

# LOWESTOFT

# u3a

learn  
laugh  
live

Third Age Trust

Registered Charity  
1001662

## Newsletter

**MARCH 2023**

**SEE  
STOP  
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PAGE 17**

### Chair's Report

Welcome everyone to this latest edition of your newsletter. It is my first as your new chair and I am still learning the job. Luckily I have a very hardworking committee to keep me in order!

We have had a few changes and some new groups have started since the last newsletter. Unfortunately we also have a few groups struggling to keep going. Please support them as they need more members.

We will have the coronation soon and we are planning a party to celebrate. This will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and the tickets, which are now available, cost £12.00 each. We are going to hold the party at the Lady of the Lake pub in Oulton Broad. We will be having a buffet supplied by 'A piece of cake', a quiz, a raffle including a lucky ticket and some music. Please see your group leader or contact a committee member for more information. A question for you. When Queen Elizabeth II began her Reign we became Elizabethans. What will we be with Charles on the throne?

We now have a new treasurer. Verity has taken over from Barbara but Julie will continue to be the assistant treasurer. I should like to thank Barbara for keeping the accounts up to date after Alan left. I am very sorry that Barbara has stepped down from the committee. She worked very hard as the chair and then treasurer.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped to make our first monthly meeting at our new venue such a huge success. The talk by Ivan Bunn about hunted Lowestoft was very interesting. I hope that you have a very good summer and I look forward to seeing some of you during the coming months. All being well, I will write another letter in the next edition of the newsletter.

Ray Willett

#### Editors note

I would like to say a big thank you to every one who has sent articles etc. for this Newsletter. From having very little material to almost being over run with contributions (I'm not complaining!) I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have enjoyed editing it.

Thanks to the people that said its fine to allow your pets to sleep on your bed. My goldfish is now dead.



## With Regrets

It is with regret that we must mark the passing of the following members:

Bill Jeffrey  
Jim Russell

Kathleen Clayton  
Dorothy Lomas

To brighten your day



I sea the sea - watercolours

William Rouse



Canal - watercolours



Venetian mask - pen & wash  
Bridget Newbery



Through the woods - acrylic/pastels William Rouse



New Zealand Kiwi  
Pastels & pastel pencils  
Bridget Newbery



Hawaiian Honeycreeper  
Pastels & pastel pencils  
Bridget Newbery

## French Leave

A relaxing week away in France, just what we need! That was the theory anyway, but of course reality has an irritating habit of taking over...

It starts with the drive to the airport – we're flying to Nantes so have to fly from Stansted. For some reason I booked Friday early afternoon flights, so we hit the A11 with full on traffic jams, accidents, roadworks, every delay imaginable. Finally make it to Stansted Jet Parks, see the bus come in, run to the bus, sit on the bus for 15 minutes whilst it fills up and then the driver makes a leisurely trip to the terminal. I'm so glad I don't have my blood pressure monitor with me.

Through security surprisingly quickly, find the departure gate and board the plane, which is full, no idea why – is Nantes such a desirable destination on a Friday? Apparently it is.

Out of Nantes airport to the car hire office to find that I have reserved an all-electric automatic Fiat 500. I think we could have just about coped with electric or automatic but both is hard to deal with.

Could we have a petrol car instead? Of course madam, not a problem that'll be an extra 16€ per day.

Thank you so much but no thank you (How much???). We locate the car, manage to get it out of the airport and on the road to the coast.

We find the accommodation easily, it's a small town. The accommodation has security gates with a device to enter a code, which I have. Husband stops the car, I get out to enter the code, the gates swing open, the car does not move. The gates close again. I enter the code again, the gates open, still the car will not move. After a while, once another car has arrived behind us, a resident muttering things about stupid English I imagine, we realise the car has applied the automatic handbrake, but we have no idea how to release it. With some help, we manage this and get the car through the gates. We meet our host at the apartment, she is friendly and speaks excellent English – our French is ok, far from fluent, but we get by, but I'm always grateful for the fact our European cousins have a better grasp of our mother tongue than we often do of theirs.

She leaves and we decide to walk to the supermarket to get the essentials (rather than risk the Fiat hand brake again), and return with two heavy bags of goodies.

But we'll eat out tonight, our first night here, as a treat and find a charming restaurant up a side road just off the harbour. The tide is out and the mud flats are not particularly attractive but it looks promising.

Morning breaks and the sky is an ominous grey, with rumblings in the distance. The tide is out again, so no pretty views just yet. We go the tourist office to find a local street map and maybe some ideas

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about the neighbouring villages.

Husband notices electric car charging points in the car park by the station, so we investigate and find we need an app to register to use them. I find the correct app on my phone and download it, fill in the details including credit card number, and the app disappears. I try again and manage to open an account, which I hope will allow us to use the charging point. I have no idea why but of course we cannot use it, even though my card details are floating around in the ether.

The car still has enough charge to get us to another village to explore so we go there and it's very pretty, we find a decent restaurant for lunch, and we return. We get through the security gates without incident. Husband will cook tonight, so we settle in for a pleasant evening. The hob is electric of course and he manages to lock the hob, a safety feature to stop small children hurting themselves. The instructions for the hob are available in French, Portuguese and a possibly Slavic language I cannot otherwise identify. I consult Google which tells me 27 different combinations of touching various buttons to release the lock and eventually one of them works. He continues cooking but is very bad-tempered about it.

