



CROUCH VALLEY

NEWSLETTER



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

WINTER 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

INNOVATION

1. Everything that's already in the world when you're born is just normal.
2. Everything that gets invented between then and before you turn 30 is incredibly exciting and creative, and with any luck you can make a career out of it.
3. Anything invented after you're 30 is against the natural order of things and the beginning of the end of civilisation as we know it until it's been around for about 10 years, when it gradually turns out to be all right really.

Douglas Adams



A Word from the Chair

Here we are again just a few days to Christmas!! Where has the year gone, OK I know I have had a few holidays. But time flies when you are busy. And we have been busy. Or your committee has. We have introduced a mountain of new procedures from district, mostly connected to new data protections that have been circulated, and thanks to Ken Walker (our secretary) we seem to have managed the changes well. Lynda and Ray have organised a number of successful events that have been enjoyed by most of our members. We now have the Christmas party to look forward to...

Your new Treasurer has been battling with the banks to get our online banking up and running. He now has that in place, so those of you that embrace new technology will be able to pay your subs direct into our bank. Don't worry, we will still take cheques.

I want to thank once again the coordinators who work hard through the year running the many groups we have, without them you would not be able to enjoy all the activities we have to offer. And we must be doing things right because our membership is the highest it has been at over 160 members.

That leads me on nicely to all the new members that have joined this year. Don't forget, you will get the most from your U3A by joining the groups, I hope you have already. But if you are still not sure, from January 2019 we are going to invite two groups at each monthly meeting to promote their group activity. They will have photos and information about what they get up to. You can talk to them, and be sure it is right for you. A list of the group each month will be on the website.

And finally some light entertainment:

A old woman on the phone to her friend. I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape. So I go to my doctor. He suggested I join the U3A. I go and join the fitness group. I decided to take aerobics class; I jumped up and down fling my arms about and perspired for an hour, by the time I got my leotard on, the class was over. BOM BOM

Sorry folks that was the best I could find.

David Shea. Chairman



From the Secretary's desk

Acronym

Noun – word formed from the initial letters of other words (The Concise Oxford English Dictionary)

We are all familiar with, and use, Acronyms on a day to day basis e.g. BBC, RSPCA, RSPB, VED, AGM, NASA and so on, not forgetting of course U3A.

But are you sure the other party knows what you are talking about? It's not always the case.

I used a lot of Acronyms, in discussion, and in writing, during my Insurance career and blithely assumed we were all on the same wavelength so to speak. However, two instances spring to mind when this was not the case. I frequently referred to the FPA (Fire Protection Association) and the FOC (Fire Offices Committee). My clients wondered why I was referring to the Family Planning Association and if our quotation was Free of Charge.....

I mention this because even the U3A came up with two stunners recently – MOOCS and TED which I hadn't a clue about.

Translation: MOOCS - Massive Open Online Courses. TED - Technology, Entertainment and Design.

So there you have it, be careful in the use of Acronyms.

Ken Walker, Secretary

Editor's note :

Many members will be familiar with FutureLearn, a MOOC provider of a humongous range of short, free online courses.

TED talks can be found on Youtube, just about anybody who has a specialism will probably have done a TEDtalk.

GROUP CONTACT DETAILS WILL NO LONGER APPEAR IN THE NEWSLETTER – PLEASE USE THE FACILITY ON THE WEBSITE.



Treasurer

This is my first report for the Newsletter since taking over from John Gable. John had 2 hats not only as Treasurer but also he was responsible for all bookings of all venues for Social Events and rooms or locations for the various groups. John has kept that role on the committee to allow me to concentrate as being Treasurer.

This year the 4 charities we are supporting are Dementia Adventure, Essex Air Ambulance, Mencap and Aspire. The amounts so far to the end of September are on the website.

As most of you know the Nat West Bank in the town has closed and I have been trying to get acceptance to have our account to be visible on-line. I can now say I can manage the account on a daily basis. Deposits can be made at the Post Office but this is not necessarily straight forward so a trip to the bank is easier on a weekly basis.

We do have to register with the Charity Commission which needs to be done by March 2019 which is a requirement for all U3A clubs to do if their total income is above a certain level.

I will be able to update members with progress hopefully in the next Newsletter.

Don Wragg



Groups Coordinator

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



Membership

Our current membership stands at 161.

We have had a steady influx of new members which more than makes up for the eleven that decided not to or are still to renew.

Anticipating the next renewal season could I ask you to please remember the second page of the form and could you please ease my job by highlighting any changes to your details, thanks.

Colin Pegrum, Membership Secretary



Webmaster

Crouch Valley U3A Website – <http://u3asites.org.uk/crouch-valley>

Don Wragg – Webmaster.



Welfare Officer

Thank goodness being the Welfare Officer I'm not too busy, I think I said the same thing in the last Newsletter!

Generally, the Members are informing me now of people that have not been well or been in hospital. I know it doesn't seem much when you are well, but the few members that have received cards from the committee and all of you it really means a lot to them, that's the feedback I'm getting, so keep up the good work in informing me of anybody that you think requires a card so they know we are thinking of them.

