



# **CROUCH VALLEY**

## **NEWSLETTER**



<http://u3asites.org.uk/crouch-valley>

**SUMMER 2018**

## COMMITTEE 2018/19

Chairman	David Shea
Vice Chairman	Ray Burns
Secretary	Ken Walker
Treasurer	Don Wragg
Membership Secretary	Colin Pegrum
Programme Secretary	Lynda Burns
Groups Co-ordinator	Eileen Wendleken
Committee Members	Rosemary Green
	Bob LeBeau
	John Gable
	Andy Hull
	Richard Bradshaw
	Ian Robinson
	Jane Peachey
Welfare Officer	Joyce Sach
Webmaster	Don Wragg

# CREAM TEA

## Special Club Tea Party

Sunday June 3<sup>rd</sup>

2.00 pm

Scout Hut

Creekview Road



Entry by ticket : £5.00

Please buy a ticket & mark the date in your diaries!



## A Word from the Chair

Early in 2017 during a committee meeting it was decided that Ray had to stand down as Chairman as he had done three years, being vice chair I was told it was my turn to take the reins, I'm not sure at this point in time whether I volunteered or was press-ganged into the role. However, the job was mine.

I can't believe that was over a year ago, and I have enjoyed every meeting and pleased that our U3A has continued to grow in numbers. I think this is because we try and have fun. And make the meeting light-hearted and informative.

I have been very lucky to have an excellent committee that makes my job so much easier, particularly having a superb Secretary in Ken Walker who guides us through the mountain of paper work that comes from the Third Age Trust. Somehow he manages to understand all the jargon and only tell the committee what we need to know, and manages to keep the minutes nice and short.

I must also thank all the other hard working members of the committee particularly Bob Le Beau, our group's coordinator, who helps our various activity groups to run smoothly, and gives our membership plenty of activity choices.

Now to the group coordinators themselves. The volunteers who give up their time to ensure we all have fun, keep us active. And challenge us to try new things. Walking, ten pin bowling, games, wine tasting, outings various choices, Jazz . . . Just to mention a few of the vast opportunities you have to get active in our community.

That is what the U3A is about, giving you the opportunity to get out and enjoy your life and keep active. I hope you will agree that over the past years we, that is, *your committee*, have given their best to ensure we thrive into the future. And it has been a pleasure to be part of this exciting organisation.

It looks like I will be in the chair for another year, and I am looking forward to seeing our numbers grow, and the activity groups expanded to give even more opportunities get out and enjoy ourselves.

### **A thought for today**

If you start now, you'll begin seeing results one day earlier than if you start tomorrow.

**David Shea. chair Crouch Valley U3A**



## **From the Secretary's desk**

*Yes, I know, most of what I do is boring, unfortunately however, it has to be done or your U3A will, technically at least, cease to function. So, (I hate sentences that start with so), just a few light hearted stories about Secretaries for your amusement.*

*One day a secretary is leaving on her lunch-break, and she notices her boss standing in front of the shredder with a clueless look on his face. The secretary walks up to him and asks if he needs help. "Yes" he says, looking and sounding relieved, "this is a very important document". Glad to help, she turns on the shredder and inserts the paper. Then her boss says "Thanks, just the one copy please".*

*The secretary of a small company was complaining during a staff meeting that people didn't respect him enough. Trying to change the attitude in the office, he came in the next day with a sign for his door which said "I am the boss".*

*One of the employees, apparently not appreciating the change, put a post-it note on the sign which said "your wife wants her sign back".*

*The secretary walks into his boss's office. "Sir, I'll be straight with you, I know the economy isn't great, but I have three companies after me and I would respectfully ask for a salary increase. After a few minutes of haggling, the boss finally agrees to a 5% raise and the secretary gets up to leave.*

*"By the way", asks the boss, "which three companies are after you?". "The gas, electricity and credit card companies the secretary replied".*

### **Ken Walker**

#### **Sexist Joke - but I laughed anyway!**

A woman entered her kitchen and found her husband waving a fly swatter. "What in heaven's name are you up to?" she asked.

"Killing flies," he said.

"Oh. Get any?"

"Yep, two males, three females," he answered.

"Oh come on! How do you tell them apart?"

**"Two were on a beer can, three were on the phone."**



## **Treasurer**

The Accounts for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 have now been completed and these were made available at the recent AGM.

As expected our General Fund made a small deficit of £69.44 for the year and means that we have good reserves of £855.52 to carry forward.

Our Social Fund had a surplus for the year of £152.85 and means that we have reserves of £1,507.51 to carry forward.

The strength of our Social Fund monies has meant that we were able to subsidise the Quiz, BBQ, and Christmas Meeting. As you are aware the 60's evening proved so popular that, to our surprise, the clamour for tickets meant we ended up with a profit of £500.

The donations of "tea money" raised at the monthly meetings is for this year being paid over to Four Charities as agreed by you all. This year we have paid £202.09 to Essex Air Ambulance, £168.15 to Aspire, £184.74 to LUPUS and finally £213.02 to Dementia Adventure (with the April meeting collection to be added). Details of these payments and thank you letters are put on the web site regularly. Well done everyone.

I have now reached the end of my 4 year term as Treasurer and must say that it has been a pleasure not a chore and I wish all the best to my successor Don Wragg.

John Gable, Treasurer.



