



CROUCH VALLEY

NEWSLETTER



<http://u3asites.org.uk/crouch-valley>
Crouch Valley U3A - Registered Charity 1180675

WINTER 2019

COMMITTEE 2019/20

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

AN APPROPRIATE U3A *THOUGHT FOR TODAY*:

If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it.

Margaret Fuller, author (1810-1850)



A Word from the Chair

Welcome to the Winter 2019 newsletter.

Here I am again as Chairman of our U3A for what I can promise you all is my last spell in the chair. If I do the full three years I will have been chairman for seven years and vice chairman for three years and that's too many for all of us! My first thank you in this report is for the help I get from our excellent Committee, it would be impossible to carry on without their input and support.

We have had another busy year with a number of activities which have been (hopefully) enjoyed by our members. First was the quiz in April at Champions Manor Hall. In June we had the cream tea and in July the BBQ, both of these at the Scout Hut which were well attended. We have many people to thank who were involved in these entertainments, Steve & Lesley Dearing who set the questions and Ian & Jane Gill who did the marking at the quiz, the people who arranged to get the sandwiches and cakes for the cream tea and of course the tea & coffee etc. Also those who sourced all the food for the BBQ, David Shea and his team of chefs who cooked the meat so expertly that none of us were ill, and we shouldn't forget the Crouch Valley U3A's very own supergroup of The Ukulele Ladies and The Elderly Brothers who entertained us royally, and certainly not least all the people who came early to help set up for these and who remained behind to help clear away, they are very much valued by the organisers.

Still to come is the 1940s dance in November for which we have a trio of ladies named 'Fox, Wiggle and Sass' who will entertain us, and also the Christmas meeting in December which we are currently organising, and thanks must go to the Catering Committee who will be sourcing the food for this.

We must also thank all the group leaders who have put in a lot of work and organisation to provide their members with interesting things to do and of course the members of those groups who pitch in with help and ideas, the groups are the lifeblood of our U3A.

We have maintained our contacts with the Essex Association of U3As and always have volunteers from the committee to attend the twice yearly meetings in Chelmsford. These meetings are important to keep up with what our neighbouring U3As are doing.

This year we are again supporting four local charities through money raised at our meetings by donations for the tea and cakes. The charities we support are as always nominated and voted for by the members at our AGM. This year they are Essex Air Ambulance, Lupus, Dementia Adventure and the Helen Rollason Cancer charity, all very worthy causes and as I say at every meeting all the tea, coffee, milk, sugar and cakes are donated by members, not one penny comes from the U3A funds so we ask those who enjoy these at break time to give generously for these charities worthy causes.

Finally, thanks must go to Jan Campen who has again put together the newsletter and for which we are all very grateful.

Ray Burns – Chairman.



From the Secretary's desk

After a mere 1 year on the committee I found myself “volunteering” to replace Ken Walker as your secretary. I am now 6 months into to my 3 year stint and this is my first piece for the newsletter.

As secretary my job is to deal with the boring stuff and so what on earth do I write about? What about learning? The U3A is after all a learning organisation, so what have I learned as your new secretary?

Firstly, that the job is not as bad as I feared it would be. When I retired I promised myself that I was done with paperwork and deadlines. There has not been as much dull reading as I expected and long may that continue. Apart from our committee meetings I have attended only two meetings in Chelmsford and one of those, the Essex Association AGM, was quite lively. AGMs are not supposed to be lively, but the outgoing chairman being keen not be trapped into continuing in post offered up a wholly unsuitable candidate. Along with most of the attendees, your representatives, were not willing to nod the candidate through. After an interesting debate a very suitable candidate arose from the floor and was voted in. I am not entirely sure that the voting process was absolutely correct, but no one cared. If all

future area/national meeting I may have to attend run on the same lines I will be happy.

Secondly, that the founders of the U3A were very astute people. Of the structural models possible they chose self-standing groups bound only by the law and the principles of the U3A. We are all independent charities and so can develop to satisfy local interests and needs as we see them. This structure leads to healthy relationship with those occupying more senior/central positions and I have found everyone in the Essex Association and at national office easy to deal with and helpful

Thirdly, and I sort of knew this, but in the 10 years since I left the world of work the influence of “elf and safety” and “political correctness” has expanded exponentially. We recently had a request in the suggestion book to organise a transport service assist members where needed to attend the monthly meetings. A good idea, but regrettably the committee concluded that we could not step in formally as the legal and insurance implications were too onerous. Volunteer drivers would have to be trained and vetted. Gone are the days when trust was sufficient.

Ian Robinson.



Treasurer

It is over 18 months since I took on the post of Treasurer and the initial difficulties with the closure of Nat West in the town are in the distant past.

I am now able to make online payments if needed and also view the bank balance online.

This year the 4 charities we are supporting are Dementia Adventure, Essex Air Ambulance, Helen Rollason and Lupus. The amounts so far to the end of September are on the website. The total monies raised from the donations for teas at meetings for 2018 – 2019 came to £784, and I would like to thank members for their ongoing support

Overall the finances of the club are very good and in doing so our aim with any social event organised is to break-even.

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 membership has stayed stable and now stands at 168.

Hopefully we will continue to attract new members to replace those who decide to leave us.

Colin Pegram.



Webmaster

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

The web is still averaging over 3000 hits per month. 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 would like to thank everyone who has provided information to the web throughout the year.

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 do try to keep the number of mails to a minimum

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'm very pleased to inform our members that it hasn't been a very busy year for me, so I'm assuming that you are very healthy or as I say every year you are not informing me when a member is under the weather.

Please let me know about members that have been admitted to hospital or had an accident or ill so I can send a card to wish them well. My details are on our website.

