

# Keeping In Touch

## Hitchin U3A

[www.u3asites.org.uk/hitchin](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/hitchin)

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### *Chairman's Comments from Heidi Ebrahim*

## Chairman's Chat July 2023



We are halfway through summer and life has been quite musical for a change: we enjoyed our very first musical Monday evening with popular light jazz which had us dancing too; we then followed this at the summer social with an opera singer and a varied programme of well-known arias and other songs. Both these events were held at Hitchin Town Hall, a new venue for us which offers a lot more space for our growing membership. The second musical Monday on 4 September will expose us to yet another music genre and no doubt test our singing prowess with sea shanties and other jolly singalongs like the Wild Rover.

September looks to be our busiest month by far with a major event on every Monday. The one I would like to draw your attention to here is the 'Group Fest' on 18 September at Hitchin Town Hall. You will be able to explore what all the various interest groups are doing and talk to their leaders or members. This might inspire you to join one or two you did not already know, but even better, it might spur you to start another group on a topic or hobby close to your heart but not yet covered. I am planning a special session for prospective group organisers/leaders to talk about what is involved in setting up and running a group, so watch this space.

And remember: it is still strawberry and cream time!

Heidi

# A Gardening Group Member's Lament



I woke on a sunny morning,  
40 degrees in the shade,  
I heeded the pessimists warning,  
And a drought tolerant garden was made.



I woke to the rain this morning,  
It rained right through the spring,  
My garden was soggy and waning,  
Not a blossom on anything.

A gardeners lot you might say!  
Minus 11, drought and the sound of thundering.  
Well, climate change is here to stay,  
Is it winter, summer or spring?



## Photos from Saroj



*We have chalky soil  
in Baldock so the  
garden is always  
thirsty but we do  
have these beauties  
on our doorstep*





# Science and Technology

In June the group broke from its usual pattern of member lead talks when it met at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum near St Albans. We were lucky to have a guide who was not only very knowledgeable but extremely enthusiastic. The way he responded to our barrage of questions was impressive.

The group is pictured in front of the DH Mosquito prototype. This aircraft was of composite wood construction. It's astonishing to think that the Mosquito reached 408 mph in level flight, which was faster than the operational version of the Spitfire at the time, whose top speed was 370 mph!



The group meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Sun Hotel in Hitchin.  
Anne Rapley

## 2pm Morag Walters - Sexual Abuse. A special meeting at the Sun Hotel

*On July 31<sup>st</sup> at 2pm at the Sun Hotel there's a special meeting about sexual abuse. The craft group are going to present the speaker, Morag Walters, with the Worry Monsters they've made for abused children.*



# The Airport

(a story from the Writing Group)

I arrive at the airport with my bags in tow. I join the throng of people being chewed up by a revolving door which was then spitting them out the other side onto the concourse. On the concourse I was met by an array of electronic displays with groups of people standing around departure boards staring up at them in awe as though they were in the presence of a god.

I run my eyes along the several check-in desks searching for my flight quickly spotting it and that it was nearly bereft of passengers I head towards it at the same time as several other passengers had spotted it which turns things into a sort of Formula One suitcase race wheels clickety clacking on the tiled floor, the low rumble of larger suitcases bearing down on me, urgent sideways glances to see who was coming up to overtake me. I came a respectable fifth place and found time to calm down a bit. But wait passport, tickets where did I put them, in my man bag which seems now to have added a few extra zips and compartments since I packed it.

Panic over I approach the check-in which was manned by a smiley young lady who instructed me to place my suitcase on the belt and with everything checked my suitcase was shunted along the belt and deposited into a cavernous black hole swallowing up several other suitcases as if it were feeding the airport its early morning breakfast.

Passport control was a breeze then on to the security check. I entered the room to see a line of people jammed into a fenced walkway snaking off into the distance. I shrugged and joined the queue trying to ignore the little boy who was trying to change the route of the fence by unclipping it and blocking my way forward. Tough luck matey I thought as I easily overcame this obstacle.

Eventually its my turn to be processed. My belt and shoes are in the tray along with my wallet and phone. I'm summoned forward to stand in what looks like an oversized air fryer. Something wrong ? I'm summoned forward once more to be frisked and patted down rather brusquely by a young man who clearly loved his work. Anxiously aware that my tray was at the end of the rollers and unattended, I rush forward to claim my belongings and get sorted.

I amble through to departures and spot a nice looking bar where I order a pint of Guinness and await my flight. Cheers people happy holidays.