## **Groups Coordinator**

This is my last year as Group Co-Ordinator and I'm pleased to say that I leave the position in the very capable hands of Eileen Wendleken. Eileen has been assisting me over the last 12 months and has already been the driving force behind a number of initiatives this year and in particular the Summer Cream Tea Event that we are holding in June.

May I take this opportunity to thank all Group Leaders who do such a fantastic job for you as members, they are a real treasure as are the rest

the Committee. Please support all the events where possible, have fun and enjoy the company of other members

Bob Lebeau



## **Membership**

Assuming 100% renewals our current membership is 162.

It is very pleasing to see a steady growth in our numbers, it shows that the efforts put into running groups, events and meetings are being enjoyed by a wider audience.

Some of you have not supplied a contact in case of emergencies, could you please update me on this and any other changes to your details.

Colin Pegrum, Membership Secretary



## **Webmaster**

The web is still averaging over 300 hits per day. As I have indicated before there is little scope to change the look of the site as we use the standard National U3A template. I look at other U3A websites to see if it possible to improve the level of information but I have to be honest based on members feedback and what I have seen our website has the right balance.

One addition that has been made to the website is the use of the Google Calendar. This is as it says is a calendar showing all dates of meetings, events, etc in our U3A. Its main objective is to ensure there are no conflicts of dates within groups.

I acknowledge some people may not like being bombarded with my emails re updates but I think it is the best way of reaching all members in our club.

I am always open to suggestions if you would like information to be changed. The website is only as good as the information sent to me and for that I thank everyone for their support.

Please let me know your views.

Don Wragg – Webmaster.



## Welfare Officer

I have been the U3A's Welfare Officer for the last couple of years, and I'm so pleased to report I'm not that busy in my post. This year we have had the terrible flu bug doing the rounds me included, in South Woodham - I couldn't send cards to everybody I heard of having the flu so hopefully we have all recovered and looking forward to the better weather and holidays.

Keep well all of you, join the groups, I'm sure they keep us young and motivated, and more importantly healthy.

My details are on our website if you think any member needs a card to cheer them up so they know we are thinking of them, also if you could let me know what groups they attend I will try and send appropriate card.

Joyce Sach

### "Ode to getting Old"

*Just a line to say I'm living, That I'm not among the dead. Though I'm getting more forgetful. And something's slipping in my head;*

*I got used to arthritis, To my dentures I'm resigned. I can manage my bifocals, But oh, how much I miss my mind.*

*For sometimes I cannot remember, When I stand atop the stairs, If I must go down for something Or if I've just come up from there.*

*And before the fridge, so often, My mind is filled with nagging doubt. Have I just put food away, or Have I come to take some out.*

*I called a friend not long ago, When they answered I just moaned. I hung up quickly without speaking, For I'd forgotten who I'd phoned.*

*And when the darkness falls upon me I stand alone and scratch my head. I don't know if I'm retiring, Or just getting out of bed?*

*Once I stood in my own bathroom, Wondering if I'd used the pot. I flushed it just in case I had. And sat down just in case I'd not.*

*So, now if it's my turn to write you. There's no need for getting sore. It may be that I think I've written, And don't need to write no more.*

*Now I stand beside the mail box With a face so very red. Instead of mailing you the letter I have opened it instead.*

# GROUP REPORTS



## Aviation

The Maldon Aviation Group has been on a trip to Brooklands Museum in March which those who went found interesting, as the car museum caters for those who are interested in all things mechanical.

The meeting for May is going to the Trenchard Museum and The James McCudden Flight Centre at RAF Halton. This is an interesting venue for other groups in the U3A, being on the Lord Rothschild Estate, near Aylesbury. It is due to close over the next 2 years and be turned into, guess what, housing!!

The 1st April, saw the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the formation of the RAF, in 1918 with the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps with the Royal Navy Air Service. The local historical site of Stow Maries Aerodrome, was to feature prominently on the day on the BBC, with broadcasts every hour on rolling news. The reason for the site's importance is that it is the only World War 1 aerodrome, extant, left as it was in 1919, when the station closed down and reverted back to farming.

Any member interested in aviation is welcome to attend the monthly meeting or visits to related sights, on the third Tuesday of the month, at Purleigh Sports Pavilion.

CV Contact is Brian Austin 01245 329587



## Bird Watching

Within the Bird Watching fraternity there is a wide range of activity. You have the top 'Lister's' - people who spend a lot of money on travel cost and considerable time to see as many different species of birds as possible. As well as the more elusive regular birds, they chase after 'rarity's', birds from outside the UK that get blown of course and may only stay for a day or two. Their urge is to be top of the list. Then you have the dedicated who don't travel too far but spend every



opportunity in the 'field' observing recording and these days photographing the birds.

In our U3A Bird Watching Group we can be classed as casual birders. Our main focus is to learn to identify the different species, whilst enjoying each other's company and visiting wildlife areas.

I do not consider myself an expert but have enjoyed many hours observing birds. In the past I have been on bird watching holidays in Scotland, family holidays in Wales and in the 1990's I used to go out one day a week with a friend in East Anglia or the South East. I started making a list 1<sup>st</sup> January 1991 and have kept a year list every year since. I have a modest 255 species on my UK list. The top birders are approaching 600.

So, can you tell a Dunnock from a House Sparrow?

Contacts: Colin Martin & John Gable.



