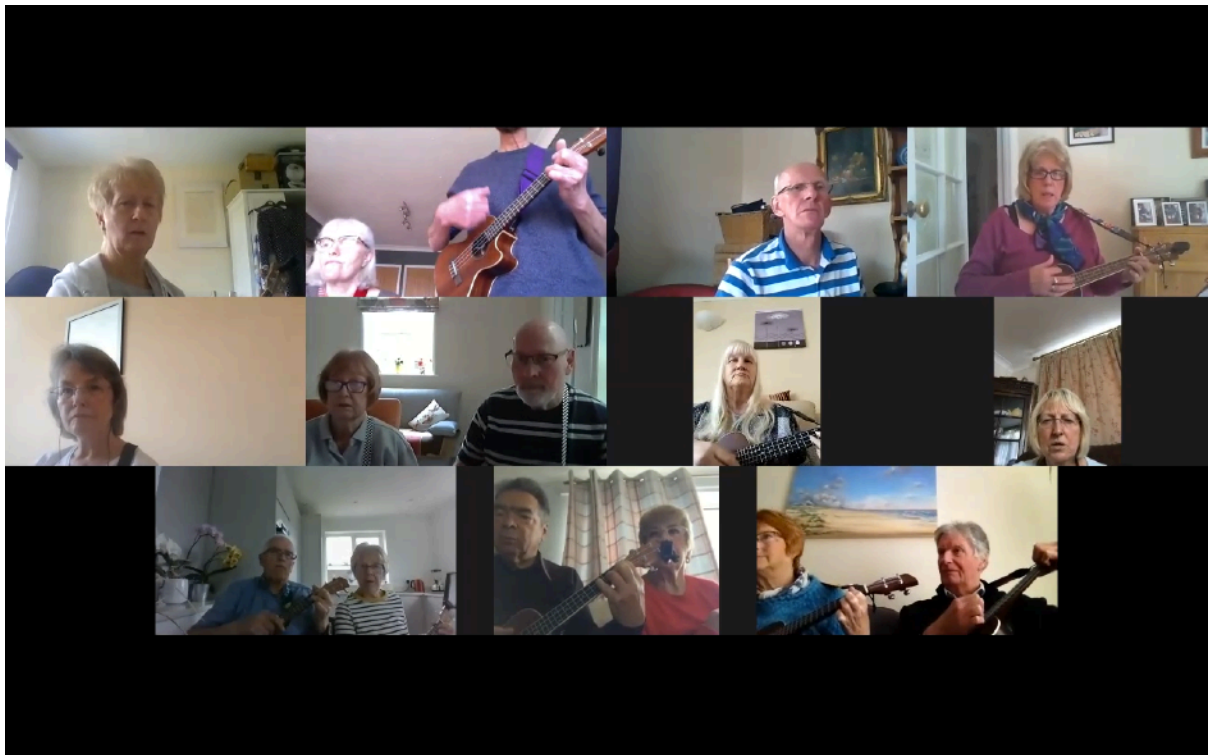


u3a learn,
laugh,
live
King's Lynn

KaLeidoSCOpe



JANUARY 2021

For members, About members, By members

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Cover photograph: The Ukulele Group get to grips with Zoom Video Conferencing for the first time, April 2020.

Editorial

The last time I was preparing these musings our U3A (note capitalisation) was readying itself for the upcoming National U3A Day, and plans for our own 30th Anniversary. A year later, and these plans lay in tatters, and our u3a (note lack of capitalisation!) although continuing, is relying increasingly on technology which the majority of our members will have never have even encountered a year ago.



The extremely fluid situation through which we have all been living these last few months must have tried the patience of members and Group Leaders alike as they grappled to get to grips with Video Conferencing Software, Risk Assessments and Socially Distant meetings; only to have to tear up plans made as rules altered overnight. I would like to pay tribute to all the Group Leaders who have found ways to keep their activities running in some manner, and to the Trustees who have spent so much time and effort behind the scenes to ensure that those activities could remain within the rules laid down by our Government.

This issue of *Kaleidoscope* reflects to some extent some of these enforced changes - It will be our first to be digital only, due to the great difficulty of fairly distributing print copies under the present circumstances. Also with it being our first magazine for a year, there is very much a flavour of “then and now” to our Meetings reports and Group updates.

Once again, I would especially like to thank my Co-Editor *Norma Chaplin* for her hard work in bringing the disparate items assembled here into order, and I end with the fervent hope that we will all soon be able to see each other again in person and **not** only by peering at a screen!

Neil Prew

From Your Committee

Despite the relative lack of Special Interest Group activity during this year, your Trustees have still enjoyed (endured?) a full schedule of business.

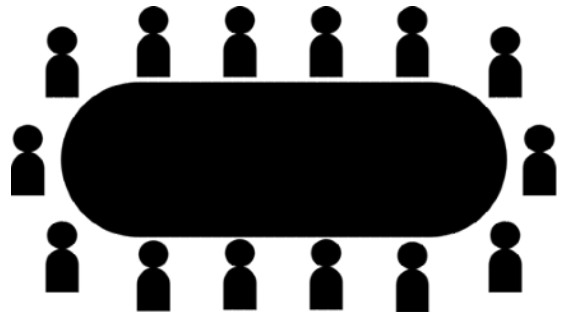
In March at our last conventional monthly meeting a Special General Meeting passed the delayed new Constitution, which brought our u3a into line with the preferred approach of the National u3a Office.

June saw our delayed AGM being held via Zoom, and the election of new Trustees with Edward Harrison and Ann Higgins, our past Chair and Secretary, Sylvia Cliffe, our past Vice-Chair, Vic Newell, our past Treasurer, Julie Carter, who has been our Groups Co-ordinator and John Wood, our past speaker organiser all departing, though not necessarily for a well deserved rest - Julie Carter for example is maintaining her role on The Wash & Fenland

Forum (WAFF) whilst Ann Higgins is expanding her role as a Shared Learning Project Link for Norfolk & Suffolk.

Our new Committee now consists of the following Trustees -

Marion Newell *Chairman*
 Neil Prew *Vice-Chair and Website Editor*
 Sheila Burney *Secretary and Press officer*
 Linda Creed *Treasurer*
 John Duncan *Membership Secretary*
 Dana Gower *Group Co-ordinator*
 Tricia Bailey *Speaker Organiser*
 Davilia Cadby *Committee Member*
 Norma Chaplin *Committee Member*
 Val Sparkes *Committee Member*



We have been meeting regularly via Zoom, and to begin with were busy getting to grips both with new roles and changed circumstances. Preparing unified risk assessments for when our groups were able to resume in person was a priority, even though in the end they barely saw the chance to be employed before the shutters were pulled down on activity again.

The committee has also been overhauling our policies covering finance, safeguarding, data protection, equality & accessibility - though we may find ourselves revisiting these soon in the light of possible legal changes following the country's exit from the European Union. These policies can be found on our [Website](#) .

Treasurer Linda Creed has been engaged with ensuring that any funds owed to members due to cancelled activities are being returned and that we have agreements in place with our host venues for when normal activities can resume.

She has also assisted Dana Gower in setting up her first Group Leaders Meeting since becoming Group Co-ordinator, which also needed to be hosted via Zoom. This in turn led to a further Zoom presentation hosted by Linda & Neil Prew, open to any member interested in using the Video Conferencing software. Both meetings were well supported by both Group Leaders and our members.

The **KaLeidoscope** team is grateful for the interest shown in this publication by readers and contributors, without whom there would have been no **KaLeidoscope**. It should however be noted that, in this and any subsequent editions, the right to select articles for publication, to edit those items as considered appropriate, and to hold items over for possible publication at a future date may be exercised, whilst contributors have the right to expect all submissions to be treated with courtesy and respect.

