



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE  
REGISTERED CHARITY NO 296975**

Issue No 78 Editor: Margaret Morgan email editor@guildfordu3a.org.uk

**AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021 - GUILDFORD AREA u3a**

**CHAIRMAN'S LETTER**

Dear Guildford u3a members,

I am happy to be able to tell you that we are weathering the return to face-to-face meetings very well. The more tech-savvy Group Leaders are doing hybrid meetings, with people in the hall and online. I am so impressed by their know-how! I do understand if you feel you are not ready for in-person meetings yet. We all have to do these things at our own pace and it is important that you feel comfortable with your decision. We have decided to carry on with our Monthly Meetings online because attendance is so much higher; you obviously enjoy being able to take part from home, too.

Our membership is gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels but we still have some way to go. You might remember some time ago the committee decided to offer a free trip or outing to the member who introduced the most new members to Gu3a. That offer still applies! Just ask the proposed new member to write "Introduced by" and your name on their membership form.

You should all have managed to have your booster vaccination by now – I do hope so!

This newsletter is full of news from the groups; you are obviously pleased to be meeting again. I am particularly encouraged by the popularity of our trips and outings which you clearly missed.

You will be receiving the papers for the AGM under separate cover in the New Year. As last year, we are holding it by Zoom, this time on 31<sup>st</sup> January.

Once again I should like to thank you for your continued support during the past difficult 18 months or so. The committee has tried hard to maintain our offer and keep our lines of communication open. We are all indebted to our Group Leaders for their hard work.

It seems awfully early to be doing it, but this will be my last chance to wish you a happy, healthy and safe Christmas.

With warm good wishes,

***Julie Beattie***



# Christmas Concert

Wednesday 15th December 2021  
2.00 pm  
St. Nicolas Church  
Bury Street, Guildford, GU2 4AW



The u3a Choirs  
Singing for fun Group  
The Instrumental Ensemble

We are delighted to announce a collaboration between four u3a Groups, and other u3a members for our forthcoming Christmas Concert this year. After nearly two years of no live music or singing, we are all overjoyed to be back.

We have just begun rehearsals for the Christmas Concert and it is not too late for any singers amongst you to come and join one of the two Singing Groups. The recently formed "Singing for Fun" Group will be boosting the audience carols/songs and will present one or two songs themselves. We shall also be delighted to have Sheila's Orchestral Ensemble with us again. Carolyn Stevens and Paul Gillingham will present the readings. The accompaniment on the organ will again be in the capable hands of Rob Mansell, and on the piano will be the equally capable Matthew Smith.

SAVE THE DATE. WEDNESDAY 15th DECEMBER, ST. NICOLAS CHURCH. 2pm.

Look forward to seeing you there.

*John Varney, Musical Director*

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Guildford Area u3a AGM will be held on Monday 31 January 2022 at 2pm. We are once again planning an online Zoom AGM for all paid up members. If you accept emails, the paperwork will be sent to you via email, together with a voting questionnaire under separate cover. You can also vote at the meeting. If you do not accept emails, the Agenda and Voting Paper will be posted in the new year.

It is very much hoped that we will be able to hold the 2023 AGM in person, but the committee have agreed to hold our AGM on line this time, due to the rapidly rising covid cases, at the time of writing this. Those attending the Zoom AGM should notify the chairman: [agm@guildfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:agm@guildfordu3a.org.uk), stating your full name and the email we should use to invite you to the meeting.

*Julie Beattie, Chairman.*

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

- |                        |  |                                      |
|------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 29 November            | Chris Shaw (Chartered Civil and Structural engineer) | Not just for Spies ; coded messages  |
| 31 January             | Tony Knapp (Guildford u3a member)                    | The UK's place in the UK economy     |
| 28 February            | Katie Wignall (Blue Badge Guide in London)           | A virtual tour of Spitalfields 'East |
|                        | End: Suburb to Squalor to Street Art'28 March        | Yehudi Menuhin School: the history   |
|                        | of the school plus a musical presentation.           |                                      |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> April | Sue Lambert (community banker at Natwest Bank)       | How to avoid being scammed.          |

*Jennifer Margrave – Organiser*

## **MEETINGS**

### **Virtual Coffee Mornings**

We've been running the Coffee, Cake and Chat meetings for a year and have a group of people who enjoy the social element of being with other U3A members, even if they can't get out and about. These will be continued in the new year, running fortnightly (on different days, so they don't always clash with the same group meetings) – you will find the dates on our website, under Events. We chat about a wide range of topics, it might be something in the news, or someone asking for advice, or anything of interest. There have been one or two clashes of opinion, but everyone is respectful of others' opinions and feelings. If you haven't joined us before, then email me for the Zoom link, then bring your own coffee and cake on the day.