Joyce Sach.

GROUP REPORTS



Aviation

Crouch Valley members are welcome to meet with Maldon U3A.

CV Contact is Brian Austin 01245 329587



Bird Watching

The colder weather brings opportunities right on our doorstep in South Woodham Ferrers. Many birds migrate to the UK at this time of year - Waders, Duck and Geese can be seen if you take a walk around the Creeks accessed from the junction with Creek View Road and Broughton Road. A good time to go is an hour or so either side of high tide. Tide Tables are in the Focus.



There are many bird reserves within reach. The nearest is Blue House Farm about 10 minutes away at North Fambridge which is always open with no charge, but walking is required. Some reserves have visitor centres with light catering. Abberton Reservoir, Thurrock Thameside, Rainham Marsh and Fingringhoe Wick are interesting places to visit even if you are not a bird watcher and you want to go for a drive and have a cup of tea or a light lunch. Some of these reserves let you borrow binoculars. Information can be found on the Essex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB web sites.

If you would like to learn more about birds and our Group, why not come out with us as a guest without any commitment to join the group. We meet the third Wednesday of the month. Any further information, please contact me or John Gable at the U3A meetings or through our web site.

Contacts: Colin Martin & John Gable.



Book Group



The library continues to supply us with books each month. Recent reads have all been published in the past few years and we recommend these :-

The Gods of Guilt by Michael Connelly

An enjoyable outing for the author's Lincoln Lawyer, a well-plotted crime novel with surprising twists.

Here's the book blurb : *Mickey Haller gets the text, 'Call me ASAP - 187', and the California penal code for murder immediately gets his attention. Murder cases have the highest stakes and the biggest paydays, and they always mean Haller has to be at the top of his game. When Mickey learns that the victim was his own former client, a prostitute he thought he had rescued and put on the straight and narrow path, he knows he is on the hook for this one. He soon finds out that she was back in LA and back in the life. Far from saving her, Mickey may have been the one who put her in danger. Haunted by the ghosts of his past, Mickey must work tirelessly and bring all his skill to bear on a case that could mean his ultimate redemption or proof of his ultimate guilt.*

Dark Places by Gillian Flynn

This is a whodunit and whydunit from the author of *Gone Girl*. It's a page-turner despite the fact that the 'heroine' is not very likeable!

Here's the book blurb : *Libby Day was just seven years old when her brother massacred her family while she hid in a cupboard. Ever since then she has been drifting, but now the money is running out. When she is offered \$500 to do a guest appearance, she feels she has to accept, unaware that the infamous Kill Club's members believe her brother was innocent.*

Barkskins by Annie Proulx

This is a long novel – over 600 pages and you need some stamina but some feel it rewards the effort.

This is the book blurb : *In the late 17th century two illiterate woodsmen, René Sel and Charles Duquet, make their way from Northern France to New France to seek a living. Bound to a feudal lord, a 'seigneur', for three years in exchange for land, they suffer extraordinary*

hardship, always in awe of the forest they are charged with clearing, sometimes brimming with dreams of its commercial potential. Rene marries an Indian healer, and they have children, mixing the blood of two cultures. Duquet travels the globe and back, starting a logging company that will prosper for generations. Proulx tells the stories of the children, grandchildren, and descendants of these two lineages, the Sels and the Duquets, as well as the descendants of their allies and foes, as they travel back to Europe, to China, to New England, always in quest of a livelihood or a fortune, or fleeing stunningly brutal conditions.

Contact is Joan Martin.

A.Word.A.Day
with Anu Garg

If you have ever wondered why there's not a single word for the concept of a happy ending, the opposite of catastrophe, well, your wish is granted. In fact, you may not know that your wish was granted about 75 years ago.

You can thank J.R.R. Tolkien for it.

eucatastrophe

PRONUNCIATION:

(yoo-kuh-TAS-truh-fee) _

MEANING:

noun: A happy ending, especially one in which, instead of an impending disaster, a sudden turn leads to a favorable resolution of the story.

ETYMOLOGY:

Coined by J.R.R. Tolkien in a letter in 1944, from Greek eu- (good) + catastrophe, from kata- (down) + strophe (turning). Earliest documented use 1944.

USAGE:

“The contrived eucatastrophe of Dennis’s play seemingly resonated with and satisfied the audiences.”

Alison Forsyth; *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914*; *Theatre Journal* (Baltimore, Maryland); Oct 2007.

But you don't have to be the author of a trilogy to add to a language. Language is a do-it-yourself thing. If you speak it, it's yours. So go ahead, fix it. Fill in any gaps, any potholes, you find. Coin a word; share it with a friend; share it with the world.



Computer Help

The Group continues to welcome new members into our friendly informal group, whatever their knowledge or experience in the use of tablets, laptops, printers, computers and smart phones.

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 our confidence in the use of the devices. We meet to discuss any general topics raised by members with the aid of a projector linked to a laptop. After a break for tea/coffee & biscuits we split into small groups to help each other. As more people are now using their smart phones for both photographs and the internet we continue to look at their use and security.

