



Great news!

During the past two months twenty new members have joined taking our total membership now to just over 500... quite an amazing achievement since our inaugural meeting in May 2015.

Now that the weather is turning wintry, I do hope that you will continue to take part in the many interest groups available.

Our special November monthly meeting should cheer everyone up when The Buckden Handbell Ringers will be entertaining us. Mulled wine and pre-Christmas nibbles will be provided beforehand to get us into the Christmas spirit.

Finally a big thank you to all our members for your support and commitment throughout the year coupled with thanks to the committee members, the group leaders and the helpers for their contribution to the continuing success of Royston U3A.

As this is the last issue of Royston U3A News for 2019 I wish all members best wishes for Christmas & the New Year.

Jackie Gellert, Chairwoman

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Opening the doors on life inside

Dark corridors, metal gates that clank shut and jangling keys - that's the general impression we get of life behind bars.

But former prison officer Pauline Martindale took us behind closed doors and revealed what it was like working in places like Holloway and Wormwood Scrubs.

"All my friends thought I was mad when I joined the prison service in 1984," she told members at the September meeting.

She gave an insight into her varied roles over more than 20 years, including court escort, managing the psychiatric unit, and working with women coming in on remand right through to those serving life sentences.



Former Prison Officer
Pauline Martindale

Life was eventful and one highlight was when she was asked to take photographs and sing at a wedding being organised inside Holloway for a woman serving life. "At the next visitors' session her mother came and hugged me and said she couldn't

thank everyone enough for going out of their way to make it a special day for her daughter," said Pauline.

Being inside offered opportunities to improve basic skills, learn new ones and gain qualifications. A group of prisoners at Holloway created an immaculate garden which was an oasis of peace and tranquillity.

"Everyone should be given a chance when they come out," she said. "At the end of the day we were dealing with people. People have histories and they have stories. Because they are in prison and have done something wrong they are still people."

Pam Dajda

Conjuring up the secret side of Dickens

Charles Dickens is renowned as a literary genius for his epic stories of Victorian life. But very few know that he was also an amateur conjurer performing tricks for his friends and family.

Magician Ian Keable, the speaker at our October meeting, revealed that Dickens took up magic in 1842 at the age of 30. Not one to suffer false modesty he wrote about his "mighty conjuring performance" with tricks like *The Plum Pudding in a Hat Wonder*.

As his tricks were described in detail on a

playbill, Ian has been able to recreate some of them. He is a member of the Magic Circle and mystified us performing Dickens' *Leaping Card Wonder*, *Travelling Doll Wonder* and *Pyramid Box Wonder*.

Interestingly, of the two thousand characters in his novels, a conjurer appears in only one - an ugly silent man named Sweet William in *The Old Curiosity Shop* who specialised in balancing a feather on his nose and swallowing sixpences.

Dickens was a man of many talents and his enthusiasm for conjuring lasted seven years. With his inexhaustible energy he moved on to acting, public readings, social campaigning, hypnosis and spiritualism.

Pam Dajda

Professional Magician
Ian Keable performing
magic with a pack
of playing cards



Chris has cracked it!

If you were at the September meeting in the Town Hall you may have spotted a new face setting up the audio visual equipment.

Specialist technician Chris Walls has come up with the answer to the problems we were experiencing projecting onto both screens upstairs and downstairs.

Working over the summer with Ralph and Jackie Gellert, he sourced the best solutions and advised us on buying a more portable video

conferencing camera and other items to replace the large camera and other equipment we had been hiring from an audio visual company.

“Using the Royston U3A computer we can project the picture from the camera directly through the computer, sending it onto both screens,” he explained.

Chris, who runs Royston Folk Club, will soon become a familiar face at

Royston U3A as he is going to be at every monthly meeting setting up and supervising a rota of members helping him with wiring and cabling. “I always like a challenge and I’ve been happy to help out,” he said.

Thanking Chris, who is not a Royston U3A member, Jackie said the results were plain to see - a better, clearer picture with excellent sound that is less cumbersome and easier to set up.

‘the results are plain to see – a better, clearer picture with excellent sound’



“Chris has put in an immense amount of time, effort and skill,” she said. “This is the first time we’ve put it together in-situ and I’d like to say a big thank you to him.”

More helpers are always welcome so if you would like to join the rota get in touch with Jackie.

Pam Dajda

Chris Walls (centre) with helpers Keith Collard and Bryan Summers

September sunshine in Barrington

Setting off from the Royal Oak in Barrington, 15 Five Mile Walkers could appreciate views from the nearby high ground between the village and its near neighbour Haslingfield.

