

Croydon u3a

Winter 2023 Magazine



The Third Age Trust

(Operating as the University of the Third Age)

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www.u3asites.org.uk/croydon

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Members of Croydon u3a and other interested parties,

Happy New Year and healthy one, I hope. At this time of year – cold, damp and often with those dismally grey skies when you need the lights on all day, my mother would always remind me that the evenings are getting lighter! On the way home today driving through a heavy hailstorm, there was a beautiful rainbow ahead of me. Nature is amazing.

I'm sure you will agree that Word of Mouth recommendations are worth their weight in gold. If you need a plumber or a hairdresser or a new restaurant to try, that personal tip from someone whose judgement you trust, ticks the box. The same is true for u3a recruitment. We produce flyers and leaflets. We have articles in local publications, on-line and in print. We hold recruitment events from time to time. But your recommendation tops all of these. The largest group of new members join because a friend, neighbour, former colleague, or family member has tipped them the wink. Please consider yourself an Ambassador. Your personal recommendations are very much valued.

I hope you feel INSPIRED from time to time, through the Interest Groups, the Talks, the Outings and Social Activities. I hope you feel challenged occasionally – to have a go, to put your toe in the proverbial water. I hope you feel the WARMTH and FRIENDSHIP that being a member brings. These are the aspects to tell others about.

I will add a plea here – we desperately need a couple of members who are tech savvy – this is an urgent repeated request. Help and assistance are needed to maintain and develop our on-line presence so that our shop window continues to be attractive and informative for members and potential members. Please get in touch with me if this is you.

Very best wishes

Jenny

Jenny Wilson Croydon u3a Chair

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Hello and Welcome to the latest edition of the Croydon U3A magazine.

I hope you all had a wonderful festive season and are sticking to any New Year's resolutions you may have made.

As the days lengthen, we can begin to look forward to milder weather and making plans for the summer. If you are planning holidays abroad, you may wish to take a look at the foreign language groups of Croydon u3a – or if you prefer to stay in this country, the travel group is organising a trip to Great Yarmouth. See the latest bulletin for details of these and all the other activities offered.

Although I have taken on the task of editing the magazine, it would not be possible without your valued contributions, thank you.

The Writing for Pleasure group wrote some short stories with the topic of eavesdropping and two are reproduced in this issue. More to come next time!

Please let me know if there is anything you would like to see in the magazine. Perhaps a gardening section? Local History? Recipes? More puzzles?

Editor – Tess Smith

All contributions for the next edition will be gratefully received. Please send to: Tess.exlunn@gmail.com

Albrecht Dürer's Magic Square

You may know of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) as a painter and printmaker, but he was also very much a Renaissance man with an interest in a wide range of different branches of philosophy, science and mathematics.



I recently came across his 'Magic Square' which appears on an engraving, entitled: *Melencolia*.

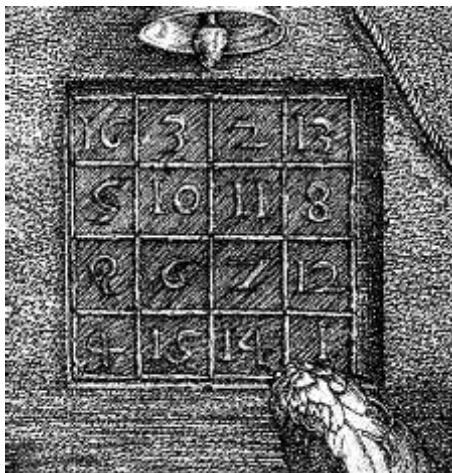
Look carefully and you can see the Magic Square in the top right-hand corner, on the wall.

The numbers 15 and 14, which appear in the middle of the bottom row, reference the date of the engraving, 1514.



Dürer's magic square has the number 34 as the constant.

It is called a Gnomon Magic Square because the sums in any of the four quadrants, as well as the sum of the middle four numbers, are all 34.



In addition, any pair of numbers symmetrically placed about the centre of the square add up to 17, a property making the square even more magical.