Next day is Market Day in the town, so we make our way to the market area, and it is in full swing with every imaginable fish and seafood available, vast vats of French paella variations bubbling away, meat and charcuterie stalls, fruit and veg, bakery and patisserie delights, everything a market should be, it's delightful. Then the rain comes and everyone dives for cover, we hurl ourselves in to a small bar and sit drinking coffee, steaming gently in a corner as our damp clothes dry out.

The days pass, we dare not use the car as we need the available charge to get back to the airport, so take the bus to other places.

On our final night we eat out again at the restaurant we went to on the first night, we chat to the proprietor and he asks where we are from, I think he will probably have heard of Norwich so mention this and – fun fact coming up – he tells us that Nantes football team is known by the same name as Norwich City – The Canaries! Who knew!

On the last day, we clean through and pack our things, reflecting that it hasn't actually been as relaxing as we'd hoped but not a complete disaster either, and would happily come back, as long as we can have a petrol car (sorry, environment). And if the tide could stay in long enough for us to actually see the pretty harbour without mud everywhere. And perhaps learn some more French first.



## "Autumn Walks"

Throughout this season, Marian and I have visited many places of interest.

The Norfolk and Waveney Emmaus Centre have taken over the All Hallows Convent at Bungay. The Centre offers rooms filled with antiques and modern day items, which can be purchased and helps support people through difficult times. The cafe serves excellent snacks all made by the residents and the front counter has been built of different sized books. A work of art. Well worth a visit if you want a day out.



Another day our walk was through Corton woods. We strayed off the main path and found ourselves facing



a few unexpected creatures, all carved out of fallen trees, which amused us greatly.



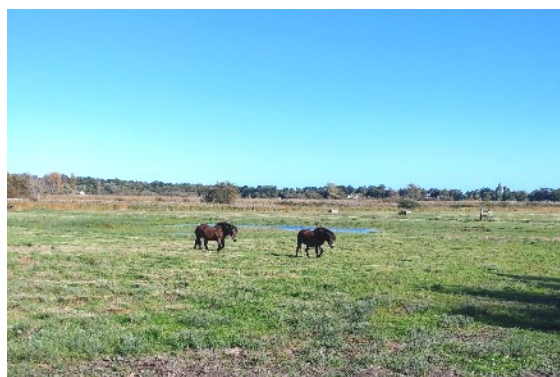
In Lowestoft we are watching the Gull Wing Bridge structure taking shape.

The Flood Risk Management Project is under way as they fit the glass floodwalls around the Norfolk Yacht Club and along the South Pier section. The work is due to be completed by next summer. The Lifeboat shop is still open while the work is being carried out.

We were delighted to see Dartmoor ponies at Carlton Marshes, Suffolk Wildlife Trust Centre, a place we often visit. As you walk around the marshes, there is much wildlife to see. We have never seen so many coloured butterflies during one of our July walks.



Joan Porter and Marian Baldwin



## The World Their Oyster

They were tired of the whole thing, they said. They sat together, this group of young men, confident, attractive, the world their oyster.

The pub, all stainless steel and polished light wood, gleaming with a hopeful newness, was fairly crowded for an early Friday evening but they had been closed for so long there was something of a demob spirit in the air. Not that they would understand if you tried to explain. This generation was far removed from the privations of war which, even I, old as I was, only remembered in fleeting snatches. They had talked about the inconveniences of the last two years as being like the war. They had no idea.

Martha and her friend were late, of course. The young are always late. I sat, quietly, at the corner table and spread my things around the remaining two chairs; my coat, not the warm one but a lighter spring affair my daughter had persuaded me to buy. You still need a coat, she had admonished me, when she saw me in my garden in a thin jumper. So it starts, I had thought, the child becomes the parent. On the third chair my hat. I have always liked a hat; a hat gives one an air of authority I think, someone to be taken seriously. My bag with my money and purse tucked securely inside, I kept on my lap. No need to tempt fortune.

Although the pub was busy the conversation wasn't loud. Being locked down for so long had caused a certain reserve which might well take time to thaw. So it was that I, under my guise of harmless old woman nursing a gin and tonic, could listen to their conversation.

The redhead was obviously their leader. He had a quiet, piercing confidence about him. The three others, like orbiting moons, fawned around him, favouring him with sycophantic grins and nods.

“I mean,” he was saying, “We soon won't be able to walk the streets at all. Did you hear that old witch calling for a curfew for men?”

The old witch, I reflected, was probably our local member of parliament known for her strident feminism, less well known for her charitable work with battered women and abused children, although I suspected much of that would be made public soon.

“I suppose,” ventured one of the moons, “that she is trying to make a point.”

“A point, a point!” and the redhead's voice rose now, so that others glanced round. He took a deep breath and started again, but quieter now, although not too quiet for me; there is nothing wrong with my hearing.

“The point is,” he continued, “the point is, why are they out late at night, walking alone, in dark places. Haven't they got any sense? What's wrong with a taxi?”

