



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 296975

Issue No 85 Editor: Margaret Morgan email editor@guildfordu3a.org.uk



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024 - GUILDFORD AREA u3a

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Gu3a members,

Isn't it cheering to see the days getting visibly longer, all the bright spring flowers and some warmth in the sunshine? I am writing this on 14th March and I was equally cheered by an item on the Today programme at about 8.55 this morning talking about the value to society of retired people. You could find it on BBC Sounds <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001x4zh> if you missed it but I wanted to tell them that is just what we have been saying for years!

So far this year we have run a very successful series of sessions on hearing loss, making provision for self-funded care in later years and cybersecurity. Judging by the attendance you find these meetings helpful. If you can think of any other subject we could cover in this way do please let us know.

We have Gu3a's 40th Anniversary coming up next year and we would like to make it special. John Varney will be conducting a concert with our Singing and Music groups. If you have any other ideas for the celebration do please get in touch and tell us about it. We are always in need of more volunteers – for example to do refreshments at group meetings, with our IT and with manning our stall at the farmers' markets over the summer. It only takes an hour or so and it is enormously appreciated. If you would like to lend a hand, please get in touch with your Group Leader or any member of the committees.

It is with deep regret that I have to mention yet again poor behaviour on the part of some members. Everyone in Gu3a is a volunteer and they should not have to put up with offensive behaviour from others. If you witness any incident which you find distressing or even just embarrassing do please let us know. Our eminently reasonable Code of Conduct is on the website.



I am happy to finish on a more positive note by mentioning a MOTO visit organised by Kathy McGilchrist to the Lightbox in Woking where they have an exhibition of Grayson Perry tapestries until 2nd June. You don't need Gu3a membership, you can go on your own and have a wonderful couple of hours seeing how he has adapted the Rake's Progress and various 15th century paintings for the modern day.

With all good wishes,

Julie Beattie - Chairman Guildford Area u3a

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES' REPORT

Virtual Coffee Mornings

These are a great opportunity to keep in touch with friends, even when not able to join in-person meetings due to ill-health. They happen on Zoom, about every two weeks, changing the day so that they don't always clash with the same group meetings. Always at 11.00am, for one hour, chatting about all sorts of things. We're very friendly and welcome new members. Each one is advertised via the weekly bulletin, so look out for the next date.

Group Membership

We have quite a number of Gu3a members who sign up to join groups, but then don't attend – sometimes due to clashes with other commitments, sometimes other reasons. If you have enrolled in a group, but now find that you are not going to join meetings, then please notify the Group Leader, so that you can be removed from the register.

Refreshments for Meetings

We have a pool of people who are willing to help with providing refreshments for Monthly Meetings and other ad-hoc meetings during the year. Inevitably, things change and some people are no longer able to help, or can't do particular days. I would like to have more people who can help with this, so if you think that you'd be able to help out, then please let me know (studies@guildfordu3a.co.uk). It's always good to have more volunteers!

Moir MacQuaide - Director of Studies – studies@guildfordu3a.org.uk

SURREY NETWORK STUDY DAYS AT THE MENUHIN HALL

- Friday 19 April Understanding AI and its Repercussions in Society Now and in the Future - Presented by Dr Andrew Rogoyski & Colleagues, University of Surrey. Bookings open shortly
- Friday 17 May The Jazz Age & Beyond - With Talks, Film, Demonstrations & Musical Finale - Presented by Howard Lawes, Woking u3a & Jazz Subject Advisor. Bookings open shortly.

Places for all lectures are available in the hall or for on-line viewing

MONTHLY MEETINGS

These are held at QE Park Centre GU2 9LX on the last Monday of the month - details on the Guildford u3a website

- Monday 22 April The talk at 2:30pm is *Piers*. It will be given by Paul Tracey, who is an artist and designer, collaborating with architects and designers in the visual realisation of projects. Paul is author of *100 Piers, Paintings at the Water's Edge*. The talk will be preceded by a meeting at 1:30pm on the top floor for tea/coffee, chat, swap books and jigsaws etc

PUBLICITY FOR 2024/25

If you lead or participate in a Gu3a group/s and have taken recent photographs during your group meetings, we would love to have a copy of them, to use in our publicity material. Please send them to Publicity@guildfordu3a.org.uk.