## Book Group



The library continues to send us a diverse range of books, and in the last few months we have a read a book from the 19<sup>th</sup> C, one from the 20<sup>th</sup> C and one from the 21<sup>st</sup> C.

***The Thread by Victoria Hislop*** published 2011 and set in Thessaloniki in 1917 and the present day. A young Anglo-Greek hears his grandparents' life story for the first time and realises he has a decision to make. For many decades, they have looked after the memories and treasures of the people who were forced to leave. Should he become their next custodian and make this city his home? A heart-warming family story from an author we've read and enjoyed before.

***Hot Water by P.G. Wodehouse*** published 1932 and set mainly in Brittany, with a cast of dim British minor aristocrats, Americans with more money than brains and a ragbag of scheming criminals - safe-blowers, con men, jewel-thieves. If you are familiar with the author's Jeeves and Wooster books then you will know what to expect. The book is daft and humorous, carefully plotted and finishes with all the ends neatly tied up. A book to cheer you up.

***Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy*** published 1895 and set in his fictitious Wessex (loosely Dorset to Oxfordshire). It reads like the

Victorian novel that it is and details the life of Jude Fawley, a young man with aspirations to better himself but who falls under the spell of 2 different women and thus derails his plans. The book blurb states : *Jude the Obscure, with its fearless and challenging exploration of class and sexual relationships, caused a public furore when it was first published and marked the end of Hardy's career as a novelist.* Today's reader will not be offended or shocked but will need reading stamina to reach the end – not all of us managed it! It's fairly depressing . . . .

We turned the April meeting into an enjoyable social event by laying on 'Afternoon Tea' with the help of The Eatery – this was far more enjoyable than the reading and discussion on *Jude the Obscure!*

Contact is Joan Martin.



## **Computer Help**

The Group continues to welcome new members into our friendly informal group. Whatever your needs, knowledge or experience in the use of your tablets, laptops, printers or computers.

We are very much a self-help group meeting once a month at the Village Hall for two hours. Whilst in no way experts we offer an enjoyable way to boost your confidence in the use of your devices. This has proved beneficial in improving our skills and understanding of the constant updating and changes being made to our devices.

The format of the meetings is to initially discuss any general topics from the members with the aid of a projector linked to a laptop. After a break for tea/ coffee & biscuits we then split into small groups to help each other. We have access to the Hall's secure internet connection and if members bring their laptops or tablets it possible to investigate and show sites so members can share and discuss problems and solutions.

More people are now using their smart phones for both photographs and the web. So we have starting looking recently at the various ways members print from and use these devices.

With confidence and knowledge and help it means we can many times avoid a trip to the computer doctor by resolving the problem ourselves.

So if you don't wish to formally join our group, you will be welcome as a visitor or observer to see if what we are trying to do may be of benefit to you.

Contact is Richard Bradshaw.



## **Cricket Lovers**

If anyone is interested let me know and I will add your name to the contact list.

Contact is Ray Burns.



## **Family History**

In some ways family history is akin to bird watching. We make lists, research and record our ancestors, go visiting Churches and Cemeteries, Record Offices and try to find their house or place of work in Villages and towns where they lived. We also try to find that elusive ancestor and put them on the list. But it is of course much more. We are being encouraged in the writing up of our research, any U3A member can borrow our 'Creative Writing Folder' to read what members have written, please ask me.

One recent resource made available for free by the GRO (General Record Office) is the birth index with the mother's former surname included. Previously this could only be found on the freebmd website from July 1911, now with GRO we can find the mother's name from the start of civil registration 1<sup>st</sup> July 1837. This type of research can done by anyone with a bit of time and enthusiasm for the journey.

Several of our members have given talks to our group on what they have found in their research and we have more talks in the pipeline for the coming months.

To find out more, come along on the fourth Thursday morning, details are on our web site or from me.

Contact is Colin Martin.



## **Games**

The games group has a healthy group of members. We have had up to twelve people. We play card games. Very easy ones and sometimes we play harder games depends on who comes. We have a break half-way through for tea and biscuits.

We have darts, snooker and Pool available too. If any wants to there is scrabble, bingo and other board games.  
We just have a good time.

Contact is Julie Ferris.



## Gardening

Well, the snow has gone and been replaced with rain, too much for my allotment that is waterlogged. April is when I would put my potatoes in but I think it will be later this year.

The garden group members helped put together a varied list of visits for this year, the first of which was Anglesey Abbey in February, 8 members turned out on a wet day but enjoyed the garden. Then we had a plant swap meeting at Ken & Terrie Walkers. I would like to thank them for hosting the meeting that had a good turnout, 12 members went. They brought along a range of plants.



The next outing was Marks Hall Gardens in April. A good turnout for this popular garden, 13 of us went (see photos).

There are many more garden visits planned. You can find them on the web site. It would be nice to see a few more members coming to the Gardens. Don't forget we can organise a lift if you don't drive.

### *Gardening tips :-*

Don't put bedding plants out too early or a late frost may mean you making another visit to the garden centre. Hanging baskets should be planted up now. You can plant potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, carrots. And other root veg in tubs or Growbags if you don't have a big garden. But remember to keep them watered well.



Most of all - enjoy your garden, it is good way to relax and keep fit.

If you want to join the Garden Group or come along to one of our visits then email me your name and I will keep you informed of what's going on.

Contact is David Shea.



## **Going Out**

Contact is Ray Burns.