With confidence and knowledge and help this means we can sometimes avoid a trip to the computer doctor to resolve the problem and so avoid being without its use for a time.

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

Contact is Richard Bradshaw.



Cricket Lovers

The group has not been active over the summer but if anyone is interested let me know and I will add your name to the contact list.

Contact is Ray Burns.

'It's a funny kind of month, October' reflected the great Denis Norden, who died in September aged 96.

'For the really keen cricket fan, it's when you discover that your wife left you in May.'



Family History

The darker days and keep-indoors-weather provides more incentive to do research into our family's history. As we share our knowledge of the research that we are doing, it gives members ideas to build on their family tree and make it interesting.

There are no rules on how much you should do or how much time should be spent, it is entirely a personal matter. One driving force behind research is, you find out something and you want to know more. And when you know more some of us want to write about it and put it into our 'Creative Writing' folder so that anyone can read it. This writing can sometimes be included in this Newsletter.

If members wish to they can give the meeting a short talk or use PowerPoint to illustrate their research. Our meetings are very relaxed with plenty of chatting and helping each other.

If you are a U3A member and are thinking 'I might like to do that' don't think you have to give a talk or take part in anything. Most of what we do is private in our own homes. You just have to ask for one of the group to get you started. Of course in this day and age you need some basic computer knowledge to do family tree research on your own.

Because our meeting venue is upstairs it excludes some of our U3A members. If this includes you and you wish to have one-to-one help to get you started on your family tree, please have a word with me or one of the group members and we may be able to help.

Contact is Colin Martin.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Those who compare the age in which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only in imagination, may talk of degeneracy and decay; but no man who is correctly informed as to the past, will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, author and statesman (1800-1859)



Games

We still meet every fourth Thursday of each month. We have a very lively group. Play cards, bingo and other games.

Contact is Julie Ferris.



Gardening

I hope you have had a good year. The weather has been fantastic for some plants but not others, but that's nature for you. My runner beans on the allotment were rubbish, they don't like hot weather. But then my Hibiscus in the garden has been fabulous.

It now time to start tidying up the flower beds. Don't forget to take out dahlia tubers by end of October and store them in shredded paper. Frost free. They say we are going to have a very cold winter?? So cover or mulch any tender plants. if you are lucky enough to have a heated green house, then no problem. Now the frost has come the lawn will stop growing. So clean up the lawn mower. If you have a petrol one don't forget to run the carburettor dry before putting away for the winter if you want it to start next year.

Garden visits. Let me apologise for not doing so many, my holidays got a bit out of hand this year, But I am always happy for other members to step in and do their own thing. In fact I appreciate the help. I am looking for volunteers to organise visits next year. We can discuss this at our normal planning meeting that may have taken place by the time you read this.

I will also be look for help with the Information stall at one of our monthly meeting. There we will have a opportunity to showcase what we have done and what we plan to do next year.

I would like to thank all the members that supported the garden visits this year. If you are interested in joining our group - Remember you don't need a garden, just enjoy looking at some amazing gardens. Then look on the website for more information.

Contact is David Shea.



Going Out

The Going Out Group's activities have very largely been covered by the Local History Group and the Garden Group but next Summer I would expect that there will be more activities.

Contact is Ray Burns.



Jazz Appreciation

The group has not been active over the summer.

Contact is Ray Burns.



Knit'n'Natter



The group has risen to 25 now and we meet on the 4th Monday between 11am - 1pm in the Small Hall of the Village Hall opposite the Blue Cage. We talk more than we knit, but that's what we do best. We're a very friendly bunch and always welcome new members.

At present we are planning our table-top sale to take place at the Christmas party. As it was so successful last year, we would like to raffle Father Christmas and Mrs. Claus once again. All monies donated to J's Hospice in memory of Connie Bushby, one of our members who sadly passed away 2016 and worked tirelessly for this charity.

So, hopefully, you will bring plenty of pennies with you.

Contact is Brenda Neale.



Local History

Our Local History group have continued with their programme of visiting places of historical interest. Since the previous issue of our newsletter, some new members have joined our group. Welcome to you all.

Following on from our successful visit to the Essex Air Ambulance in April, we visited Highgate Cemetery in May where one of our members was able to locate the grave of some of her family members. Unfortunately, the member who organised this visit on our behalf was unable to attend on the day. She was very disappointed.

Our visit to the Epping & Ongar Railway in June was enjoyed by all the members in attendance. The volunteer staff who were present were most helpful. This was a nostalgic day in our diverse county. Although two of our members put a lot of effort organising the planned visit to the River Thames Barrier in July, we had to cancel this owing to the costs involved and the lack of interest. In some glorious August sunshine, our Local History group teamed up with our Going Out group on a visit to West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, Suffolk. This was another very interesting visit however some members mentioned afterwards that they were glad that they weren't alive during this era.

The Royal British Legion Poppy Factory, Richmond were unable to accommodate our group in September, as a result we moved this visit to a suitable date in November. During October and November, we have visits planned to Southend Pier & Museum, The Royal British Legion Poppy Factory and The Bank of England Museum. We are looking forward to visiting these venues, details of which are shown on our website.