Obituaries

Ann Bolton 1938 – 2020: An Appreciation

Upon her retirement from teaching in a local secondary school, Ann was recommended by the late Bob Rawlings to join King's Lynn U3A. She was already a keen pétanque player, having spent many holidays in France which both she and her husband Mike loved, where she could be found on the local, often dusty, pétanque terrain in a small village they were visiting.

Whatever Ann took up she gave 100% to it. Dorothy Rawlings remembers that Ann, soon after joining U3A, became the chairman at a time when members with new ideas were needed to see the organisation progress. She joined various groups including those for Handbells, Mah Jong, Recorder Beginners, Drama and, briefly, Kurling.

Ann continued to play pétanque as long as possible, playing for part of the 2019 season. She donated the annual trophy for the best player in the Pétanque Group which she found in a shop on one of the family French holidays. Her name is engraved on the trophy plinth as one of the very early winners. Ann also led the Local History Group for some years.

Outside the U3A, Ann enjoyed the Gaywood Scrabble Monday morning meetings. She played bowls too and trained to teach blind and partially-sighted players. Ann and Mike had a mutual interest in classic cars. On Heritage Days she was to be found, dressed in black and white, showing off their old Triumph Herald immaculate in its matching livery on the Tuesday Market Place.

Ann was also a qualified mechanical engineer, and had worked in the aviation industry upon leaving school, before training to teach in mid-life. In retirement she also contributed to the life of the town through her voluntary work for the King's Lynn Museum and by her membership of the King's Lynn Civic Society. She was a member of the team which contributed to the King's Lynn Talking Newspaper. She also enjoyed commenting on issues raised in the local Lynn newspapers and her letters were often printed by them. Although in failing health by the spring of this year, her last letter produced the desired results of gaining help with her shopping and other needs during lockdown.

Ann will be remembered by all who knew her for her preparedness to offer opinions on a great variety of subjects and her life experiences which all played their part in her contribution to U3A and King's Lynn.

Ann Smith

Barry Keenan

I first met Barry and his wife, Yvonne, when I joined the Genealogy Group, then run by Sue Rowe. He was very helpful and well-informed about the subject, and would help anyone who needed assistance.

He started another Genealogy Group but unfortunately, as he lived quite a way out of town, it was not so popular because of the distance involved.

He also transcribed old Parish records for a Norfolk genealogy society.

I started going to the Sunday Strollers, and he and Yvonne often lead the group. It was a very social group, and we often ended in the pub for a drink and a chat; this is how I got to know a lot of other members.

He was a man of hidden talents, including being a book binder of extreme skill. He would take books that were in bits, reconstruct and bind them to the highest degree.

Another of his interests was astronomy, until thieves took his telescope from his garden, which really upset him.

Doris Watson – Genealogy Group

Barry Keenan very kindly left a bequest of £500 to King's Lynn u3a.

Your Trustees are seeking suggestions from members for suitable ways in which this sum may be utilised.

Meeting Reviews

**Nov 2019 “West Acre Man Walks the World” - by
Jeremy Cameron**

We were given a couple of clues as to the main interests of speaker, Jeremy Cameron, when we returned to our seats after the refreshment break. On them we found a quiz about European



capital cities, and a long booklist of recommended writers and titles which he has compiled over many years. In addition, he is a published author himself.

As Jeremy Cameron's talk progressed, it emerged that he had always loved walking and reading. He had walked in the United Kingdom and many parts of the world, but had always finally returned to his home in West Acre.

His talk contained many details of his travels, but he concentrated on his adventures walking across the USA from New York to California. He had many stories to tell about his encounters along his way. He always seems to have been a solitary walker and preferred to find alternative routes to the main American highways.

More recently he has walked from Amsterdam to Istanbul. At this point in his talk he encouraged the audience to use their quiz sheets to join him on his journey. I think most of us got stuck on the Balkans', revealing our lack of knowledge of the capitals of the relatively new countries in that part of Europe.

Jeremy Cameron concluded his talk by describing a walk around England, visiting all the places which began with "Q". He has published his account of this adventure in a book with the title of "Quite Quintessential: a walk round all the Qs of England".

Ann Smith

December 2019 "Mr Charles Dickens and A Christmas Carol"

To put us into the true Christmas spirit, Mike Wabe, as Charles Dickens, dressed in top-hat, frock-coat, muffler and glasses, with a coat stand, writing desk and a myriad of candles to set the scene to re-introduce us to the classic tale of *A Christmas Carol*. He gave us a very spirited reading with lots of different voices and some atmospheric sound effects, taking us through the entire story, with many little asides and funny moments.



Bob Cratchit was dismissed from Scrooge's office at the very last moment of Christmas Eve with an exhortation to be at his desk even earlier than usual on Boxing Day. Scrooge, retiring for the evening, heard the sound of shuffling footsteps, the dragging of chains, the heavy chime of a clock, and the ghost of his late business partner, Jacob Marley, materialised before the shocked and disbelieving Scrooge. Three more spirits appeared in turn to show the miserly, miserable, grasping old man what Christmas Past had been, transporting him back to his childhood when all were happy and well-fed; then on to Christmas Present, where poor Bob and his jolly but impoverished family including Tiny Tim were cold,

hungry, and struggling to be cheerful in the face of Scrooge's penny-pinching treatment. Finally to Christmas Still To Come, where Scrooge looked at his own demise with not a soul to mourn him. Waking from this nightmare to the sound of the clock chiming once again, he finally saw the light, sent for the biggest turkey in the butcher's shop and hurried off to the Cratchit cottage to transform the lives of the entire family to the joy of them all.

Mike's scene-setting, costume, candles and many voices, and his lively interpretation of this much-loved story were so evocative that he was greeted with very enthusiastic applause not once, but twice. And a Merry Christmas to all and God Bless Us, Every One!

Sheila Burney

January 2020 "EACH and The NOOK" by Tina Burdett

Tina Burdett, the West Norfolk Regional Fundraiser for The East Anglian Children's Hospices, held the sympathetic attention of a large U3A audience in its renewed venue at the Gaywood Community Centre.

Tina spoke about how she became involved with EACH after moving to Norfolk, her opportunity to shadow staff when she began her training and her realisation that she felt a passionate commitment to the work of the children's hospices.



She spoke movingly of the various hospices in East Anglia, focusing particularly on the most recent hospice known as the NOOK which is a new-build at Framingham Earl and was opened by the Duchess of Cambridge in the autumn of 2019. It contains state of the art facilities for the children. The hydrotherapy pool is a firm favourite. There is a sensory room, art studio, soft play area and music room.

However it is the children who are at the centre of the experiences of the NOOK, along with support for the whole family including grandparents. At the time of her talk there were 124 children and young people being supported plus 201 family members. Symptom management, a 24-hour service, counselling, end-of-life care, a support group, respite care and short breaks all figure in the programme. Help can be given at home if parents prefer this.

The running costs are £5,600 per day. Staff salaries figure prominently in the financial accounts. There are no charges to the families benefiting from the range of services. There is a small amount of government funding but the rest of the costs have to be met by fund-raising, bequests, the charity shops which exist in various parts of the county, ad hoc donations, third-party fund-raising, charity of the year donations, challenge events, etc.

Tina concluded her talk, which had been ably illustrated with a series of slides clearly explaining the work of the hospice and with some video sequences of

the children, with the information that there is a need for volunteers to help with fund-raising in the King's Lynn area. It is hoped that some U3A members might respond to this challenge at some time in the future for this charity which struck such a chord with the members.