## **Jazz Appreciation**

Contact is Ray Burns.



## **Knit'n'Natter**



We meet in the Small Hall of the Village Hall on the 4th Monday in the month from 11am - 1pm. At present we are 24 but new members would be made very welcome.

At the last Christmas meeting our table top sale of items knitted raised £230 which we sent to J's Hospice in memory of Connie Bushby, one of us who sadly passed away last Easter.

We are already making plans for next Christmas - hopefully with some new ideas.

Contact is Brenda Neale.



## Local History

Since the beginning of 2018 our Local History group has been out and about visiting places of historical interest.

In January, we had an interesting guided tour of the Postal Museum, London. A ride in one of the mail trains under London was included in this. To follow this in February, our members visited the Royal Albert Hall. With the allocated tour guide being very informative, this visit was another interesting one. We were fortunate enough to visit a historical gem in the heart of the City of London, namely The Charterhouse in March. Our guide imparted a great deal of historical information, as we strolled around with him.

To end the first quarter of this year, we visited the Essex Air Ambulance Base at Earls Colne in April where we were made very welcome, shown all the workings of the helicopter and the airbase. As the Air Ambulance was called out whilst we were there, we had an added treat of seeing the air ambulance take off and subsequent land, following its return.

Our forthcoming events for the remainder of the year are shown on our websites. We generally meet on the third Tuesday of the month however there are occasions when we have to move to another day of the month to fit in with the organisers of the chosen venue.

Should you wish to join our group, please email me and I'll add your details to our mailing list.

Contact is Aileen Langley.



## Loose Women (& Men)



The Discussion group is not meeting currently because the second Thursday afternoon seems to be a difficult time for people to make. A new contact is needed who can choose a more suitable time for the group and perhaps enable more people to come along.

A Volunteer is needed! Could it be you . . . ?

Contact is Jan Campen or Eileen Wendleken.



## Play Reading



Our last play was I, Brutus by J M Barrie. Sorry to say none of us particularly enjoyed it, or understood it! Still we've been meeting for two years now and this is the first time that has happened.

Contact is Linda Thomas.





## Poetry & Creative Writing

One of our newest groups meeting once a month round each other's houses.

We have a wide range of interests in "The Arts". Each month we take a theme and then we share our findings at the next meeting. We have discovered unknown American poets, enjoyed Valentine poems and currently we have a story that we are all contributing too, you write a paragraph or two and then pass the story on to another colleague. Come and join us for some great fun and conversation

Contact is Bob LeBeau.



## Strollers

We continue to have a good group of strollers meeting every week, our route has changed owing to the closure of Tropical Wings so we now end our stroll at the coffee lounge when we are local.

We shall be walking at Hanningfield reservoir next week to enjoy the Bluebells, they are always lovely at this time of year. Hyde Hall is still a favourite walk for us - we take advantage of this being on our doorstep.

Contact is Pat Fayers.



## Table Tennis

We had our delayed 'Xmas' meal in February which was thoroughly enjoyable and accompanied with much talking, laughter and even a table tennis bat!

Due to the bad weather we had to cancel one week's table tennis which was the first time since 2011 when we



started the group that we had to do this and was certainly something unexpected.

We are a very friendly group of players who enjoy having some exercise and laughter and would welcome anyone interested in joining us. We play every Wednesday evening from 7.00 to 8.00 p.m. in the Activity Room at the SWF Leisure Centre.

Contact is Eira Jonson.



## **Ten Pin Bowling**

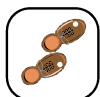
The Ten Pin Bowling Group is a very popular group, we average about 15 people at different levels every time we go which is twice a month, the first Thursday and third Thursday of the month, Maddison Heights at Maldon is where we go. They are very accommodating - they supply us with refreshments all within the price of two games of bowling! We usually finish 12 - 12.30 depending on the number of members who go. So please come along we will make you very welcome, we have lots of laughs and you get a bit of exercise.

No need to book in, just turn up, we start at 10am so if you could get to Maddison Heights ten minutes before to allow for payment and to hire bowling shoes, then we can start at 10am.

Look forward to seeing you.

Happy bowling

Contact is Joyce Sach.



## **Walkers**

### **A Walk on the Wild Side - Kiwi Style**

Thought you might like to join me on a recent walk "Kiwi style". We arrived as a small group at our meeting point just outside Wanaka, South Island, only to find a rough car park by a river, where we were to 'share transport' to our walk. The group were split into two, then asked to don black neoprene hooded capes and fluorescent orange life jackets. We all looked like a bunch of Michelin men as we followed our guide. We then clambered aboard a waiting jet boat, moored to a muddy river bank. There had been quite a deluge at night during the past few days, so the



river was flowing very fast. When all were aboard, the leader signalled to go & we accelerated away. Guess who got the back seats?

The jet boat tore off downstream at speeds that felt like 70 mph, swaying in one direction & then the other, as our guide avoided the shallow banks of silt that had accumulated in the river. The depth in places was no more than 4 inches but apparently that is enough. Suddenly his finger circled in the air and he put the boat into a spin! Then off we went again; the same routine a couple more times, interspersed with stops by the river bank to tell us facts about the local land, community and wildlife.