Joyce Sach.

Could we be 'greener'?

As you all know we have in the last year or so been looking at ways to do our bit to try if not to actually save the planet but at least to try to preserve it for a bit longer, starting with a reduction in our use of single-use plastic - cups and so on. So leading on from this, the subject of recycling, particularly after our special events such as the Afternoon Tea, Bar-b-que and those held at Champions Manor Hall, etc has been discussed at the last couple of committee meetings and was mentioned to members at the meeting in August.

We would welcome any ideas from members as to how to develop this idea in time for the Christmas Party in December. However we would like to suggest a few things to focus on, particularly as recycling facilities at Champions Manor leave much to be desired. (Everything goes in black bags and deposited in the wheelies at the side of the building and only food waste is separated!)

Obviously we don't want to spoil the fun of the event but we are hoping we can do the following:

- As lots of members bring bottles and cans of their favourite tippie, we could ask them to take their empties home afterwards.
- We can use the designated bin at CMH to recycle our crisp packets.
- We can use our own (Catering Committee) china, cutlery, etc. (We are looking into alternatives to paper plates currently)
- We could use our supply of food waste bags to separate uneaten/leftover food then our 'clearer-uppers' will then be able to transfer these straight to the wheelie outside the hall.

If members have any other ideas on this subject then we would really appreciate these being noted in the Suggestions Book.

Many thanks,
Jane Peachey, Committee member

Crouch Valley U3A Interest Groups

Did you know that Crouch Valley U3A has 23 Interest Groups? Sounds a lot, but some U3A's have 50 plus Groups and there are currently 167 interest groups within the various U3A's. Not a lot of people know that!

We are always looking for volunteers to start up new groups, so do you have an interest which you would like to share with others? Don't be shy, it's informative and fun. No restrictions on the subject (within reason!), which can be from Astronomy to Zoology. Without Group Leaders, there would be no U3A's.

Here are just some ideas:

Metal detecting Quizzes Petanque Archaeology Astronomy
Bridge British History
Films Cryptic Crosswords French Geology Military History
Singing Philosophy
Science Shakespeare Opera Golf Zoology

Please see Eileen Wendleken, our Groups Co-ordinator, if I have inspired you to set up a new Group. There is an extremely informative Group Leaders guide on the U3A web-site to get you started. Good Luck!

Ken Walker, Committee member

agerasia

PRONUNCIATION: (a-juh-RAY-zee-uh)

MEANING:

noun: Not growing old, or looking younger than one's age.

ETYMOLOGY:

From Latin agerasia, from Greek agerasia, from geras (old age), which also gave us gerontology. Earliest documented use: 1706.

NOTES:

Do people tell you you look ten years younger than you really are? There's chronological age, determined by when you were born, totally out of your control. Then there's biological age, which is how well you have aged, and it is quite likely up to you.

If you have ever wanted a word to describe that youthful look you have maintained from regular exercise, healthful eating, and conscientious living, your wish is granted. As for actually not growing old, you ask too much.

GROUP REPORTS



Art Appreciation

Imagine you are watching a film in an obscure language. You've got a rough idea of what's going on but miss most of the plot because you don't understand the language. It's much the same when you've stood in front of a painting, whether visiting a Stately home or an art gallery. You like it but you would get a lot more enjoyment if you could interpret it, understanding why it might be a "good" painting, knowing something about the artist and so on. That's what we are learning in the Art Appreciation Group.

The group has not been going long but we've already had some really interesting and informative meetings. One member introduced us to Caravaggio, the 16th Century artist who, as well as being a bit of a lad, is known as "The Other Michael Angelo". If we thought that a 16th century Italian artist had no relevance to the modern day, we were wrong. His works have significantly influenced the work of modern photographers and film directors, one being Martin Scorsese himself and another, Ridley Scott, who directed "Blade Runner". Another member introduced us to the works of Anthony Van Dyke which she saw on a visit to Windsor Castle. Following a visit by two members to an exhibition at Tate Britain, we learnt how Van Gogh was influenced by his experience of London and how in turn he influenced British painters. During the final months of 2019 we are looking at some examples of Modern Art and artists; plenty of scope for discussion there!

You don't have to be an expert to enjoy the Art Appreciation Group. It's all about learning new things. We meet on the second Thursday of the month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the library study room where tea and biscuits are available for a donation.

Contact is John Acklaw



Aviation

Crouch Valley members are welcome to meet with Maldon U3A.

CV Contact is Brian Austin 01245 329587



Bird Watching & Wildlife

This year we added 'Wildlife' to the group name because it points to our interest not just with birds but anything to do with the natural world. Whether it is insects, wild flowers or living creatures, they all belong to the environment which we are constantly reminded about in the media.

Most of our members support the RSPB and the Essex Wildlife Trust, these and other charitable organisations are keystones in promoting the balance of nature against the needs of humankind. As a Group we enjoy visits to the reserves they provide and often have a lunch at a visitor centre, so it is sad to hear that the EWT has made the very difficult decision to close their trading business, comprising of a café and small shop, at the Chafford Gorges Visitor Centre. The reserve will continue to be open prioritising the main charitable aims of Educating and Conserving nature. This means for us there will be no facilities if we were to visit.

Most of us realise the importance of recycling and reducing the effects of pollution, so as we enjoying identifying birds and wildlife by visiting reserves we are also supporting the desire to help in saving the planet. Why not join us on a visit to somewhere wild.

Contacts: Colin Martin & John Gable.



Book Group



The very name 'Book Group' does not conjure a group that each month goes out exploring flora and fauna, walking or trying to trace long lost ancestors. But we do indeed experience travel in this country and overseas, accompanied by characters good and not so good from the writing of many authors. Never knowing whether the going will be hard to follow or easy as we turn the page.