Ann Smith

February 2020 Local Films



Our speaker for today was unfortunately unable to come, so instead we enjoyed 3 short films of the King's Lynn area. Firstly, we had "John Betjeman Goes by Train" travelling from King's Lynn to Hunstanton in the 1960s. This was a real nostalgia treat – we saw the old stations of King's Lynn, Wolferton [***Pictured***], Snettisham and Hunstanton. Betjeman walked round the King's Lynn station pointing out various features, then disembarked at Wolferton

where we saw the church, the station with the station master's house, and the village itself - it was interesting to see how little has changed in the 60 years since the film was made. Then, on to Snettisham where again he got off the train and wandered round the station, sat on a bench in front of a flower bed planted with the station name in shrubs, then ending in Hunstanton where he told us that the train needed to reduce speed so as to avoid going through the barrier and into the sea! As a newcomer to Norfolk I was quite surprised to see that even so recently there had been a pier in Hunstanton. [*Editor's note: it was destroyed by a storm in January 1978*]

Our next film was "King's Lynn as it Was" and this was pre-war – and what enormous changes have taken place since then; while the streets were largely recognisable we saw an outdoor swimming pool, grain stores at the docks, Woolworths!, wonderful old cars, a huge market on the square set against the backdrop of the Duke's Head – all to the accompaniment of *oohs* and *ahs* from the audience. The third film was a 1966 tour around the town and again this was very much appreciated by the audience. This film show was a real treat for all of us – and well done to Edward for having come prepared to give us an alternative to our, sadly unavailable, speaker.

Sheila Burney

[Local films are available to view on the internet at the East Anglian Film Archive www.eafa.org.uk and by searching on YouTube]

March 2020 "My Life and Hard Times" by Alistair MacDonald

Alistair Macdonald, an award-winning BBC journalist, photographer and film maker, gave his illustrated, and often hilarious, talk to a spellbound audience. He was hugely influenced by his soldier father who had fought in the desert, usually behind enemy lines, eventually captured by the Japanese and was their POW for 2 years. This resilience and ability to cope with extremes, inherited from his father, gave us an insight into the mindset that led him to the things he has spent his working life doing.



He gave us a whistle-stop picture ride through his wilderness-walking through 20+ countries, where amongst a host of other feats he has:- taken tea with the Tuareg, mixed with Nepalese bandits, slept on a ledge up a Swedish mountain, swum with piranhas in the Amazon, photographed wildlife on the Galapagos, delivered an ambulance to war-torn Beirut, and climbed to 23,000 feet on Mount Everest.

His wanderings began at the age of 8, when he habitually walked alone from his home in Sheffield to the Peak District. By his 20s he was ice climbing in Scotland, and he spent his 70th birthday walking and cycling coast to coast across Scotland. Ports of call have ranged from an ice hotel, crossing a desert on a camel train, wild water rowing, off-road cycling, mountain walking, eating sheep's eyeballs in the Sahara, to climbing English factory chimneys with Fred Dibnah.

The highlight of this utterly fascinating talk was his adventures on Mount Everest, recreating the 1924 climb of Irving and Mallory. The pictorial journey took us from the 1,000-roomed Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet, via the meat market where the meat and cheese all came from the local yak, to a photo of the open-air lavatory on the slopes of the mountain at 17,000 feet in the permafrost, to the gloriously sunlit summit of this majestic, but often lethal, mountain.

Some of Alistair's films can be found on YouTube.

Sheila Burney

And then came The Lockdown.....

July 2020 "The Walk of Death" by Jenny Mallin

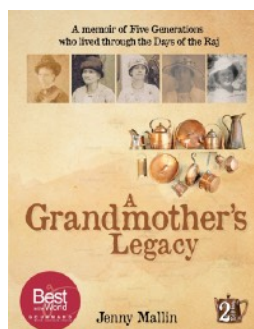
Our first ever Zoom speaker, Jenny Mallin, gave an illustrated talk about the escape from Rangoon of her Great Aunt Constance in 1942, ahead of the Japanese invasion. Constance Jeffries was born in 1888 in Madras of purely British descent and had spent many years in Burma, marrying an Englishman of high rank in the Imperial Civil Service. The ICS employees and their families enjoyed a privileged lifestyle. The wives, often left behind when their

husbands were away for many months on business, belonged to country clubs and played tennis, cards, enjoyed afternoon tea and cocktail parties, wore fashionable Paris gowns and beautiful, often impractical shoes, with good jewellery and accessories. Constance was very much a part of that society.

At 10am on the 23rd December 1941, the population of Rangoon, a flourishing and wealthy international port, were going about their daily business, doing their Christmas shopping, having afternoon tea with friends, or simply enjoying the day, when the skies above were suddenly filled with huge numbers of Japanese bombers, which rained destruction onto the city below causing utter panic. There were many deaths, and over the next two months 2000 civilians were killed in these raids. On March 8th 1942 the order came to evacuate Rangoon. The ICS set up transit camps for 40,000 refugees, with a handful of rice and a tablespoon of salt being the daily ration for everyone. 80,000 found safety there before setting out on the Walk of Death.

The local authorities opened the doors of the prisons and mental asylums, and the zoo, to allow all the occupants a slim chance of survival. All added to the chaos, with wild and hungry animals dashing through the streets, prisoners looting and setting fire to buildings, and mental patients running amok in their panic. The town was reduced to rubble; the port had been heavily bombed and all seaworthy ships went to sea with as many people on board as could be crammed on; the railways similarly left packed with people; the roads were full of refugees, and those who remained had no choice but to set out on foot. The Indians were the first to flee, to get back home, and the Burmese mainly stayed behind. From January to June 500,000 people fled, and many thousands of people had no choice but to walk. Constance and her husband locked up their house and, leaving everything behind, departed with them.

All nationalities and castes, from road sweepers to nuns to company executives, set out on the Walk of Death across the foothills of the Himalayas, through uncharted and unexplored mountainous territory up to 8,000 feet high, towards India, facing dangerous wildlife and headhunting tribesmen. Most people carried whatever they could hastily grab, but some left simply in their clothes – including in Paris gowns and sandals. There was no shelter or food available, and what anyone had managed to take with them was soon gone. There were no roads or tracks, and very quickly a limited sense of direction was lost, as progress through dense undergrowth meant constantly circling round trees, rivers, inaccessible cliffs, and ravines. This



devastating trek of gruelling hardship took many months from the beginning of the monsoon season. As the trek progressed, many people died of hunger, disease, injuries, attacked by the wild animals and reptiles, and eventually starvation. The bodies of the dead, from infants to elderly, were simply left behind along with belongings.

In the autumn of 1942 stragglers were still making their way through to India. Over 40,000 people had perished; bodies and belongings still being found years later. Miraculously Constance survived, arriving on her sister-in-law's doorstep

at 2am in rags and without shoes, so emaciated that her family didn't recognise her. She, her husband and adult children eventually settled in Calcutta and she died at 70 years old.

Jenny's book on this subject, "A Grandmother's Legacy", is available on Amazon.

Sheila Burney

August 2020 St George's Guildhall: the Oldest Working Theatre in Britain by Tim FitzHigham

Tim, a performer himself, has passionate and infectious enthusiasm for the building and its history. The amount of documentary evidence that he and his colleagues on the Shakespeare's Guildhall Trust have uncovered in the town archives is astonishing.

The first evidence of the Guild of St George, in the north end of King's Lynn, is 1376; the Black Death was prevalent in the years prior to this and wiped out half the population of the country. This Guild had primarily a religious, rather than a trade, outlook, providing fellowship, charity and hospitality, with four meetings a year, and admitting both men and women members. [The land was given to the Guild by a mayor, John Brandon in 1406.] The first documented evidence of the building we now see on King Street is of a meeting in 1428. Dendrochronologists have determined that the floor beams, below the raked seating now there, date to 1417, so it is reasonable to suppose that the building was erected around 1420-25.



