

u3a Medway

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – March 2024

Message from the Chair March 2024

I must begin by congratulating everybody who made our Black Oak table event a spectacular success. I didn't attempt to count the number of members present, but there were lots! It was great to see members of different groups mingling and sharing ideas. When the Cathedral offered us the use of the table, I had no vision as to what we'd do with it, but as ever, Marilyn Curtis stepped up and, ably assisted by Jan Perry and Sue Daykin, planned and organised the whole thing. My thanks to them, and to everyone who attended.

In the last newsletter, I excitedly informed you about the four dates of our regular events that we had just planned. I should have known better, as one date has had to be changed – the History Study Day has been moved back to Friday 8th November. My apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Now an appeal for help. The amazing Sue Harry and her two regular volunteers could really use some extra pairs of hands at the monthly meeting for making the refreshments after the speaker finishes – further details are in this newsletter.

Finally, I mentioned at the start of the year that we need to recruit a new Secretary and Membership Secretary. To date I have not received a single enquiry. If you have reasonable administrative skills you could be one of the two people we are looking for. Please give it some thought. Sadly, a u3a cannot run without these officers.

Our membership renewal deadline has now passed, and I'm pleased to report that over 520 members from 2023 have renewed their membership and together with 30 brand new members we are 550 strong! I hope to see many of you at our next meeting on Wednesday 13th March.

Kevin Booth
Chairman

Welcome to the following new Members

Lynne Ashmeade, David Bassett, Jean Bassett, David Brenchley,
David Hales, Debbie Hales, Jae Mendham, Peter Moulden,
Ian Peckett, Eileen Price, Joan Simpson, Kathleen Strange, Chris Waller

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.

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.

8th May 2024 (please note: change of speaker)

Malcolm Jones - NOT IN FRONT OF THE AUDIENCE

Malcolm was Events Manager for the Victoria and Albert Theatre Museum for 10 years and developed a range of courses on theatre history. He will enlighten us on the years of controversy, absurdity and fascinating battles between the theatre makers and the authority of the Theatre Censor that was started by the Theatres Licensing Act of 1737 - an Act that was in place until September 1968! This was when the Lord Chamberlain finally lost his power to decide what the British should and should not see.

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 –.*

February's Monthly Meeting – The Art of Illusion

February's Monthly meeting proved to be most interesting and really great fun. Bertie Pearce was an excellent speaker who kept us all entertained with the history of magic, his skilled tricks and his ability to involve the audience. Cazz and Kevin were invited onto the stage - they were very willing, as can be seen by the photographs. This was not staged, but just good speculation by Bertie that they would take part!



Volunteers Needed to Serve Tea/Coffee at the Monthly Meetings

A cup of tea or coffee and a natter with friends is always popular at the monthly meetings.

However, we do need volunteers to help with serving the drinks – 2 teams of 3 would be good, although more would always be welcome. We are currently relying on just a few people who regularly do this (many thanks to Sue, Jacquie and Ann), and do not have cover in their absence.

So, please come forward and volunteer - contact **Marilyn Curtis** by email or phone



History Study Day

Please note, the date advertised for the History Study Day as published in the February Newsletter has been changed.

It will now take place on **Friday 8th November** in the Guildhall, Rochester. Full details, including the programme and price will be announced later in the year.

Fenland Black Oak Table, Rochester Cathedral, 28th February 2024



What a wonderful afternoon we had at Rochester Cathedral around the Black Oak Table. Many thanks to Marilyn, Jan and Sue for their organisation and to the Group Leaders and members of Medway u3a who came along to support the event – a great blend of 22 different groups was represented. The Music groups even had people up dancing!!

Quiz and Cuppa – 4th April

The next Quiz and Cuppa will be held on Thursday 4th April, at the Baptist Church Hall in Crow Lane, 1.30pm for 2.00pm.

The cost will be £3.00 per person, payable on the day – members can enter as a team, or just turn up and join others to form a team.

If you would like further information, please contact Kevin Booth:

Meet The Committee – 18th April

The next “Meet the Committee” event will be taking place at the Baptist Church Hall, Crow Lane on Thursday 18th April, from 2.00pm to 3.30pm. You are very welcome to pop in and have a chat with your Committee members whilst enjoying a cup of tea or coffee.

Groups

Advanced Spanish

Here are some members of the Advanced Spanish group enjoying their session. We meet at Rochester Library every week from 10.00am -12.00 noon to converse, read articles, play games, do crosswords etc, all in Spanish. We are none of us completely fluent and, at the moment, we have a Venezuelan lady who very kindly helps us when she can. We are a friendly group and have room for new members.

If you are interested, please contact the group organiser, **Frances**, at Hasta luego.



London Studies 1

Last month 15 members of this group travelled to the Soho area of London. We saw many places of interest, of which these are just a few:



Pillars of Hercules Pub – mentioned in Dickens “Tale of Two Cities”



St Patrick's – the oldest church in London dedicated to the Irish patron saint.



Maison Bertaux – London's oldest French patisserie



“Selene”, a bronze figure, is named after the Greek goddess of the moon and of magic.



The 2i's coffee shop that was regarded as the birthplace of rock and roll in the UK (it is now a Fish and Chip shop).



This caught everyone's attention!