In our journey we have been joined by Julia Barber so we are now a full party of travellers as we meet together for a next trip through crime, history, the classics and saga each third Monday at 2-30pm in the Village Hall, destination we know not where.

We have enjoyed many journeys through the pages of books in the years since we began reading together, each one different, never needing a passport or leaving South Woodham Ferrers.

Our most recent book was *The Third Man* by Graham Greene. You may have seen the film, you probably know the Harry Lime theme tune. The book is only about 100 pages long, a novella really, and was written with the intention of it becoming a film script. The setting is 1948 Vienna and the writing is quite atmospheric but we felt that it is not really satisfying as a book because there is no depth to most of the characters and the essential plot twists that work so well visually just don't quite work on a page. Interesting but not a 5 star read! The film however, has been rated as one of the best in the 20th Century.

Contact is Joan Martin.



Computer Help

We often discuss security matters at our meetings and passwords are a recurring theme. A member of the group recommended the free password manager LASTPASS and gave a demonstration of its set-up and use. You never need to remember a password again – LASTPASS stores them and you can retrieve them on any device, anywhere in the world. When you go to login at a website LASTPASS will automatically fill in your login details. You can also store important information such as your driving licence, and stuff that may be useful when away from home. The only password you need to remember is the master password to access LASTPASS, so make it strong but memorable.

Contact is Richard Bradshaw.



Cricket Lovers

The Cricket Lovers Group exists mainly as a mailing group where the members can let each other know when they are attending matches at Essex CCC.

We will also arrange occasional trips to sporting venues. We visited Lord's cricket ground a while ago and I hope to arrange a visit to the Oval in the early new year. We could also visit other venues such as Wembley and Twickenham, it doesn't really matter if you are a fan of the sport or not it will always be interesting to see iconic venues.

If you are interested in joining our group please contact me.

Contact is Ray Burns.



Family History

We have had good attendance at our meeting this year as we continue to learn from each other, which reflects the interest in Family History generally in society. Several of our own members have given talks on their research.

In 2016 some of the Group took part in a course on Genealogy run by the University of Strathclyde in which we learnt a little about the mechanism of DNA. Now, a few of us have had our DNA tested and shared the results which can vary from not very much to significant discoveries. These discoveries are made by being able to contact distant cousins which is mainly done by email. The testing and provisional contacts are channelled through commercial companies which is why it may be prudent to seek advice to make the cost worthwhile.

Family History is a journey we all can take if we choose to. On that journey we have the choice of how much time we wish to allocate to this interest, which can remain private or shared. There are steps to learn and pathways to navigate as we proceed. Our Family History Group welcomes any U3A member to join them on that journey whether it short or continues for the foreseeable future.

Please contact me or a member of the Group should you wish to find out more on what is required for you to start your journey in Family History.

Contact is Colin Martin.



Games

Games Group meet every 4th Thursday in the month.

We play all sorts of card games, sometimes as many as twelve playing the same game.

Sometimes in between games, a game of darts might take someone's fancy. On occasion a board game for four more might come out of the cupboard. We have a tea break half way through. I think everyone who comes enjoys themselves.

Contact is Julie Ferris.



Gardening

The Garden Group is open to anyone who is interested in gardening whatever size garden you have - large or small - you will find something of interest to help you.

We also visit lots of local gardens and historic houses with gardens and garden centres. So, whatever your interests are you will find our activities fun and informative.

For new member to the U3A I have listed some of the places we have visited this year :

Warley Place with pub lunch

Capel Manor ENFIELD

Elwy Lodge. In the rain

Patio Festival in Spain

Bridge End Gardens

Kew Gardens by coach

Long House Gardens - Rained off



We try and vary the locations to suit everyone's interests however the weather is not always kind to us . . . but then we are British.

You will find all the information on the U3A web site.

If you are interested in joining our group please contact me on

Sheadave@hotmail.com

Contact is David Shea.



Going Out

This group's purpose is to arrange trips out to anywhere that may be of interest to our members. We very often combine with our sister groups in the U3A, the Garden group & the Local History group, for our outings. It is up to the members of the group to suggest places to go and do the arrangements for that outing and it was made very clear at the meeting which formed this group that it was to be a joint effort, hopefully we will get some input from the members in the coming year and we will have some interesting visits in 2020.

Contact is Ray Burns.



Jazz Appreciation

The group's spiritual home is the Belvedere Club which is run by Phil Church each Wednesday at the The Chichester Hotel at Rawreth. We will often go as a group to see artist which interest us, we all have favourites and the variety of music on offer there is quite wide, usually middle of the road vocalists featuring the Great American Songbook, but they will often feature what I would call 'real jazz' so there is something for every taste. If you are not involved now but would like to be on the mailing list please let me know.

Contact is Ray Burns.



Knit'n'Natter



We meet on the 4th Monday in the Small Hall of the Village Hall from 11 am till 1 pm. Being a very friendly and chatty bunch, not much knitting gets done, but there is always someone with advice for those with knitting problems.

We hope to have our annual table top sale at the Christmas party for J's Hospice, so please come with your pockets full of pennies.

Contact is Brenda Neale.



Local History

Our Local History group meet on the third Tuesday of each month. We visit places of historical interest, travelling either by public transport or by car. When necessary, car sharing can be arranged. Each month, one of our members makes the arrangements for our visit to the chosen venue.

In May, we'd a very enjoyable visit to Audley End where we learnt that the Polish equivalent of our SAS were trained there during WW II.

This was followed by a visit to St Bartholomew's Hospital in June. One of our members was born there.