The first recorded dramatic performance there, a nativity play, took place on January 6th, 1445, the same year the Gutenberg press was invented. This date was, of course, the Twelfth Night festival, being far more important at that time than Christmas, celebrating the arrival of the Magi, and the revelation of Christ to them. The records, from the minutes of the town council, on fragile scrolls, mainly written in Latin, are very detailed and include the amount spent on minstrels, costumes, scenery, candles, food and drink. The players, some of whom are named, appear to be local people, with those portraying Mary and Gabriel, being given singing lessons. However, the minstrels were professionals provided by various earls of the area. Such patrons were transported from home and back, fed and entertained at the town's expense. These documents evidence the earliest ever recorded performance of a specific play, and of costumes and sets being prepared for the same.

It is now agreed amongst academics on the basis of town records that Shakespeare in all probability performed with the Lord Chamberlain's Men here, as he acted and wrote plays for them over an extended period. This famous troupe of performers is recorded as playing here in the 1590s, along with Robert Armin, the noted comedic actor, who was born in King's Lynn. All

the theatres in London were closed that year because of disease – as today - and so the company toured all over England. An early review of Shakespeare's performance was so bad that he was called an 'upstart crow'!

The records continue through the ensuing centuries to the present day, along with the progress of the buildings. They started out being on a quayside; but, as the banks built up, the original buildings became further from the Ouse. As the site was extended, more were constructed towards the edge of the river, as we see today. Through the years they have had various uses, from scenery storage to warehousing, to a courthouse, a gunpowder store in the Civil War, eventually falling into some disrepair and being threatened with demolition to make way for a garage.

In 1945-47 it was bought by Alexander Penrose and given to the National Trust, who still own it and lease it to the borough council. It is the largest and oldest complete medieval guildhall in England. In all that time the building has been in continuous use for performances of drama and music. The last four generations of our royal family have supported the Guildhall, with some of them giving considerable sums of money towards its upkeep. Plans have been drawn up and accepted for disabled access and various refurbishments, and the only hurdle now is lack of money. It would be an utter tragedy if this globally important building could not be preserved to move into the future, carrying its unique past forward for the generations still to come.

More about its history can be found in the town archives and also at

<https://www.shakespearesguildhalltrust.org.uk/history>.

Sheila Burney

Sept 2020 "The Seahenge and her sister" by David Robertson

David Robertson gave us a well-illustrated Zoom talk about Seahenge and other Bronze Age timber circles, based on 23 years of research. David gave a mass of information, with photos, maps and diagrams of the Seahenge in Holme-next-the-Sea, which consisted of a timber circle with an upturned tree



root in the centre. Its central stump and half the excavated timbers, now preserved, are on permanent display at King's Lynn Museum.

The huge oak tree stump, upside down with its roots pointing upwards, measured 2.5 metres in length and width. 55 timber posts were placed in a circular trench surrounding it, cut from at least 20 oak trees, to form a surrounding palisade up to 3 metres tall and 6.6 metres in

diameter. One of the posts was forked, and may have been an entrance. Dendrochronology revealed that the trees were felled, and worked ready for construction, during the spring or summer of 2049 BC. The 4,000-year-old

monument was constructed in the Early Bronze Age on a salt marsh, where it would have been protected from the sea by sand dunes and mud flats. Gradually, the sea encroached on the land, covering the peat beds that preserved the wood.

100m to the east of this timber circle, the 'sister' to Seahenge was built at the same time, consisting of 2 horizontal logs with a fence of wicker in the centre, and enclosed by a second palisade. These are 2 of the most important archaeological sites in East Anglia.

Seahenge was built by at least fifty people, living and farming in nearby Bronze Age settlements, probably in Thornham and Hunstanton. Perfectly preserved tool marks from the 50 or so axes used to fell, split and shape the timbers were found, which came as surprise to archaeologists as it was thought metal tools were still relatively rare at this point. Under the stump there was a honeysuckle rope used to haul it to the salt marsh.

Although locals and visitors knew of its existence for many years, Seahenge was officially discovered and reported in the summer of 1998 by John Lorimer after he found a Bronze Age axe-head in Holme. A year later the site was excavated by The Norfolk Archaeological Unit as the timbers were starting to decay and were being eroded by the sea. This excavation was not without some opposition from locals, who wished for it to stay as a tourist attraction, and from Neo-pagans, who held spiritual objections to its removal.

There are numerous theories as to its purpose: maybe a memorial of an important and recently dead person who was placed on the stump, leaving the body to the elements before removing the bones, or possibly, with the downward facing stump, a route to the underworld. It is thought that the sister circle, Holme II, may have been the actual burial place.

As many excavated burial mounds in Europe have revealed timber circles underneath them, David believes that the second circle was a burial mound, and that a coffin was laid on top of the horizontal logs.

Another theory is that the monument has something to do with the movement of the sun, as attributed to similar sites such as Stonehenge and Woodhenge. It was decided not to excavate the second henge but to leave it to the elements. Site monitoring continues, which observes deterioration and disappearance over the years of its timbers.

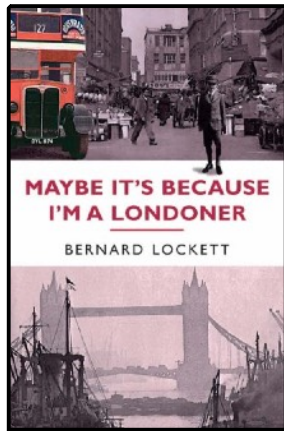
Holme beach is part of a nature reserve, so visits to the exact site are discouraged, particularly as no archaeology remains visible today. In 2000, Time Team broadcast an hour-long TV special on the excavations of Seahenge and built a reconstruction of the monument at Drove Orchards, Thornham. This is exposed to the weather and, in just 20 years, there is already rotting of some of the timbers, while others have fallen over.

Sheila Burney

October 2020 "Growing up in East End London Post War" by Bernard Lockett

Bernard was born in St Andrew's Hospital in Bow in 1945; this was a forbidding Dickensian building, functional but grim and, perhaps surprisingly,

still a working hospital in 2010 when Bernard went back to visit the area. He and his family left the area in 1960 and eventually returned to their Norfolk roots to live near North Walsham in 1975.



Bernard, his parents and grandparents lived on Bow Road in the heart of the East End, in the basement flat of a four-storey block of offices, where his grandparents were the caretakers. They were responsible for the general cleanliness of the building, tending the 12 fireplaces morning and evening, and cleaning the 24 sets of windows every Sunday. He remembers being told that once his grandparents had cleaned all of them only to watch the whole lot being blown out by a bomb blast – their response – “what a waste of time!”.

The East End was a very vibrant community with people from lots of different places, including a large Irish community of workers and their families, who had settled there to build the underground railways and the factories, and, of course, work in the docks. Dockers signed on every day and, if they were lucky, were taken on for one day’s work, with no guarantee that they would be employed on the morrow. It was a difficult way of life, with poverty and hardship all around, but where everyone pulled together and helped each other out. He painted a picture of its sense of belonging and safety, where families left their front doors unlocked all day until bedtime with no worry about intruders or burglaries. The local children played outside, in the evenings after school, and at the weekends all day, unsupervised. They roamed, maybe to the Isle of Dogs in the days before Canary Wharf, very war-damaged but great to run about in, free to play and eat their picnic lunch. They were warned ‘don’t go down the Greenwich tunnel’, but occasionally the children would tell each other they had ‘been over the water’, meaning they had gone south of the Thames – a great adventure!