Our last monthly meeting in December will be our planning meeting, which will be held at the Village Hall, South Woodham Ferrers. At this meeting, we consider all suggestions and plan our visits for 2019.

The Local History group meet on the third Tuesday of each 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 venues. 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)



Not meeting currently – need a volunteer to act as contact.



Play Reading



We are currently reading a play entitled 'Curtain up on Murder' by Bettine Mankelov, it is one of the 'youngest' as in when it was written (1994), that we have read.

A group of players are rehearsing in the theatre at the end of the pier. There is a total newcomer, a husband & wife team... the wife is having an affair with the male lead... and after a while they discover that their only exit door has been locked... and when we finished last month one of the cast has been murdered...

We have welcomed four new ladies to our group, still no gentlemen! Reminder, we meet on the first Tuesday in the month from 2pm until 4pm, in the room at the rear of SWF library. Coffee, tea & biscuits are available if you so choose.

Contact is Linda Thomas.



Poetry & Creative Writing

Its been a difficult year for the Poetry and Creative Writing Group.

We are a small group and our members lead very active and interesting lives which means it has been very difficult to arrange meetings throughout 2018.

We really need another 4 or 5 people to make the group viable. If you want to try us out please get in touch with me through the Crouch Valley Website.

Contact is Bob LeBeau.



Strollers

We are a group of strollers numbering between 10 and 20 each week meeting every Tuesday morning at 10.15 at the river car park. For those feeling energetic we then walk the headland to Eyotts Farm joining the rest of strollers at approx 10.35 we then continue our walk along the Fenn to Shaw Farm for a chat and coffee.

We also often meet up at Hyde Hall and enjoy the changing seasons with the beautiful gardens, the lake with the ducks and the peace and quiet. There is also a newly built cafeteria to enjoy a coffee with lovely views over the area.

During April we stroll round Hanningfield reservoir to enjoy the Bluebells at their best. Again a nice little cafe with good views of all the wild life on reservoir.

Winter months can make the river path slippery so we still meet up and stroll to Shaw Farm via the pavement usually meeting at the corner of Marsh Farm Road.

If you would like to join us you will be made very welcome.

Contact is Pat Fayers.



Table Tennis

*'Come along to the Crouch Valley Table Tennis Team'
They will teach you how to flick
They will teach you how to smash
Trip up the unwary with a few dodgy tricks.
As for keeping score they're very unsure
But if you get it wrong there's uproar!
So gird up your loins with shin pads – chin straps
you just can't beat them
YOU HAVE TO JOIN.'*

MP.

We meet every Wednesday from 7.00 to 8.00 p.m.
SWF Leisure Centre Activity Room.

Contact is Eira Jonson.



Ten Pin Bowling

Ten pin bowling takes place twice a month at Madison Heights, Maldon. It's always the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month, it is well supported with an average 15 - 20 people of mixed abilities.

We start at 10am and finish 12noon-ish, with a tea break in between for a free tea or coffee and of course biscuits.

There is a friendly rivalry between the men, for us ladies it's more of a social time but saying that the ladies have given the men a run for their money sometimes.

We are always looking for new people to join this very easy -going and friendly group, if you are interested just turn up about 10-15 before start time - no need to book in with me but if you need any more information just look on the U3A website for my details.

Hope to see you at Ten Pin Bowling.

Contact is Joyce Sach.

Here we introduce a new occasional feature: The Title Guaranteed to Sell. Anybody who spends much time with books will notice that publishers often gun rather obviously for a particular demographic and set their sights towards an imagined lowest common denominator. Recently we've noticed lots of macho books about war and the SAS in the bestseller charts. David Mills of The Sunday Times suggests that the following title would be guaranteed a place in the bestsellers:

Back of the Net! The SAS Book of the Spitfire

In fact, he notes that a whole series of SAS books might prove lucrative. He suggested that further titles in his series of manly SAS-inspired books might include:

*Mission to Kill! : The SAS Book of the World Cup
Bravo Two Hundred Degrees : The SAS Book of Baking
Down in One : The SAS Book of Wine Appreciation*



Walkers

The Walking Group have been walking new areas and have found some walks a little more to the west of Chelmsford recently. There are some beautiful hidden gems out there in the lovely Essex countryside; unusual churches; cottages and panoramic views. For late October we have a 'Countryfile' walk in aid of Children In Need around the Chafford Gorges and in November, we will be trying out the first in a series of new London walks, centred around Regents Canal.

Walks usually last a few hours, from 3 to 5 miles, usually finishing with lunch refreshments at a pub or café. There is plenty of walking and talking and if the weather is inclement, the walk is postponed!

SWF Village Hall car park is usually our meeting point at 10.00 for car sharing. Walks are planned for the last Wednesday of each month, from November to March. When the clocks change to B.S.T. we try to fit in an additional earlier walk on Mondays each month.

