Moon Pub in Balcombe.



Had the photographer been more proficient then she would not have stationed the group in front of a clump of beautiful bluebells!

Weekenders Group

I have been asked to let members who might be interested in joining our Weekenders Group know that they need to already be on WhatsApp or have a mobile number which WhatsApp will recognise. Apologies if this sounds a little harsh, but this is a spontaneous group and if members cannot be contacted quickly then it takes away the spontaneity, which is the whole point of this group.

Smartphone Photographic Group

Do you like taking photos with your phone? Do you like going out and about? Then the smartphone photographic group is for you.

We are a recently formed group and so far this year we have taken photos in a garden centre and a pot and pithoi local pottery.

Alternate months we go out and take photos, we have set subjects to take, printed photos are shown the following month, judged by the group and winning places awarded. We get our photos printed in local super stores at reasonable prices.

To give you an idea of the workings of the group this is the programme for the next few months:

Thursday 25th May – Photo shoot at Tilgate Nature Centre, Tilgate Park, Titmus Drive, RH10 5PQ. We will meet at the entrance of the zoo at 2.00 pm, do our shoot and end up with a tea/coffee in the restaurant which is adjacent to the zoo.

Subjects for the photo shoot are :

- One photo from the Domestic zone

- One from any other zone

- One black and white anything goes

Thursday 29th June – Home meeting at 2.00pm, Room 6, St Pauls Church, Northgate

Thursday 27th July – 2.00pm, photo shoot at Warnham Nature Reserve, Horsham

Thursday 28th September – Home meeting at 2.00pm, Room 6, St Pauls Church, Northgate

I hope that you may be interested in joining our friendly little group, please do not hesitate in contacting me via peter.beckley@yahoo.co.uk

Monique Tovey-Mansfield

Family History Group

As part of my photographic tour of the groups, I recently paid a visit to our Family History Group. The Group meet on the 4th Monday of the month from 10.00am-12.00 in Room 6 at St Paul's, Northgate.



Newsletter distribution: volunteers required

I am in the process of setting up a team of volunteers who would be happy to print off and deliver our monthly newsletter to those without email in their neighbourhood. I have some neighbourhoods covered but still need volunteers for Bewbush (two addresses), Langley Green (three addresses), Northgate (two addresses), Pound Hill (five addresses), Three Bridges (five addresses) and West Green (four addresses). If you would like to help, please contact me via sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk

Mah-Jong Group

I also visited our Mah-Jong Group to take some photos for our website.

If you are interested in joining this friendly group, they meet every Wednesday from 1.45-4.00pm at Crawley Baptist Church in Crabtree Road, West Green.

Why not go along and give Mah-Jong a try?



Attending a Group for the first time

A reminder that the first time you attend a Group meeting, trip or outing you are able to attend free of charge. This gives you a chance to decide whether or not a group is for you.

Welcome to new members

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

Sabina Hickmet, Judith Pyne

May's monthly meeting: Choir & Ko

Before we are entertained by Choir & Ko at our meeting on Friday 12th May, I thought you might like to know more about the choir. Karen O'Connor started Choir & Ko online during lockdown and now has 300 members across Sussex and Surrey. It's a non-audition choir, with ages ranging from 18 to 90. The choir enjoy ensemble singing and perform concerts raising money for charities.

Publicity drive in County Mall: Tuesday 6th June

Now that we have our new leaflet, it is time for us to not only promote our u3a but also to recruit new members. With that in mind, we will be handing out leaflets in County Mall on Tuesday 6th June. If you are in County Mall on that day then why not stop by and say hello and perhaps take away some leaflets for friends and neighbours?

Midsummer's Eve Celebration: Friday 23rd June

Don't forget to put our Midsummer's Eve Celebration in your diaries. It will be held on Friday 23rd June from 11.00am-2.00pm at the Bandstand in Memorial Gardens. Our Folk Singers, Singing for Fun and Ukulele players will all be performing together as one group. At 12.00 Graham Crozier from our History Group will be taking anyone who wants to come along on a local history tour of Crawley.

Scamwatch

Every time you do something online, you add to your digital footprint. I suggest that you follow the link to this article which gives you expert tips on how to manage your digital footprint: [Your Digital Footprint - Get Safe Online](#)

The June newsletter will be emailed to members on Monday 5 June and posted or hand delivered to those without email shortly thereafter.

Sue Parker

Newsletter Editor

sueparker5@yahoo.co.uk