# Theatre Group



On Wednesday, May 24th, Hitchin U3A's Theatre Group travelled by minibus to Milton Keynes, to see the production of Agatha Christie's "Mousetrap" which is presently on its 70th anniversary tour.

The play's incredible longevity is certainly well-deserved - I feel sure that all of us would attest to this. I must also mention some interesting twists and turns - referring here to our journey from the minibus to the theatre! I jest, of course!

In truth, a brilliant production. Set, lighting, casting, costume, dialogue - all of which Christie herself would no doubt have greatly approved. We enjoyed a delicious Turkish and Mediterranean luncheon in a nearby restaurant before the show. What's not to love?

So, you might ask, whodunit? Why, we did, of course! We "dun" a most enjoyable day out. Many thanks to Carol, for organising the event.

## Visit to Sikh Temple



*On 14<sup>th</sup> June a group of u3a members went to visit the Sikh Temple in Bearton Avenue Hitchin. It was absolutely fascinating to see inside and ask questions about it. Thank you to the Sewadars of the Gurdwara for allowing us to visit.*





# Current Affairs

At our Current Affairs Group recently we were discussing AI – is it a blessing or a curse? Just for fun Anne had the brilliant idea to ask the famous ChatGPT bod to write a poem about Hitchin u3a and quick as a flash this is what came back. Quite funny really because it shows how far this artificial intelligence still is from being perfect. But it does show that it has grasped the basics of what we are about by scanning all the relevant info on the web and we thought it would be good for all to see in the next newsletter. After all, AI is supposed to be the future!  
What do you think?

## A Poem About Hitchin u3a

*In the heart of Hitchin town, where wisdom blooms,  
There's a group that cherishes knowledge's tunes.  
U3A, a haven for the curious souls,  
Where learning and friendship are the ultimate goals.*

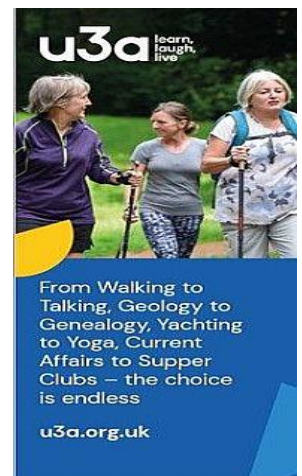
*From art to history, science to dance,  
A wealth of subjects, a vibrant expanse.  
Lifelong learners, with passion and zest,  
Gathering together, on a journey they invest.*

*In classrooms and workshops, they come alive,  
Sharing expertise, helping each other thrive.  
New skills are honed, talents set free,  
In the embrace of U3A's joyful glee.*

*Laughter and camaraderie fill the air,  
As members unite, their stories they share.  
For age is no barrier within these walls,  
The spirit of youth within U3A enthralls.*

*Through excursions and trips, they explore,  
Discovering treasures from shore to shore.  
With open minds, they embrace the unknown,  
Enriching their lives, as seeds of knowledge are sown.*

*Oh, Hitchin U3A, a beacon so bright,  
Igniting passions, guiding with light.  
May your journey continue, bound by ties strong,  
A testament to the love of learning lifelong.*



# Jazz Evening at Hitchin Town Hall in June



*On Monday June 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm Hitchin u3a held a musical jazz evening in Hitchin Town Hall. The large group of members who came weren't too sure what to expect, since this was a 'first' but we were hopeful of a good evening.*

*We certainly weren't disappointed! The band and the singer were both really good, and played a great variety of lively music. By the end of the evening there was some serious boogieing going on, as you can see on the right! The next musical evening will be on Monday September 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, with Freddie Barnet: Sea shanties and other singalongs. I'll definitely be there, will you?*



More than three quarters of fire related deaths happen in the home. You can make sure that your home is safe by arranging a [Home Fire Safety Visit](#) from [Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service](#).

Home Fire Safety Visits are carried out by uniformed fire service staff free of charge. You will receive advice on making your home safe and how to keep yourself healthy and well. Fire and Rescue Service will fit smoke detectors where necessary and check your existing ones.

With a working smoke alarm, you are 4 times more likely to survive. Safe & Well visits are available to anyone. It won't cost you a penny, but it could save a life! Everyone can benefit from fire safety advice. If you are caring for a family member or a friend, speak to them about fire risk. You can help them access the service and feel safer in their home.

Help is available so get in touch [online](#)

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or by telephone on 0300 123 4046