Maggie Chan

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 16 | 3 | 2 | 13 |
| 5 | 10 | 11 | 8 |
| 9 | 6 | 7 | 12 |
| 4 | 15 | 14 | 1 |

Book Review

'Going Juu' by Rose M D'Sa

I am grateful to Suhail Aziz for drawing my attention to this autobiography. It tells the story of a remarkable career. Rose D'Sa was born in Nairobi in 1957. Her parents had emigrated to Kenya from Goa, the former Portuguese enclave on the west coast of India. Her father worked in the Kenyan civil service, and later with Pfizer.

Her parents appreciated the importance of a sound education. Instilled into her was the ambition to succeed. The word 'Juu' in the title means 'up' in Swahili. It was not only on the academic plane that Rose sought to succeed, as she thought at one time of becoming a professional tennis player. She obtained a First-Class degree in law at Birmingham University and became a Temporary Lecturer at Cardiff University. There she had the good fortune to meet John Matthews who taught Physical Geography. Like Rose, he was dedicated to his career. (He was to lead nearly 50 expeditions to the glaciers of Norway.) In him, she gained a husband who supported her career; and the love and support of his family helped compensate for having left behind her roots in Goa and Kenya.

International law was the field that attracted her most. She worked in the Commonwealth Secretariat, became Professor of European Law at Glamorgan University, and wrote two books on the subject. She was invited by

the Government to be one of the UK members of the European Economic and Social Committee. Membership, which is honorary, gave Rose the opportunity to draw on her legal knowledge to influence debates on EU legislative proposals. In all, she was to serve on the Committee for 22 years, until the UK left the EU in 2020.

A press release said: she is especially valued for her ability to explain and clarify complex legal problems and to persuade people to reach consensus on controversial subjects.

In her summing up, Rose comments on how remarkably well life has turned out since she came to the UK in 1973. She succeeded in 'going juu'. But, of course, her ability, knowledge and character contributed to the country, too. In that, her life is similar to that of Suhail Aziz, whose book, 'Breakthrough' was reviewed in the Autumn 2020 issue of Croydon u3a Magazine.

The book is well written and has copious photographs. Members can order a free copy, subject to payment of shipping costs, by visiting the publisher's website: www.lexxion.eu/rosedsa-going-juu

Gordon Thynne

EAVESDROPPING

The village of Medley Down was built in the 1930s, an estate of 120 houses, together with a parade of shops and local amenities. Perfect, for many years. But time moves on and things were no longer the same. The doctor could only be reached now by zoom, or by a journey of some five miles. The vicar was shared by three other parishes, so services were only held once a month. The Bank had closed two years ago, and cash could only be obtained on a Monday morning behind a queue of pensioners, at the newsagents; the butcher had converted half his shop into freezers with ready meals and the grocer was re-named "The Mini-Market", and was always waiting for a delivery of anything you urgently required. A library was provided by a book swap in an old red telephone box. Bus services were deemed uneconomic, so the service was cut to one an hour Monday to Saturday, with no service on Sunday. The straggle of shops petered out into rather poor agricultural land. This, over decades, had been rented to a variety of would-be small holders, but now lay vacant.

Wednesday was half day closing, and several of the shopkeepers would gather at the pub, together with a handful of locals. The publican had diversified into providing coffee and biscuits, burgers, and all-day breakfasts until 6pm each evening, in order to keep afloat.

One Wednesday, several smart businessmen came in and ordered lunch and drinks. They rolled out what appeared to be plans on the table and carried out

discussions in hushed tones. The locals strained their ears to hear what was being said. Words like “development”, “valuable asset”, “using the available space for as many units as possible”, were overheard. It appeared they were talking about the vacant land. When the men left, the listeners compared notes and deduced it could only mean one thing. Their village was going to expand with a large -scale housing development. The news travelled like lightning.

A meeting was arranged for the next evening in the pub. Everyone was free to have their say, on the implications of a population explosion. The shopkeepers were elated with the prospect of new custom. Others secretly thought that a Tesco or Sainsbury’s Local, might find it worthwhile to open a shop. The younger inhabitants were all for it. They said it would be to everybody’s advantage, as the village was in decline and stuck in the past. And deep down many agreed it would be a good thing and wondered if it might mean their own house prices would increase. The elderly residents did not want change and worried about the roads and more traffic. Although they did concede that the bus service may have to improve. An appeal was made to the Council for information, but they were tight lipped. Just stating that it was private land and planning permission had been granted.