From the summit, fine views were enjoyed looking north to Cambridge and beyond and in the opposite direction across the extensive workings of the now defunct cement works.

Fine dry weather prevailed throughout and the party returned to the Royal Oak for a well-earned lunch.

‘fine views were enjoyed looking north to Cambridge and beyond’



Five Mile Walkers outside ‘The Royal Oak’ inn at Barrington

Peter Andrew

Living through 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland

One of six children in a Protestant family, Stephanie Wells was enjoying a care-free childhood until 'The Troubles' started and segregation split the population.

In an interesting and moving talk she gave History group members an insight into growing up in Portadown and how segregation and local hostilities affected all aspects of her life.

Protestant schooling was very different from Catholic girls. There were no go areas and barricades in towns and cities. Car travel was difficult, especially through Belfast. Bowling or cinema trips were segregated to specific nights.

Paramilitary action and harassment split people living in mixed estates into separate areas. For each

faction it was dangerous to be seen talking to the 'others', which meant either stopping friendships or going straight inside their house when you called. Stephanie could no longer stand around on the streets with friends.

Sometimes when she was travelling by a train passing through troubled areas the guard would advise everybody to get down as stones were being thrown at the windows.

Police stations were often targeted and bomb threats became a regular occurrence. Walking along the street you would suddenly be told to get down and lay flat, which after a while the family took in their stride.

Stephanie who now lives in Royston showed photos of her family, some political



Stephanie Wells

posters and memorabilia. She also brought along soda bread and potato scones so we could try traditional Northern Ireland food.

Reg Hounsell and Marion Martin

'segregation and local hostilities affected all aspects of her life'

Swinging along aboard the Jazz Boat shuffle

After such a good day out last year, 14 members of the Jazz Appreciation group decided to repeat it with a live jazz river boat trip from the Festival Pier down past the O2 arena and back. A licenced bar operating throughout!

Lucky with the weather again, the John Petters Trio and friends got into the swing and for most of the three hour trip played a wide variety of music from the greats of jazz, in particular the music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Gene Krupa and Benny Goodman.

A bonus on the return journey was being closely followed by a tall-mast sailing vessel which gave us a good view of Tower Bridge opening and closing behind us.

But the day wasn't all plain sailing when it came to travelling to London as our train was directed onto the wrong platform at Royston. Having already moved from platform 1 to platform 2 as advised, we had to hold up the train so all our members could get on!

Once we got to Blackfriars we had lunch at Giraffe on the South Bank and walked over Waterloo bridge to Covent Garden for dinner at Bella Pasta.

A long and sometimes tiring but memorable day of good music and food, with most of us looking forward to repeating the Jazz cruise next year! We thank group member Dave Cording for organising everything.

Reg Hounsell

'the day wasn't all plain sailing'



Making the most of a sunny day on the Jazz river boat trip

A taste of Spain...in Duxford

The Wine Appreciation group has discovered that you don't need to board a flight to get a true taste of Spanish food and wine.

All you have to do is hop on a coach and head to the John Barleycorn in Duxford where a warm welcome awaits from head chef James Spencer and his team.

Forty Wine group members were shown how to match Spanish food to Spanish wine at our annual food and wine pairing event.

A unique treat was in store for us as James, who is half Spanish, came into his own with a fantastic Spanish themed four course menu based around his mother's and grandmother's recipes.

Wine expert Ben Pym from Corney & Barrow paired delicious dishes such as salt cod croquettes and orange and cinnamon Crema Catalana with outstanding Spanish wines including a 30 year old Oloroso Sherry.

The John Barleycorn was the brainwave of group leader Jackie Gellert and Ben following the closure of our venue for the past three years, the Tack Room restaurant in Newmarket. The group had to find a different location but one that offered the right ambience - and after much

searching came up with the solution of Ben's local pub.

At the end of a great tasting experience everyone said how much they had enjoyed it and were looking forward to the next themed meal.

Summing it up wine group member Ron Hack said: "I thought the Tack Room would take some beating but this is better than I expected."

A huge thank you to Jackie for organising the event and to our experts Ben and James.

Pam Dajda

'forty wine group members were shown how to match Spanish food to Spanish wine'



Wine expert Ben Pym pours Belezos Rioja Reserva to pair with Cocido Madrileño, a traditional chickpea-based stew from Madrid



Enjoying the Spanish themed food & wine pairing



Head Chef James Spencer

Who do you think they were?

Everyone got thoroughly immersed in the whole debate around King Richard III at the group's first meeting.