We joined our Gardening And Going Out Groups on a visit to Kew Palace & Gardens where we spent a glorious day surrounded by all the beautiful flowers and trees, in July.

For our visit in August, we spent an afternoon at Maldon Museum where we saw a variety of exhibits. Part of a locally found Mammoth tusk, a Roman vase and a replica of the waistcoat worn by the fattest man were some of the exhibits on display. There are many more interesting exhibits there too.

In September, we visited the Prittlewell Saxon Dig Exhibition at Southend Museum. The exhibits found in the burial chamber of a high status Saxon have been found to be from the 6th Century. A couple of exhibits there are being considered to be 'first' in the UK.

Our group are visiting to Chelmsford Museum on 15 October and Kings Cross Railway Station on 19 November.

In December, we will be meeting to decide which venues we will be visiting during 2020. A date and place for this meeting has still to be arranged.

If you'd like to join our group, I'd be pleased to hear from you. My contact details are shown on our website.

Contact is Aileen Langley.



Play Reading



The group meets in the small room at the Library and we read a play over several meetings, each taking a part.

Contact is Linda Thomas.

*One technology doesn't replace another, it complements.
Books are no more threatened by Kindle than stairs by elevators.
Stephen Fry in a tweet 2009.*



Strollers

Over the summer we changed our river walk and started at Compass gardens and had a drink at Phoebe's at the river car park, we also walked at Hyde Hall and Hanningfield reservoir always lovely.

Now the weather has changed we are on our pavement walk ending at the coffee lounge for a welcome drink.

Contact is Pat Fayers.



Table Tennis

We showcased table tennis at one of our monthly meetings, with many thanks to Jan Talikowski for putting together the photos and video clips, to give everyone an idea of what one hour with our table tennis group is like.

If you would like to join us we meet every Wednesday evening from 7.00 to 8.00 p.m. at the SWF Leisure Centre.

Contact is Eira Jonson.

What do you serve but not eat?

A ping pong ball.

Why are fish not good at ping pong?

They don't like getting close to the net.

A Paw Excuse

The historian AN Wilson arrived late for the *Oldie* lunch. He explained that he had been confused by a sign on the Tube escalator that said 'dogs must be carried', adding: 'It took me an hour and a half to find a dog'.



Ten Pin Bowling

We have been going Ten Pin bowling for a number of years now. For our new members we meet in Maddison Heights, Maldon, twice a month, the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month, at 9.45 to start bowling at 10 am.

No need to book in with me just turn up, we will make you very welcome. We usually have two games with a tea break between games, and finish 12 - 12.30 ish .

So if you want to meet people get fit and have plenty of laughs come and join us. Look forward to seeing you at Maddison Heights.

If you want to know any more information please don't hesitate in contacting me, my details are on the website .

Contact is Joyce Sach.

Doris Day, who died in May at 97, had a pragmatic approach to ageing. 'The really frightening thing about middle age,' she once said, 'is the knowledge that you'll grow out of it.' She also had a piece of wisdom that many parents can recognise : 'Wrinkles are hereditary. Parents get them from their children.'

QUOTES & SAYINGS ABOUT WALKING

We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive!

C. S. Lewis

If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself

Confucius

Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far.

Thomas Jefferson

There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere and many of us will have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountain top of our desires.

Nelson Mandela



Walkers

Just put one foot in front of the other and start moving! Regular walking has incredible benefits on your health and wellbeing.

Regular brisk walking can help you maintain a healthy weight, prevent or manage various conditions, including heart disease and high blood pressure, strengthen your bones and muscles, improve your mood, and improve your balance and coordination.

- * Walking increases your demand for energy which results in an **increase in your metabolism**. Brisk walking uphill or walking moderately for an extended duration of one hour are ways you can rev up your metabolism when walking
- * **Walking builds strength and endurance**. This leads to stronger legs, especially stronger calves and hamstrings.
- * Go for a walk outside and absorb all of the **Vitamin D** you can. Our body creates most of our vitamin D from direct sunlight on our skin. It is essential for healthy bones and teeth.
- * Walking has incredible **stress and anxiety relief benefits**. It has been proven that taking a walk could actually direct your brain into a calmer state of mind. Walking briskly or jogging really does calm you down, by sparking nerve cells in the brain that relax the senses.
- * Walking is one of the easiest ways to **strengthen your heart**. It is a form of aerobic exercise; it increases your heart rate and blood circulation through the body, and it brings more oxygen and nutrients to the organs
- * Walking boosts endorphins, which puts you in **a better mood**. Studies have shown that a minimum 30-minute walk improves concentration and helps with later relaxation, leading to a more positive mood and wellbeing.

So improve your circulation, enhance your mood, and live a longer, healthier life just by walking.

The Walkers group usually meet at SWF Village Hall car park at 10.00 for car sharing. The walks last just until lunchtime, from 3 to 5 miles, generally finishing with lunch refreshments at a pub or café. The walking is paced above a stroll but with rest/re-hydration/chat stops. If you would like to join us please get in touch with me and/or come along to our planning meeting on Thursday 2nd January 2020.

Contact is Lesley Dearing.



Watercolour Group



The watercolour group has had a change of venue to make the meetings more accessible for our members. We still meet on the 2nd Monday of the month between 1:45p.m. And 3:45p.m. but we are now in the small room at the back of the Village Hall.

Each month we have a picture to paint and we try to cover a variety of topics and styles. We all attempt to 'copy' the picture to the best of our ability. At the end of the 2 hour session the differences achieved from the same starting point are amazing and sometimes quite amusing.

We have a couple of hours trying to improve our painting skills in a relaxed atmosphere, enjoying each other's company and exchanging ideas. If you would like to join us you are welcome to come along and meet the group.