He recalled the Devon’s Street market with its fish, fruit and veg stalls, and though rationing was still ongoing, you could buy off-cuts of salmon at the end of the day without a coupon and no questions asked. The local garment and haberdashery factories produced the most beautifully made dresses and hats; his Mum and Gran were seamstresses there. The entertainment was mostly in the home, no TV’s of course. There were 8 working theatres in the area, which were visited regularly, not as a treat but as the norm, plus the “Bow Bells” pub, and the local church of Bow, in the centre of the road with the trolley buses going round it.

The number 96 bus (now the 205 but the same route) gave a ride through the East End starting at Wanstead, through Stratford to Bow, via Mile End, Whitechapel and on into Aldgate in the city. Continuing on, it passed St Paul’s Cathedral, Charing Cross, Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly, Hyde Park Corner and into Knightsbridge – with a kaleidoscope of society changing all the way – and, of course, back again. There were regionalised problems - like the Kray

twins and their gang in Bethnal Green - but not known about by Bow residents until afterwards.

By 2004 the old streets had been cleared and rebuilt with tower blocks, the factories had gone, the old garage was now a Porsche dealership, and strangest of all, there was a tourist office. The attendant suggested Bernard took the Victorian tourist trail, which consisted of walking the streets and only imagining the area as it had once been! In the run-up to the 2012 Olympics, the East End experienced a massive regeneration, a very exciting time. An old, slightly shabby square, with tall houses and a central garden area, has been refurbished and would not look out of place now in Belgravia. Bernard's childhood home is now 12 executive flats commanding prices of £1.7m each!

This talk, unlike any other we have enjoyed recently, provoked a conversation with the U3A members, all recalling their own early memories, and was thoroughly enjoyed – thank you, Bernard!

Sheila Burney

Nov 2020 Lisa Auker "Scams"

Our speaker this month was Lisa Auker of NatWest Bank, who gave us some valuable information and advice on recognising & avoiding scams.

It's important to remember that criminals are experts at impersonation, using official branding and language used by trusted organisations and government departments to convince you their emails are genuine.

These may include offering you or your business a government grant or a reduction in your council tax with links contained leading to fake websites designed to obtain your personal and financial information. In some Covid 19 scams people are urged to "take advantage of the financial downturn", using emails and social media platforms to advertise fake investment opportunities in cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin. Others include criminals offering their assistance with Universal Credit applications, while taking some of the payment as a fee for their "services". Lisa urged us to follow the advice of the *Take Five to Stop Fraud* campaign to:



Stop: Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

Challenge: Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse, or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

Protect: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

Using the coronavirus pandemic as an opportunity, fraudsters are using sophisticated methods to callously exploit people, with many concerned about their financial situation and the state of the economy. To coincide with the launch of its new animation urging people to follow the advice of the Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign, UK Finance today reveals ten Covid-19 and lockdown scams which criminals are using to target people to get them to part with their money.

Some scams manipulate innocent victims, urging people to invest and "take advantage of the financial downturn". Others impersonate well-known subscription services to get people to part with their cash and personal information. Criminals are even posing as representatives from the NHS Test and Trace service in an effort to trick people into giving away their personal details.

To remind people that criminals are experts at impersonating trusted organisations, UK Finance has launched a new animation video urging people to follow the advice of the Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign. Consumers are reminded to always take a moment to stop and think before parting with their money or information in case it's a scam.

The ten scams to be on the lookout for and how to spot them:

Covid-19 financial support scams

1. **fake government emails** designed to look like they are from government departments offering grants of up to £7,500. The emails contain links which steal personal and financial information from victims.
2. access to '**Covid-19 relief funds**' encouraging victims to fill in a form with their personal information.
3. offering a '**council tax reduction**'. These emails, which use government branding, contain links which lead to a fake government website which is used to access personal and financial information.
4. Fraudsters are also preying on benefit recipients, offering to help apply for **Universal Credit**, while taking some of the payment as an advance for their "services".

Health scams

5. One of the most shocking scams that has appeared during the pandemic has involved using the **NHS Test and Trace** service. Criminals are preying on an anxious public by sending phishing emails and links claiming that the recipient has been in contact with someone diagnosed with Covid-19. These lead to fake websites that are used to steal personal and financial information or infect devices with malware.
6. Victims are also being targeted by fake adverts for Covid-related products such as **hand sanitizer and face masks** which do not exist.

7. Criminals are sending fake emails and texts claiming to be from **TV Licensing**, telling people they are eligible for six months of free TV license because of the coronavirus pandemic. Victims are told there has been a problem with their direct debit and are asked to click on a link that takes them to a fake website used to steal personal and financial information.

8. Amid a rise in the use of **online TV subscription services** during the lockdown, customers have been targeted by criminals sending convincing emails asking them to update their payment details by clicking on a link which is then used to steal credit card information.

9. Fraudsters are also exploiting those using **online dating websites** by creating fake profiles on social media sites used to manipulate victims into handing over their money. Often criminals will use the identities of real people to strike up relationships with their targets.

10. Criminals are using social media websites to advertise **fake investment opportunities**, encouraging victims to “take advantage of the financial downturn”. Bitcoin platforms are using emails and adverts on social media platforms to encourage unsuspecting victims to put money into fake investment companies using fake websites.

In order to spot a Covid-19 scam, people should be on high alert if:

- The website address is inconsistent with that of the legitimate organisation
- The phone call, text or emails asks for financial information such as PIN, passwords
- You receive a call or email out of the blue with an urgent request for your personal or financial information, or to make an immediate payment
- You're offered a heavily discounted or considerably cheaper product compared to the original price
- There are spelling and grammar mistakes, or inconsistencies in the story you're given

Sheila Burney

Dec 2020 Howard Slater: “A Life Study of Glenn Miller, with Music”



We were treated, once again via Zoom, to a slide show of photographs, posters, advertising, and record sleeves, and a selection of ‘big band’ music from Glenn Miller and his Orchestra. Howard gave us the famed band-leader and trombonist’s life story, from his birth on 1st March 1904, one of four children, at Clarinda, Ohio, through various moves to Nebraska, Missouri

– where he bought his first trombone - and Colorado, where in 1921, he graduated from high school, and became a professional musician. A talented arranger, as well as playing the mandolin, cornet, and trombone, he arranged music for, amongst others, the Dorsey Brothers, Pee-wee Irwin, and Ray Noble's Orchestra. He married Helen Burger in 1928, and, unable to have their own children, they adopted Steve and Jeannie as babies.

His own band, and his own compositions followed, with 'At Last' being his first record in 1942, and his eventual 'sound' was achieved with the use of a 'wet' reed on the trumpet, and a violin and saxophone all playing together. His first two bands failed from lack of funds and eventually after playing for other bands, he formed his third and hugely successful band in 1937. Europe was on the brink of war, and in 1945 Pearl Harbour was bombed by the Japanese, the USA joined the war, and Glenn enlisted in the army and was put in charge of the American Armed Forces band. He eventually reached the rank of Major, his band, and 'sound', were hugely popular, revolutionising the music of the time. He consistently ranked highly on the US and British pop charts and achieved 23 number one records; interestingly this compares to the Beatles' 20, and Elvis's 18.

In 1944 he came to England to entertain the troops here and on the 15th of December he set out to fly to Paris on a UC64A Norseman airplane as a passenger. The plane took off from Twinwood airfield near Bedford. The plane was spotted and a diary entry made by an aircraft enthusiast on its way south to fly over the channel, and was lost – theories proliferated at the time but it is now accepted that the plane, made of balsa wood, and not very robust, must have iced up and lost altitude and dived into the English Channel.

To end this interesting talk we listened, some danced to, and many sang along to, some of the most well-known and some less well-known tunes including Moonlight Serenade, Sold America, Wishing, and Perfidia.