Martha, my granddaughter, arrived with her friend; two young women, confident, attractive, the world their oyster. The conversation at the next table paused briefly while the young men checked them out. Martha bought drinks and we spent a pleasant hour catching up. Work, play, ideas covered at speed, the normal chatter of young things. I heard it all but I also heard snatches of conversation, softer now, from the next table. Nothing wrong with my hearing, as I said.

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“Fancy our chances there, boys,” said the redhead, grinning.

One of the moons nodded enthusiastically, the other two looked down at their drinks as if searching for some invisible wisdom.

“We'll get them after they leave.” More nodding, more searching. I rummaged in my bag.

“Let me take a photo of you two girls,” I said. They posed obligingly, pursed lips and sparkling eyes.

“Lovely,” I said and fumbled around with my phone for a moment.

“We have to go, Gran,” said Martha. “Things to do, people to see.”

“People to do, things to see,” came softly from the next table.

The girls gave me fond kisses and Martha asked if I needed them to see me home.

“Certainly not, I'm meeting your mother here when she comes off duty. Off you go, enjoy your evening.”

They crossed the bar, turning back to wave.

The young men started to rise. I leant over to their table.

“Just in case you were thinking of following my granddaughter and her friend and harassing them in any way, I would advise you to think again.”

“Right, Grandma,” redhead smirked. “And how exactly do you think you are going to stop us?”

“Well, I do have your pictures,” I said, indicating my phone.

“But no back up”, chuckled redhead leaning over and snatching the phone.

“Oh, yes,” I said, “I have back up. My daughter.”

He started to say something and his voice caught in his throat as my daughter, in her police uniform, slid into the chair opposite me.

“Trouble?” she asked sweetly, fixing redhead with eyes as cold as ice.

They sat down with a thud, the world no longer their oyster, more their oyster shell.

Irene Sergent



## A Trip to Malmesbury

Viv Loney and I were invited by her daughter, Jenny, to spend a long weekend with her in a cottage that she was renting for the weekend in Malmesbury, Wiltshire. We travelled on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December and, after a long drive, arrived at the cottage. Unfortunately the heating in the cottage had only been on for a short while so we had to learn how to use the wood burner! We sorted ourselves out and went for a meal in a very nice Italian restaurant.



The back of our cottage

We woke on the Saturday to be greeted with a beautiful, but cold, bright blue sky. We decided to go to Lacock, a small village about 10 miles away. The village is a National Trust Village and is about 200 years old. It is overlooked by Lacock Abbey. During its 800 years of history it has been an Augustinian



Lacock Abbey



The subject of the 1<sup>st</sup> UK photo

abbey, a Tudor family home, the birthplace of photography and also the setting for various films and TV dramas. When we got back to the cottage we decided to get some more logs in a local supermarket as the wood burner was very hungry. As we had eaten in a very nice pub near Lacock, we had a snack and played board games in the evening. Such a nice change from watching the TV! On the Sunday morning we woke to an unexpected surprise. There was about 3 inches of snow! We had intended to drive round the village sightseeing but, as there was a steep slope up from the small car park, we decided that we would spend the morning in the cottage. Luckily one of the cars in car park was a Landrover who got out with no problem. This meant that there was a track for the rest of us to get out. We went to the supermarket to get some more logs, some microwave meals and a bottle of wine. That was our Sunday Lunch! We then settled down to play some more games. After a fun weekend we left the cottage on the Monday morning and had a good drive back home.

Ray Willett

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One of the beautiful trees in the grounds

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The Cloisters

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BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW THIS....

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are 'limbs,' therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, 'Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg.' (Artists know hands and arms are more difficult to paint)

As incredible as it sounds, men and women took baths only twice a year (May and October) Women kept their hair covered, while men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs) and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs made from wool. They couldn't wash the wigs, so to clean them they would carve out a loaf of bread, put the wig in the shell, and bake it for 30 minutes. The heat would make the wig big and fluffy, hence the term 'big wig.' Today we often use the term 'here comes the Big Wig' because someone appears to be or is powerful and wealthy.

In the late 1700's, many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board folded down from the wall, and was used for dining. The 'head of the household' always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor. Occasionally a guest, who was usually a man, would be invited to sit in this chair during a meal. To sit in the chair meant you were important and in charge. They called the one sitting in the chair the 'chair man.' Today in business, we use the expression or title 'Chairman' or 'Chairman of the Board..'

Personal hygiene left much room for improvement. As a result, many women and men had developed acne scars by adulthood. The women would spread bee's wax over their facial skin to smooth out their complexions. When they were speaking to each other, if a woman began to stare at another woman's face she was told, 'mind your own bee's wax.' Should the woman smile, the wax would crack, hence the term 'crack a smile'. In addition, when they sat too close to the fire, the wax would melt. Therefore, the expression 'losing face.'

Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A proper and dignified woman, as in 'straight laced' wore a tightly tied lace.

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the 'Ace of Spades.' To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't 'playing with a full deck.'

Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to 'go sip some ale' and listen to people's conversations and political concerns.. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there.' The two words 'go sip' were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term gossip

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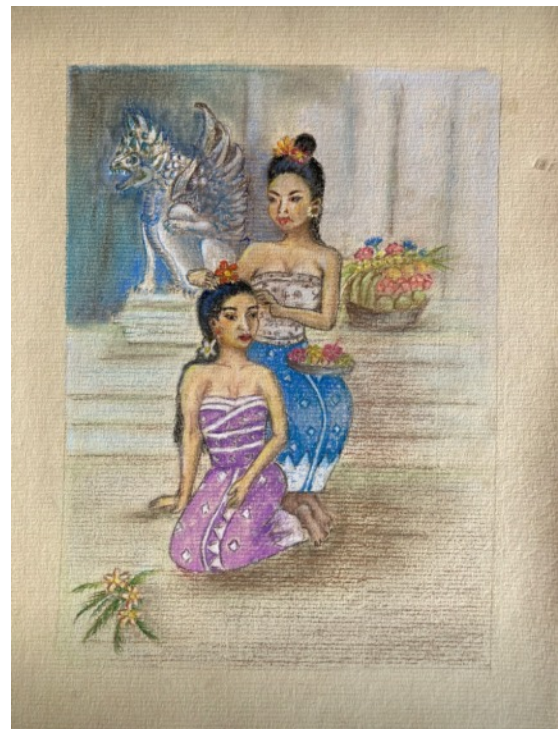
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At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in 'pints' and who was drinking in 'quarts,' hence the term minding your 'P's and 'Q's'

One more and betting you didn't know this!

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls. It was necessary to keep a good supply near the cannon. However, how to prevent them from rolling about the deck? The best storage method devised was a square-based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem, how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a 'Monkey' with 16 round indentations. However, if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make 'Brass Monkeys.' Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey. Thus, it was quite literally, 'Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.' (All this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you.)

Maureen Showell



2 lovely water colours by Ann Pearce

### A Series of Trips

Herefordshire is a wonderful county. Softly pastoral for the most part with interesting mediaeval towns and villages nestling between rounded hills and by sparkling rivers but always, wherever you are, you can see the hills, the Malvern hills. The Malvern Hills are composed of some of the most ancient igneous rocks in England and consequently have resisted erosion better than the surrounding countryside. Hence, the hills whose geology is responsible for the purity of Malvern spring water.

Settling into our wonderful house swap home, with sweeping views over the surrounding countryside we planned our trips. National Trust properties, a walk up the Malvern hills and a visit to Ledbury, a nearby market town dating back to mediaeval times. Before all of this, of course we had to eat and I had booked the hotel/restaurant a few minutes walk away. Shades of Faulty Towers. The bar seemed busy and buzzing but we were shown into the restaurant, not many people and lacking in atmosphere. None the less our food was delicious until it came to the cheese course. We suspected that they had to rush to Tesco or Waitrose as it took so long we considered cancelling, but possibly they just forgot. Not nearly enough staff, Manuel would have been a welcome addition.

Often negotiating roads the width of a tea bag, courtesy of my idiosyncratic sat nav, we set off on the first of our trips; Brockhampton National trust property. A moated mediaeval manor hall, built for grand folk, the house was eventually lived in by more modest farming Families. The manor house itself is charming and informative and is surrounded by orchards, apple and damson. A lovely short visit. The tea rooms, however, were only good for a coffee so we set off for Malvern in search of lunch. Parking is a nightmare in Malvern but I managed to get one of the last spots in a precipitously placed car park.

Everywhere is precipitous here, thanks to the Malvern hills. Ros was desperate for a photo of the view over the valley as Malvern is nestled at the foot of the Malvern Hills so we did a quick sweep through Weatherspoons to its balcony, took the photo, and starving by now but not tempted by the fare in that hostelry, headed up the hill, yes, up the hill to a lovely little restaurant for a very pleasant late lunch. A wander around Malvern with a quick peek at the abbey and a look at one of the many springs bringing water in to the town, followed later by a delicious Thai meal in a local restaurant completed a very satisfactory day.

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Plans for Saturday trips were :- a walk up the Malverns taking the easiest path we could find followed by lunch in a highly recommended cafe and then on to Ledbury.

Oh, the plans of mice and men. Yes we had a trip. Sandra tripped over a disobliging tree root on the first leg of our walk. Carefully easing into a sitting position the blood poured down her face from a head wound. At which point the cavalry arrived in the form of four young people doing a 12 mile sponsored walk of the Malverns. Paramedics instantly summoned by phone, exact location reported through an app on their phones – there's an app for everything these days – and before too long the second lot of cavalry arrived. Sandra meanwhile had been lifted very carefully by two of the young people – firemen – although not hoisted in a fireman lift, onto a convenient bench. The, young, again everyone is young these days, paramedics arrived by car ambulance, cleaned Sandra's wound, warned her to be aware of headaches developing and declared her fit to go home. No hospital trip needed, thank goodness. After ferrying her down the hill, we all proceeded with relief to The Kettle Sings, a wonderful cafe perched on the edge of the Malverns with stunning views over the valley. Suitably nourished we went home.

Sandra and Dorn decided to rest so Ros and I went to Ledbury, a lovely old market town with a perfectly preserved market hall, a huge church, lots of little lanes with quirky museums and a convenient Tesco for provisions for dinner. Also, I might add, a shop selling lovely bags which I pounced upon, my own handbag falling apart at an alarming rate throughout the week.

Sunday was designated another National Trust trip day but first Ros and I had another attempt at the Malverns. After trying with no success to pay at the carpark using every credit and debit card in our possession, we decided to ignore the warnings of fines and had a great walk almost to the top with spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. Coming back down people were still trying to pay for parking to no avail. I haven't received a notice....yet.