(Please remember that all photographs taken must have the consent of those people featuring in them.)

Farmers' Market

Gu3a will be participating in Farmers' Market, on Guildford High Street, again this Summer. The dates are 04 Jun, 02 Jul and 06 Aug.

We are looking for volunteers please, to help out on the stall at the following times:

09.30 -10.30 10.30-11.30 11.30-12.30 12.30-13.30 13.30-15.00

We will aim to have a maximum of 3 volunteers on the stall at any one time. The last slot is slightly longer, as we will begin to clear up at 14.45 in order to leave the market at 15.00, as the target demographic tends to have disappeared by then.

If you are able to help out on any of those dates, please do let us know at Publicity@guildfordu3a.org.uk.

Surrey Schools Appeals Service is hoping to recruit additional volunteer panel members. Full training is given and expenses paid. Panel members sit in 3s and adjudicate on a 'case' where a parent is appealing after an application for a school place has been refused. The school is the other party at the hearing. We are independent and need to make a decision based on the evidence but within the rules/legalities of the Admissions and Appeals process. If you feel you may be interested, and for more information please contact Margaret Clements using the email : prospectus@guildfordu3a.org.uk."

Coping With Hearing Loss

Twenty people booked up for the 6-part course on strategies and tactics for managing life with hearing loss. Sessions included the basics of lipreading, equipment, planning for social events and travel and useful organisations. New friendships have been formed, and members of the group will meet for coffee (in person) after Easter to practice their lipreading, and swap experiences.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

ART OF CALLIGRAPHY

Some calligraphy work our group did on a Nursery Alphabet - It was a fun project over Christmas.



Janet Thorpe – Group Leader

ADVANCED GERMAN CONVERSATION

A kind invitation to tea and cakes at Henley Park Manor from HSH Prinz Donatus von Hohenzollern put group members' German language skills to the test at the end of October. A wonderfully inspiring morning transported us through German history, brought to life through Dr Donatus's extensive knowledge of his family's art treasures and heirlooms. A short recital of expertly played harpsichord and flute music, followed by tea served in grand style amid impressive paintings made this a group meeting to remember.

David Askew – Group Leader

CARDMAKING & PAPERCRAFT GROUP



The group has made some lovely cards so far this year, celebrating Christmas, Easter, as well as making more general cards. We've used several techniques, but in March the focus was on Folded Cards, which are great fun to make. We're a small, friendly group, learning from each other, and developing skills to make our own, unique cards for friends and family.

Moira Macquaide Group Leader

EXPLORING LOCAL HISTORY 2

This group continues to enjoy some very interesting talks, mainly from our own members, who are willing to do some research and present their results to the group. We're all learning more about the local history of South West Surrey, with occasional forays further afield. If you're interested in finding out more about Guildford and the surrounding area, or would be willing to give a talk, then please contact Moira, contact details in the prospectus and website.

Moira Macquaide *Group Leader*

LATIN GROUP

On March 1st in the church of Saint Mary's in Shalford, the Guildford U3A Latin group celebrated the 95th birthday of Stanley Hemming-Clark. Stanley has been leading this group for about 20 years and there are several members who have been attending for 10 years or more. It is a popular group with 22 members, including some beginners and many advanced members.



We all sang to Stanley in Latin (*Felix dies tibi sit*) and ate delicious gluten free cakes, specially prepared by two kind members of the group.

Karen Fletcher – *Group Leader*

MEMOIR WRITING

Once a month the group meets up to read out aloud and discuss their latest piece of memoir writing.



Christine, raised in a Northumberland mining village, tells of her fond memories of Auntie Nance – *As an old lady, Auntie Nance was bent and gnarled with arthritis. A lifetime of smoking had left her face deeply lined and she was usually found wreathed in smoke, despite her assertion that she had given up. This, combined with her rather beaky nose and prominent chin, with its witchy whiskers, made her appearance an alarming sight to my southern soft children. But I still saw her as she had been when I was young and I loved her dearly . . .*