Finally, we arrived at a river bank downstream, with a marvellous view of snow-capped Mount Aspiring, where the boat was tied up to an overhanging tree branch. We left our Michelin men suits in the boat and climbed up the river bank. There we encountered a magical world of ferns, moss, lichen and all manner of trees. We followed our guide for about ½ hour through the woods and across a meadow until we came to a fast flowing stream. No way across, without removing boots and socks. Our guide said “no worries” & just picked up the boulders in the stream and made us a safe passage across with stepping stones. Once across we passed through into a glade where the source of the stream was revealed. A beautiful waterfall was raging down over the nearby rock face. All framed in green ferns and many types of woodland shrubbery, as the sun shone through. Absolutely stunning!

After a rest we retraced our steps back across the stream and meadow to the woodland, where we heard all manner of strange bird calls and found a peculiar type of mauve fungi amongst the tree roots. Then it was back to the jet boat & the Michelin men outfits for the journey back. More spins and swerves & at times it seemed like our shades would fall off with the strong cross wind, but we made it back to the start completely exhilarated, but in one piece. Oh yes, one more thing; the other guide led his group walking barefoot – don’t try this at home!

Contact is Lesley Dearing.



## **Watercolour Group**



The watercolour group meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month between 2pm and 4pm at Club Woodham. We all help and support each other in an attempt to improve our skills and produce a reasonable piece of work. Recently we have attempted various topics such as snow scenes, trees

in different seasons, figure drawing, birds and animals. Some of our efforts have been more successful than others!

If you would like to have a go at drawing and painting but not sure how to get started come and see what we do. We are a small friendly group and would welcome new members. We can help with Art Materials at your first meeting.

Do come along and join us.

Contact is Yvonne Frost.



## **Weekenders**

I can't quite believe it but we have now been going for two and a half years and I hope it is proving useful for those members who find themselves at a loose end at the weekends. We do not arrange many trips out during the winter months, but our regular meet ups are very well attended at 11am on a Saturday at the Coffee Lounge in town. Some have braved the weather to carry on strolling along the river on a Sunday, meeting in the River Car Park at 12 noon. We hope more members will join us now the weather has improved.

We still have some members visiting the free concerts at Chelmsford Cathedral on a Friday lunch time and the details of the concerts and times are on the website.

We have been meeting regularly at The Three Horseshoes at Althorne for Sunday lunch there, although the January lunch was a disappointment for some because of a change in Chef and quantity. We are going to try there one more time on 29 April to see if they have got their act together and, if not, we will find somewhere else to go.

At this time of year, we are planning some visits, a Steam Day at Mangapps Railway near Burnham, as we didn't get there last year, a visit to Stow Maries Fly-in day and classic car rally at the Aerodrome in May, and the Hyde Hall Flower Show, to name but a few. I also put a list of upcoming Theatre shows at the two Southend Theatres, Basildon Towngate, and the two in Chelmsford. Some of us went to the Glenn Miller Orchestra – In The Mood on Sunday 21 January, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all, despite the weather! All visits are listed under the Weekenders Events on the website and include some coach trips with Phillips Coaches.

We didn't get to visit any of the Suffolk towns/villages last year, so we are going to try again this year, and one of our members has given me a leaflet for a trip on one of the Sailing Barges at Maldon, so lots to look forward to.

We are a very informal and friendly group, and all forthcoming events are advised by email to group members on a fairly regular basis and they are also kept updated on the website. However, if any other U3A members are interested in any of our trips out/visits, they are more than welcome.

Contact Jan Talikowski.



## **Wine Appreciation #1**

This year it was decided by each of our members that when it was their turn to host an evening, they would concentrate on a predetermined country. So far this year we have tasted wines from Australia, France and accompanied by French food. With other European and New World countries to follow. One of the hardest countries to source at least six different wines our own country of England, but we will manage to source six at least.

As a wine group we do not buy expensive wines or wines that you can only buy from a specialist supplier. We try to buy from supermarkets, Off Licences such as Majestic and Odd Bins and also from some of the online stores. Never normally spending more than £10.00 per bottle.

During the time the wine group has been running we have all reached the conclusion that the New World Countries are in many instances producing far better wine than the traditional wine producers of Europe. There are of course wines that by their label tell you where they come from and no other country can produce a wine with that name. For example Côtes-du-Rhône which is grown in the Rhone Valley, even though there are many other wines grown around the world that use the same grape variety using a different name.

If we look closer to home a drive from South Woodham to Burnham will surprise you in how many vineyards are being planted in our own region. I wonder what this will be called!!

Contact is Andy Hull.



## Wine Appreciation #2

Wine Group 2 continues to thrive, meeting once a month in each other's homes to taste a variety of wines. They are very sociable meetings - we do have such fun and every host continues to amaze us all by finding different themes or ways to test our taste buds and knowledge, (which is not progressing very much by the way, but we try!)

We vary our meetings also by interspersing them with perhaps a visit to a brewery, wine bar, restaurant or even a garden party and at the time of writing one of our members is planning a trip to a local vineyard where we will have a guided tour, taste the wine And have a cream tea - it's not all about the wine then!

Contact is Sue Acton.



## New Group Suggestions



## Wine Appreciation #3

Linda & Bob Denston have volunteered to start the third Wine group. Contact Groups Coordinator Eileen Wendleken for latest information.

**Maybe you** have an idea/passion/suggestion for a new group – please have a chat with the Groups Co-ordinator Eileen Wendleken.