*Moira MacQuaide*

### **The Rise of the Hybrid Meeting**

During lockdown we continued to run many groups online via Zoom. Most of us hadn't heard of Zoom prior to lockdown, but many of the Group Leaders took to it like a duck to water. (Not that there weren't impressions of ducks acting like submarines in the early days).

Zoom became a verb, a saviour and a way of life during bleak times. There were challenges – variable broadband speed and reliability often meant people “popped” in and out of a session. This was especially awkward if it was the presenter! We quickly adapted to avoid feedback from loudspeakers and also to mute our own microphones whilst talking to the neighbours over the fence in the background. People with little IT experience were soon running Zoom sessions like seasoned veterans. Once freedom arrived, we were allowed to meet in person again. Those in vulnerable health or with partners in this condition did not feel able to join us.

Initial thoughts were to either cater for those who wanted to meet in person or continue with Zoom only. This would have been the easy option, but since when has that been the way for the adventurous silver surfers? No, we adopted something called the Hybrid Meeting. We would broadcast on Zoom and simultaneously hold our meeting as normal in a Village Hall. Well that was the plan – would it work? I likened this to riding a unicycle across a tightrope whilst juggling.

We had and still have to overcome major obstacles – how can the people on Zoom hear those in the Hall and vice versa? How can the Zoomies see those in the Hall?



We now use powerful loudspeakers connected to the Zoom laptop, which solves the problem of those in the Hall not being able to hear the Zoomies. Getting those on Zoom to hear the members in the Hall is still to be resolved (the presenter repeats questions at the moment). We also use a videocam on the Hall attendees. The groups I attend are very understanding – just remember what it was like in the early days of lockdown Zoom – we will get there. One thing I can say is that running a Hybrid Meeting is absolutely exhausting, especially if you are presenting as well. I haven't fallen off my unicycle or the tightrope yet but let's say that my juggling could improve.

*Paul Kassell*

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### CALLIGRAPHY

We're very pleased that our group is thriving under the guidance of Ray and Janet. We have three new members. Although retired, Jane has returned to get our beginners started which is a great help. Fortunately she seems happy with the way we are taking the group. After everyone produced a decorated name-plate, we have had a really good response to our book cover project and are now moving on to Christmas cards – examples below.



*Janet and Ray*

### Cardmaking & Papercraft Groups

These groups are a chance to try out different techniques for making unique cards for birthdays, Christmas, etc. So far this year, we've been focusing on Christmas, using die-cutting and stamping

methods. Sometimes there's a lot of chatter while we work, but other times there's silence, as everyone concentrates on what they're doing. Members can work on their own projects or join in with something for the group. We could be using glues or paints or scissors, and may be messy – much like primary school art classes! But great fun. Last year on Zoom we learned a lot from YouTube videos, but this year it's back to rolling back sleeves and making cards.

*Moira MacQuaide*

## **Exploring Local History 2**

After meeting on Zoom for the whole of last year, we are delighted to be back in Burpham Village Hall for our meetings. We're trying to run hybrid meetings, which is a bit of a challenge for me, as a non-technical person, but we have some people in the hall and some joining us on Zoom. Members are encouraged to find out about local people, places, or events, then report back to the group. Presentations can be long or short, so meetings can be mix and match talks from several members. There is so much fascinating history around this area, and plenty of opportunities for us to learn more about this part of Surrey in the past.

*Moira MacQuaide*

## **FRIDAY YOGA CLASS**

I took over from the long standing and highly regarded Johanna Bishop at the start of the term in September. Johanna asked if I wanted to take the class back in the early summer of 2021. After the year we had all had with restrictions and lockdowns, I was keen to say yes to any new opportunities I was offered, a behaviour quite different from the norm! I felt slightly nervous as Johanna is a best friend, an excellent yoga teacher and had been taking the class for many years - I knew she was reluctant to stand down. I also know from experience as a student, that we can be hesitant to meet a new teacher.

The yoga class members who attend at St Catherine's Village hall on a Friday morning have been very welcoming. They have been open to my philosophy and teaching of a seasonal yoga practice, often with a few qigong moves thrown in too. I am in awe of the students' honesty and growth mindset. It has been a pleasure to work with the class and I am grateful to every one of them for their constructive feedback and dedication.

So this is a grateful thank you to all the class members and I'm very much looking forward to the second half of the term.