The question and answer session revealed that there is there is a memorial at Jacks Green airbase near Peterborough, where he conducted his orchestra in his last airfield hanger concert in October 1944, and also that there is an annual festival in August at the old airfield at Twinwood, near Bedford, the airbase from which Glenn flew on his last voyage.

Sheila Burney

Don't forget that many of our Special Interest Groups are still meeting Online, usually via the Zoom Video Conferencing Software.

For an up to date list of groups, check our Website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/kingslynn/page/108885>

A Walk to the Park

Down Tennyson Avenue, so few cars!
A few people...moved away, but smiled
The Sun beating down made the world sparkle.
St. John's Walk, cool and shady, trees meeting overhead, whispering.
Chestnuts wearing magnificent chandeliers—
Birthday candles for a May-born child.
No flowers in the formal beds, disappointment, but..a Joy to come!
The Broad Walk, old trees dreaming of the past, and a few new ones for
continuity,
No scent from the limes yet, another Joy to come.
Into the Bandstand Garden, Alliums and Geraniums,
Soft pinks and blues flowing softly in the gentle breeze
Laughter by the river!
A little girl feeding the mallards, all drakes
No ducks or ducklings yet, more Joy to come!
Along to the level crossing, a car stopped to let me cross!
Home by the Old Hunstanton Railway Line path
Sun and shade, sun and shade
Cow Parsley's white lace scents the air!
Some Joys to come,
But what pleasure from a walk to the Park!!

Denise Mansell



How to impress the Grandkids.

Before you start this trick take a piece of paper and write the answer to the following problem -

Challenge your grandchildren to a simple mathematical problem

Take any 3 numbers that are NOT the same eg 6 4 7

Arrange them in order 7 6 4

Reverse the order 4 6 7

Subtract 2 9 7

Reverse the order 7 9 2

Add 1 0 8 9

What number did you write on the paper? Answer 1089. It is always 1089 regardless of what numbers are chosen but they do not need to know that.

Mark Keightley

Interest Group Updates

In happier times, at the end of 2019 our groups were enjoying their usual Christmas meals and end of season award celebrations.

22 members of the Friday Lunch group for example were imbibing at The Three Horseshoes in Roydon -



Meanwhile, several groups were celebrating up at Knights' Hill Hotel.....

Kurling - 2019 Season

Until the autumn of 2019, the King's Lynn U3A Kurling Group remained the only Kurling Group in Norfolk, but now with our help and advice one is being established at Swaffham U3A. We wish it well. Our Kurling Group was founded at the beginning of 2015 and has just completed its fifth season. Members have come and gone for various reasons but a loyal hardcore remain to enjoy this sport which suits the older generation very well. Kurling contributes to your physical fitness, with walking and gentle bending, plus the development of accuracy skills of hand and eye coordination. Players with mobility problems can be catered for too.

The Kurling Group uses its own equipment which is the property of our U3A. Lynnsport has been Kurling's home from the very beginning and its help and cooperation has been much appreciated. We originally began playing a conventional game based on ice curling, but on a polished boarded floor, aiming at a bull's eye target and scoring as in the game of bowls. Pairs are drawn each fortnightly session and all scores are recorded. Two years ago an individual competition was introduced using a different target where the scores are added up differently.



The group enjoyed it's annual lunch and presentation at the Farmers Arms, Knights Hill on Tuesday, 10th December. The shield for the most successful player of 2019 was won by Chris Hewson, a worthy winner.

The cup for the Solo competition was won by

Marian Wilson, one of our most able and talented Kurling players.

Both players were presented with their

Trophies by Anne Lemmon.

After five years as group leader, the time has come for me to pass on the job to a younger Kurler. Thank you Julie Foster for taking the task on. I hope you have as much fun and pleasure as I have enjoyed with a super group of U3A members. Keep on Kurling!



Ann Smith

Pétanque 1, 2019 Season

The 2019 Pétanque Season finished with the annual lunch and presentations held as usual at the Farmers Arms, Knights Hill last November. Twenty four playing members attended plus three guests, one of whom was the Guest of Honour Dorothy Rawlings, widow of the founder of the Pétanque group Bob Rawlings. The group's history as a part of U3A goes back to the year 2000 and the trophy for the player with the best results of the season was first presented in 2001. (In that year the trophy was won by Ann Bolton who had in fact donated the trophy, and was then a playing member.)

After an excellent lunch for which we thanked Julie Harpley assisted by Pam Rowe, the Pétanque Group Leader Brian Smith gave a summary of the 2019 season. which had seen play on 38 sessions out of a possible 40, and proceeded to reveal the results for three competitions. A highlight had been the second Doubles tournament played in Bob Rawlings' memory and won by Ken and Julie Harpley. The whole day had been a happy and relaxed one with most of the competitors staying for the final in the afternoon. Dorothy Rawlings herself presented the Bob Rawlings Memorial Shield to the worthy winners.



Next Brian moved on to announce the winner of the trophy for the Most Improved Player. This trophy is somewhat unusual - it could be called the 'Boules in a Bottle'. We leave it to the reader's imagination to visualise this trophy. (Though it can just be made out in the photo *Left*) This year it was won by David Fisher much to his amazement and pleasure.

The Champion's trophy is quite a unique one of a statuette of a pétanque player in the act of throwing a boule. Here the Group

Leader kept up the suspense by describing how the winner was only decided when the results of the last Friday morning's play of the season were included. For the first time in the group's history a dead heat was declared with the trophy being shared by last year's winner Ron Graham and Brian Smith who had last won the trophy in 2012.



After thanking the willing helpers with the various tasks needed for the weekly meetings, a sobering conclusion was Brian's announcement that he plans to stand down as Group Leader at the end of 2020.

Ann and Brian Smith

Pétanque 2, 2019 & 2020 Seasons

Also ending their season at The Farmers Arms were the Thursday Pétanque group, and following the three course Christmas Lunch, our group leader Bob Hindry made a number of presentations in several categories, including the "Rusty Balls" medal, the much coveted "Shiniest Balls" award and of course the dreaded 'wooden spoon' for the player with the most zeros scored in the year!



One eagerly awaited presentation was that for the "Players Player of the Year" voted for in strictest secrecy by the group members, and awarded this year to a surprised Bob Caseley (*Left*)

The plate for the highest averaging scoring lady player was won this year by Moira Wesson (*below*)



The shield for the player with the highest average score, was won in our groups first year in existence by Denise Mole; then in 2018 by Chris Taylor. In 2019 Chris was pipped to the post by our leader Bob Hindry - as as he could hardly award himself with the prize, it was presented by our group founder Ann Smith (*Left*).

The 2020 season had hardly begun (and that with strict social distancing measures) before it was curtailed by the lockdown. Resuming for a few more weeks in the summer, formal play ended in September with the application of the Rule of Six. It was deemed that sufficient play had been possible to support end of year awards but in TITLE only until such time as we able to gather again for them to be presented. It can be revealed however, that the highest scorer shield was retained by Bob Hindry, with Jane Hindry a close second; and it is she who wins the plate for the highest scoring lady.

The Shiniest & Rustiest Balls awards were also retained by their holders, who no doubt would prefer to remain anonymous....

The annual Doubles competition (with pairs chosen by lot) was eventually finished, and also won by Bob Hindry, partnered with initially Bob Casely until he was forced to isolate due to upcoming eye surgery. He was replaced by Neil Prew, who was originally unable to participate due to isolating because of upcoming eye surgery - this substitution was deemed acceptable under ancient precedent (something about 'an eye for an eye').

Neil Prew

Madrigal Group

In early January 2020, for various reasons, a somewhat depleted complement of singers assembled at the home of our inspiring Musical Director, Ann Higgins, and her husband, Jon, also a member of our group.