We had a lively and interesting discussion about Jacqueline Tey, author of our first book *The Daughter of Time* about why she decided to write historical novels. We then considered the life of Richard III and why he was portrayed as a

villain after his death. Shakespeare has much to answer for as the evidence to support this portrayal is fundamentally flawed - especially as in English law a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The group enjoyed the session so much that we have decided to extend it to two hours. Our next book is *Innocent Traitor* by Alison Weir, which is about Lady

Jane Grey. The research focuses on the main characters including Queen Catherine Parr.

If you enjoy reading historical novels and like doing a small amount of research beforehand why not come along? The next meeting is on November 28 or for more information contact Sharon Camilletti on 07725 847303 or sharonroystonu3a@gmail.com

Sharon Camilletti

'the group enjoyed the session so much that we have decided to extend it to two hours'

Get immersed in a classic novel

The Classic Novels reading group has been up and running since June and has six regular members - but there's room for more if anyone would like to join us.

We meet every third Friday to discuss a book we have looked at the previous month. To date we have read *Pride and Prejudice*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Moby Dick* and are currently on *Vanity Fair*.

The books are chosen by the group from the many classic novels that perhaps you always meant to read but have never quite got round to!

We have had very interesting discussions and very diverse views on what we have read so far. One of the *Sherlock Holmes* novels will be our subject for discussion in November. We are not meeting in

December but have chosen *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Catcher in the Rye* for our first three sessions next year.

Meetings are on the third Friday of the month at 2pm at Royston Conservative Club. If you are interested contact Sue on 01763 847200 or biggs1633@gmail.com

Sue Biggs



- or enjoy a good read at a book group

Would anyone be interested in joining Book group 3?

We meet at 10.30am on the last Wednesday of the month. We are an informal and friendly group and our meetings are held in members' homes.

Our book choices are varied and we don't do 'book group questions' - too much like school homework - just share our ideas and opinions which make for lively and interesting meetings. This month's

book is *Anatomy of a scandal* by Sarah Vaughan, last month we read *Belgravia* by Julian Fellowes, and our next book is *Into the Water* by Paula Hawkins - a varied selection and we are a

friendly bunch!

Email Lee Towers at ladytowers@gmail.com if you are interested and would like more information.

Dates for your diary

November

Tuesday 26, 2pm
Hardwicke Hall at
Royston Town Hall

Sounds of the season concert with THE BUCKDEN HANDBELL RINGERS

December



January

Tuesday 28, 2pm
Hardwicke Hall at
Royston Town Hall

Mike Levy will give a talk on **THE LIFE OF W.S.GILBERT** Dramatist & Librettist

February

Tuesday 25, 2pm
Hardwicke Hall at
Royston Town Hall

Tony Earle will give a talk on **THE LONDON UNDERGROUND**

Easy Guide to Interest Groups

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM		Art	Fitness	Birding	Walkers: Strollers	Book Club 2
		Golf Croquet	Seated Exercise	Book Club 3	Who do you think they were?	
				Life Stories		
				Patchwork		
				Walkers: Five Mile		
PM	Solo Sundays	Current Affairs	MONTHLY MEETING last Tuesday of month	Clay Shooting	Gardening	Classic Novels
		Curry Club	Book Club 1	Film	Golf	Petanque/Boules
		French Conversation	History	Wine Appreciation	Mixed Crafts	Pilates
		Pottery (Hand Building)	Ukulele		Quiz	
		Tai Chi				
EVE				Jazz Appreciation		

For frequency and contact details about all interest groups please see the chart on the final page or check our website for more information. Announcements about future Events & Outings and Theatre Trips will be posted on our website when details become available.