Robin & wife Sylvia are writing about their time as expats living in Dubai when it was mostly desert. *Robin, 1976 - We had managed to make a profit each month since May and had wiped out the losses that had accrued since inception some 18 months earlier. I had visited six new countries in the region including a one day trip to Iran. On my return to Dubai airport from Shiraz I witnessed a passenger, probably Iranian, pick up a goat's carcass off the luggage return belt, put it over his shoulders and walk out . . .* (picture: Building of The Trade centre)

Sylvia takes time-out whilst their two young children are at school Robin had bought me a car from a member of the BBC Outside Broadcasting team so I was free. The car was a little Mazda which I christened Mumfy. Wendy and I found our way to the newly opened Country Club. From my house we had to drive across the empty desert on an unmade sabkha road until we came to a tall, petrified tree trunk. It was the only landmark around. There we turned left and kept going in a line till we arrived at the Clubhouse gates . . .

Keith recalls the family's first holiday - September 1960. Sally was 6 months old and we had booked a holiday in Ambleside . . .

. . . My rucksack was made of thick canvas, had a metal frame and was surprisingly waterproof. But it was not lightweight! I put a little cushion inside and Sally was able to sit inside the rucksack in comfort. The combined weight was about 10 Kg.

On the Sunday, we tried going for a walk with Sally in the ruka. We went up Wansfell Pike (1600 feet) and back by Troutbeck and Low Wood. Sally seemed to enjoy the walk and so did Jill and I, particularly the views over the fells near Ambleside.



Sitting listening to such a wide variety of personal stories is a pleasure and privilege. Just a page or two a month (belonging to a writing group helps motivate) can result in a self-published memoir. Our past and present members have their own books to prove it!

We meet on the third Thursday afternoon of each month in St John's church hall, Merrow.

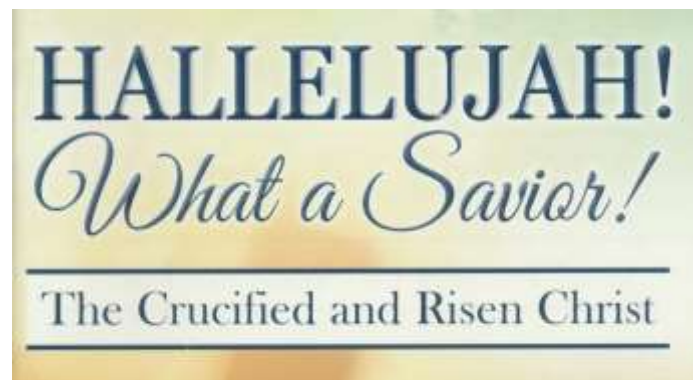
Broyna Rallye – Group Leader

NUFFIELD HEALTH BETTER MOBILITY CLASSES

These have been very popular and we have covered a number of different types of exercise. From circuit training to Wet Bikes, Chair Pilates to Zumba Gold, there are opportunities to learn new ways to improve our mobility and fitness. We're very grateful to Nuffield Health for putting these classes on for us. Each block of classes is publicised in a weekly bulletin, and each block had weekly meetings over a five to eight week period. Watch out for the next block to be advertised, which will start at the end of April.

Moira Macquaide Group Leader

SINGING GROUP – CHOIR



(not a spelling mistake – it's American!)



An Easter Celebration with Guildford u3a Choir at St Nicolas Church,
Bury Street, Guildford on Wednesday 27 March 2024 at 2.00pm.
Entry is free, but there will be a retiring collection

Our Holy Week Presentation, (Not Concert) this year features a wonderful compilation of hauntingly beautiful music and readings which tell the events of Holy Week. From the euphoria of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the desolation of the lonely garden as he fully embraced God's plan and ensuing death; from the genuine love conveyed to his faithful followers in the upper room to the loneliness experienced in his final hours as those same followers rejected and abandoned him. From the anger that filled the hearts of those who now called for his crucifixion, after hours having hailed him as King, to the tender resignation of a Roman Soldier that this indeed was the Son of God, from utter despair as he died on the cross, to triumphant joy as Christ's followers began to realise that his prophetic words had become a reality. All this and so much more in a single week! Included in this wonderful work, music by J.S. Bach and Hymns for all. Come, be inspired and uplifted.

John Varney, Leader and Conductor.