Croome Court was our next trip. Again a journey along very minor roads featuring potholes, high hedges and blind corners took us to Croome Court. The positives first. There is a very interesting RAF museum there charting the work of the secret air base during the war and the restored Capability Brown landscaping of the parkland is lovely with commanding views over the Malverns. The house, however, was a huge disappointment.

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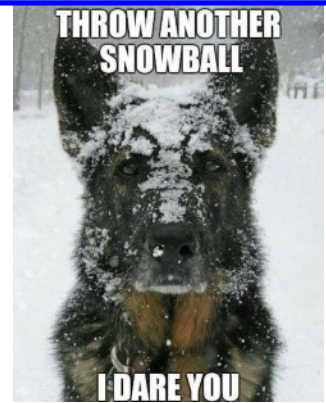
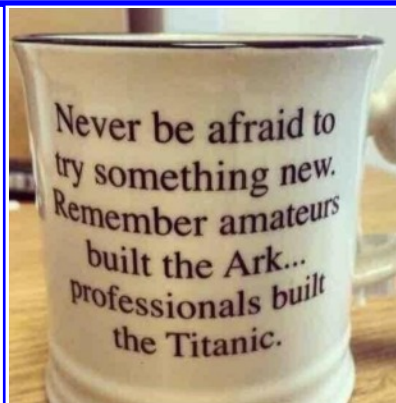
There has been a lot of work on the restoration of the walls and ceilings – it is an 18th century house – but the rooms were, by and large, bare with little to see. There was a bizarre exhibition of surfing involving a young relative of the family but, although I spoke at length about the plans for the house with one of the staff, we left feeling rather disappointed. A work in progress, no doubt, but this should be mentioned in the National Trust handbook, surely. I've written a few emails and have been assured that the handbook will be updated to reflect more accurately the house and the plans for it. It will be interesting to see the 2023 edition.

Our last trip was different. No electricity on the first floor of the house, caused we thought by a faulty socket. Rang the owners, still at Ros's house and located the fuse box. Really high up, no steps and the cover had fallen down over it. Tottering on a coffee table, armed with a broom, a bread knife and Ros holding open the fuse box with a pole, we located the offending switch and, after removing all appliances from sockets on the first floor, we had power. A trip too far.

Home on Monday after watching the finely orchestrated and impeccably conducted funeral of Queen Elizabeth on TV. No trips there, thankfully.

Irene Sergent

A captain notices a light in the distance, on a collision course with his ship.  
He turns on his signal lamp and sends, "Change your course, 10 degrees west."  
The light signals back, "Change yours, 10 degrees east."  
The captain gets a little annoyed.  
He signals, "I'm a US Navy captain. You must change your course, sir."  
The light signals back, "I'm a Seaman First Class. You must change your course, sir."  
Now the captain is mad. He signals, "I'm an aircraft carrier. I'm not changing my course."  
The light signals back a final message: "I'm a lighthouse. Your call."







The dogs need walking even in the rain!



My daughter by a Welsh waterfall



Mevagissey Harbour

Some more paintings from Ron Hemp. He sells them in aid of James Paget Hospital Charity "Help for Heroes". He has now raised over £4,000.00.



“Watering can” Acrylics  
“Spring” Watercolours  
By Pat Ewels



& 2 watercolours  
By Lily Siggins-Her  
representations of  
← Egypt

& Scotland ↑



## COVID USA Style

My carer, Karen, and I were on holiday in the USA on a cruise. We started off in Las Vegas. We had three days there and did all the normal things like exploring 'The Strip', going on a helicopter trip over the Nevada Desert and having a Champagne Lunch inside The Grand Canyon – wonderful. In Las Vegas you need a banker with you before you even unpack. You are charged a resort fee, plus a resort fee tax! Our 3 days cost us \$125.85! My full English breakfast cost (you will not believe this) 1 piece of bacon \$5.50, 1 sausage \$5.50, 2 eggs \$7.95 and coffee \$4.50. I complained and they gave us a free breakfast on our last day. Then we went to Los Angeles to join our cruise



Our hotel in Las Vegas

liner for a 15 day holiday in the lovely Hawaiian Islands. All four islands that we visited are completely different. Our highlight was an 'Atlantis' Submarine trip. This was a 48 passenger craft and we went down to the depth of 110 feet. The sight was magical – Crystal clear waters, 25 acres of Coral Reef plus all sorts of things on the ocean