*A clock's second hand is really its third hand.  
Refried beans are only fried once.  
A running joke is the same as a standing joke.  
The Mall of America is owned by Canadians.  
The President of America is owned by ...*

Well, don't look for much sense in naming. And what are words but names for things and ideas.

## HOME SCHOOLING

Most of our generation of 60++ were HOME SCHOOLED in many ways.

1. My mother taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE.  
"If you're going to kill each other, go outside and do it. I've just finished cleaning."
2. My mother taught me RELIGION.  
"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."
3. My father taught me about TIME TRAVEL.  
"If you don't fix it up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"
4. My father taught me LOGIC.  
"Because I said so, that's why."
5. My mother taught me MORE LOGIC.  
"If you fall out of that swing and break your bloody neck, you're not going to the shops with me."
6. My mother taught me FORESIGHT.  
"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're involved in an accident."
7. My father taught me IRONY.  
"Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."
8. My mother taught me about the science of OSMOSIS.  
"Shut your mouth and eat your dinner."
9. My mother taught me about CONTORTIONISM.  
"Just you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"
10. My mother taught me about STAMINA.  
"You can just sit there until all that spinach is gone."
11. My mother taught me about WEATHER.  
"Looks like a damn tornado has been through your bedroom"
12. My mother taught me about HYPOCRISY.  
"If I told you once, I've told you a million times, don't exaggerate"
13. My father taught me the CIRCLE OF LIFE.

"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out..."

14. My mother taught me about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION.  
"Stop acting like your father!"

15. My mother taught me about ENVY.  
"There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have parents like you do."

16. My mother taught me about ANTICIPATION.  
"Just wait until we get home."

17. My mother taught me about RECEIVING.  
"You are going to get it from your father when he gets home!"

18. My mother taught me MEDICAL SCIENCE.  
"If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they are going to get stuck that way."

19. My mother taught me ESP.  
"Put your jumper on; don't you think I know when you are cold?"

20. My father taught me HUMOUR.  
"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me for sympathy."

21. My mother taught me HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT.  
"If you don't eat all of your dinner, you'll never grow up."

22. My mother taught me GENETICS.  
"You're just like your father."

23. My mother taught me about my ROOTS.  
"Shut that door behind you. You must have been born in a barn?"

24. My mother taught me WISDOM.  
"When you get to be my age, you'll understand".

25. My father taught me about JUSTICE.  
"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

This should only be sent to the 'over 60' crowd because the younger ones will not believe we truly were told these "EXACT" words by our parents...

## **FAMILY HISTORY - STORY # 7**

### **The Shoe Makers of Nantwich**

The setting for the story is in the rural county of Cheshire bordering with the more well-known areas of the Peak district of Derbyshire to the East, North Wales to the West, Shropshire and Staffordshire to the south and Lancashire in the North. My Grandmother was Ann Jane Penlington but normally called Jane, she and her family had until the mid-1880's been living in this part of mid-southern Cheshire for over 300 years.

In my initial searches I had discovered that after his marriage to Louisa Blakeman Jane's father (who was a carpenter) had moved from nearby Audlem a small village where his father was the landlord of the local White Swan pub. Audlem sits next to the Shropshire Canal five miles from Nantwich and boasts of a famously 15 step staircase of lock gates. In contrast Louisa's family, like many Nantwich residents, was born in Stafford where her father was a shoemaker. He had moved to Nantwich in 1860 and lived in Cartwright Row in the Wybunbury district of the town. By that time the shoemaking industry was the major source of employment in Nantwich and many of their neighbours in Cartwright Row were involved in the trade according to the 1861 census. This census also highlights that many of the heads of the family showed their pride in their profession by calling themselves Cordwainer not shoe or boot makers. The title originates from Cordova in Spain and came from the French word *cordonnier*. The Moors who at that time ruled and controlled the Iberian Peninsula produced cordovan leather from Mouflon sheep to make shoes of an unequalled quality using a method known only to them until brought over to England during The Crusaders. Conscious of this distinguished history and tradition shoemakers when organized in guilds have always shown a clear preference for using the title Cordwainer.

All of the family were involved working at home in making the hand stitched shoes and boots, including the wife and children. The father both 'Clicking' (as the cutting of the leather pieces from patterns and templates is called) and then the heavy hand stitching. Older children, normally the sons, would take over the clicking operation when they became older and more skilful, whilst wife and younger children did the lighter stitching trimming and polishing work.

Like most villages in the eighteenth century Nantwich had their share of shoemakers, but who or what was responsible for the meteoric rise in the mid-nineteen century to make Nantwich a major centre. Two names contributing to the change and also the nearby Lancashire textile industry appear to have been responsible.

The first was an American called Lyman Blake who invented the mechanical stitching machine, see opposite, then later, eye-letting and riveting machines. These machines were first introduced in Northampton and Stafford, already major shoe manufacturing towns and these advances quickly replaced the family home way of manufacturing. This resulted in a lot of social unrest and encouraged families like Louisa's father to move if they wanted to continue the family style of shoemaking still available in Nantwich. The second is the better known locomotive designer and railway builder George Stephenson. He decided to choose Crewe, then a village with a



population of only 70 in the late 1830's, for the location of his London and North Western Railway junction station and later workshops. Crewe was less than 5 miles from the shoe makers in Nantwich and therefore ideal for the shoe factors who collected and took the finished boots and shoes to the station and on to the ever growing populations of Birmingham and especially Manchester. Here there was a large market in Shude Hill selling boots and shoes in the city centre close to the cathedral.