SCIENCE FORUM:

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at Queen Elizabeth Park Community Centre starting at 2:00 pm. We have had meetings about the Zoe programme (health genetics and microbiome), and quantum computers and meetings through to June cover the story of vaccines from smallpox to Covid, quantum physics in biological systems, scales of the universe and a talk on badly behaved viruses. We now include in the meetings a 20 minute slot at the end for members to give short reports from science and medical journals and we have covered topics ranging from colliding neutron stars and making textiles from wood to how cats decimate bird life and what seabed organisms tell us about global warming. If you would like to follow our meetings but cannot usually get to the QEP venue, you can always join up and follow the meetings on zoom online from home.

John Nichols – Leader

OUTINGS AND VISITS REPORT

Going Underground - Have you ever wondered what's behind those doors and grilles when you walk along the passageways on the London Underground system? Last November we went on a **Secret London 'Access All Areas' visit to Charing Cross Station** and explored these hidden places.

This part of the station closed to the public in 1999 and since then the area has been used for film locations, as well as for training and testing purposes. We entered through an ordinary-looking door by the Northern Line turnstiles and were immediately away from the noise and bustle of the concourse and the general public, and found ourselves in a quiet and atmospheric place. We walked down an old-style stationary escalator, which was a strange feeling - no-one in the group felt they could match Daniel Craig's slide down it as he did so expertly in *Skyfall*. We then came to the abandoned tunnels and platforms which still had the old signage and advertising



hoarding. Part of our tour included walking along an old construction tunnel, which took us underneath Trafalgar Square as far as the Fourth Plinth. Every time I pass by the lions and fountains on a bus now, I think of when I walked underneath it all! Going through another locked door led us into the ventilation tunnels where we could look down onto a platform, and were told how the system worked pushing and pulling air in and out every time a train came into the station and out again. It was quite strange to peer through the grilles from the inside and see the public hurrying by, completely unaware that we were there. We had three super and informative guides who told us about the history of the station and lines – with some amusing anecdotes – for example how they could afford to have the new Jubilee trains painted in silver for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, rather than battle-ship grey.

Siddy Holloway from London Transport Museum was one of the originators and presenters of on-line virtual tours where she visited and explored a number of disused underground stations. These had become very popular during lockdown, and some of these station tours can now be experienced by the public in person. We were really lucky to spot Siddy herself, doing some recce work at the station, as we went in and quickly took a group photo. After the tour members were given the option of going to the London Transport Museum, or free time in nearby Covent Garden and do some pre-Christmas shopping.



In December, just before Christmas, we went to the lovely Mill Theatre at Sonning to see **High Society**. We felt we'd been invited to a very special occasion – the lavish wedding of Long Island socialite to her boring groom. We knew that she really still loved her ex-husband who was determined to win her back. This was a classic feel-good musical. The theatre only takes just over 200 in the audience, in a semi-round, so we were up close and felt involved with the action on the stage. The singing, dancing, music, costumes, comedy and set were all superb – as was the talent of the cast, taking on the roles played by Frank Sinatra et al in the classic film was no mean feat. Before the show we had enjoyed a lovely two-course Christmas meal – and we all left feeling very joyful. I have already reserved tickets for next year's musical – **White Christmas on Sunday 12th January**. For the moment, put the date in your diary - details will be circulated when finalised. .



In January we had a day with two visits on the theme of Music (and how to make it). In the morning we went to **Eel Pie Island Museum in Twickenham** – and what a fascinating place it is, especially for those who lived in the area in the 60's and visited the island when it was very much part of the trendy jazz and pop music scene.

We were given an interesting presentation on the history of the island, by a local lady who had first-hand knowledge and told us a few stories – and clearly there were more that she wouldn't tell us! The island had always been a bit Bohemian, where alongside the boatyards, artists lived and worked, and gentlemen from London visited their mistresses here, then it



became a popular place for day trippers to stop off and picnic. A hotel was built and in the 1920s and 30s dances were held in their magnificent ballroom. The hotel fell into disrepair and became the ideal place for teenagers to hang out and listen to the latest jazz and pop bands including the Rolling Stones, Rod Stewart, The Who, Yardbirds, etc. Following a fire, the hotel no longer exists, and the island is now privately owned with mainly

artists' studios. We looked around the museum which was crammed full with all sorts of memorabilia from this time – photos, posters, tickets, records - and of course music playing on a record player. It was a fascinating place. We then kept the theme going by having lunch at the **Eel Pie pub**, which had posters and photos all around the walls and on the ceiling.

