

u3a Medway

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – February 2024

Message from the Chair February 2024

The first Committee Meeting of the new year has taken place, and I have news for you!

We have been making 'targeted' enquiries within areas of our membership in a quest to find an organiser for our History Study Day. I am pleased to report that Sue Jeeves has agreed to take this on for us, supported by the Committee. Pencil in this date: Tuesday 8th October, a little earlier than usual and on a different weekday. Further details will be announced during the summer. Thank you so much Sue.

We will be holding the annual "Meet the Committee" event again. This will be at the Baptist Church Hall in Crow Lane, Rochester on Thursday 18th April from 2.00pm to 3:30pm. Tea and Coffee will be available. So, Members new and experienced are invited to come along and meet us to ask questions, share ideas and generally get a feel for how we tick.

We have also arranged the Spring and Autumn Quiz and Cuppa events at the same venue. These are planned for Thursday 4th April and Thursday 3rd October. Again, more on all of these later, but we hope to see many of you there.

We have renewed our Zoom Licence for a further year. Three of our groups are still using it regularly and a few others occasionally. If any Group (or even a number of members socially) wish to use it, get in touch with me and I'll set it up for you.

Our membership renewal programme continues into February. Taking resignations and new members this year into account, we are already at 585 members for 2024. There are just 73 members still to renew.

Finally, thanks to the 152 members who supported the January meeting. I hope we can match this on the 14th February. I hope to see you there!

Kevin Booth
Chairman

Welcome to the following new Members

Karen Beck, Sue Blackman, Anita Bowmer, Penny Crick, Linda Davies,
Sue Featherstone, Amanda Foster, Stephen Foster, Gilda Hudd, Steve Hunter,
Jacquie Laws, Anne Lightowler, Susan Lightowler, Dawn O'Connor, Eddie Peake,
Jim Taylor, Caroline White

Monthly Meetings – Corn Exchange, Rochester

All monthly meetings start at 1.55pm – doors open 1.30pm

**There is no charge to attend these meetings
but membership cards must be shown.**

14th February 2024

Bertie Pearce – WONDER WORKERS AND THE ART OF ILLUSION

From the beginning of time the fascination with magic and the impossible has been widespread. Ancient Egypt was the cradle of magic. Magicians in the time of Henry VIII had to call themselves 'jongleurs' to avoid being arrested for witchcraft. With the emergence of the Music Hall, magic gained a new respectability and audiences flocked in their thousands to watch the extraordinary feats of The Great Illusionists.

Even today in our super technical age of iPod and broadband, the wonder and surprise of magic are as popular as ever, not forgetting the Harry Potter craze. Wonder Workers and the Art of Illusion is a whistle stop tour of the history of mystery from 3000BC to the 21st century; be careful! – you might be amazed and bewitched.

Bertie Pearce is a member of the Inner Magic Circle and has performed all over the world. He is an accredited NADFAS lecturer and has a passion for Punch & Judy and Charles Dickens as well as magic.

13th March 2024

Paul Daley – TOOLS WITH A MISSION

TWAM aims to transform lives in the developing world by supplying tools and other items to enable people to earn a living.

TWAM collects tools, donated by people in the UK, refurbishes them and then ships an average of 2 containers a month to those who need them.

Ever wondered what to do with all those tools languishing in the shed? The ones you haven't looked at in years? Well – maybe this talk will give you an answer!

10th April 2024

Imogen Corrigan – MASTER MASONS

On retiring from the army as a major after nearly 20 years' service, Imogen studied Anglo Saxon and Medieval history.

She is returning to Medway u3a to talk about the Master Masons. The amazing individuals who were the architectural pioneers of their day. They ran the building sites – recruiting the workforce and ordering the huge quantities of wood and stone. Their lives can be told by buildings such as Rochester's Cathedral - still standing after almost 1000 years.

Medway u3a Bad Weather Policy

In case we need to cancel the Medway u3a monthly meeting due to bad weather i.e. snow, ice, etc. the following action will be taken.

- 1. An e-mail will be circulated cancelling the meeting. If members have e-mail, please check on the morning of the proposed meeting.*
- 2. If members know of other members who are not on e-mail then please could you pass on the meeting cancellation by telephone.*
- 3. If you do not have access to e-mail and have not been contacted by another u3a member, please telephone Kevin Booth on the morning of the meeting*

u3a trip to RHS Wisley – 27th March 2024

As we move from the dull days of January toward Spring, I am pleased to give the final details of our trip to RHS Wisley.

