

Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends

If you came to our "signing up" day at Ryarsh last month I do hope you all enjoy the groups you have joined and will find it a rewarding and stimulating year learning new skills and renewing old friendships or making new ones. It was a bustling and successful afternoon and our thanks are due to Jenny Tomlin, our Groups Co-ordinator, for all her hard work in organising it. Thank you also to the group leaders who were there to publicise their groups and offer information, and to all those who provided cakes and served tea and coffee to keep us all going.

For some time now our membership has remained more or less constant at around 450. Each year we lose a few members who move out of the area, join more convenient neighbouring U3As or, sadly, die. And each year we gain a few who have moved into the area, are recently retired or have only just heard about us. In order to remain a vibrant, lively organisation with new ideas and fresh enthusiasm we need to recruit new members who will get involved and help to carry us forward into our next decade. Do you have friends who might enjoy what we have to offer? Why not talk to them and direct them to our website or to our membership secretary, Carole Lawrence? We do have some publicity material produced by the National Office that you can pick up at our general meeting to give to them to whet their appetites. It would be great to welcome new members in the next few months who would enjoy sharing our friendship and stimulating activities.

Best wishes

Valerie Willsher

Chairman Malling U3A

☎ 01732 885021 ✉ valerie.willsher@gmail.com

Refreshments

Tea Rota For October :-

Judith Bardsley; Peter Stiles; Linda Bramley; Alan Bramley.

Advance notice for November:-

Jean Allen; Ann Ancombe;
Elizabeth Astridge; Audrey Baldwin.



Monthly Meetings

(4th Tuesdays in Ryarsh Village Hall at 2 pm)

October 25th

Anthony Poulton-Smith, who was due to speak to us this month, has sadly lost his long-term partner whose funeral service has been arranged for the day on which he was coming to speak on the subject 'What's in a place-name?', and therefore his visit to us has been postponed. We have assured Anthony of our thoughts and prayers for him at this time.

In his place we will welcome

Christopher Parkinson, TD, BA

who will speak on the subject:

"C Northcote Parkinson – bane of bureaucrats"

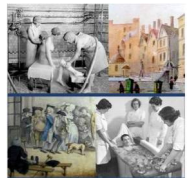
Dr C Northcote Parkinson was Raffles Professor of History at the University of Malaysia in Singapore when he noticed that he was on 32 different committees and wondered where all this was leading, and whether they were of any use. This led to his writing humorously about the growth of bureaucracy in the form of a book called "Parkinson's Law" – and later he wrote other works, subsequently touring the world lecturing.

The term "Parkinson's Law" (work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion) was in common use for many years: he met, and dropped, the names of many leading people in the world in the 1960s and 1970s, influencing Thatcher, Reagan and Gorbachev. He was immensely popular in the USA and spent a lot of time there, being appointed a Grand Admiral in the Navy of (landlocked) Nebraska!

Our speaker is his eldest son, Christopher, a retired teacher of economics. He was invited to speak to the Czech Liberal Institute in Prague and to a class at the Economics University in 2008, and has since developed a lecture on his father's life and work, describing his original ideas and using some of his examples, but updating them with modern material. We expect a memorable afternoon.

November 22nd

**'Diseased, Douched and Doctored'
by Dr Roger Rolls**



Until relatively recently, many doctors were convinced of the healing nature of hot mineral springs. The Romans constructed elaborate bathing facilities throughout their empire to utilise these waters. Immersion was reputed to cure a large variety of illnesses, including such diverse conditions as paralysis, forgetfulness, sciatica and leprosy. The profusion of infirm and disabled visitors seeking relief in the waters attracted an assortment of practitioners and spas became thriving medical marketplaces.

By focusing on Britain's premier spa at Bath, Dr Rolls will examine how and why 'taking the waters' in past centuries was regarded as an efficacious therapy by both patients and practitioners. He will also discuss whether there is any scientific evidence that drinking or bathing in hot mineral water is more than just a placebo.