So from the 1850's until the mid 1870's this was a good time for the home working shoemakers of Nantwich but eventually 'the relentless march of progress' and mechanised manufacture came to the town. The shoe factors firstly offered to put the machines in the homes for the light finishing operations, then later started putting the machines and operations in their new factories. Any resistance was too late to stop this 'change and advancement' which due to economy of scale reduced production costs for the employers resulting in a repeat of unrest and loss of work, similar to what Stafford had suffered twenty years earlier, resulting in considerable ill feeling with a bitter struggle culminating in demonstrations, violence and then strikes. This badly affected Leonard Gilbert one of the factory employers who when he brought in workers from Liverpool in place of local men who had refused to use the machines they threatened to torch his factory. He was even reputed to resort to carrying a revolver to protect himself. Nearly every family's earnings in the town were hit by these events including all the local tradesmen, especially drapers, grocers and publicans, some who had come from Stafford even returned if they had been badly affected. Despite these threats and a national economic slump, that included the cotton spinning and weaving industry, Nantwich still thrived until 1880. However with the final move to the introduction of powered machinery in



the manufacture of the footwear and the consequent de-skilling, the start of a steady decline followed. By 1920 the last major factory had closed as with greater transport links and new production systems there was no longer a need for centralised manufacturing in the town.

The census returns for 1861 and 1871 for the Nantwich ward make interesting reading, for instance :-

Charles Blakeman, 34 Cordwainer

Ann Blakeman, 32 Boot Binder

and *almost all* their neighbours were also involved in the shoemaking trade and these were their most commonly listed occupations :-

Cordwainer; Shoemaker; Boot Maker; Boot Binder; Ladies Boot Maker; Ladies Shoe Binder; Boot Rivetter; Shoe manufacturer.

*Richard Bradshaw*

## **FAMILY HISTORY – STORY # 8**

### **An Agricultural Labourer**

My 3<sup>rd</sup> Great Grandfather Nathaniel Martin was baptised on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1790 in the small Church of St Nicolas Little Saxham, Suffolk. Nathaniel's Father was an Agricultural Labourer and this was the employment that he also was going to be engaged in for all of his life.

By 1813 Nathaniel had travelled the 25 miles from Little Saxham to settle in Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire where he married Elizabeth Cross on the 8<sup>th</sup> November. That winter of 1813-1814 was very cold, and the frost was persistent. Britain's last Frost Fair was held on the frozen River Thames, where the ice around Blackfriars Bridge was thick enough to bear the



weight of an elephant. Winter temperatures were to remain below freezing for extended periods every winter until 1822.

Six children would be born to this couple at regular intervals, St Mary's Fen Ditton (opposite) played an important part of the life of the villagers and the Martin family. In 1826 the fifth child Elizabeth arrived, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> February, perhaps a cold winter day, the now familiar routine walk up to the Church for the baptism ceremony took place.

The family seems settled for about four years. Then Henry was born in 1830. On the 7<sup>th</sup> June that year, what must have been a very traumatic time in the life of this family, we find that on this same day baby son Henry was baptised his Mother was buried. It looks very likely that Elizabeth died in childbirth. Although early death was still common, one has difficulty in imagining emotions on that day.

Most of the working population in the Fen Ditton area seems to have been employed as agriculture labourers in Nathaniel's time. Many surrounding Agriculture Societies held competitions.

An article in the The St Edmundsbury Chronicle refers to the Fen Ditton & Horningsea Agriculture Society being formed. At its first meeting the Gentlemen of these two villages felt their workers were missing out of the chance to win a prize.

On the day of their first ploughing competition there were 28 ploughs. Later that day twenty-two Gentlemen sat down to dinner at the Chequers Inn Horningsea. After 'the cloth was removed' the loyal toasts were given, then the local Vicar gave an address (more like a sermon). The Labourer's were then called in.

The prizes were given. Henry Martin, the youngest son of Nathaniel, won 10 shillings. At the end of the prize giving, Nathaniel received an award for long service, a sovereign for 46 years service. He is also mentioned by Mr. Kent his Master when he spoke, saying 'he had never had a day off sick'.

After a few words of admonition by the Chairmen as to the disposal of their money, the men were dismissed. There were 17 toasts mentioned, accompanied by 'hear-hears' and 'cheers'. The ladies were not forgotten, there were songs sung, and other proceedings that did not terminate until an advanced hour.

We suppose the workers had to go home while their bosses enjoyed themselves or did they spend their prize money at their local pub?

Nathaniel never married again. His daughter Sarah must have been a tremendous comfort to him, as she lived with him until the day he died. Nevertheless, she did marry in 1859, and with her family, she continued to live at her father's house.

Nathaniel Martin died on 29<sup>th</sup> April when he was 75 and was buried on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1866. A notice in the Cambridge Independent Press of 3<sup>rd</sup> May said, 'Nathaniel Martin was much respected by all who knew him, he was a good and honest servant, having been on the same farm for 55 years in the occupation of Mr. T Kent'.



On this War Memorial in Fen Ditton are the names of two Great Grandsons of Nathaniel Martin who lost their lives in the Great War. It is very likely that his Grandsons lived in his house in the High Street.

