



Chairman's Bulletin – 7 April 2023

At last, some sun! This past winter seems to have just gone on and on and I have been very glad to have the u3a keep me busy both with our interesting talks and our great interest groups. Each month I feel I make new friends which is such a benefit of the u3a. The saying goes that you make friends if you have children or dogs but making friends is not easy once the children have grown up and you may no longer have a dog. Well, I know the u3a is a brilliant substitute plus keeping our brains and bodies active, which is so important as we grow older. And all for £18 a year – much better value than the TV licence or a gym membership and so much more pleasant.

This month sees the start of our summer 'term' – I don't know what else to call it – which will take us up to our summer break although many of the groups carry on through that period. This year we hope to have a couple of activities in August, especially for those of you who are not involved in holidays with, or looking after, the grandchildren. News of these to follow shortly.

Before then, we have a full programme of events which you can read about later in the bulletin and, please don't forget our **Coronation Tea** which will be held on 4th May. Please make sure you sign up for this if you are interested.

Happy Easter!

My very best wishes

Viv (01582 766147)

Members' News

This month we are delighted to welcome **Jacqui** and **Phil Cartwright**, **Kevin Jennings**, **Lesley Durio**, **Sharon Torres**, **Alan Cliff** and **Laura** and **David Corcoran**. I hope you all enjoy your membership.

Dates for Your Diary

Below is the programme of General Meetings up to the end of July. They will, unless otherwise stated, all take place in the Trust Hall, opposite the Plough and Harrow, at 2.15 on the dates shown. Whereas the Speaker Meetings have a talk by a visiting speaker, Members' Afternoons have a shorter talk by one of our own members, followed by time for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

20th April **Speaker Meeting – Bobbie Darbyshire** will give a light-hearted, informative talk called '**A Beginning, a Muddle & and an End: where do novelists get their Ideas from?**' Bobbie is a prize-winning author of four novels. She has much life experience to draw upon having worked as a barmaid, mushroom picker, film extra, maths coach, cabinet minister's private secretary, care assistant and volunteer adult literacy teacher, as well as in social research and government policy.

4th May **Coronation Celebration Tea**

18th May **Speaker Meeting – 'Poisons for Medicine'. Graham Harrison** will give us a darkly humorous look at medicines in the 19th century. The reign of Victoria saw the development of chemical medicine from medieval alchemy to modern pharmacy. Chemists lent their ingenuity to provide anything customers wanted. Some made fortunes, some made disastrous mistakes.

1st June **Members' Meeting – tba**

15th June **Speaker Meeting – "A Concise History of our Great British Parks"** by Paul Rabbitts, author and historian.

6th July **Members' Meeting – "Protect Yourself from Scams"** by Sue Shanahan, Senior Trading Standards Officer at Hertfordshire County Council. Sue is a very welcome return speaker following her well-received talk last year.

20th July **Annual Summer Get-Together at Plough and Harrow**

CORONATION TEA – Thursday, 4th May

This will be held in the Trust Hall just two days before King Charles' Coronation and will be a good excuse to celebrate and enjoy ourselves. We may have to restrict numbers but we hope that we won't have to do so as it will be holiday season by then. Please let me know if you think you might like to come to this event. If you give me your name this does not mean you have to come and it will be fine to drop out later; it's just to give us an idea of the numbers.

Group News

Details of all our **21 groups** can be found on our website.

History Group – Roger Thompson writes: The next meeting of the History Group will take place on Tuesday, 11th April at 2,30 in the Randall Room of the Trust Hall when Eric Midwinter will give a presentation on 'Horrible Murder: the Victorian Interest in Crime'. As usual, there will be a £1 levy for the room hire. Please contact Roger for further details.

Singing for Pleasure – the dates for our enjoyable singing sessions up until the summer break are 27th April, 11th May, 25th May, 8th June, 22nd June and 13th July. Come along and join us; you will be made to feel very welcome and please don't worry if you don't read music – you will not be alone! For further details, please let me know.

Needlecraft Group – our Needlecraft is unable to take any more members but I believe there are some avid stitchers out there who would like to get together and make what can be a solitary hobby more fun. If you are interested in joining a second group, please let me know.

Play Reading Group – before the pandemic we had a very popular play reading group. For varying reasons, this has not been able to start up again until, hopefully, now. There are several people who would love for it to resurface. If you would like to be part of this group, please let me know.

Strollers Group – our Strollers group is very popular – could the reason for its popularity be that after the short walk on a Saturday morning, the group ends up in a pub for lunch? Unfortunately, because of the problem of finding a pub that is prepared to take a large group, they are unable to accept any more members. However, despair not, as we would love to start up another Strollers group which would walk on a weekday morning. Any takers? Please let me know.

New Groups

We are still in the process of trying to start a **Science Group** and a **German Conversation Group**. We nearly have enough people interested in both these but would probably need a couple more in each before either could be set up. Again, please let me know if you could be interested in either of these possible groups. Once groups have started, other people soon join. There is even the possibility of a **Latin Group** being set up in the near future – watch this space!

u3a Learning Events

The national u3a organises a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses which are free with your Harpenden u3a membership. To find out more about them and how to book, please go to <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>
In April the subjects include: Cotton and Linen – the environmental impact of textile production; Exploring World Faiths; Let's Talk about Autism; Family History – using Census Data; Mindfulness and Meditation; Toulouse Lautrec and the Cabarets of Paris; War in Ukraine **1919**; Staying Safe Online; Discussing Climate Change, involving all generations; and then at the beginning of May: Climate Change and Geo-Engineering; Hadrian's Wall – a series of presentations.