Outing Report

On Thursday 18th August some 30 or so members enjoyed a splendid day visiting **Eltham Palace and then cruising down the Thames** from Greenwich Pier to Westminster. Cautious with our timing because of traffic concerns in the London suburbs, we arrived in the Coach Park at the Palace half-an-hour before the gates opened. Our coach-driver had managed to contact our London Guide who was able to arrive early and, onboard, give us information about the day's activities, enabling us to resist the temptation to



engage in some community singing. Coffee (and cake for some) was followed by a tour of the Palace: sitting in the Great Hall with the minstrels' gallery at one end and admiring the 500-year-old hammer-beam roof, we were taken

through the history of the place where Henry VIII spent his childhood years. He enjoyed it, but subsequent monarchs failed to use it and it fell into disrepair until Stephen and Virginia Courtauld acquired it in the 1930s; a member of the important textile family, Stephen was also financial director of Ealing Studios and a Trustee of the Royal Opera House. They had their new private house designed and built in the Art Deco style, and attached to the existing Palace building which was extensively restored: it's a unique conjunction, but it seems to work perfectly!

Our tour of the house was fascinating – a gold-tiled bathroom, a wardrobe of Ginny's clothes, an interior home for the pet lemur,



an outstanding entrance Hall and rooms of the 1930s, lounge, study and bedrooms – all within lovely grounds of mixed borders, rock gardens, a sunken rose garden and surrounding woodlands.

The Palace became the venue for socialites and artists, politicians and royals, and clearly vast sums of money were lavished on it during the eight years that the Courtaulds lived there, leaving it in 1944 to live in Scotland before settling in Southern Rhodesia.

We moved on to Greenwich where we had time to browse and lunch before meeting at the Cutty Sark for our Thames trip to Westminster, with our guide now a typical East-ender whose stories, some perhaps



apocryphal, enlivened an enjoyable cruise through London's changing scenery. It was a lovely day, and our thanks to Dianne White for organising it all for us – yet another splendid outing for which we are indebted to her and her committee.

Derek Carpenter

News from Groups

New Science Group



The group has held an inaugural meeting at which we brainstormed dates, venues and topics. In future we shall be meeting at 2 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month. There has been considerable interest in the group and so for the time being we will be meeting in a hall rather than our homes. Our next meeting on 26th October will be a general discussion on fracking – the science, the geology, the politics, the pros and the cons. Then on 23rd November we shall be looking at William Armstrong, 19th century scientist, pioneer of hydroelectricity and inventor of modern artillery. We have already identified around 30 topics that we would like to investigate in the future. Among them are energy, in all its forms, climate change, astrophysics, species diversity/rewilding, robotics, agriculture, forensic science, plastics ... the list goes on! If this sounds like something you would find interesting then why not join us? We are a mixed group and not all of us have scientific backgrounds, just an interest in the world around us. Contact the convenor: Valerie Willsher – contact details in the handbook.

Computer Group

Christmas is coming & you may be thinking about buying a tablet computer, either as a present for someone or even for yourself. In which case the next meeting of the Computer Group will be of interest, as there will be a talk on "Choosing and buying a tablet computer". The next meeting is at 14.00hrs in Ryarsh Village Hall on Monday 7th November.

All are welcome.

Cost is £1.50 including tea & biscuits. *Chris Daly*

Rummikub

A Rummikub group has been started, meeting every other Wednesday at 2.00pm. If you are interested, please contact Julia King



Chess Club

I would be interested to know if other members would be interested in a Chess Club. I played at school and have recently taken up on-line chess but it is not quite the same. I have never run a chess club, just enjoy playing the game. I am happy to be some sort of conduit for others and my email address would be the best route of contact so if you would like a friendly game please get in touch.

Rai Janz

Technical Support Group

Since the inception of Malling District U3A the equipment has been operated and cared for by two people. This is not a particularly good arrangement because, for example, a holiday and illness could coincide leaving a vacuum. Therefore we are looking for 3 or 4 volunteers to form a small technical group who will be available to install equipment at the monthly meetings and also provide advice on replacements etc.

Will those interested please contact John Davies.

Welsh Group

Aim - To explore the language - history - culture of Wales and its people.