Our planning meeting for next year is Friday 4th January 2019. So, if you fancy a good walk with good company and good old Essex scenery then dust off your walking shoes or boots and join us. You know it's good for you!! All U3A members current and returning are welcome. Please bring your ideas and most importantly, take your diaries too.

P.S.

Amazing quote of the month:

“Wait a minute, I’ve still got half a can of lemonade to finish!”

Steve Dearing, at a party (still suffering from a cold and having worked six hours at the SWF Beer Festival!!)

Contact is Lesley Dearing.

We spend the first 12 months of our children's lives teaching them to walk & talk. Then the next 12 telling them to sit down and shut up!

Phyllis Diller

My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's ninety-seven now and we don't know where the heck she is!

Ellen DeGeneres



Watercolour Group



The group is aimed at people of any ability level. We meet on the second Monday of the month at Club Woodham. The session is 2pm to 4 pm.

Subject matter varies each month and is chosen to give varied techniques and styles. Generally each painting is on A4 paper and can be completed in the session. Subjects have included koi carp, parrots, ink and wash sea scenes, buildings, sunsets, boats and flowers. If a particular aspect is of interest (like say, perspective) we will do our best to cover that.

Watercolour painting is not an expensive hobby and can be very satisfying. If you would like to give it a try come along and have a go. Suitable paints, paper, brushes etc will be provided for your use. If you decide to carry on then guidance will be given on what you need. We look forward to seeing some new members. Come along and have a go.

Contact is Yvonne Frost.



Weekenders

As the name implies, the Weekenders Group was started for those members who find themselves alone at the weekends. Our regular meet ups are very well attended at 11am on a Saturday at the Coffee Lounge in town and some of us have a short stroll along the river on a Sunday, meeting in the River Car Park at 12 noon. We now have the lovely addition of Phoebe's Café in the car park, to have a welcome drink after our stroll, and sometimes a naughty cake. They hope to continue throughout the winter with soup, etc.

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.

Our Sunday Lunches were postponed during the lovely summer we had, with members not wanting to be indoors during the gorgeous weather. However, we are starting up again on Sunday 28 October and we are

trying a new venue, The Red Lion at Latchingdon this time. We will report back after the event.



During the lovely summer, we have been to a few events at the weekend – Hyde Hall Flower Show and Stow Maries events, but a lot of people were having BBQs and family get-togethers and just enjoying their gardens and it was sometimes too hot to drive anywhere! Regarding our theatre visits, some of us went to the Abba & BeeGees show

at the Cliffs and we have several theatre visits booked between now and February next year. These include - Last night of the Proms, Searchers Farewell Tour, an evening with the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain and The Billy Fury Story, to name but a few.

There are some lovely events up at the Schoolroom in Woodham Ferrers in the coming months and we support them when we can, especially at their weekend events.

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 to come along.

Contact Jan Talikowski.

"Chillax, sit back, just take it slow
make every effort to unwind
let the calming breeze just blow
away those worries from your mind."

J.R. Winchester
The Word According Two; Lulu; 2016.



Wine Appreciation #1

Wine group 1 has carried on with our theme of each host selecting wines from the country that they drew at the end of last year.

It has have proved to be more difficult selecting three white and three red wines from some countries, than would have been expected. The USA being one of these as the variety of grapes appears to be limited and most of the wine being produced in California.

As a group we have had the pleasure of celebrating two Golden Weddings and three 70th birthdays' over the summer months, one of the weddings aboard a Thames Sailing Barge.

With the unfortunate cancellation of our wine tasting in October due to falling numbers, the group deviated at the last minute from wine tasting to beer tasting at Wibblers in Southminster. Some of us even tasted the first brewing of the new Hyde Hall beer.

Our programme for next year is still to be finalised but we are looking at starting the year on our usual topic of *Drinks left over from Christmas* and later in the year a visit to a vineyard and a possible Gin tasting evening.

Contact is Andy Hull.

**I like long walks, especially when they are taken by
people who annoy me. Noel Coward**



Wine Appreciation #2

Wine Group 2 is still going strong and still meeting once a month in each other's homes for a fun social evening. The theme each month is decided by the host, so it's always a surprise when we arrive and find out what we will be doing. It's a great opportunity, though, to try so many different wines and to see how much our palates are improving. We also occasionally go out, sometimes to a wine bar, sometimes for a meal.

In August we did venture out for a trip to Clayhill Vineyard in Althorne for



a tour of the vines and a talk and wine tasting. Unfortunately it was one of the few days this summer when it poured with rain, so it was just a quick look at the vines. However, the talk about how the vineyard came about, the problems of setting it up and how it is now thriving was fascinating. We all had a cream tea, and tasting the wines was pretty good too!



Contact is Sue Jacobs



New Group Suggestions



Wine Appreciation #3

Contact Eileen if you are interested in being part of a new group.

MY TRAVEL PLANS FOR 2019

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Kahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Kahoots with someone. I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there. I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. The drive there did not take very long, but it sure took longer to return. I got back yesterday. I have made several trips there, thanks to my spouse, children, friends, family and work. I think I've also been in Secure, but I'm not totally sure about that.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity any more. I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often. I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm. Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older. One of my favourite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenaline flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get! I may have been in Continent, but I don't remember what country I was in. It's an age thing. They tell me it is very wet and damp there.