With Christmas 'hols' a distant memory, hilarity reigned supreme at this New Year madrigal rehearsal, due to mistakes aplenty as rusty voices proved difficult to control.

"Oh dear! Only two Basses?" "Good gracious! Where are the Tenors and Altos?" "Really? Only one of each?"

Nothing daunted, and with much aplomb, this reduced coterie of songster stalwarts faced the rather smug faces of the almost complete Soprano section who nonchalantly sang with great gusto; well, for the most part anyway. Admittedly there was the odd mistake, not least from yours truly; *mea culpa!* Oh! and an accidental soprano-like sound occasioned from the Bass section. I shall not cast an aspersion as to whom - my lips are sealed!

A unanimous decision was made; three-part harmony would prevail, rather than our usual four. No new songs would be attempted; old, much-liked and

well-practised pieces would be resurrected. To our surprise, joy and delight they were successfully executed. Mission accomplished.

Whilst it is true to say that our madrigal practices have their moments of fun, we are seriously committed to this complex, harmonious, wonderful genre of music, and we strive hard to do it justice.

Its birthplace was in Renaissance Italy, and it was soon embraced by the French. In this country the form became playful and humorous under the direction of William Byrd, Catholic composer of note to the Tudor court of his patron, Queen Elizabeth. Somehow he miraculously kept not only his faith but his head - quite a feat in those troubled times of religious conflict.

Since that first New Year rehearsal, where jollification took precedence over serious application, we are back on track to mastering the complexities of Early Music.

The alchemy that transforms the combination of music/singing/laughter into such a pleasurable group experience is not easy to define. We, in the Madrigal Group certainly derive much pleasure from all three of the above as we make music together. Suffice to say that camaraderie rather than 'hilarity' has always 'reigned supreme'!!

Maureen Feeney

Ukulele Group



In January 2020, following a planning meeting the previous month, over 20 u3a members gathered in the small room at Gaywood Community Centre for the Ukulele Groups first meeting. Some half dozen members already had experience of playing as part of Downham Market u3a's ukulele group, and a few more were also members of the local

Fenland Ukulele Club. But half our number were newbies to the instrument, though pleasingly everyone arrived with an instrument in tow - one advantage of starting a new group soon after Christmas!

As I have a couple of years experience of playing, I agreed to act as the Musical Director, whilst David Collins took on the role of group leader, arranging some half time refreshments for us all as well as taking care of the finances. We started with ten songs aimed at absolute beginners, with none having more than four chords, and ran through each song twice. By the end of the first fortnightly session we had a band of very happy singers and players,

and the number of attendees remained fairly constant for the half dozen occasions we were able to meet.

By adding a couple of new songs each meeting, and gradually introducing new chords we had a repertoire of twenty by the time lockdown was imposed.



For many of us this progress was maintained by resorting to Zoom from April onwards, although the inherent delay in video conferencing software makes it impossible to all play at once as it produces a cacophony. But at least we can still chat between songs, ask questions and take turns to lead songs (though I have made little headway in sharing that duty as yet!). For a while during the first lockdown we met twice a week, but since the summer have settled into a regular weekly session. We now have tackled over seventy songs, many of which have been suggested by other group members and we are all eagerly awaiting the chance to play collectively again.

Neil Prew

Of course video conferencing wasn't suitable for every special interest group, but one group leader at least kept his members on their toes during the lockdown.....

Scottish Dancing

A 32 bar reel for any number of dancers in their own living room

(devised by *Maria Bright*)

1-8 Dancers cast off behind own couch, dance around the end and back to place

9-16 Do-Si-Do around coffee table, then advance and retire (2 bars for each)

17-24 Dance down the hallway, into the kitchen, grab a beverage* and dance back to place

25-32 Set, while placing the beverage on the coffee table, turn on the spot twice (using Pas-de-Basque steps), then step back to the couch, sit and enjoy.

And here's an appropriate song, to the tune of Mairi's Wedding:



Step ye gaily on your own
Sharing via the telephone
Dancing is such fun, alone
Imagining the wedding.

Fetch the bottle, drain it down
Chartreuse green and sherry brown
Don't go anywhere near the town
For the sake of Mairi.

Social distancing's ideal
Isolation: make it real!
How good does it make you feel?
Keeping safe, sweet Mairi.

Do not drive a motor car
Take a walk but don't go far
Stay at home and you're a star
Drink a toast to Mairi..



(* Alcohol recommended)

Though by July, the strain was clearly starting to show, as the song had changed to.....

I wish I were dancing again.

We've suffered the pain of enforced isolation,
Done all that we should for the sake of the nation.
Looking forward to holiday? Great, it's 'staycation',
I want to stop lockdown and then,
I want to go dancing again.

I wish I were dancing again.

I've hoovered, I've polished, been down on my knees.
I've dusted and classified all the CDs,
By colour, by title, can I stop now? Please!
I want to stop housework and then,
I want to go dancing again.

I wish I were dancing again.

I've eaten too much, each meal's been a feast,
With snacks in between, my waistline's increased.
I ought to cut down, give up chocolate, at least.
I want to stop eating and then,

I want to go dancing again.

I wish I were dancing again.

I've done all the jigsaws, some of them twice,
Crosswords, sudokus and puzzles, precise,
Dealt cards, huffed draughts, rolled plenty of dice.
I want to stop playing and then,
I want to go dancing again.

I wish I were dancing again.

I've ploughed through the box-sets, exhausted 'Netflix.'
The I-Player gave me an old-sit-coms' fix,
And I'm fed up to here with that fellow Joe Wicks.
I want to stop watching and then,
I want to go dancing again.

I wish I were dancing again.

I've mowed and I've pruned and I've pulled up the weeds,
I've raked and I've hoed and I've planted the seeds.
Now three months of rain is all that it needs.
I want to stop gardening and then,
I want to go dancing again.

I wish I were dancing again.

A couple of glasses will help me stay calm;
One or two extra, they work like a charm;
I think I need one bottle more, where's the harm?
I want to stop drinking and then,
I want to go dancing again.

I wish I were dancing again.

The days are so long, and the night-times are worse.
The walls don't reply when I try to converse.
I've even resorted to writing bad verse.
I want to stop lockdown and then,
I want to go dancing again.

Bill Brakes

In Great Taste

Chocolate Delights

On a swelteringly hot day in September, 5 members of In Great Taste met at an outdoor location to sample their homemade chocolate delights.

Chocolate can be dated back to Central America, almost 4,000 years ago, when cacao was made into a frothy drink, usually with the addition of spices. The Aztecs even used cacao beans as a currency.

In 16th century when chocolate was brought to Europe by Christopher Columbus, it quickly became a popular drink, with the addition of sugar or honey. In 1847 Joseph Fry developed the first chocolate bar. Fry's bar consisted of a cocoa powder, cocoa butter and sugar mixture that could be poured into little rectangular moulds. It was suddenly possible to eat chocolate instead of drink it! Chocolate is one ingredient that will never go out of fashion.

In the photograph you can see Raspberry Blondie Tart, Chocolate truffles, chocolate and pistachio Babka, chocolate chip and nut loaf and pineapple and chocolate pudding.



Tropical Fruits

Tropical fruits are any edible fruit native to or grown in tropical regions. They are grown and developed in high temperature climatic zones in and around the equator. This allows a diversity of fruit cultivars with an exotic appearance and taste.

For example:

Durian fruit: Inside its thorny exterior is a soft creamy fruit which has an intense aroma. You can smell the fruit even when the shell is intact. People either love or hate this fruit.