The group would not just be for Welsh people but anyone who is interested in the language and culture of Wales. There maybe people who speak Welsh who would be willing to teach or people like me who are beginners who could put together classes. We could explore history, literature, painting and music. There could also be a current issues element as well - for the more politically minded. Also members could 'present' areas of Wales that they know and like. For the more domestic - we could cook Welsh recipes. There is a Welsh Cultural Centre in London - this puts on all sorts of activities - concerts etc., which we could link into and then of course there is supporting Wales in the 6 nations!

If interested please contact Chrys Short.

Some members will have recently had refund cheques as a result of some sort of **overpayment of subscriptions**.



Refunds will have been accompanied with a letter advising you to contact your bank to make sure the Standing Order you have in place is correct.

Our subscription at present is £12 per person (£24 for two living at the same address), payable by standing order on 15th July each year.

This year we have had to send out approaching 50 such refunds and letters, and this has created a lot of work.

Please remember that, in accordance with our policy on this, if you have had a refund like this and it happens again, we will treat the overpayment as a donation, and wait for you to reclaim it back from us - if that's what you want.

Ray Lawrence, Hon Treasurer

Have you changed your email address?

We are keen to ensure that every member receives the newsletter and any other important information, so if you have changed your email address do please let our Membership Secretary, Carole Lawrence, know so that we can update our records.

U3A 2017 Diaries

Still only £2 - the colour this year is red. The notes page features the U3A Logo.



If you would like a 2017 Diary, I now have a supply and will be at the October and November meetings to sell at £2 per diary.

Or you can send £2 to me then phone me to arrange a time to collect it.

Anne Sargent

Forthcoming outings and events

- **Monday October 31st** The second outing to the Houses of Parliament and to Churchill's War Rooms is full, with a short waiting list. The coach will depart from Kings Hill, on the road near Asda car park, at 8am.
- **Saturday November 12th** at 6 pm: *In Voice and Verse*, a concert and celebration of music, verse and readings from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II in Ryarsh Village Hall. As a result of a cancellation, there are now two spaces for the concert, and supper at the Duke of Wellington, at £25 head. Please contact Jenny Williamson.
- **Thursday, December 8th:** Christmas Lunch and included tour of Hever Castle. Cost is £23.00 head. Please contact Jenny Williamson for details.
- **Wednesday, March 1st:** A study day on aspects of Kentish History is being planned. Further details will follow in the near future.
- **Visits** to the Royal Albert Hall; to the Chelsea Hospital; to Michelham Priory and to Hughenden and Cliveden are being considered for 2017, as well as a theatre visit to a local theatre. Your comments about these, or any other suggested visits, are always appreciated.

Dianne White

REMINDER - Christmas Lunch 8th December at Hever Castle.

I have to confirm the final numbers for the Hever Christmas Lunch two weeks before the 8th December, so if you wish to join us and have not yet sent in your form and payment can you please do so as soon as possible. This is a very pleasant, informal event with the added bonus of being able to tour the castle and garden before or after lunch (or both if you wish!). Just to remind all of you who have booked so far that you should park in the car park opposite the main gates of the castle and meet me at the ticket office.

Jenny Williamson

Forward Dates For Your Diary:

• Study Day - Aspects of Kentish Culture

On Wednesday March 1st 2017 from 9 am in Ryarsh Village Hall. Lose yourself for a day in aspects of the unique culture of our county! Hear how the Italians have influenced our gardens! Listen to the Life of Charles Dickens in Kent. Round off the day immersed in the history and performance of Kent folksongs!

Details to be announced.

• Malling U3A 2007 to 2017

As it will be ten years next year since we had our inaugural meeting in September 2007, attended by 120 people, your Committee is making plans for a celebratory tea in Ryarsh Village Hall on Saturday, 2nd September 2017 to mark the occasion. So do put this date in your 2017 diary and we will let you have further details when plans have been finalised.

November Newsletter:

Copy is required by Sunday, 13th November
Please send material to the Editor, Mike Rowe at
mike.quintain@gmail.com