We will be travelling by coach on the 27th March 2024. Pick up points are as listed on the booking form.

The cost of travel on the coach is £23 per person (to include the driver's tip of £1 each).



Entry to RHS Wisley is free for RHS Members, who can take a guest who will also go free.

Non-members will be charged £15.95 per person. This to be taken along with the coach fee and paid over to RHS Wisley before the visit as per their terms and conditions.

Booking forms have been emailed to those members who had previously expressed an interest in this trip, and can also be found on the Medway u3a website:

Completed applications should be returned to

Forms will also be available at the February monthly meeting and I will be there to answer any queries, take cash payments and completed forms, as required.

It should be noted that only Medway u3a members who have paid their 2024 subscriptions are eligible for the outing.

Let's hope for a sunny day!

Maria Mills

Fenland Black Oak Table - Rochester Cathedral

Do please come and join us on the **28th February** at the Cathedral between **1.00pm - 3.00pm**. This will not only be an event for the groups already attending but will be an opportunity for the wider membership of Medway u3a to come and meet up and speak to the Group Leaders. You might find a group you have not considered before that has vacancies, or we can offer to set up a Waiting List for a new group.

We have had more interest from other Group Leaders since last month's article, including Play Reading, 3 Book Groups, Italian and Board Games. If any other Group Leaders would like to join in the afternoon, please let me know.

We are hoping to arrange time slots for the different Groups so that everyone will be able to enjoy sitting or standing around this lovely and historic Black Oak Table. Although we are not able to offer refreshments there will be the Crypt Cafe where you will be able to buy a drink.

This will be a chance for visitors to the Cathedral to see some of the variety of Interest Groups that u3a have on offer and perhaps go back home and join their local branch.



PLEASE NOTE: It is advisable to wear warm clothes when visiting the Cathedral, due to heating problems following the fire in December.

Marilyn Curtis -

u3a Kent Network

We have received a request for nominations for the Kent Network Committee. The Committee meets over Zoom about 6 times a year. They plan the 3 network events, including the network day, run the peer-to-peer groups for officers and generally support u3a's around Kent.

They are looking for nominations for:
Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer and committee members.

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact **Suzanne Lucas**, Medway u3a Secretary, in the first instance –

Groups

Mythology

As we enter 2024 our group, which has now been running for 4 years plus, continues to explore Mythology from around the world. So far we have only covered Greek Mythology, which took 2 years. We then moved onto Norse which only took about a year and covered Odin, Thor for example. Next came the Egyptians which encompassed both human and animal gods. At the present time we have been looking at Arthurian myths and legends, covering Arthur, Lady of the Lake, The Sword in the Stone to name a few. We are researching the last two topics one of which is Gawain and the Green Knight. Our new topic, which will begin in April, has yet to be decided, but might be the Celts or Native Americans.

We have had one trip to the British Museum to look at Egyptian and Norse (Vikings) artefacts and hope to do so again in the near future.

The photographs below are of King Arthur (the middle of the window) which is in The Lady Chapel, Rochester Cathedral.



Most of our material is taken from various sources including writings from Mallory, YouTube Videos and use of National Geographic DVDs – this was looking at the Greeks which is rich in sources material.

We have a group of 7 members and others who have dropped in and out. So if anyone wishes to join us in Rochester Library on the 3rd Wednesday at 2.00pm please do - as mentioned, we have a new topic starting in April which is a good time to join. You don't have to be an expert; we have varying degrees of knowledge and we all seem to enjoy it. It is also very useful for quiz questions provided you retain the information!

For contact information, my email is

Rosemary Corner-Osgood

Thursday Walking Group

Last month the Thursday Group had a walk from Rochester towards Borstal and back along the river. They were fortunate to have blue sky and sun for their first walk of the year.



Opportunities to Volunteer

We have received requests regarding a number of volunteering opportunities which promise to be both interesting and valuable to the community – also great occasions to publicise how active Medway u3a members are!

Come help write a song!!