Three months later the sound of heavy vehicles was heard lumbering down the main street. A high hoarding was erected around the site and work commenced. It carried on for several months, causing endless noise and disruption. But strangely nothing could be seen

above the hoarding. This caused endless rumours and speculation to run rife in the village.

Then one night during a fearsome gale, the sound of hoarding crashing down could be heard in the distance. As soon as it was light, some of the villagers excitedly rushed down to investigate. There, as far as the eye could see, all facing South, were hundreds of rows of..... ..Solar Panels!

Janet Stokes



Dementia prevention.

The Lancet Commission on Dementia has identified twelve potentially modifiable health and lifestyle factors from different phases of life that, if eliminated, might prevent dementia. In fact, if all of these factors could be successfully acted upon across the population, we might see an extraordinary 40% reduction in dementia cases. In reality, health inequalities and the choices, or lack of them, make the 40% hard to achieve but even realising 1% of the potentially avoidable cases would mean around 10,000 people in the UK, and their families, would not endure the heartbreak of dementia.

Alzheimer's Research UK has a Think Brain Health campaign, a positive drive towards lifelong good brain health and dementia risk reduction in later life. They have now released 'Check-in', a simple, user-friendly tool allowing anyone to take a look at their current health and lifestyle to see if they could change anything to improve their brain.

Researchers think challenging your brain helps to build your 'cognitive reserve'. This is its ability to cope and keep working properly, even in the face of damage from diseases like Alzheimer's.

So which activities are best for your brain health?

Although understanding is growing all the time, it's not yet clear which activities are most beneficial.

Not all activities are suitable for all, so the key is to **do things you enjoy**, whether that's reading, playing board games, art, learning a new language or

something completely different. That is why u3a is so helpful for people in later life.

Sadly, there's no sure-fire way to prevent dementia yet, because age and genetics also play a role, but taking care of our brains can at least help stack the odds in our favour. And any case of dementia avoided represents an individual and a family who avoid the profound heartbreak of the condition. It's time to Check-in.

<https://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/braintool>

To start you off challenging your brain, try our puzzles, below.

Sudoku Medium

Place the numbers 1 to 9 in each row, column and square of nine spaces.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | 8 | | | 6 | 4 | | |
| | | 6 | | 9 | | 8 | | 7 |
| 5 | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 6 | 9 | 5 | | | | 8 | |
| | | | 4 | | 9 | | | |
| | 8 | | | | 2 | 7 | 9 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | 5 |
| 6 | | 4 | | 7 | | 2 | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | | | 9 | | 3 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 8 | | | 7 | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | 7 | | 1 |
| 9 | 2 | | 1 | | | | 3 | 6 |
| | | | 8 | 7 | 2 | | | 5 |
| | | 9 | | | | 3 | | |
| 1 | | | 9 | 5 | 3 | | | |
| 3 | 7 | | | | 9 | | 4 | 8 |
| 2 | | 6 | | | | | | 9 |
| | | | 7 | | | 2 | | |

Harder

Harder still

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 6 | | | 4 | | 1 | | |
| | | | 3 | 8 | | | | |
| 7 | | 8 | | 6 | | | | 9 |
| 1 | 2 | | 8 | | | 9 | | 3 |
| | | | | 5 | | | | |
| 3 | | 5 | | | 2 | | 6 | 4 |
| 8 | | | | 9 | | 4 | | 7 |
| | | | | 3 | 8 | | | |
| | | 9 | | 2 | | | 8 | 5 |

Word Game

How many words, of three letters or more, can you make from these letters? You must use the middle letter in each case and use each letter only once in each word. Plurals, foreign words or proper nouns are not allowed. There is at least one nine letter word.

C U M

L R I

G B N

Target 25-35

N C E

V E O

N R E

Target 18-29

My People

Life, it seems, is about ever-widening circles of community. From the core or central hub of immediate family, like the ripples in a pool or the spokes of a wheel, knowledge and understanding of the world reach out to encompass an individual universe. 'My people' used to be a way of referring to your parents to locate them socially and geographically in much the same way as 'You people' is used today to distance the speaker from the views and company of others. With the greater intermingling of different classes and races of people comes the instinctual recognition that it is elective affinities which draw people together through a common feeling of sympathy towards ideas, beliefs, the arts and one another.