*Gemma Giles*

## **GENEALOGY GROUP**

Over the last year we have been meeting on Zoom which has worked very well. We have learned how to search on various family history websites live during the meetings, and we have helped our members to solve some of their problems. We have access to Ancestry, Find My Past, Genes Reunited and The Genealogist, as well as British Newspaper Archives. We can also search the free websites such as Family Search, FreeReg, FreeBMD and FreeCen. There are talks on a wide range of family history topics, including finding Irish, Scottish and Welsh records, military records, etc. Next year the 1921 Census will become available and we will spend some time looking at how this can help us with our research. The group is very friendly and everyone is willing to suggest possible ways forward to overcome brick walls. Family History is a growing area and more information becomes available every week. We are looking

forward to returning to Burpham Village Hall, hopefully in the autumn, but if not then we will continue with Zoom. We are intending to continue meeting over the summer months as well. If you would like to join us then contact Colin Bridger, via the website or prospectus, to get on our list.

### ***Moira MacQuaide***

**The Jazz Group** were delighted to be able to return to live concerts again, at last. Our first concert in 18<sup>th</sup> months was held in October when we were very pleased to welcome the return of the Panama Café Orchestra. They treated us to sophisticated vintage jazz from the 1920's and '30's. At our next concert in December, the band will be pianist Martin Litton with his All Stars, playing a New Orleans and ragtime style. We select bands to give a variety of styles of jazz from month to month so that all tastes are catered for.

For the first few concerts at least, we have restricted the audience capacity to just over half of what is normally allowed in Shalford Hall. This gives members more space at their seats and also while moving around. However, not only do we need to ensure that we do not exceed this number, we also have to have sufficient numbers attending so that we can pay

the bands. Advance booking is therefore necessary. If you wish to be notified when bookings are being taken for our January and future concerts, please contact Jackie Ring: [ring\\_jackie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ring_jackie@yahoo.co.uk)



### **LEARN TO DRAW AND PAINT**

Needless to say, this has been a difficult year due to the Coronavirus pandemic but we have managed to keep going all the way through, on Zoom.

My conclusion about the Covid-Zoom experience for 'Learn to Draw and Paint' is that it was sometimes frustrating but also challenging, interesting, and rewarding for myself and the members if we put our heart and soul into it.

### ***Jane Wharton***

### **SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY GROUP**

It was good to get back after a break of nineteen months. My group did not Zoom but every two weeks I sent out a chatty newsletter and a handout from a previous class. Having led this class since 2005, I have quite a stock of handouts. Over the months I had lots of replies, especially when the subject sparked an identification.

We had lots of on-line discussion over how we would function. Some were in favour of sitting in a corner with their flask and digestive biscuit where others were all for a party spread. So, we compromised. Own mug, shared biscuits and drink.

I thought I would choose something cheerful to start with but instead, we looked at 'Adaptation', something we have been doing a lot of and this was very popular. So for October, this was balanced with 'Holidays of Yesterday'. I managed to misplace (people like me do not 'lose', they 'misplace') the page about what the privileged young men got up to on the 'Grand Tour' But I have now found it. This month we consider the changes from 'Foraging to Farming.'

I re-started our twice monthly coffee mornings, now at the Yvonne Arnaud, during the summer and these have proved to be most enjoyable.

To those who have not yet ventured out, I realise how hard it is to consider risk. However, I must admit that judging by the noise levels at tea time, it is hard not to choose the pure joy of social contact which was so sorely missed.

#### FIRST OUTING AFTER LOCKDOWN

Perhaps a visit to a cemetery is an odd choice for a damp November day except that this one – to Highgate Cemetery had been held over for 20 months. When I cancelled in March 2020, I promised that everyone on the list would have first choice, thinking in terms of a 3 to 4 month postponement. I was pleased to find that 27 of the original list could make it and this was despite dreary November.



We did start off in a steady drizzle but by the time we reached Kenwood House, our first stop, the sun had come out. I even spied a rainbow from the North Circular dipping down around IKEA where no doubt there is a pot of gold. We were able to savour the spectacular view of Hampstead Heath in all its Autumn glory and sit outside for coffee or lunch. The house, English heritage, is free, and a pleasure to visit. It was

built by Robert Adams in the late 17thC and contains many Old Masters. On to the West Cemetery which is like nowhere else. Anyone who has visited Pere Lachaise in Paris or the non Catholic cemetery in Rome will find a well maintained, level area. Constructed originally in 1839 it is built on challenging slopes. It was part of the profit-making development of private cemeteries in this case the London Cemetery Company because urban churchyards were full. These were garden cemeteries for all to enjoy, safe for ladies to walk because they were guarded by the military (to deter body snatchers). Originally it had three trees but now it has many hundred and to say the graves are overgrown would be an understatement.