PLEASE DO YOUR PART!

You can do your bit by remembering to send this e-mail to at least one unstable person. My job is done! Life is too short for negative drama and petty things. So laugh insanely, love truly and forgive quickly!

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Oh, the comfort -- the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person -- having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.

Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, poet and novelist (1826-1887)

DO YOU REMEMBER . . . ?

I remember the Corned Beef of my childhood
And the bread we cut with a knife.
When the children helped with the housework
And the men went to work. Not the wife.
The cheese never needed a fridge
And the bread was so crusty and hot.
The children were seldom unhappy
And the wife was content with her lot.
I remember the milk from the bottle
With the yummy cream on the top.
Our dinner came hot from the oven
And not from a freezer or shop.
The kids were a lot more contented
They didn't need money for kicks.
Just a game with their friends in the road
And sometimes the Saturday flicks.
I remember the slap on my backside
And the taste of the soap if I swore.
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of
And we hadn't much choice what we wore.
Do you think that bruised our ego?
Or our initiative was destroyed?
We ate what was put on the table
And I think life was better enjoyed.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

You can safely assume that you've created God in your own image when
it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.

Anne Lamott, writer (b. 10 Apr 1954)

NEXT NEWSLETTER

I plan to issue the next newsletter at the MAY 2019 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 24th APRIL.
Thank You.

Jan Campen

CYBER CRIME AWARENESS

In early October our secretary Ken organised a talk for our members on 'cyber crime awareness' in partnership with the SWF U3A Group. On the day, 150 attended the meeting at the community hall presented by David Gibb of the Essex Police Force and Barry Linton a computer expert from Thorpe Bay U3A.

The event, which was expertly presented, was both pleasantly entertaining and informative, making many re-think about the level of their own security from intrusion and hacking.

After discussing the cost and level of such crimes now taking place we moved on to remaining safe when using our devices and also mobile phones when on the internet.

Especially highlighted was the right choice of Passwords where simple one word or number only passwords can be hacked in seconds. Recommendations were given on how to choose a password and to never use the same one for two sites. Likewise to be very alert to spam phone calls and e-mails. Also, when using local wi-fi for internet access be very careful as it may not be a secure.

Demonstrations were shown where the presenter had the equipment hackers use to show how easy it is for scam e-mails to be put on members of the audience mobiles or those on their contact list.

We were then shown the dangers and care required when using bank and credit cards. Less obvious was the potential retrieval of details from your passport which is now able to be taken if the password is micro chipped. In both cases consider investing in covers that shield the card/passport details. Users of cars with key-less entry were also advised where to keep the device to avoid it being read by criminals.

Reports from those attending was that they found the afternoon enjoyable as well as very useful and informative.

If you are interested in the better use of your devices we have a computer self-help group for members that meets every month and initial contact can be made via our web site.

Richard Bradshaw

FAMILY HISTORY SNIPPETS

FAMILY HISTORY - STORY # 9

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO



At 7-25pm on the 8th September 1918 on the Great War Airfield at Scampton in Lincolnshire, an Officer Cadet throttled back the engine of Avro 504K number E3469 and signalled to the ground crew to pull the chocks clear. He adjusted the two levers controlling the fuel mixture to gain full power and took to the air. The flight lasted fifteen minutes reaching at height of 2000 feet.

With perhaps a sigh of relief, he had accomplished his first solo flight.

This Officer Cadet was my Father. He joined the Royal Flying Corps two days after his eighteenth birthday, on 15th November 1917 at the RFC Depot South Farnborough in Hampshire. The R.F.C. was part of the army at this time, so men would undergo basic training before doing specialised trade training. Many hotels and big house had been commandeered for the men in Hastings. This is where Frederick Nathaniel Martin No 110146 was attached to the No 2 Officer Cadet Wing at Carlisle Place in Hastings. Fred had completed nearly three years as a Motor Mechanic before his service which was an asset in understanding the aircraft engines.

When this basic training was completed he was posted to No.6 School of Aeronautics at Bristol on the 23rd February 1918 for a month of lectures learning about aeroplanes, flight and their engines. It was then on to the Armament School at Uxbridge to learn how to fire the Lewis and Vickers guns in which Fred was certified as proficient.

No longer were aircraft thought of as an observation tool that the army used, but a fighting machine capable of waging its own war. A Major in the RFC named Robert Smith-Barry who commanded a flight in France in 1916, was so shocked by the incompetence of the new pilots sent to the front, that he developed a new theory of flying instruction. Smith-Barry believed that the pupil should always be in control of the aircraft and the instructor only would use his controls to escape a too-dangerous moment or to conduct and demonstrate more complicated manoeuvres. This was to become known as the Gosport System and is most likely the method

used to train Fred when he began flight training on the 1st June 1918 at Scampton in Lincolnshire.