Contact is Yvonne Frost.



Weekenders

Early this year I was "volunteered" to take over the admin for the Weekenders. Looking back it was a fortunate outcome for me. I have really enjoyed working with the group.

The purpose of the Weekenders is to provide activities at weekends when time can go slowly. Two regular activities are meeting in the Coffee Lounge on Saturday mornings, and a walk along the river on Sunday mornings (which perhaps isn't as popular as meeting in the Coffee Lounge!)

A cream tea was organised in a member's house earlier this year, which was very well attended, followed by visits to the cinema, lunch at The Toby and Scrimshaws on a Sunday, as well as the Open Air cinema at Hyde Hall. We even managed a picnic at Saltcoates Park, with a game of rounders before the weather turned from summer to autumn. A Games evening was held recently and future events are a Quiz evening and what I like to call a Cheese and Wine evening (which shows my age) and caused much laughter.

I have a lot of help organising events for which I am very grateful. We start the New Year with a planning meeting to hopefully come up with ideas for weekends in 2020.

Contact is Pat Offord.



Wine Appreciation #1

Wine group 1 are still trying wines that have surprised us all. We have learnt that there are more Pinot's than just the ones that are easy to recognise on the supermarket shelves, like Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio.

We have compared wines from different countries that are produced from the same grape variety, for example a Chardonnay from France and New Zealand. Some of our members preferred the French wine whilst others preferred the New World wine from New Zealand.

We also broke away from wine at one meeting and had a Gin tasting, tasting different gins with different tonic waters. Did you know that a slice of Orange is a very pleasant alternative to a slice of lemon?

We normally try to taste wines that can be purchased in supermarkets and the price does not normally exceed £10.00. Most of the time they are under £8.00. When drinking wine, it is not the price that should control your taste but what you like. There are some very reasonable wines for around £5.00 per bottle. Even better if you have found a wine you like and the offer is to buy 6 or more and get 25% off is a good deal.

In our program for next year we are hoping to celebrate Chinese New Year by tasting Chinese wine, attend a wine tasting at Bar Vino with wine group 2, visit a local vineyard, and if we can afford it, try wines produced locally within our county. Unfortunately English wine is normally £10.00 or more so we might have to dig into our reserve fund.

Contact is Andy Hull.



Wine Appreciation #2

Wine Group 2 have had another great six months of enjoying the results of grape production and continue to hold our monthly meetings in the homes of our members, never knowing what to expect as the host chooses the theme.

Recent themes have included trying the guess whether the wine is an expensive or 'a bargain', wines for summer, wines with unusual labels, guess the country and price and wines from the Sunday Times best seller list. Quite a variety of evenings! Sometimes there is also a quiz to test if we have actually increased our knowledge over the months.

Given the British weather, most of these evenings were held indoors, although we do sit out where possible during the summer months, but always with warm weather clothing and a readiness to dash indoors if the rain starts.

As well as the house meetings, we also took a minibus for a wonderful trip out to the Fox & Hounds at Cock Clarks for a five-course meal with wine tasting. This was a very popular evening and we hope to do something similar next year. I'm now looking forward to the Christmas evening, which is always one to remember and a nice way to kick off the festive season, and to another tasty year in 2020.

Cheers!

Contact is Sue Jacobs.



A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Be master of your petty annoyances and conserve your energies for the big, worthwhile things. It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out - it's the grain of sand in your shoe. Robert Service, writer (1874-1958)

A clip from the facebook page 'Cambridge in the Good Old Days'

Yesterday after shopping in our local supermarket, I was in the queue at the Check Out, and heard when the young cashier suggested to the much older lady that she should bring her own grocery bags, because plastic bags are not good for the environment.

The woman apologised to the young girl & then sighed, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days."

The young clerk responded, "That's our problem today. You folk didn't do enough to save our environment for future generations." The older lady said "Ahh yes you're right -- our generation didn't have the "green thing" in its day." She sighed then continued: Back then, we returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles & beer bottles to the shops. The shops then sent them back to the plant to be washed, sterilized & refilled, so those same bottles were used over & over, thus REALLY were recycled. But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day. Grocery stores put our groceries into brown paper bags that we reused for numerous things. Most memorable was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our school books. This was to ensure that public property

(the books provided for our use by the school) were not defaced by our scribbles. Then we were able to personalise our books on their brown paper bag/covers. But, too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then.

I remember how we walked up stairs because we didn't have an escalator in every store or office building; walked to the grocery store & didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go 200 yards. . . . But she was right. We didn't have the "green thing" in our day. Back then we washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind & solar power really did dry our clothes back in our days. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. . . . But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Back then we had one radio in the house -- not a TV in every room. And if anyone did own a TV, it had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of a football pitch. When cooking we blended & stirred by hand coz we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send by post, we used layers of old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity., , , But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then. We drank from a tap or fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, & we replaced the razor blade in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But we didn't have the "green thing" back then. Back then, people took the bus & kids rode bikes to school or walked instead of turning their mothers into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's expensive car or van, which cost what a whole house did before the "green thing".

Oh and we had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest leisure park.

. . . . But it so sad this current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the "green thing" back then?

I think you should forward this on to another selfish old person who needs a lesson in conservation from some smart ass young person. We don't like being old in the first place, so it doesn't take much to piss us off... Especially from a tattooed, multiple pierced smart ass who can't make change without the cash register telling them how much.