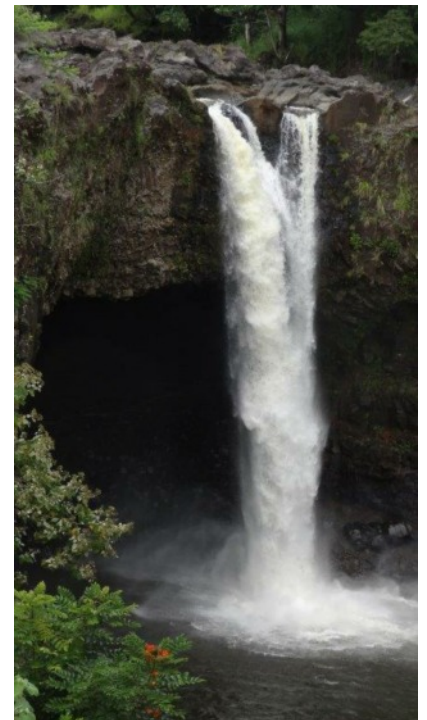
The Grand Canyon



110 feet under

we were looking forward to it. In the morning I developed a light cough. I didn't think anything of it but Karen thought that it would be a good idea to have it checked. We called the medical centre and, within minutes, a senior doctor came to visit our cabin. He gave me a good examination and found that everything was OK other than the cough. He said that he would send a nurse to give me a Covid test. A nurse arrived quickly and did the test. Within 10 minutes medical staff arrived. I had COVID! My things were packed up and I was immediately transferred to another cabin. Karen was given a test and it was negative. She was checked daily and told not to mingle. Our Mexico trip was cancelled but Karen did go ashore just to have a look round. My 3 days in isolation was not too bad. Karen talked to me about every hour on the phone and I had the choice of food from 13 outlets. This came and was placed on a table just outside of my cabin. About 36 passengers and crew had covid which I didn't think was too bad as we had about 2500 passengers and 1000 crew on board. We arrived at Los Angeles and, as all of her tests were negative, Karen was allowed to leave as scheduled. I was given a letter telling me which hotel I was going to for another 6 days of total isolation. This would cost me \$240 per day plus food. I would be contacted on a daily basis to check my requirements, health check and to see if I was OK by the shore based family assistance group. All very reassuring. I was escorted ashore by a member of the medical staff and placed in a very large warehouse completely on my own. A customs officer called and checked me back into

bed like Aircraft, Ships etc. We visited the famous beach Waikiki and enjoyed the various waterfalls. Hawaii done and it was off to Los Angeles via Ensenada Mexico. This is a celebrated wine region and we



Twin Falls in Hawaii

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the USA. My suitcase followed, completely destroyed with zips broken and some of my clothes outside. I was told that the family assistance group had been informed and a new suitcase would be supplied plus my return air ticket etc. As I was waiting for transport a huge fire engine arrived blocking the gangway off and fire fighters went aboard. Passengers came one by one and a man stepped ashore. In minutes the fire fighters turned into armed police and arrested him. I was told that he was a 'man they were interested in'. My Taxi arrived and I was transported to my hotel "Mexicana". I was greeted by a lady manager who told me my room would not be ready until 15:00. She apologised and, as it was about 10:30, placed me in a large meeting room-1 toilet-2 Chinese who took one look-left, never to be seen again. They knew my age, 95, and I would get the first room available. I told her that I had not eaten since 7:45 and she got me a bottle of water. The situation was getting worse and worrying. Just before 1:00 I was called. My room was ready. It was very, very large and clean with the latest coffee machine, a nice microwave, large bed and bathroom. It had a large panoramic window which overlooked the airport runway with the word 'HOLLYWOOD' on a mountain in the distance. I settled in and called reception to find out what was for lunch. I was told it was all on the menu that was on the desk. It was all Mexican food. I decided I would have Fish and Chips. I called the restaurant only to be told that it did not open until 5:00 o'clock. I called reception and they told me that my meals would be delivered in a plastic bag left on my door handle. I would get a knock on the door – leave it for about 5 minutes and retrieve it so staff can clear the corridor. My lunch arrived -1 packet of crisps, 1 bottle of water and 1 chicken sandwich that had been made hours ago. That's all. Things did not look good. Dead on 5:00 I called the restaurant and ordered fish and chips – 'no fish today'! So I had Chicken Wing Mexican Style – Terrible. I called reception and asked to be put through to the cruise liner ashore team only to be told that they are only in Los Angeles on the day that the liner arrived and departed. I was then told the phone in my room could only be used to call other rooms. If I wanted to talk to anybody outside the hotel one has to go to the reception, placed in a room with a phone, make the call with the help of an operator and on leaving the room pay for the cost of the call. This meant that I was totally isolated. Rule – never go on holiday without a smart phone. My contact left me when Karen went. She had the smart phone! I will explain to you all about the hotel and why I was having so much trouble. It's a transit hotel. Customers arrive, have a wash up, go to the restaurant for a meal, sleep, get up in the morning, go to the reception kiosk and buy what they want for breakfast then leave. They have no facilities to handle customers 24/7. On the second day there was a knock on the door. My breakfast. No choice. Scrambled eggs in a seaweed stuff and it was not nice – a piece of ham about the size of a 50p piece, which I found out you are supposed to chew – fried potato bits and a small bottle of water. Big difference to what I had been used to. I was still coughing and very sleepy. Lunch was no better. An old sandwich – carton of fruit juice. Dinner – Hooray, they had fish and chips! 3 fish fingers and some chips – I was losing weight! On the third day – breakfast the same. I called at 12:30 to enquire about lunch. I was told they were looking into it. At 2:15 still nothing so I asked to speak to the manager and told him if they did not feed me I would die! Simple as that! He was very very sorry – he asked me my favourite drink and I told him and within seconds he was outside and gave me the drink 'free'! I told him what was going on and things started to improve. Plus he had contacted shore based staff to call me. I started to get fruit, packets of all sorts of crisps, Pringles, chocs etc and milk for the coffee machine which had not had any for over a day. I also had a delivery of all sorts of cleaning material for me to clean the room. Breakfast came with a note to say that the cook had not turned up today but they had done their best. The omelette had no seaweed in it and it was lovely. Then I got a phone call from a Mary Brown who was my shore based contact. She was based in Florida (so much for daily personal contact). I told her what was going on – no medical check or help of any kind. I mentioned my suitcase and air tickets or any information of any kind. She apologised very sorry but she was in charge of 5 cruise companies. I quickly had a very large suitcase delivered, a letter confirming my return flight to the UK and a bottle of cough mixture. She called Alison, my daughter, and gave her the flight details – things began to improve thank goodness. Saturday came and I was told could leave the room at 9 o'clock which I did. I went to get the taxi to the airport only to find that there was a McDonalds next door to the hotel! If only! American Airlines looked after me 110%. Got me to the nearest departure lounge, and checked me every ½ hour. I had a five hour wait. I was told that there was a lovely restaurant next door. 'Sods Law' It was a Mexican style menu but they did have soup which I had. My aircraft arrived and off loaded 300 passengers plus 9 crew. I still had Covid. Crazy isn't it. I still had it when I got home – didn't