This is why the proper study of humankind must acknowledge the basic bonds of brother- and sisterhood that bind us together. Ignorance and unfamiliarity are the ties that bind people to their fears and phobias. Often this is because, as Wittgenstein said, 'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world' – both literally (being tongue-tied for want of the vocabulary) and figuratively (being of such limited imagination that expression of feeling and emotion beyond the raw is almost inconceivable). Roger Scruton described this challenge memorably as 'effing the ineffable' (expressing the inexpressible) through poetry, art and music, which may be enjoyed vicariously without participation in the act of creation.

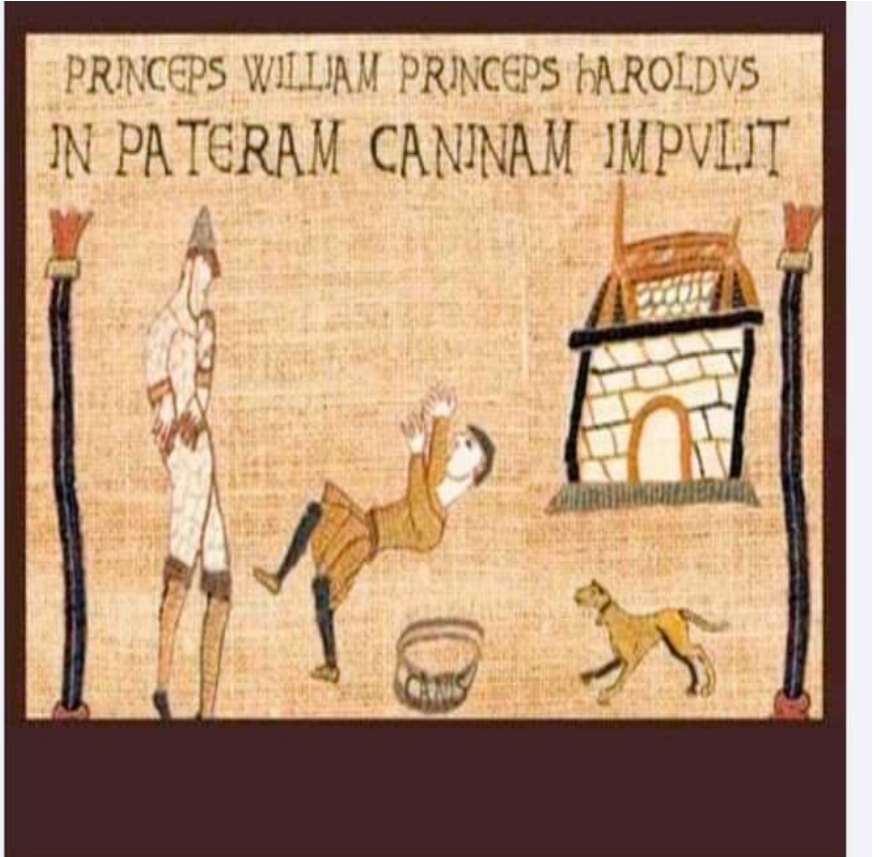
To be a British citizen is a constant challenge. We try loosely to live up to the Enlightenment ideals of Liberty,

Equality and Fraternity, but not without difficulty. Liberty is the great watchword we live by, particularly civil liberty. But the freedom to act or speak as one pleases is increasingly circumscribed by a culture of 'woke' and 'cancelling' - the modern equivalent of the old common law practice of 'hue and cry', whereby then, as now, suspected transgressors may be hounded beyond the bounds of public discourse. Equality is another enigmatic notion. The achievement of social cohesion and integration in a just, multi-cultural and multi-faith society is based on an elusive solidarity. Fraternity is more troubling still since it has become the preserve of moralists and theologians. Mate-ship is perhaps too demanding a recourse as it requires a sense of shared experience, mutual respect and unconditional assistance, where people often have little in common.

The next few years will be rough and harsh for most people. The struggle to cover the basic cost of living will be exacerbated by debt, inflation, and the quest for meaningful work. There will be large gaps in provision which public services cannot fill. Thus, as in the past, people's needs and wants will only be fully met by collective self-help institutions, like the Citizens Advice Bureau, Friendly Societies, amateur sports clubs, etc as well as religious institutions. The Church/mosque/temple has an essential role as hub of community in a modern age where localised kinship is rare and isolated individuals may find relief in sharing the burden of their existential problems in the vortex of its embrace.