Forced Landings and Gliding were early lessons as the engines often cut out; the pilot would have to be able to glide until he got the engine started again or find a suitable landing area. As he progressed more complex manoeuvres were introduced, vertical banks and spirals sometimes climbing to 7000ft. These tactics would be needed by Fred when confronting enemy aircraft. (One such was the Immelman turn named after Max Immelman a German pilot 'Ace'). I quote from the book about the Royal Flying Corps pilots 'On a Wing and a Prayer' by Joshua Levine: *"The pilot would dive past his target, before pulling out of the dive into a loop. At the top of the loop he would perform a half-roll which would leave him in an upright position, with enough height to mount another attack"*.

The instructors were officers who had seen service in the war. They may have had an injury or completed their allotted combat hours. Fred had two Canadian trainers, Lt James Vans MacDonald, whose father was of Scottish descent. Another was Lt David Luther Burgess who had joined the Army in Canada. He was seconded to the RFC and during July and August 1917, he was in action in France as an Observer and was awarded the Military Cross.

Although most of the training was done in the aerodrome vicinity, reconnaissance flights did take place. The first was over the Humber. Others were flights to Brigg, Market Rasen, Waddington and Harlaxton. There were several tests that took place. The engine was not easy to control and the Avro 504k was capable of using several different engines and tests on running the 80hp and 110hp Le Rhone was noted. Instruction also took place in firing the gun, Fred used 100 rounds, and filming was another skill to learn that he practised. A height test to 7000ft and a cross country test and formation flying were also logged.



Fred was entering his final phase of training to be a combat pilot. On the 11th November 1918 Fred was out training. At 08.10 he was accompanied by Lt Burgess doing a duel test in Avro 3462, later he went up on his own practising 'dog fights' In Europe, the Powers were gathering to sign the Armistice. He may have known of what was taking place and that it would have a bearing on his own situation. Although the next week was very busy which included a lot of stunt practice and a compass test via Kirton and Lindsey, thereafter training rapidly slowed up. Towards the end of January 1919 four more flight entries were made covering general flying. The last flight entry perhaps may have summed up his situation as his last take-off didn't last very

long, at 11.15 they were up for 5mins to a height 500ft; his remarks were 'Engine Dud'. His very last entry in his log book was 'Flying for Week Ending 11th Feb 1919 Nil.' By the time training was finished, 50 hours and 30 minutes had been spent in the air with 23 hours and 35 minutes of that total taken up with solo flying.

These were turbulent times for the country and the new RAF. A heavy loss of pilots being encountered, there is no doubt Frederick was preparing to go to war. Before he had finished his training, the war ended and he was no longer required. But he had survived a dangerous occupation. Joshua Levine in his book 'On a Wing and a Prayer' writes *"It is an extraordinary fact that of the 14166 pilots who lost their lives during the Great War, well over half were killed in training"*. It is indeed very sombre reading as one goes through the casualty lists of Flying Cadets and Officers who were killed while training at Scampton during Frederick's time there.

On the 11th March 1919, a transfer took place to Harrowby, near Grantham, to be de-commissioned. The last entry on his service record is on the 12th April 1919 when transferred to "G" Reserve, with the honorary rank of 2nd Lieutenant.



The above has been summarised from the Service history of Frederick Nathaniel Martin of which a copy has been placed in the 'Creative Writing Folder' of the Crouch Valley U3A Family History Group.

Colin Martin

FAMILY HISTORY – STORY # 10

RAF 100

I never knew my paternal grandfather – he died in 1929 when my father was only 5 years old, so Dad doesn't have memories or knowledge to share. Luck was on my side and I found online military records from the First World War that gave me some nuggets of information – Grandad was 5' 6" tall, with light brown hair and grey eyes and had a scar on his right leg. Sadly no photograph!

He joined the Navy as an aircraft mechanic in February 1917, aged 41. He had many years experience as a chauffeur and motor mechanic and no doubt his skills were needed for the huge numbers of aircraft that were in use. I read somewhere that over 20,000 aircraft formed the Royal Flying Corps / RAF by 1918 but have not verified the figure.

My grandfather was posted to Dunkirk, France in May 1917 as an air mechanic. The online records are sketchy and difficult to read but show him transferred to the RAF Reserve in February 1919 and leaving the service in April 1920.

I was curious about his records being headed 'Navy' yet he was in the RAF, so I borrowed a book from the library – *The Birth of the RAF 1918* by Richard Avery, published by Allen Lane 2018. What follows are some snippets of RAF history 'liberated' from the book.

The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was formed in April 1912 when the King issued a Warrant for a new service to replace the Royal Engineers Air Battalion. The Royal Flying Corps had a military wing, a naval wing and a Central Flying School. It sported a modified khaki uniform.

In 1913 Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, insisted that the navy should have its own separate air force : Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). In July 1914 it formally divorced from the RFC. This bifurcation lead to endless friction between the military and naval sections.

In February 1918 the King approved the Royal Air Force (RAF) and in March he approved an Order in Council that united the 2 air services and authorised the transfer of personnel from the navy and army for a period not exceeding 4 years. The RAF was born on 1st April 1918 (Easter Monday, All Fool's Day). The newly formed RAF had 25,000 officers and 140,000 men, mostly technicians, mechanics and drivers. Only 8% actually flew. The WRAF was inaugurated in June 1918 and comprised 9,000 women from the army and the navy, on a voluntary basis.