Invasive plants have rampaged throughout. We stuck to the paths and I imagine that only the abundant wildlife set feet into the rows beyond. Memorials come in all shapes and sizes, some huge and there are vaults and catacombs. It is very atmospheric. The East Cemetery opened in 1850. However, profits declined and in the sixties, the Cemetery was left to decay. Then it was rescued by The Friends of Highgate cemetery Trust and income depends on visitors. Or, you can still buy a plot for £39,000. I will be returning with another group in the Spring.

It is only about a mile and a half on foot from Kenwood to the Cemetery but due to various road closures and one way systems, our coach took a devious route lasting nearly half an hour. It was good to see unknown London

We spent a lot of time on the road, in traffic but I for one did not mind. We are only just emerging from restricting ourselves to home ground. How refreshing to see the rest of the world. I think these outings help to restore our confidence in resuming what was lost.

**STOP PRESS** I will be organising an Outing to the British Museum in mid-January. Several interesting exhibitions. Date not fixed. Please contact me for details if you are interested.

*Sheila Darzi*

## RECENT TRIPS AND OUTINGS

Ann and Jackie have been busy with various trips since the Summer Newsletter. Once the theatres started to re-open in the summer we were able to reschedule some of the trips postponed from last year. The first was to **Chichester Theatre** to see an old favourite **South Pacific**. Some of the group attended the morning session where we learnt how they had made the scenery and costumes, rehearsals had been carried out to allow for social distancing and bubbles, and how the children in the cast were being looked after. The show contained many familiar songs and it was a real tonic to enjoy these again. Strict rules were followed both on the coach and in the theatre. Our next trip was to **Carousel** in **Regents Park Open Air Theatre**, which was a modern version of the classic, and contained some moving songs – a few wiped away a tear in the end.



*Regent's Park Theatre*



*Chichester Festival Theatre*

The **Huguenot Walk** in September was planned originally for April 2020 but we ran a very socially distanced tour in June this year to get members used to going out again. The September trip was full and all appreciated life seemingly going back to normal. We had a fascinating guided tour of the history of the Huguenots settling around Spitalfields with two brilliant guides, Paul and Neil. There was time for browsing around Spitalfields Market afterwards – even though we arrived a little late due to Insulate Britain gluing themselves to the M25!



This was followed also in September by a visit to **Sussex Prairie Gardens**, which had been featured on the Chelsea Flower Show TV programme, and members enjoyed hearing the history of how it evolved.

Delicious home-made cakes and coffee were served and members then wandered among the waving grasses.



On the same day, the group went on to **Borde Hill Gardens** to have a delicious lunch in our own private marquee followed by another fascinating talk by the Assistant Head Gardener. The gardens dated back centuries and we were enthralled to see many 'champion' trees. We left with a firm resolve to come back in the spring when the azaleas were out.



Later that month we attended a performance at the **Royal Albert Hall** to celebrate 75 years of the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**, which included guest performers Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Bryn Terfel. It was wonderful to be back hearing live music from a full orchestra again in this very special venue – which you will see from the photo was celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> year. An added bonus when we arrived was to hear music drifting from the open windows of the nearby Royal College of Music as the students practised and rehearsed.

**Eltham Palace** was a wonderfully successful trip in October when we were blessed with blue skies and sunshine which made our photos look impressive. Thanks to an interesting Blue Badge guide we learned a lot about this palace and the quirky things people can buy when money is no object. The history of the palace goes back centuries and the gardens were stunning with reflections in the water. Again, this was a full trip.



In early November we visited the **Poppy Factory** in Richmond on Thames. We learnt about the origin of the poppies, how this factory came about and how it had changed over time. In the past there were over 300 employees, but now just a handful. Displays showed the many different types of wreaths which they make there. The factory also focuses on supporting ex-military personnel to find work once they leave the services, especially those who have been injured. We were able to assemble our own poppies ready to be worn on 11<sup>th</sup> November.



A few members of the **MOTO group** went to sunny Croydon recently for a tour of the DSI-London workshops. These were originally set up by Peggy Spencer many years ago and are where costumes are made for the fab-u-lous sparkly world of ballroom dancing. This was an excellent time of year to visit as we heard all about the costumes which were being made for the current series of *Strictly* – and what goes on ‘behind the seams’. The workshops are set in an unremarkable residential street, but as soon as we stepped inside we were in a different world. We were greeted with a glass of bubbly, while the excellent Carole explained what they do there, the work that goes into making the costumes, especially how they need to fit the shape and style of the different celebrities – and their size usually changes as the series progresses. The whole process starts from the idea on a Monday or Tuesday, goes through the design, cutting, making the costumes up, then adding the thousands of sparkles, with the first fitting at the studios maybe Thursday, the dress rehearsal on a Friday, and with a deadline of the live performance on a Saturday – and that is a costume for each professional and celebrity, plus those needed for the professionals’ dances. The dancers are usually sewn into their costumes before the show, as they don’t use zips, Velcro or stud fasters. We learnt how DSI themselves pay to make the costumes, and the BBC just hires them for the weekend for the show - so by the following Monday, they are up for sale on the internet, and the team is already working on the next week’s outfits.