INTRA
ARTS

THE CUT OF HER CLOTH
A TEXTILES AND SONG PROJECT

Live Music Now

Community-based songwriting workshops celebrating & exploring the life and work of two wonderful women
Kathleen D'olier Courtney & Hilary Cooke
Free to attend and **no previous experience** is required.
Join us at Sun Pier House (SPH) and Intra Arts (IA)

9th Feb 2-4 pm (SPH)
17th Feb 2-4 pm (IA)
24th Feb 10-12 pm (SPH)
2nd March 2-4 pm (SPH)
9th March 2-4 pm (SPH)
16th March 2-4 pm (SPH)

For details and directions please email me at
info@gavinalexandermusic.co.uk

supported by funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.



The Cut Of Her Cloth textiles and song project is funded by Arts Council England for Intra Arts & Live Music Now.

Gavin Alexander is a singer/songwriter based in Kent, who works closely with the charity Live Music Now.

Venues and time details are as listed on the poster. Please note, unfortunately Sun Pier House does not yet have disabled step-free access but the Intra-Arts venue does.

The aim of these workshops is to create two complete songs about Kathleen Courtney, who was born in Gillingham in 1878 and was a leader of the suffragist movement, and Hilary Cooke, who is Chair of Medway Pride. The songs will be recorded and performed as part of The Cut Of Her Cloth textiles and song project.

It is a community-based project with an emphasis on having a fun interactive afternoon with creative games, listening, perhaps singing and helping create ideas for a song with a group of people who have not done this before. These sessions are designed to be fun, not prescriptive, with the help of participants from the community.

If you would like further information, please email

Rochester Cathedral



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE?



We are fortunate to have an amazing team of over 300 volunteers who are essential to the success of the Cathedral as a place of worship and cultural destination. Our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers work across a wide variety of roles. Cathedral life just wouldn't work without all that our volunteers do to support the mission, ministry and management of the Cathedral.

Why volunteer at Rochester Cathedral?

Volunteering is an extremely rewarding way for you to make a difference and give something back to the community as a valued member of our team. While you are surrounded by incredible architecture you will be able to learn about the history, artefacts and heritage of this wonderful building. You will have the opportunity to get to know other volunteers, gain new skills and have fun.

1. Would you like to find out more about our talented Bell Ringers, Embroiderers and Flower Arrangers?
2. Are you good at polishing? Our Brass Cleaners help keep all the brass shining.
3. Do you have an enthusiastic personality to welcome visitors at the welcome desk in the new Visitor Hospitality Volunteer role?
4. Have you got a passion for history and the Cathedral building, while offering a welcome to our visitors with the Visitor Experience Volunteer role?
5. Are you free in the evenings, and would enjoy welcoming visitors to our many varied events as an Event Host?
6. Do you like offering hospitality? Why not find out about the Café in the Crypt Volunteers, and the Sunday Tea and Coffee Volunteers?

How to become a volunteer?

If you have a few hours a week to spare, we would love to hear from you. In return for giving your time, skills and talents you will become part of our friendly Cathedral community.

Please contact **Sandy Struben**, Volunteer Manager
by email

Kent Showground

The u3a Kent Network is hoping to have a stand at this year's Kent County Show to be held 6th – 8th July. Volunteers will be required to cover various aspects of the County Show such as livestock, heritage, information, traffic, etc, as well as possibly staffing the u3a stand.

If this is of interest and you would like more information, please contact **Amber Warnes**, the Showground's Hospitality Co-ordinator, either by email or phone

Amber will also require volunteers for an earlier event at the Showground - "Living Land" on the 2nd May, to help with a school trip for over 50 schools. Volunteers would be paired with a school group and schoolteacher and assist in guiding them to the different educational zones around the showground. Please contact **Amber** direct if you would like more information.

Repair Café

What do you do with a broken toaster? Or with a bike when the wheel gets a puncture? Or with a jumper full of moth holes? Toss it? No way!

Medway Libraries have organised a Repair Café, to be held on Saturdays from 10.30am to 1.00pm on the following dates:

Chatham Community Hub – 17th February, 27th April and 22nd June;
Strood Community Hub – 16th March and 25th May.

There is no need to book, just turn up with your broken item.

Come along to the Repair Cafe where volunteer repair experts will be available to help make repairs free of charge. They will have some tools and materials but you may need to order extra parts.

Visiting the Repair Café is a great way not only to save money, but also to do your bit in reducing the amount of waste produced in Medway.

For more information:

Phone: or speak to a member of staff at any Medway Library.

Editorial Panel: Sue Bullock, Marilyn Curtis, Judy Milton, Rosemary Moss, Ann Palmer, Sue Westrup