Barnaby Powell

A previously unknown part of the Bayeux Tapestry.



Translation: He pushed him into the dog bowl!

There are so many unanswered questions!!!

I still haven't found out Who Let The Dogs Out,
Or how to get to Sesame Street...

Why Dora doesn't just use Google Maps...

Why eggs are packaged in flimsy styrofoam or paper
cartons, but batteries are secured in plastic that's as
tough as nails...

Why women can't put on mascara with their mouths
closed...

Why "abbreviated " is such a long word...

Why lemon flavouring is made of artificial flavour yet
dish-washing liquid is made with real lemons...

Why they sterilize the needle for lethal injections...

And, why do you have to "put your two pence in" but it's
only a "penny for your thoughts"...where is the extra
penny going to...?

Just what is Victoria's secret?...

Why does the Alphabet Song and Twinkle Twinkle Little
Star have the same tune?

(And why did you just hum those songs?)

Finally, when is someone going to show us the way to
Amarillo....

Will Chris Rea eventually get home for Christmas....

Where was Gene Pitney when he was 24 hours from
Tulsa.....

And have you found what you're looking for yet?

Anon

Eavesdropping (2)

I sit here on the bus, annoyed with myself because I've forgotten my headphones. Oh, the boredom is going to be intolerable on an hour's plus journey. I watch the drab buildings pass by, trying to ignore the hubbub of banal chatter around me. Two women sit behind me, continuing their conversation. Three words and my ears prick up. "*She did him in!*" Immediately my mind raced, 'who did who in?' My interest caught; I admit to listening further.

"No, she couldn't have, could she?" said her friend disbelievingly.

"She did, and she admitted to it too!" the first woman replied.

"Well, she must have had a very good reason."

"Oh, it was never intentional, she went out for the evening apparently and left some eggs boiling on the hob. They boiled dry and exploded all over the kitchen."

"Tch, I bet that was an awful mess to clear up, I had an egg explode on me once! I was still finding bits of shell at Christmas, including inside the light shade!"

“Ooh, you haven’t still got that old ball shade on the ceiling, have you? My Frank changed all the lighting in my kitchen to LED, you should get your hubby to do the same!” Woman number one declared, taking them off topic. Her friend began to expel excuses as to why the kitchen hadn’t been updated. Disappointed, my mind began to stray.

Suddenly, I realised that they had resumed the captivating dialogue.

“Anyway, it was that, killed him”.

“What the eggs exploding?”

“No! The fumes!

“Fumes, from eggs?”

“No, from the saucepan when it boiled dry.”

“Oh, dear, well more fool her for going out and leaving the eggs on”.

“Yep, she is getting very forgetful” the first woman answered as they got up to leave the bus.

“Bet she won’t get another budgie!” they said in unison as the doors closed behind them.

Angela Stagg

Memories from Childhood

MY FIRST PANTOMIME!

At the start of the war in 1939, when I was three years old, my mother and I went to live with her parents in Wigan whilst my father was on war duty. As my Grandfather was the Borough Engineer in charge of the Power Station, one perk was a family box at the Wigan Hippodrome for the annual Pantomime. For reasons that probably only theatre designers know, theatre boxes faced an audience just as much as the stage.

It was my first experience of “Cinderella”, and I was carefully briefed by my mother, and was really excited as a result. Now in those far off days people tended to wear their best clothes for outings such as this, and immediately near us, almost straight in front, in the stalls facing the stage sat two ladies obviously wearing their best hats. They were the first thing that three year old David noticed, and produced an immediate none-too-soft voice, “Mummy, are those the two Ugly Sisters?” I imagine that I must have been hurried to the rear of the box for a little while, and I have no memory as to whether the two unfortunate ladies actually heard my remarks.

David Talbot

Do you have childhood memories to share with us? All contributions welcome! Ed.

What is all this fuss about air fryers?

An air fryer is a small convection oven which can sit on your kitchen counter and simulate the effects of deep frying without the mess or smell.