Breadfruit: Once grown to feed the slaves on sugar plantations. The fruit can be eaten in multiple stages of development. When mature it is eaten raw and has a sweet and creamy taste. It can be used as a starchy vegetable replacement before becoming ripe.

Papaya: This has one of the highest concentrations of vitamin C of any fruit. Eating too much can cause yellowing of the soles of the feet and palms of the hands.

Guarana: A South American fruit filled with seeds that contain twice the amount of caffeine as coffee beans. It looks like an eyeball and is the main ingredient in Brazilian soft drinks.

Jackfruit: It tastes, when ripe, like a cross between a banana and a pineapple. Unripe, its flesh has a meat-like texture and is often used in vegetarian cooking.

Dragon fruit: Grows on a cactus. The plant blooms for only one night and is pollinated by nocturnal animals, moths and bats.

Miracle fruit: Small pink berries that contain a glyco protein that binds it to tastebuds on the tongue. Any food eaten up to an hour after consumption, will taste sweet.

In October, the group met, socially distanced, in an indoor setting, the theme being tropical fruit.



Members had made chicken casserole with pineapple and banana, passion fruit and mango flan, passion fruit roulade, kiwi coconut lime tart, tropical fruit traybake, and a pineapple upside down pudding. Mmmmm

Denise Mole

Handbells

The handbell group had started to meet again twice a month at St.Cecilia's Church in Dersingham. Although we are restricted to 6 people, it is good to see one another and play a limited repertoire. This activity of course was soon truncated by the second lockdown measures.



Pat Watts

VE Day Celebrations

I was almost seven years old when the war finally ended on May 8th 1945. My home was in Rainham, Essex, situated between RAF Hornchurch, which was a Fighter Station, and the Ford factory in Dagenham, where my Dad worked helping to manufacture tanks and other vehicles for the war effort.



I can remember the street festooned with patriotic flags and bunting. The shops were a riot of red, white and blue, but they soon sold out of flags, so great was the demand.

My Mum managed to buy only a couple of flags, not nearly enough to decorate the front of our house to her satisfaction. So, sacrificing a very old sheet which had been patched, darned and had its sides turned to the middle, she set about cutting the material into triangles. With *Tintex* she dyed one third of these red, another third blue, and left the remaining triangles white. She then sewed them onto tape in sequence before these little pennants were strung across the front of our house along the windowsills and over the porch.

The party which our Mums organised was quite a feast. I remember my Mum making jellies from gelatine in white enamel pails, little cakes from fatless sponge with sugar hoarded from our rations and made with dried egg. Other women provided more cakes, jellies and sandwiches, mainly spam or jam, as everything was in short supply and heavily rationed. Nevertheless, to us kids it was a banquet!

Everyone contributed chairs and tables which were placed end to end down the road. First, the children sat down and were served the delicious fare. Then the grown-ups took their places at the table. The noise was deafening, so great was the excitement and the relief that it was at last, all over!

Some of the older boys had made a bonfire topped with an effigy of Hitler. This was positioned in a field at the top of our road, next to a sand and gravel pit - known locally as 'The Pit' - where we children caught sticklebacks, minnows and red throats with bent pins for hooks and soaked pellets of bread for bait. This pit had saved all our lives on several occasions when, in the early part of the war, bombs intended for the RAF station had overshot and landed in its water.

The feasting over, the tables and chairs were cleared away; someone dragged out their piano into the street and one of the Granddads played a banjo. Everyone was dancing to the music, singing along with the Vera Lynn hits of *We'll Meet Again* and *White Cliffs of Dover* plus many other popular songs of the time. Everyone was so full of happiness! Later the bonfire was lit and, to great roars of approval, Hitler was gradually consumed by the flames. Then potatoes were baked in the embers of the fire and shared out.

It was a day and a night to remember.

Beryl A .Long
Writing For Pleasure Group 2

U3a Member Shortlisted For New National Arts Competition



Congratulations go to Bill Brakes who made the shortlist for the King Lear Prizes, a new national arts competition launched in March 2020 to encourage artistic creativity among older people during lockdown. Bill beat thousands of other entries in the inaugural Prizes to make the shortlist in the short story category. The competition attracted more than 14,000 entries in total in six categories from about 5,000 people across the UK and British citizens overseas.

Bill gained his PhD from Trinity College, Cambridge, and worked as a mathematics lecturer in various universities. On retirement, he took an MA in Modern English Studies and he's been writing ever since, with two unpublished novels and many short stories under his belt. [*Available from Amazon, Ed*]

For his shortlisted short story 'Flying Upside-Down', Bill receives a certificate of commendation. Speaking about why he entered the King Lear Prizes, Mr Brakes said he wanted "to support an excellent initiative and to measure myself against others".

The inaugural competition was supported by famous writers, actors, musicians and artists, such as broadcaster Gyles Brandreth, who judged the poetry category, cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, who judged the music category, and literary editor of *The Spectator* Sam Leith, who judged the short story category.

Speaking about the entries in the short story category, Sam Leith said, "The monarch for whom the King Lear Prize is named may have started out foolish and ended up mad, but the writers whose short stories I read showed no signs of either condition: here were first rate works of imagination and craft. These stories – composed, in many cases, in the difficult and isolating circumstances of a lockdown that has been especially hard on older people – showed what a wealth of talent there is among men and women for whom writing fiction is a resource and a recreation rather than a professional calling. It has been a great privilege to have had a hand in judging them."

The competition and its mission have also been championed by older people charities, such as Age UK.

The competition was open to people over 70 with no professional experience in the arts, to submit new short stories, poetry, short plays, solo musical compositions and art during the time they were quarantined. The Prizes take their name from Shakespeare's play *King Lear*, which was written in 1605-1606 during outbreaks of the plague in London.

'Flying Upside-Down' as well as the other winning and shortlisted entries, are available to view at the *King Lear Prizes* website www.kinglearprizes.org.uk.

TV Licence

I did begin to think they'd forgotten about me but on the last working day of August, I finally got a letter asking me to make arrangements for my next TV licence. Yes, that's how they put it, they "asked me to make arrangements", at least they didn't tell me to buy one, they didn't instruct me, they asked me, and rather nicely. So Alison Roberts, Customer Service Director of TV Licensing, has a human side and isn't a typical civil servant, and that did colour my response.



I can remember sneaking into certain pubs before I was 18, trying to look grown up. Later, when insuring my car, I can remember wanting to be 21 to get lower insurance rates, then wanting to be 25 when the rotten insurance companies increased the bar to lower rates just before I was 21. So I was really pleased to reach the magic age of 75, get a free TV licence and sit back to watch endless repeats on the box for free. But no sooner had I reached for my pipe and slippers than the BBC decided I could afford to fund the mega salaries of its personalities in full.

But no, Alison Roberts knows how to sugar coat the pill. She asks: am I receiving Pension Credit? In this case she asks me to "please" apply for my next free licence. She is polite. Do I need to buy a licence? She's not finished yet. Please, she says, choose your way to pay - Monopoly money I'm thinking! No, she's being serious. I can pay in one go or spread the cost. What's more, if I do that, there are no additional charges. That got my attention! I can pay monthly, even fortnightly or, can you believe it, weekly! Is the man from the Pru going to come round each week to collect my TV licence money? Shall I elect for weekly just because I can? Would that mean they'd pay their TV stars weekly instead of mega bucks? Well, they'd still get *loadsamoney* anyway and I'd find paying weekly a faff. And that Alison Roberts did ask for the licence money nicely, didn't she? So I'll pay in one lump sum by annual direct debit and then I won't have to worry about it again in future years. Neither will those TV stars being paid their obscene salaries.

Richard Coates

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**King's Lynn U3A Registered Charity no. 1100986
Chairman: Marion Newell**