On our tour around the building, we were told about different types of material, colour matching and stock control, shown how multiple patterns are cut out, and saw up close the incredibly creative and intricate skills of their staff. The majority of their business is for all types of dance costumes and outfits for cruise ships, West End shows, and competitions - and their stock room is huge. Photos weren’t

allowed inside the 'Strictly' area in case we leaked some information about costumes – but it was interesting to watch the programme the following Saturday and spot the dresses which we'd just seen as strips of material, or a very plain piece a fabric pinned to a mannequin. Visitors are normally allowed to try on dresses, but that was not allowed due to Covid, but we were able to hold dresses up and did some swirling and swishing in front of full-length mirrors.



MOTO is a new group for members on their own, who are active and want to get out and about to do a variety of activities.

### **Jackie Ring**

Our most recent trip was to the lovely **Mill Theatre at Sonning** to see the classic tap-dancing musical of the '30s, **Top Hat**. The performers were excellent, including a very talented chorus, and with some amusing characters – we enjoyed the day and felt our spirits had been lifted.



December sees us going to **Hever Castle** twice for the **Lights** and to enjoy a **Christmas Lunch**, and also back to the **Royal Albert Hall** for the **John Rutter Christmas Concert**. All these trips have proved to be extremely popular. Members are obviously keen to get out and about again. However we haven't rushed into these lightly and every venue's Covid policy and procedure is considered and every trip has a risk assessment completed to ensure that we are taking as much care as we can.

Trips to the **Great Stink** are being re-arranged. The delay has not only been due to Covid, but the **Crossness Pumping Station** developed a large crack which had to be repaired to make it safe again. We didn't want to do this trip in the winter months, so dates are being looked at in the spring. We will contact everyone who is still on the list and have been waiting patiently as soon as we have dates. If there are spaces available, we will advertise to all members. There is also one outstanding trip to the **Houses of Parliament** which we will fit in as soon as we can. They have started doing their guided tours again, but the Public Viewing Gallery is not open yet, and we think it's important to include this as it's

so interesting to watch. Some poor people have been waiting for this trip since before Covid, before Brexit, before the current Speaker, before the General Election....!

### **Forthcoming Trips**

We are planning our Spring Programme so look out for email alerts and 'Events' on the Guildford U3A website for details of all our future trips.

### **How to make life easier for Ann & Jackie for Trips & Outings!**



*Jackie Ring and Ann Elms*

1. Look out for the U3A email alerts advertising the trip. Details are no longer sent with the newsletter as the publication date may not tie in with our booking-dates or deadlines. Once advertised, details and application forms are put on the GU3A website under Events.
2. Directly we have received enough/sufficient applications for the trip to go ahead, we will email to confirm that you have a place or to say that you will be placed on the waiting list in case someone drops out later. Anyone without an email address will be notified by post if they include a SAE with their application form or by telephone.
3. Please fill in your form carefully as per instructions with all the details and send it with your cheque, **not** stapled, to either Jackie or Ann, whoever is running the trip in question.
4. You need to get your application in asap as 'first through the letter box' gets the place! There is no need to ring or email to ask if there is a place, just send in your form. We cannot reserve places. If we get too many applications, we will place you on the waiting list and we may possibly run a second trip.
5. Don't panic if you don't have a printer – details on a piece of paper, with your cheque, will be fine.
6. Your membership number is very important to us as we can key it in and not have to fill in all your details and the U3A database will supply that information
7. If you have a mobile number or have changed it since you gave your details to Guildford U3A, please can you update this with Sue Watson, the Membership Secretary. These numbers are very useful if for any reason, you are missing from the bus stop on a trip, as we can then contact you to find out what has happened.
8. If you don't have an email, you can either let Jackie or Ann have a number of SAE's for us to post details or, better still, find an email 'buddy' to let you know when trips are advertised.

**THE DEADLINE** for the **SPRING 2022** newsletter is **11 MARCH**: please submit your contributions as a **Word.doc or compatible** in Calibri font, single spacing. **Photos as individual jpg files** please. Anything sent after the deadline will be held over until the next newsletter