FAMILY HISTORY SNIPPETS

FAMILY HISTORY - STORY # 12

MY FATHER'S STORY

I did not know my father. He was killed in action in 1944 during the Italian Campaign of World War 2. I knew about the basic facts of his life from my mother and that he was tank driver when he died in Italy in 1944. We are all part of history and the lives of ordinary men are worth recording as much as the great and good, especially when ordinary men have taken part in momentous events. What follows is a shortened version of a longer paper.

John was born in 1918 in Maryport Cumberland and was the first surviving son of Thomas Acklaw a coal miner. Maryport and the surrounding region suffered high level of unemployment. John was a milling engineer and a skilled worker when he came to London in seek of work at the age of 19. It was not long before he met Violet, my mother. They married in 1940.

John was called up for military service in 1942. His technical skills and training were probably the reasons that he chose, or was chosen to join the the Royal Armoured Corps subsequently to be posted to the 48th Tank Regiment. The Regiment was based in Effefechan in Scotland where John passed training as a Driver Mechanic AFV (Armoured Fighting Vehicle) Group 6 on 15 February 1943. It was from here that the Regiment set sail for North Africa. The journey was horrendous. One trooper later wrote:

"...we cast our bread upon the waters, or vomited from our hammocks on those sleeping below. 'Those who succeeded in reaching the heads stared wan and haggard at the notice "It is forbidden to throw cigar ends down here."

John comment in his letter home was more phlegmatic:

"We had a rotten voyage, half starved and very cramped...."

The 48th Tank Regiment was in North Africa to fight in in the final campaign leading to the fall of Tunis. Very few people in Britain like John had ever been outside the country so coming to a strange country with different people customs and environs was a new experience. His first impressions were mixed:

"Its not much different to England here...its quite cold at night...The people here are Arab and French and seem to have been well bombed. The arabs are very ragged and don't seem to have much grub and clothes...Its nice country here. Plenty of mountains, some of them with snow on the top."

He had a short period of respite and preparation in which he had his first experience of swimming in the Mediterranean Sea (*"It was champion but rather salty"*). At the same time he received his personal NAAFI ration of soap, razor blade, chocolate, beer, cigarettes and matches. He did not get the quarter bottle of whiskey that was included in an officer's rations. It was not long before he drove his tank into battle.

It was on Good Friday, 21 April 1943 that the 48th Tank Regiment went into action for the first time. John's Squadron was to mount an attack on enemy positions at Djebel Djaffa with the East Surrey Infantry. The objective was to capture two hill positions and a saddle north east of one of them to which a German attacking force had withdrawn. The order was given at 0.45 hours when John threw aside his blankets, jumped into his tank and warmed the engines, while the wireless operator checked radio connections. Minutes after the warning was given his tank was advancing with the squadron, line ahead through a cornfield below the hill features occupied by the enemy. The following paragraph is based on a description of the action by A.J Gilmour who observed the attack by John's A squadron from B squadron's hull-down support position.

As John's tank crept slowly forward towards the high ground held by the enemy its six pound guns opened up in unison with others. It was exposed to fierce fire from enemy tanks and a powerful 88 mm anti-tank gun. One lead tank in the squadron exploded in flames and John had to pray that his team would spot and respond instantly to any threat in its sights. He would be sweating in the extreme heat inside the tank. His ears would be pounded by the tank's gun firing two feet above his head. He would be choking in the dust, smoke, and cordite fumes filling the tank's compartments. The noise would be drowning out the the roar of the tank's engines and making it difficult for him to gauge their performance. At the same time his eyes would be glued to the periscope or visor through which he peered for obstacles to the tank's progress.

John was to be exposed to danger again when his squadron was deployed to support infantry defending a high point against German attack. The squadron was situated on the reverse slope of the height for six hours while under heavy and incessant mortar attack; so incessant that John and the crew were trapped in their tank, unable to leave under daylight.

In a letter dated 29 April John wrote:

" We are well up in the hills here..and these Gerry blokes are taking some shifting, they are as stubborn as hell."

It is very likely that John was involved in the following incident on 26 April 1943, recorded in the Regiment's Dairy, and illustrating the risks to which he was exposed:

1200hrs – Churchill IV on crest of pt 144. J.6935. Track broken on top, probably by 88mm through the left air louvre. “A” Sqn fitters went to repair it, but had to withdraw owing to dive bombing attacks and mortar fire in the area.

John seems to have taken it in his stride as he wrote:

“I’m in the recovery section...and we’ve done some good work so far”

That is not to say that he was enjoying himself as he also wrote:

“Well, things are not going too bad here except its still bleeding cold at nights. The grub ration hasn’t been too good up till (sic) now and we’ve been worked to a frazzle with the tank. In fact we started at dawn and finished at dark and the lads and I were so tired we just rolled into bed dirty.”

Tunis fell in April 1943 after which the regiment did not come home but stayed encamped in Tunisia for a year. John’s letters home reflect his boredom and frustration,

“It wasn’t long before the all the behind the line heroes crawled out of there (sic) holes to push us around. A good shelling would make them realise that its not bullshit that makes a good soldier. But still my love its just part of the handicap we have to put up with.”

John had felt himself much better occupied maintaining his tank which had been destroyed in an accidental fire,

“I miss the old tank. She was so contrary it was a full time job keeping her going but she never let me down in the thick”.

John left North Africa with the Regiment in May 1943 arriving at Naples as Vesuvius was erupting, belching smoke and ash high into the air. Some leave time away from training and tank maintenance enabled John to visit local sights like Pompeii, The Amalfi Grotto and

“some of the most beautiful churches in the world”.

John felt guilty that he seemed to be having a good time while Violet and the children were experiencing the deprivations and dangers of civilian life on the home front,

“I know it seems wrong to you and that it seems like I’m having real time, darling, but believe me the boys need rest when you’ve done nothing but eat, drink sleep and fight tanks for 18 months tempers get frayed”.