All those transferred had a right within 3 months to register their objection and return to their original army or navy service 'without prejudice'. There was ongoing confusion over ranks and uniforms. The RAF adopted Army ranking until it devised its own ranks from August 1919. The uniforms were a lingering problem. In May 1918 light blue with much gold braid was chosen and given Royal sanction on 21 June, but a shortage of the necessary blue cloth was a difficulty. Officers who could not afford a new blue uniform were permitted to wear their khaki until it wore out. They must have been a motley crew! A darker grey/blue was found for work

uniforms and in September 1919 used for all RAF dress. Non-officer ranks had to wait until 1921 before they were all in grey/blue, to use up a large quantity of khaki in RAF stores!

It is amusing (now) to see all the bureaucratic squabbling and the teeth gnashing about colours for uniforms when there was a world war going on . . .

Jan Campen



CYBER SECURITY

The recent presentation by David Gibb (Essex Cyber Protect officer) and Barry Linton (Thorpe Bay U3A) was well attended and full of useful and interesting information

and advice. Here are just two suggestions to improve your own security:-

1. Passwords need to be 'strong' so try using 3 random words, with a mix of upper and lower case and numerals and symbols - really hard to crack.
2. About 40 people a month in Essex fall victim to scammers and fraudsters. Report fraud crimes to Action Fraud on 0300 1232040 www.actionfraud.police.uk

From the recent U3A Online Newsletter:-

Preventing Fraud

The Metropolitan Police Service FALCON (Fraud and Linked Crime Online) have been launching five - one a week - new Little Guide animations that aim to raise awareness and promote behaviour change over different aspects of fraud.

- Money Mules <https://youtu.be/hOLiXY09OzI>
- Payment Fraud <https://youtu.be/O1tktyF0-Tg>
- Computer Software Service Fraud <https://youtu.be/aJA-eyVtOW4>
- Romance/Dating Fraud <https://tinyurl.com/y7pe5osk>
- Online Shopping Fraud https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-_wPFXK2m4

All videos, and other resources created by FALCON can be found at www.met.police.uk/fraud

CLASSES IN DANBURY 2019

New classes starting in the New Year :

LITERATURE : *Making Sense of Poetry* : With poems from a range of writers and periods, we will explore how poets use specific techniques to encourage readers to respond to a poem's deeper meanings looking at elements such as speaker, setting, sound effects.

(10 sessions Tuesday mornings from 15 January £73)

ART : *Modern Portraiture* : Sergeant to Hockney : face to face with new ideas in the modern era. In 1910 Walter Sickert said 'portraits are of two kinds; a picture painted by artists as servants of their customers and pictures painted by artists who are masters of their customers'. This course, from John Singer Sargent, to the portraits of Picasso and Matisse and to the present day, will test Sickert's theory of portraiture and examine its history from 1840 to the present day.

(10 sessions Wednesday mornings from 16 January £73)

HISTORY : *The Rise of Witchcraft in the C16th* : times were unsettled, crops failed and people looked to lay blame, eventually leading to the first execution of a witch in 1566 in Chelmsford

(10 sessions Thursday mornings from 17 January £73)

ENROL on-line : enrolonline.wea.org.uk or by phone: 0300 303 3464

For more information contact Branch Secretary r.pratley@hotmail.co.uk

New classes starting after Easter :

ART : *Hieronymous Bosch* : Famous for his surrealist visions, his exploration of human savagery and suspected religious cultism, Bosch is also one of the most empathetic painters. Our aim will be to make as much sense of him as we can.

(8 sessions Wednesday mornings from 24 April £58.40)

HISTORY : *Falklands War* : an invasion with military and political implications: the Belgrano, the role of USA, Chile and the challenge of the South Atlantic.

(5 sessions Thursday mornings from 25 April £36.50)

ENROL on-line : enrolonline.wea.org.uk or by phone: 0300 303 3464

For more information contact Branch Secretary r.pratley@hotmail.co.uk

FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday December 10th
Christmas Meeting

Tuesday January 22nd
Monthly meeting starting at 2.00pm
Bob Milne will talk about FORENSICS

Tuesday February 26th
Monthly meeting starting at 2.00pm
Ray Clark will talk about RADIO CAROLINE

Tuesday March 26th
Monthly meeting starting at 2.00pm
Kate Bord's title for her talk is FOR BETTER OR FAR WORSE

Tuesday April 23rd
Monthly meeting starting at 2.00pm
AGM

Tuesday May 28th
Monthly meeting starting at 2.00pm
Peter Jones will conduct a Q & A on being an author

Tuesday June 25th
Monthly meeting starting at 2.00pm
Colin Harper will tell us about the Sahara Run Challenge

Tuesday July 23rd
Monthly meeting starting at 2.00pm
Keith Sargeant will tell us about the Life of a Fire Officer