Thanks go to Janet Finneral for organising the day and to Sue Daykin and Tony Faulkner for the photographs.

The Seriously Funny Group

We are a group who meet once a month on a Thursday morning for a laugh (or, hopefully, many laughs!) washed down with coffee, tea and biscuits. We meet in members' homes – generally in the Rochester and Chatham areas – to listen, watch and discuss.

Members bring along contributions in a variety of formats - DVD, CD or downloaded from the internet – anything they have found funny. These are sometimes a 30-minute programme or, quite often, snippets from the programme. The clips range from vintage comedy up to modern day material - anything we find funny. Some examples of these are Beyond Our Ken, Hancock's Half Hour, The Two Ronnies, Dad's Army, Victoria Wood, Joyce Grenfell, Dave Allen, Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, clips of "The Bottle Band", clips of "Would I Lie To You?" and the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain - but this is only a small selection of the things we have listened to or watched. Sometimes a member brings along something which the rest of us have never heard of or have long forgotten!

We also bring short items that have made us laugh, be it from books of jokes, magazines or newspapers and anything else which we have found funny. We seem to find too that most of our general conversation gives rise to some (or much) laughter as well!

If you would be interested in joining us, please contact
Richard Irving - or the group leader **John Burrows** -.

Cooking for Pleasure

Last month we made a savoury vegetable galette. This makes a simple meal with the addition of some grated cheese in the sauce and on the top. It can be topped with pastry or served as an open topped dish where the sides have to stand alone with no side support.



A galette has its origins from France where it was served at Epiphany; a dried broad bean was inserted into the pie so that whoever found the bean could be the king or queen for the day, rather like we have for a Twelfth Night Cake. Later, the bean was replaced with a lucky charm made of china as a prize for the winner. Strangely enough, this item was in the Great British Bake Off programme recently but as a sweet version. We had decided on this tart long before the programme aired!

Known as La Galette Des Rois, from the Norman word gale, and also called King Cake, this can be sweet or savoury and is still popular in France. This form of pie is not baked in a dish but on a baking sheet. Our group made a sweet one a while ago with apple and mincemeat.

This charming savoury galette can be enjoyed with some vegetables and a jacket potato.

Sue Harry

Moving landline phones to digital technology: what you need to know

A number of Medway u3a members have expressed concern about the future provision of home telephones and it may be some members are not aware of the changes that are taking place. The following link provides information from the Ofcom website that may be of assistance and should address any questions you may have.

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/future-of-landline-calls>

Fundraising Walks and Tours of Rochester

Geoff Ettridge is a Medway u3a member, known to many as “Geoff Rambler”. This tour may be of particular interest to our history and social groups and probably to many others as well.

For many years I have led fundraising walks and tours of Rochester to raise funds for good causes. If you are not familiar with my activities, please take a look at my Facebook page/ blog - links are below.

For this year I have constructed a new – probably unique - tour to raise funds for the Kent Air Ambulance. There is no charge but a collection will be held at the end for the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance.

The tour is titled "**A Dry Pub Crawl along Rochester High Street**". History is about more than dates and events - it was a lived experience for the people of the time.

This tour is less about the Rochester pubs and more about what happened in them - from the time of Elizabeth 1 to the outbreak of WW1. The tour starts from the Guildhall Museum and takes about 90 minutes.



For groups who would prefer not to walk the length of the High Street, I could offer the “tour” as a PowerPoint presentation; again, no charge but I will “shake a tin” at the end.

Please email me at [redacted] for more information or to arrange a date for a tour.

Geoff Ettridge aka Geoff Rambler

The Big Plastic Count

An organisation called Everyday Plastic is running a campaign to raise awareness about the single-use plastic problem, and aim to inspire people to reduce their own plastic consumption. They are teaming up with Greenpeace UK to run [The Big Plastic Count](#), the UK's largest investigation into household plastic waste.

You can help by counting your plastic waste for one week (**from 11th -17th March**) and submit your results to them online. This will automatically generate your personalised household plastic footprint and help them to reveal how much plastic we are throwing away as a nation, and what really happens to it afterwards.

Over 80,000 people across the UK have already signed up and they would like members of the Medway u3a to take part, should you wish to do so - the registration link is: thebigplasticcount.com/U3A.

Medway Queen Preservation Society



Painting by Kevin Diamond

Paddle Steamer Medway Queen "Heroine of Dunkirk" will be 100 years old in April 2024.

As part of the celebrations to mark her centenary we are delighted to show a unique film, about our ship, starting from her launch in 1924. This is the film's first public showing!

Date: Wednesday 13th March 2024, starting at 7.00pm. Duration 1hr. 7 mins.
To be shown at Rowan Williams Court, Canterbury Christ Church University,
36 Pembroke Court, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent. ME4 4UF
Tickets: £10.00 Adult, £5.00 Children.

The venue is open from 6.00pm to 9.00pm. You are warmly invited to attend early to relax with free light refreshments before the film starts. There is ample free parking close by. Tickets available through "Eventbrite", <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-history-and-restoration-of-paddle-steamer-medway-queen-tickets-848268001427>.

For further information and notice of other events:

www.medwayqueen.co.uk or email pambathurst@sky.com

Mobile tel. no. 07790 179760 Facebook - Medway Queen Preservation Society

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