Hot air circulates at a speed of 70km/h in the basket of the fryer which then distributes the heat evenly in the appliance



Research has shown that fried food can contribute to high blood pressure, obesity and more, so many of us look for healthy ways to avoid unnecessary fat when cooking. A hot air fryer is therefore a good alternative to a deep fryer. In addition, air fryers don't produce any nasty frying smells and you don't have to worry about the disposal of old cooking oil. Even cleaning is easier with a hot air fryer – all removable parts are usually dishwasher-safe. Plus, using an air fryer can reduce your calorie intake – a win all round.

However, an air fryer is not just for fried foods. It can also cook anything you would use a conventional oven for – even cakes! The latest models come in different sizes, with different sections, glass doors and even rotisseries, for perfect roast chicken.

As a rule of thumb an air fryer will take at least 20% less cooking time than a conventional oven, and there is usually no need to pre-heat. You will also cook at an average of 20 degrees lower than an oven. Therefore, there can be considerable savings in both energy and time.



Salmon fillets cook in 8-10 minutes at 180c. (If you wrap them in foil it keeps the smell in and reduces washing up.)

A 3lb chicken roasts in 45 – 60 minutes at 180c. (Cook breast side down for 30 minutes, then flip over.)

Scones will cook in 7-8 minutes at 200c (cook in batches of 5-6 scones)

There are plenty of recipes available on-line and in air-fryer cookbooks, so if you have an air-fryer please don't restrict it to cooking chips. If you don't yet have one or can't see the point, take a look at the latest models – you may be converted.

Yum.

How I joined u3a

It all really started autumn last year after watching an episode of the lovely, gentle NZ police detective series "The Brokenwood Mysteries" one Saturday evening. Detective Senior Sergeant Mike Shepherd has a constant thing for Country & Western music, much to the annoyance of his partner in crime (so to speak). Now, the specific episode that brought me to u3a was the one ending with DSS Mike Shepherd joining in the Line Dancing that his new girlfriend was doing.

Line Dancing! I needed to try that - my ex-niece-in-law's mother loved it back in whenever. Googled, found the Friday morning Line Dancing at Shirley and the lovely Joy Ellery, and somehow I was in u3a after signing up at the Xmas Fair in Croydon Clocktower. (I prefer to say Fairly Almost - perhaps half a dozen stalls max! But terrific crafted items for sale.)

I digress. I'll unlikely become proficient at Line Dancing, too many left feet plus no sense of rhythm, but I don't care - it's painless exercise and a lovely group of ladies to boot (well, flat shoes). However, this week with u3a has been plain fantastic! I met Jacqueline, who has boundless warmth, friendliness, and enthusiasm.

I truly felt so enlivened and uplifted by both the amazing speaker at last week's talk about his passion for the poet John Keats. He spoke with love, interest, humour, and skill. Oh, if only school had been like this! I was totally enchanted by his knowledge, enthusiasm and delivery that I Googled the couple of Keats' poems he mentioned

he liked. I didn't like them. But I liked Endymion, well the few lines I read, which he (I apologise for forgetting his name) didn't, so I downloaded it. I've still to read it. I'm slow to follow-up. (Oops, did I say that out loud?!)

And then, joy of joys...last Friday afternoon! 3 glorious hours with the Boards Game Fun group at Ludoquist games café, just opposite the south end entrance to Surrey Street Market. Welcomed by Jacqueline, I played a few rounds of "5 Seconds" (never heard of it before) and "Scrabble" with the fun company of Pat, Marion and Andy. I haven't played any board games for several years and have missed them. Playing games on my mobile phone really isn't much fun but can be compulsive...hup-hmm...addictive...perhaps, maybe, clearly not obsessive. Well, only several minutes/hours at a time which could be considered unhealthy, or healthy - who knows?

So, this morning I came to the new members meeting at Croydon Clocktower and met: Clifford, Patricia, Linda, Colin, Jacqueline (again - she's everywhere - luckily I'm not paranoid-ish), Kim, Elaine and Alice! Hey - I've remembered everyone's names! A miracle - thank you u3a for finding my memory! This week has been a blast, and there are so many other groups to investigate. Such a pleasure to be part of something so warm, friendly, welcoming, kind, interesting, interactive, all-inclusive and not scary. At all.

Thank you u3a for being there.
Teresa Cramer, aka TC