*Colin Martin.*

### **A Song of Gratitude**

**The whole family, harmonious and devout.  
Aware of debts to our parents and ancestors.  
Revering nature, grateful for society.  
Always humble, learning from others.  
Able to give, demonstrating kindness.  
making one's motto " A bright life ."  
Overlooking other's faults,  
Correcting one's own.  
Moderate in speech, not getting angry.  
Gentle, kind, honest.  
Let's appreciate the joy of life.  
Patient. Peaceful.  
Not getting angry.  
Careful in speech.  
This leads to a long life.**

**Soen Ozeki**

**Daisen-in Zen Temple, Kyoto**

## MY NIGHT WITH GEORGE

Some years ago while working in Israel, an elderly man was admitted to the ward suffering from a very virulent pneumonia. Against all expectations he survived and it transpired that he was a senior elder of a Bedouin tribe. As a thank you, all the members of staff were invited to a celebration at the camp.

When we arrived the camp was decorated with colourful flags and banners, along with a number of white flags high on several tents. These indicated that the family had a marriageable daughter and any passing tribes with a marriageable son would stop, the fathers would make all the arrangements and the marriage would take place. I was very relieved that my father was not present as he would have had his tent pitched, his flag up the pole and I would have been swept off into the desert!

There was no socialising between the men and women and we were in separate tents seated on the floor. Later we were called outside and the elder made a speech of thanks. Apparently, a long-ago relative of his had met Laurence of Arabia and remembered he had blue eyes and all the tribes then believed that everyone who was English and had blue eyes was related to Laurence of Arabia. A camel was produced and given to me as a relative of Laurence of Arabia! I was about to tell the truth when one of the doctors whispered 'just smile and accept it'. To refuse would have been a great insult. I called the camel George after my father, I am not sure if either of them would have been flattered. Lately, there have been reports of some camel owners using Botox to enhance their camel's appearance but my George needed no enhancements being, apparently, a pedigree camel. George and I were quite taken with each other and spent most of the night walking around the camp, sometimes stopping for a chat, well I chatted George just grunted periodically. We were both quite fond of the very strong mint tea and enjoyed several glasses. It transpired that George had not been broken to the saddle so we made our way back to Tel Aviv with George tied to the back of a Volkswagen beetle. Anyone has towed a camel on the back of a Volkswagen beetle will know the speed is dictated by the camel!

On arrival in Tel Aviv the security guard at the nurses' home, who also happened to be the local Mr Fixit, made a few phone calls to a buyer. My night with George ended when I waved goodbye as he went off with his new owner, although the money he raised made for a very good night out.

*Catherine Elliott*

## THE CARER

*Footsteps coming down the path, Oh god it's Monday, time for a bath,  
No good you saying you can't get in, with my dear Carer you'll never win,*

*Into the bathroom you will go, get stripped down from your head to your toe,  
Hot water poured into the sink, in no time at all you're glowing pink,*

*But all is not over as yet you'll see, for on her face comes a look of glee,  
You shout in terror, this isn't fair, too late she says as she grabs at your hair,*

*Head over sink, shampoo poured on, head lathered up as she bursts into song,  
Fingers work fast as she scrubs at your scalp, hair dried off fiercely, then you're  
covered in talc,*

*Then with a movement she turns with grace, a wicked smile upon her face,  
You feel you've had a visit from Satan, as she whips off her gloves and tears off her  
apron,*

*I stand all pink glowing, and hygienically clean, thanks once again that my Carer  
has been.*

*You may wonder why I write all this – it simply is my dearest wish –  
To let you know if you live in dread, how you can possibly be brought back from the  
dead.*

*Ill in hospital, lying in bed, a visitor saying he's better off dead,  
Another said he's had his last beer, can't see him getting out of here.*

*Then having a stroke – they sent me home – Social Services was the first to phone.  
Then along came my Carer, namely Jean, who put a different light on the scene.*

*Cancer of the bowel, she said – followed by a stroke, better get to work on you,  
otherwise you'll croak.*

*Wasting no time, she was soon on the ball, an Aromatherapist was the first to call.*

*Next a diet sheet upon the wall; that was the hardest thing of all.  
But, I can say she's lengthened my life; couldn't have done better if she had been  
my wife.*

*By Pete Jones*



*Following our recent speaker's topic, here's a reminder . . .*

## **Smoke Alarms**

Smoke alarms are proven life savers. They give warning at the first sign of fire, waking you and your family up and giving everyone the time they need to get safely out and call the fire service.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service wants to ensure that every single home in Essex has the excellent protection smoke alarms offer and will visit any home in Essex and fit smoke alarms completely FREE of charge.

What a home safety visit involves:

- Identifying and making you aware of the potential fire risks in your home
- Making sure you know what to do in order to reduce or prevent these risks
- Helping you put together an escape plan in case a fire breaks out in the future
- Ensuring you have a working smoke alarm and if you don't, we will fit a FREE ten year smoke alarm.

**To arrange your home safety visit, or if you know anyone who would benefit from a visit, please contact us:**

Call us: 0300 303 0088

### NEXT NEWSLETTER

I plan to issue the next newsletter at the NOVEMBER 2018 meeting. Articles of interest to members are very welcome and will be included, space permitting.

Please send Group Reports and other items to me by 24<sup>th</sup> OCT.

Thank You.

*Jan Campen*

**B B Q**

**Annual Club Barbecue**

**Sunday July 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Scout Hut Creekview Road**

**Watch the website for more details!**

**Please mark date in your diaries.**