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rest negative until 7 days after and Karen 3 weeks after me. When I left the hotel I was given a letter and my final Account figure but had to give this up at the airport to get my air tickets and that was the first thing that my insurers wanted. Alison and I called the hotel 16 times plus emails to get the final account but no results. However, after 3 weeks at 2 o'clock in the early morning USA time I called and spoke to a lady on duty and within 5 minutes she download the account onto my computer – Easy! To sum up my final statement showed me that the cruise company had paid for my food and my return flight. I was not charged the \$242 room charge but the normal charge of \$120 I received from the hotel into my account off \$223 which to this day I don't know what for. So I came out good. Enjoy your holidays!

From Ron Hemp Lifetime Honorary Member No 167

## STOP PRESS



### Coronation Party

In order to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III, the Lowestoft Branch of the u3a will be holding a party on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023. This will be held at the 'Lady of the Lake' pub, Oulton Broad. It will start at 12:00 and finish about 4:00. We will be having a Buffet supplied by 'A piece of Cake.' Free tea and coffee will be available. The bar will be open so you may purchase other drinks. We will be having music supplied by Ian with his 'Legends' disco, the Quiz Group will be supplying a Quiz (will it be based on the coronation?), there will be a raffle and also a Lucky Ticket draw. The prize will be a free year's subscription to the u3a. There will also be an auction of one of Ron Hemp's paintings. Tickets at £12:00 are available from your group leader or the committee. Please remember that entrance to this event will be by ticket only.



### COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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## **Custard**

Who would have thought that a humble, yellow sauce would be something that divides our two cultures? The origin of the word 'custard' is apparently 'custarde' which is a corruption of 'crustarde' which means a pie with a crust. Hum, I am not entirely convinced by the logic of the pie giving its name to the sauce.

The French equivalent is 'crème Anglaise' whose name would suggest that it takes its inspiration from our vanilla flavoured sauces. However, there is one major difference. French 'crème Anglaise' is invariably served cold. Let me tell you a little story.

When I was teaching English to a class of retired people, I would ask them what they did at the weekend. One gentleman said that as his wife was away, he used her 'robot' to make some 'crème Anglaise'. I ask him to describe all the steps and procedures he had to pass through to make his favourite sauce. He related putting cream, egg yolks, vanilla and sugar into the machine, turning it on and waiting for the appliance to mix, stir and heat the preparation until it was thick, creamy and delicious. Then I interject, 'And you eat it while it is nice and warm'. 'Oh, no' he replied with a look of horror on his face, 'I put it in the fridge until it is cold!' I was equally horrified that such a gourmet eating was passed by. 'Is this true?' I asked the class. 'You eat 'crème Anglaise' cold?'

No wonder, I had never had hot custard with a desert in France. I had assumed it was easier for the chefs to keep the sauce in the fridge and that they couldn't be bothered to heat it up how many times had delightful pairings been bypassed? Chocolate desserts with hot custard, apple tart and hot custard, profiteroles and hot custard – all great opportunities had been sadly missed by chiefs not taking the time to heat the sauce, I had supposed.

We receive hikers and cyclists who are on their way from Canterbury to Rome. One of the deserts they love is fruit crumble served with hot custard. One group of young men enjoyed it so much that they ate it again at breakfast! The custard they enjoyed was made with Bird's Custard Powder.

The story behind the invention of the powder is inspirational. Mr Bird was a pharmacist, scientist and a Fellow of The Chemical Society. His wife was allergic to eggs and yeast, so he invented a thickening powder based on cornflower so she could eat something equivalent to 'crème Anglaise' thickened with egg yolks. Their guests appreciated the sauce and he realised that there could be a market for his custard powder. So since 1890 it has been available firstly in Birmingham where they lived and later round the country. Bird's Custard Powder was even supplied to troops during the First World War.