Throughout his time away, the content of John’s letters to his wife had mainly been about loving and missing her, regretting not seeing the children, and greeting friends and family. This letter, dated 14 July 1943 is the last surviving letter kept by Violet. Perhaps Italy and the beauty of the Amalfi coast brought out the poet in him:

"I go out sometimes for a few drinks but when the sun goes down I'm with you again. I can't help it , it seems with the dark my heart flies to England and I get very sad...one of these days a tired sun scorched soldier will knock on your door and say, "Honey I'm here!"

But the time was to come when he was required to face enemy fire once more. The Regiment crossed to the Eastern side of the Italian Peninsular ready to take part in the assault on the Gothic Line, the heavily fortified German defences blocking the way to Rimini and beyond. The reality of what lay ahead was made clear:

"Crews were furnished with phials of morphia, and casualty sheets to be completed by survivors containing such merry injunctions as 'give location of bodies and state whether or not buried'. The Medical Officer gave us final tips on checking haemorrhage, resuscitation and first aid ("Never apply a tourniquet round the neck"...). Armoured against fate, we plunged into the last battle." (from Titan Goes to War by A.J Gilmour).

John's Troop was ordered to proceed quickly to a village called Pieve as an officer had observed that the Germans appeared to be reorganising their troops and would not be ready for an attack. On reaching the village at 0400 hrs on 2 September John's tank, leading under the command of Lieut. C.R.G. Hutchinson, was feeling its way through the village when it was hit and burst into flames. An anti-tank gun embedded in the slope to the west side of the village had fired on it. Lieut. Hutchinson and two crew escaped. John and one other crew were killed. He was 23 years of age.

John is buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Gradara, Italy. Details of his grave on the Commonwealth Grave Commission website state that the site for the cemetery was chosen in November 1944 and contains the graves of casualties incurred during the advance from Ancona to Rimini which broke the Gothic Line. His name appears on the 48th Battalion Tank Regiment Honours Board kept at the Bovington Tank Museum where it is also inscribed in a Book of Remembrance. His name is also recorded on the war memorial in St Andrews Parish Church, Willesden, London N.W 10, not far from Sandringham Road where he lived with Violet.

John Acklaw

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

I don't know why we are here, but I'm pretty sure that it is not in order to enjoy ourselves.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosopher (1889-1951)

The Value of Old Age

Remember old folk are worth a fortune, with silver in their hair and gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a little older since I spoke to you last and changes have come into my life.

I am quite a frivolous old girl. I am seeing five gentlemen each day. As soon as I wake up, Will Powers helps me get out of bed. Then I go to visit Lou, next it is time for Mr. Quaker who gives me my oats.

They leave and Arthur Ritis shows up and stays for the rest of the day. He doesn't stay in one place for very long, and takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I am ready for bed with Johnny Walker. What a life!

Oh yes, and I am flirting with Al Zymers.

The vicar came the other day and said " At your age, you should be thinking about the hereafter". I told him " Oh I do. No matter where I am, in the lounge, upstairs, in the kitchen or in the basement, I ask myself " Now what am I here after?".

THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

We have probed the earth, excavated it, burned it, ripped things from it, buried things in it, chopped down its forests, leveled its hills, muddied its waters, and dirtied its air. That does not fit my definition of a good tenant. If we were here on a month-to-month basis, we would have been evicted long ago. Rose Bird, Chief Justice of California Supreme Court (1936-1999)

ANOTHER THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

For all our conceits about being the centre of the universe, we live in a routine planet of a humdrum star stuck away in an obscure corner ... on an unexceptional galaxy which is one of about 100 billion galaxies. ... That is the fundamental fact of the universe we inhabit, and it is very good for us to understand that. Carl Sagan, astronomer and writer (1934-1996)

The Times view on pet names: Why Cats Don't Come

A study suggests your pet can recognise its own name, so where is it?

"I can hear you shouting perfectly well but I am very busy eating your favourite plant."

"I am faintly interested in the notion that I should care what you want me to do, but not interested enough to do anything about it."

"I am off hunting one of those pretty little birds I know you like looking at, so I can present you with its heart and its spine."

"I am busy hunting a small twig with lots of leaves on it. You may feel this would not require a huge amount of hunting, but that just shows how little you know about anything."

"I am already in the house. I sneaked in through an upstairs window and, while you scream, I am now directly behind you sitting perfectly still."

"I am finding some snails to eat so I can later vomit them up into your slippers again, somehow maliciously."

"I have unilaterally opted to change my name. Henceforth I am to be known as Ai-Apaec, after the God of the pre-Incan Mochica civilisation. I shall be along smartly as soon as you guess this."

"I have spent the past ten minutes attempting to catch a butterfly and am profoundly jealous of your thumbs."

"I suspect you are calling me because there is a mouse in the house and I resent the implication that this is my problem."

"I am saving my voice, so as to spend the whole night outside inexplicably screaming."

"I am stuck up a very high tree and have opted to style it out by pretending this is an active choice about where to spend the rest of my life."

"I am sitting on the gutter above your head and about to pounce."

"I am waiting for an apology for the look you gave me when I absent-mindedly sank my claws into your lap while you were wearing pyjamas."

"I am not a dog."

Our Strange English Language – Ablaut Reduplication

Adjectives in English absolutely have to be in this order: opinion-size-age-shape-colour-origin-material-purpose Noun. So you can have a lovely little old rectangular green French silver whittling knife. But if you mess with that word order in the slightest you'll sound like a maniac. It's an odd thing that every English speaker uses that list, but almost none of us could write it out.

