

HASLEMERE MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023

Winter is now well underway and we have endured severe cold and are now experiencing extreme wet weather. Not the most inspiring time of year! However, we kicked the season off well with our well attended and highly enjoyable Christmas Party. Many thanks to Howard and Ray of Haslemere Hall, Tina and her crew, whose hospitality service was flawless and to Colin Sherlock who devised a lively Christmas quiz which held our attention well. Thanks also to Stephen Bennett who kindly donated the u3a Christmas Quiz Trophy which will be awarded to the winners next year!



Turning to the year ahead, it would be only too easy to be depressed at aspects of the state of the world and our nation, but perhaps this is the time to be more imaginative, creative and optimistic going forward. I recall when joining Haslemere u3a, I was asked which existing groups I was interested in and whether I wanted to suggest any new ones. Perhaps we should ask this not just to new members, but also to existing members?

Groups are the life of the u3a - some will flourish, some may reach limits and some may grow less lively. Haslemere u3a has a good record of new groups and Lorna Wright has played an important enabling role, but there is always scope for more. However, an important difficulty arises here: our membership of several hundred has little direct communication and so it is difficult to gauge scope for further expansion of existing groups and far less the potential for new ones. Do please get in touch via the website with either myself (Chairman), or Lorna Wright (Group Co-ordinator), with your ideas going forward. Lastly, although I know it will be January before you read this, but I wish you all a very Happy New Year. **Regards, Jock.**

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS COACHLOAD!



Over 50 Haslemere u3a members enjoyed what has now become their annual December coach trip to John Rutter's Christmas Celebrations at the iconic Royal Albert Hall with The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in attendance. The Hall was magnificently attired

and there was lots of enthusiastic and joyous audience participation! Highlights included songs from the 2023 Grammy nominated British vocal ensemble VOCES8 and the wonderful girl and boy Choristers of the Year from Guildford Cathedral. Thank you for organising the trip, **Don Stacey** - a lovely day out was had by all!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS!

“WE MADE A MUSEUM!” with TONY FURSE - Monday, 9th January @ 2.00pm, Haslemere Hall.

Early in 2002, a group of St. Albans residents decided that the signal box at the end of their road had been left to decay for 25 years too many. It could surely be put to better use than a pigeon nesting box (they got through the cracks in the boards). So, they looked at possibilities resulting in a determination to save the Grade 2 listed signal box as the only other alternative was to let it disintegrate. It was also discovered that the box had a rare 1906 Midland Railway “tumbler” interlocking lever frame.

To accomplish this goal, a Building Preservation Trust was formed. As a registered charity, it has been awarded grants which have enabled the lease of the signal box from Network Rail and its restoration. This talk, given by Tony Furse, who has been active in the project for many years, will give the history of the line, the place of the St. Albans South signal box in it and the effort of converting it into a working educational museum.

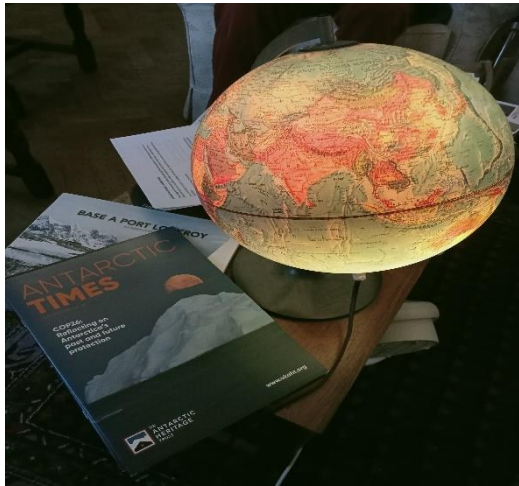
FEBRUARY SPEAKER – SHARON WRIGHT – “Aeronaut to Her Majesty – The White-Knuckled World of Margaret Graham” – Monday 13th February @ 2.00pm, Haslemere Hall

Fearless balloonist, Margaret Graham, was somewhat of a Victorian superstar! Though the first British woman to fly solo and an accomplished aeronaut, she was more famous for her spectacular accidents and the 19th

Century adventures of the accident-prone diva made history, grabbed headlines and astonished the nation! Though she frequently caused havoc, you really could not keep a good woman down.... Hold on tight as Sharon takes you on an unforgettable ride through the life of the indefatigable Mrs. Graham – the self-styled “Aeronaut to Her Majesty.”

Sharon Wright is an experienced speaker, journalist and published author and when not researching her new non-fiction books, she very much enjoys delivering talks.

ENJOY INTRIGUING WORLD HISTORY



This is a thought-provoking self-learning and self-teaching group based on World History. Members prepare excellent papers based upon their research, reading and experience to be presented for lively discussion at the monthly group meeting. So far, this year, they have looked at the history of China, the USA, the USSR and Russia and are about to embark on the history of Central Asia.

The Group meet at the organiser's house on the second Monday of the month from 10.00am to 12.00am. Please do get in touch with the Group Leader via the Groups Co-ordinator on the Contacts page of the website if you would like to be put on the waiting list – there may be room for a couple of new Members next term.

‘DISCOVER AND RE-DISCOVER’ BOOK GROUP



The new ‘Discover and Re-discover’ Book Group has held two meetings in November and December at the Kiln Café at The Grayshott Pottery. The first book discussed was Penelope Fitzgerald’s elegant novel ‘*Offshore*’. This won the 1979 Booker prize and was a controversial decision. It was the judges’ unanimous compromise decision because they had a split first

choice between V S Naipaul’s ‘*A Bend in the River*’ and William Golding’s ‘*Darkness Visible*’. The subject of December’s meeting was Willa Cather’s ‘*My Antonia*’ an exquisitely descriptive novel written in 1918 about early

frontier life in the American mid-West. This choice was an excellent example of the thinking behind the Group. An American-born member of the Group had studied the book at High School (it is still a set reading in US schools) taking little from it as a schoolchild but on picking it up recently, had much enjoyed it and introduced it to the Group - none of whom had read it before and most indeed having never heard of it. It was a huge success all round. A real case of 'Discover and Re-discover'! For more information go to the Groups page and contact the Group Leader.

BOBBIN LACE WORKSHOP GROUP



The Bobbin Lace group has successfully met for the first trimester and is now running smoothly. They still have places if new members wish to join - no previous Bobbin Lace experience required – and they meet twice a month on a Thursday. The sessions will introduce people to Torchon Lace techniques and students will progress to patterns to suit them

resulting in making simple items, such as bookmarks, eventually moving on to the more complicated patterns as confidence grows - Celia and Mary enjoyed making Xmas cards with a lace motif after meeting up only six times! For more information, please go to the Group's page on the website.

CALLING ALL POTENTIAL POET LAUREATES!

The u3a's national poetry competition is back! There is no theme for this competition, but your poem should be a maximum of 16 lines (plus title) and **MUST** be submitted by 12 noon on Friday 27 January 2023. The three winning poems will be published in Third Age Matters and on the u3a website. For more information, please go to [u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programme/poetry-competition-2022](https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programme/poetry-competition-2022) Good luck Haslemere u3a!

GROUP PICTURES NEEDED



We always need Group photos for our Facebook page (and for the Newsletter too!) to promote Members having fun and enjoying u3a activities. Please email these to Judith, our Social Media Co-ordinator, via our [website contact page](#). Thank you.