Our afternoon visit was to the **Musical Museum at Brentford**. Here we stepped back a bit further in time, and saw and heard how music was recorded – this was from the first music boxes, through player pianos, to the modern day. Our guides demonstrated



various instruments, and explained how the music was recorded in different ways - onto a brass cylinder or a paper roll, and how some well-known musicians such as Liberace, played the piano themselves to cut the paper rolls, enabling them to personalise the 'performance'. Instruments also included organs, violins, huge barrel organs and radiograms, right up to the modern era of a space age juke box. The finale of our afternoon was watching a super performance on the 'mighty Wurlitzer' which did indeed descend below the stage at the end.



We had a very full day recently at **Reading** where we dived into the history of Reading and its fascinating places of interest. We started with a visit to the **Museum of Early Rural Life (MERL)** which has the largest collection in

the UK of rural carts, agricultural implements, clothing– the exhibits were huge. The Museum is sited in the building originally designed by Sir Alfred Waterhouse in 1880 for local business man, Alfred Palmer, of the Huntley & Palmer biscuits company, and gifted to MERL, which is part of the University of Reading. We had a guided tour around the galleries where we could explore the skills and experiences of farmers and craftspeople and how they can shape our lives now and in the future. The gallery of Ladybird books brought back happy childhood memories to us and much reminiscing.

On from there to the **Narrowboat pub** where we had a convivial meal and it was an enjoyable opportunity to chat to different members in attractive surroundings overlooking the canal. After lunch, one group went direct to **Reading Museum** for a



guided tour of a replica of the **Bayeux Tapestry**, made in Victorian times. It had circulated throughout England and funds ran out when it arrived at Reading, so that is where it stayed. It was much appreciated that we could get up close to see all the details on the tapestry and we marvelled at how it spanned two galleries. The second group had their tour after they had a guided walk around the **Abbey Ruins** of Reading. We learned how Henry I was buried near the High Altar of the Abbey although he is probably underneath

a car park like Richard III. Reading Abbey was founded by Henry I in 1121 and was one of Europe's largest royal monasteries. This was followed by tea and cake before we wended our weary way home with our heads buzzing with history.

We continue to plan our trips for the coming few months – our visit to see **Oliver! At Chichester on 3rd September**, has just been circulated. **Ham House and Strawberry Hill House on 25th April and 5th September**, details of which have also been circulated this visit proved so popular that a second visit was arranged. Both visits have very short waiting lists and members frequently drop out at the last moment. It is always worthwhile applying for the visits even if they are full as tickets are sold on, wherever possible, if someone has to drop out.

Future trips, details of which will shortly be circulated, are **Knole House on 19th June** and **Buckingham Palace State Apartments on 9th September**. We are also hoping to arrange a visit to see **Kew Christmas Lights** in late **November** but tickets have not yet been released for group bookings for this.

Payment for trips

We have recently had a number of requests from members to pay for trips by bank transfer. We regularly review our procedures, and although we realise that it's easier for members to pay in this way, we have decided that we need to continue with the existing system, at least for the time being, and receive payments by cheque. The main reason for this is the amount of admin work this would create for us and the Treasurer as he would have to identify what any payment was for and who to tell. Ann and Jackie would also have to check with the Treasurer and allocate that payment to a particular trip. The amount of extra work would be phenomenal. If a trip is oversubscribed, we would then need to get bank details from the relevant member, pass this on to the Treasurer and he would have to reimburse. The present system is that we just tear up the cheque if no place is available.

There are a number of groups where money is received from members (such as Jazz where 500 payments are received from members over a year), so cheque payments are not just for the Outings, which means the Treasurer would need to deal with a number of GLs. We hope this explains our reasoning and that it's not just a 'No'. We do, however, continue to review our systems.

THE DEADLINE for the **SUMMER 2024** newsletter is **21 JUNE 2024**: please submit your contributions as a **Word.doc or compatible** in **Arial** font, single spacing. **Photos as individual jpg files** please. Anything sent after the deadline will be held over until the next newsletter