English speakers love to learn this sort of thing for two reasons. First, it astonishes us that there are rules that we didn't know that we knew. That's rather peculiar, and rather exciting. We're all quite a lot cleverer than we think we are. And there's the shock of realising that there's a reason there may be little green men on Mars, but there certainly aren't green little men. Second, you can spend the next hour of your life trying to think of exceptions, which is useful as it keeps you from doing something foolish like working.

Actually, there are a couple of small exceptions. Little Red Riding Hood may be perfectly ordered, but the Big Bad Wolf seems to be breaking all the laws of linguistics. Why does Bad Big Wolf sound so very, very wrong? What happened to the rules?

Ding dong - King Kong

Well, in fact, the Big Bad Wolf is just obeying another great linguistic law that every native English speaker knows, but doesn't know that they know. And it's the same reason that you've never listened to hop-hip music.

You are utterly familiar with the rule of ablaut reduplication. You've been using it all your life. It's just that you've never heard of it. But if somebody said the words zag-zig, or 'cross-criss you would know, deep down in your loins, that they were breaking a sacred rule of language. You just wouldn't know which one.

All four of a horse's feet make exactly the same sound. But we always, always say clip-clop, never clop-clip. Every second your watch (or the grandfather clock in the hall makes the *same sound*) but we say tick-tock, never tock-tick. You will never eat a Kat Kit bar. The bells in Frère Jaques will forever chime 'ding dang dong'.

Reduplication in linguistics is when you repeat a word, sometimes with an altered consonant (love-dovey, fuddy-duddy, nitty-gritty), and sometimes

with an altered vowel: bish-bash-bosh, ding-dang-dong. If there are three words then the order has to go I, A, O. If there are two words then the first is I and the second is either A or O. Mish-mash, chit-chat, dilly-dally, shilly-shally, tip top, hip-hop, flip-flop, tic tac, sing song, ding dong, King Kong, ping pong.

Why this should be is a subject of endless debate among linguists, it might be to do with the movement of your tongue or an ancient language of the Caucasus. It doesn't matter. It's the law, and, as with the adjectives, you knew it even if you didn't know you knew it. And the law is so important that you just can't have a Bad Big Wolf.

NOTES:

You can friend & defriend and you can magnetize & demagnetize, but you can only degauss, you can't gauss. You can debunk, but not bunk, and you can defenestrate, but not fenestrate.

What other words like this can you think of?

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Words are but the signs of ideas.

Samuel Johnson, lexicographer (1709-1784)

ANOTHER THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

"If I seem unduly clear to you, you must have misunderstood what I said."

Alan Greenspan, when Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

I plan to issue the next newsletter at the MAY 2020 meeting. Articles of interest to members are very welcome and will be included, space permitting.

Please send Group Reports and other items to me before end of April

Thank You.

Jan Campen

Do you look at the website? Here are recent additions :-

CROUCH VALLEY U3A - DONATIONS (Refreshments) 2019 - 2020

Up to 30/09/2019 the following donations have been made:-

Meeting Date	Dementia Adventure	Essex Air Ambulance	Lupus	Helen Rollason Cancer Charity	Aspire
April					60.70
May	53.90				
June		45.20			
July			67.80		
August				77.00	
September	62.80				

**From
Dementia
Adventure**

4th October 2019

Dear Mr Wragg,

I am writing to thank you for your recent donation from the money collected at your recent September meeting. We can confirm that we have gratefully received a cheque for £62.80.

We are really grateful for your support and this donation is a very valuable contribution to the charity and will go directly towards adventure provision for people living with dementia and their carers.

Dementia Adventure is a multi-award winning charity with a simple mission: to enable people living with dementia to get outdoors, connect with nature, themselves and their community, and retain a sense of adventure in their lives. We provide training, research, and consultancy services - all with nature in mind. We also provide Dementia Adventures in the form of small group supported holidays ranging from first steps into the outdoors through to sailing holidays and other residential adventures.

Many thanks again for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,



Kath Vale
Head of Fundraising
Email: kathvale@dementiaadventure.co.uk

Tel: 01245 237548

7 October 2019

Dear Don

Please pass on our thank you to all of the members for the generous donation of £77 received at the office last month.

This donation will make a real difference in our efforts to support people living with cancer.

We could not provide our service without people like you and we hope you can continue to support us in the years ahead.

Through our network of cancer support centres, the charity is currently supporting patients with 28 different cancers, providing more than 1000 appointments for complementary therapies, counselling and manual lymphatic drainage every month.

We also provide support and counselling to their family, friends and carers.

More than 3,000 cancer patients have benefitted in the last decade from the funding provided by the charity towards clinical drug trials undertaken in Broomfield and North Middlesex hospital.

We wondered if you would like one of the team to come and give a talk to your group about the charity? Please let us know. In the meantime, we enclose a copy of our latest Moment magazine which may be of interest to your group.

Once again, thank you for helping our charity.

With very best wishes

 Helen Rollason
Administrator

**From Helen
Rollason**

FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday 9th December - Christmas Meeting

This will be similar to previous years – see website for details.

A maximum of 100 people with ticket prices set at £2 per person. There will be entertainment provided.

Tuesday 28th January 2020

Speaker : Brian Carline on *School Days*

Tuesday 25th February

Speaker : James Taylor on
The Forgotten Art of the Picture Postcard 1840 – 1950s

Tuesday 24th March

Speaker : Arthur Brookes on
The History of the Music Hall part 2

Tuesday 28th April

AGM
Combined groups showcasing

Tuesday 26th May

Speaker : Saffron Summerfield on
Milton Keynes to Mississippi – Guitar Music

Tuesday 23rd June

Speaker : Keith Sargeant on
Life of a Fireman part 2.