Only a very few British people heat double or single cream mixed with 3 egg yolks, sugar and vanilla essence to make 'a proper custard sauce' as Delia Smith, our favourite TV cook, calls it. There is the risk of overheating it and the whole pot curdling and separating. It is so much easier to heat a pint of milk with 2 tablespoons of Bird's Custard Powder and 2 tablespoons of sugar. Eating lovely, comforting, thickened milk is far less calorific than eating thickened double cream. Second helpings will not ruin a diet. Even the British chef Rick Stein says in his book, *French Odyssey*, that his TV director preferred Bird's, AND he says to serve his French style 'crème Anglaise' warm. Quelle horreur! He calls himself a 'Francophile'?! Similar products exist in France but have far more ingredients than the cornflour, natural colouring and vanilla Bird's Custard Powder. The one I looked at recently contained potato starch, palm oil and lots of other unnatural things and it too was meant to be eaten cold.

However, there is a 'grand souci'! Bird's Custard Powder is no longer a family concern. It is not even owned by a British company. There is talk of the plant in Knighton, Staffordshire being sold! The French take to the streets and protest over everything they disagree with. Where are the protests and petitions to save Bird's Custard Powder? It is not any old product – it has a Royal Warrant that means it is eaten in the palaces of our country. I decided to write to the company to ask if the

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rumours were true. I received a reassuring reply that, even though the plant where Birds Custard Powder is currently made is closing, that product will continue to be made. Just to be sure, I ask you to go out and buy a tin of Birds Custard Powder. Let the manufactures know that British people care about our history and culinary traditions. There is the expression 'revenge is a dish served cold' Apparently, it was coined by a French writer. I would say he was gravely mistaken. Neither revenge nor custard are ever best served cold.

Joy Brodier

**Don't blame me these are from Helen Morris!**

My friend can only sleep on stacks of magazines. He's got back issues

Breaking news: the man who fell into an industrial upholstery machine in Leeds last year is now fully recovered.

There was a collision yesterday between a prison van and a cement mixer lorry in Yorkshire. The police are now searching the area for four hardened criminals.

I had a pair of trousers made from spiders' silk but the flies kept getting stuck.

I've often wondered what cured meats were suffering from before their recovery

A prisoner was complaining about his freezing cell because of the draught from his window, so the warder agreed to put another bar on.

I spilt a pot of invisible ink over me: I am now in A & E waiting to be seen.

My dog only responds to commands in Spanish – but he is Espanol.

#### BREAKING NEWS...

There's been a fight in the biscuit tin, a lad called Rocky hit a Penguin over the head with a Club, tied him to a Wagon Wheel with a Blue Ribbon and made his Breakaway in a Taxi. Police say Rocky was last seen just After Eight in Maryland with a Ginger Nut known to police as Rich T. They didn't leave a crumb of evidence so the Jammi Dodger got away with it!!!!

#### SEVERE WEATHER WARNING!!

The AA have warned that anyone travelling in icy conditions should take a shovel, blankets/sleeping bag, extra clothing (including scarf, hat and gloves), 24 hour supply of food and drink, de-icer, rock salt, torch, spare battery, petrol can, first aid kit and jump leads.

I felt like a right idiot on the bus!

Dogs are welcome in this hotel.

We never had a dog that smoked in bed and set fire to the blankets. We never had a dog that stole our towels and played the T.V. too loud, or had a noisy fight with his traveling companion. We never had a dog that got drunk and broke up the furniture....So if your dog can vouch for you, you're welcome too. *The Management*

me going on a stupid little daily walk  
For my stupid physical and mental health





## Lowestoft u3a Groups Schedule

### Monday

Writers group	10.00-11.30	Colville House	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Mondays
Scrabble	10.00-12.00	St.Mark's Church Oulton Broad	Weekly
Social History	10.00-12.00	Colville House	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday
Art for All	13.30-15.30	Colville House	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mondays
Bookworms	14.00-15.30	Colville House	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday
Table Tennis	14.00-16.00	United Reform Church	Weekly

### Tuesday

Country Dance	10.00-12.00	St. Mark's Church, Oulton Broad	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays
Spanish	10.30-12.00	On-Line	Weekly
Lunch Group	12.00-14.00	Various* See below	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday
Bridge	13.00-15.30	Colville House	Weekly
Canasta	14.00-17.00	Seagull Theatre	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays
Family History	14.00-16.00	London Rd Baptist Church	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday
Singing	14.00-16.00	St Margaret's Church	Weekly

### Wednesday

Short Mat Bowls	13.30-15.30	Colville House	Weekly
Mixed Crafts	13.30-15.30	Colville House	Weekly
Computer Clinic	14.00-16.00	60's Club, Lowestoft	Weekly
Monthly Meeting	10.00-12.00	St. Mark's Church, Oulton Broad	Last Wednesday

### Thursday

French Improvers	10.00-12.00	Colville House	Weekly
Music Appreciation	10.00-12.00	St. Margaret's Small Hall	Weekly
Rambling/Walking	10.15-12.00	Various (see web site)	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursdays
Quiz Group	14.30-16.30	Trinity Methodist Church	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday

### Friday

Art Appreciation	10.30-12.00	Homes	Weekly
Rummikub	13.15-15.30	Colville House	Weekly
Bridge	13.30-15.30	Colville House	Weekly

### Saturday

Coffee Morning	10.30-12.00	Kensington Gardens Cafe	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday
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\*For venue contact [u3asocialsec@gmail.com](mailto:u3asocialsec@gmail.com)