Interest Groups

Don't forget to check our website for regularly updated information

GROUP	DAY	TIME	FREQUENCY	GROUP LEADER	CONTACT DETAILS
Art	Mon	9:30am	Monthly 3rd Mon	Sylvia Jordan	sylviahjordan41@gmail.com 07599 212882
Birding	Wed	8:30am	Monthly 1st Wed	Carol McGeoch	carol.mcgeoch@hotmail.co.uk 01223 207354
Book Club 1	Tues	2:00pm	Monthly 1st Tues	Deirdre Smith	deidreroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 244700
Book Club 2	Fri	11:00am	Monthly Variable	Janet Burton	janet.a.burton@gmail.com 07984 600295
Book Club 3	Wed	10:30am	Monthly last Wed	Elizabeth (Lee) Towers	ladytowers@gmail.com 01763 241488
Classic Novels	Fri	2:00pm	Monthly 3rd Fri	Sue Biggs	biggs1633@gmail.com 01763 847200
Clay Shooting	Wed	2:00pm	Variable	Frank Martin	thoefmartin@outlook.com 07831 898234
Current Affairs	Mon	3:30pm	Monthly 3rd Mon	Marion Sweet	marion22roystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 273806
Curry Club	Mon	12:00pm	Monthly 2nd Mon	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Events & Outings (open to all)	Variable	Variable	Occasional	Sandra Walker	sandraroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241896
Film	Wed	2:00pm	Monthly 1st Wed	Carla Bailey	carlaroystonu3a@gmail.com 07968 261101
Fitness	Tues	9:30am	Weekly	Kathy Hounsell	kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
French Conversation	Mon	1:00pm	Monthly variable	Barbara Fielden	fieldenbarbara@hotmail.com 07850 455211
Gardening	Thurs	2:30pm	Monthly Variable	Val Fairbanks	t.fairbanks@ntlworld.com 01763 230724
Golf	Thurs	1:00pm	Weekly	Ralph Gellert	ralphroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 248097
Golf Croquet	Suspended till Spring 2020			John Bishop	bishop190@btinternet.com 01763 246703
History	Tues	2:00pm	Monthly Variable	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Jazz Appreciation	Wed	7:30pm	Monthly 2nd Wed	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Life Stories	Wed	11:00am	Monthly last Wed	John Bell	john.bell99@btinternet.com 07710 176161
Mixed Crafts	Thurs	2:00pm	Monthly 3rd Thurs	Rosie Cowsley	rosie.cowsley@ntlworld.com 07809 047380
Patchwork	Wed	10:00am	Monthly 1st Wed	Maureen Strugnell	maureen.strugnell@ntlworld.com 01763 241967
Petanque / Boules	Suspended till Spring 2020			Sue & John Bishop	bishop190@btinternet.com 01763 246703
Pilates	Fri	1pm & 2pm	Weekly	Kathy Hounsell	kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Pottery (Hand Building)	Mon	2:00pm	Fortnightly Variable	Rosie Cowsley	rosie.cowsley@ntlworld.com 07809 047380
Quiz	Thurs	2:00pm	Monthly last Thurs	Sharon Camilletti	sharonroystonu3a@gmail.com 07725 847303
Seated Exercise	Tues	10:45am	Weekly	Kathy Hounsell	kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Solo Sundays	Sun	12:00pm	Monthly 2nd Sun	Sandra Restall	sandra.restall@gmail.com 07775 508533
Tai Chi	Mon	3:15pm	Weekly	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Theatre Trips	Variable	Variable	Occasional	Deirdre Smith	deidreroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 244700
Ukulele	Tues	12:00pm	Weekly	John Bishop	bishop190@btinternet.com 01763 246703
Walkers: Five Mile	Wed	9:45am	Monthly 2nd Wed	Eric Heaton	ericroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 242989
Walkers: Strollers	Thurs	10:15am	1st & 3rd Thurs of month	David Walker	djwalker3@aol.com 01763 241896
Who do you think they were?	Thurs	10:45am	Monthly last Thurs	Sharon Camilletti	sharonroystonu3a@gmail.com 07725 847303
Wine Appreciation	Wed	2:00pm	Monthly Variable	Jackie Gellert	jackieroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 248097

Royston U3A Committee

Chairman	Jackie Gellert	jackieroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 248097
Vice Chair	Sandra Walker	sandraroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 241896
Treasurer & Speakers Secretary	Barbara Andrew	barbararoystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 245363
Secretary	Karen Heaton	karenroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 242989
Membership Secretary	Marion Martin	marionroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 246876
Minutes Secretary	Sylvia Fuller	sylviaroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 243006
Existing Groups Co-ordinator	Joan Westcott	joanroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 220812
New Groups Co-ordinator	Mel Chammings	melroystonu3a@gmail.com	07713 837086
New Members Contact	Carla Bailey	carlaroystonu3a@gmail.com	07968 261101
Publicity	Pam Dajda	pam@dajda.net	01763 246234
Royston U3A News	Ralph Gellert	ralphroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 248097
Co-opted Committee Member	Eric Heaton	ericroystonu3a@gmail.com	01763 242989

Get it in the News

If you're involved in a group why not publicise it in Royston U3A News? Send in a short report of your latest meeting or outing - photos welcomed too - to Pam Dajda at pam@dajda.net or phone 01763 246234

Next deadline for submissions: Wednesday December 11, 2019