



As we are not holding a monthly meeting in December this is an earlier than usual edition of Royston U3A News.

To get into the Christmas spirit 170 members were entertained by the Buckden Handbell Ringers at our monthly meeting in November. I hope you all enjoyed their *Sounds of the Season* concert.

Many interest groups have remained active in December and several groups have held their Christmas get-togethers during the month.

Throughout the year we attracted quite a few new members, taking our membership total to just over 500 with numbers still growing all the time. With more than 30 interest groups running and we hope to start up more, there is no reason for anyone getting bored in 2020. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy a long and joyful Christmas break.

Wishing you a happy and most importantly, a healthy New Year 2020.

Jackie Gellert
Chairman

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Handbell ringers hit the festive note

We all got into the Christmas spirit at our November meeting - thanks to the Buckden Handbell Ringers.

Led by Miles and Pam Falla, the ten strong team entertained us with a musical medley with the feel good factor, from Jingle Bells and Sleigh Ride to Bach and Christmas Carols.

With a total of 54 handbells covering all the notes over four octaves from bass G to a top C, the precision and skill of the ringers was impressive.

The Buckden group has been going strong for 40 years and Miles assured us that you don't have to be able to play an instrument or read music to take up ringing.

Handbells come in all sizes - from very large to extremely small

I'm not a musical person and the first time my wife mentioned handbells I said I'd never be able to do it. That was 40 years ago and I've just loved it," he said.

Bells have to be properly cared for and ringers always wear gloves because if they are cleaned too much it removes the metal and changes the tone.

By the end of the afternoon we all had a jingle in our step and chairman Jackie Gellert asked the group to come back to give a training session.

"It's been amazing and I would love to have a go," she said.

Pam Dajda



Coffee & chocolate make the perfect combination

Why do coffee and chocolate go together so well? To find out, 30 members took part in a Royston U3A pre-Christmas special Coffee & Chocolate Pairing event at Hot Numbers Roastery at Dunsbridge Turnpike, Shepreth.

Experts Sophie Garner, head of tea & coffee at Hot Numbers and Isabelle Chappell, chocolatier and owner of Chocolat Chocolat in Cambridge explained how both coffee and chocolate offer a variety of flavours from sweet, sour, salt, bitter and their many combinations.



We learnt that Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Ethiopia and Vietnam all have a heritage in coffee or chocolate. So, what better way to celebrate these best

of flavour partners than to put them to the taste test.

Many thanks to Jackie Gellert for organising this unique and enjoyable event.

Ralph Gellert

Christmas around the world at Chatsworth

*'the largest
and furthest
trip to date for
Royston U3A'*

Flooding the previous week cast a huge shadow over our trip to Chatsworth House. Daily phone calls to Chatsworth and Met Office updates finally confirmed conditions were slowly improving.

On a very cold November morning 75 members of Royston U3A travelled by luxury coach for three hours to Chatsworth House in the heart of the Peak District in Derbyshire.

On arrival, we had three hours to fill prior to entering the House at the pre-arranged time.

The gigantic Nordic Fir tree in the Painted Hall



The Christmas Market held in the grounds of the stately home had over 100 market stalls offering a wide range of Christmas gifts and decorations. Keeping warm entailed drinking mulled wine or hot chocolate with Baileys while being entertained by a talented trio playing countless oompah-pah tunes on trumpet, euphonium and banjo.

The Orangery shop, with its range of home and fashion gifts, was chock-a-block with lots of lovely stocking fillers for members to buy. Whilst the Carriage House Café offered warm food and relief from the bitter cold

before we entered the House itself.

Each year Chatsworth House stages a festive themed event in the grand house. This year's theme 'In a Land Far, Far Away' is an immersive experience full of atmospheric lights, rich colours, evocative sounds and scents, with each room decorated to transport you on a journey around the globe following in the footsteps of famous explorers from fiction and life, Phileas Fogg and Amelia Earhart.

As night fell, we returned to Royston after what had been a long but really enjoyable and memorable day.

A huge thank you to Jackie Gellert and Sandra Walker for all their hard work organising this outing, the largest and furthest trip to date for Royston U3A.

Ralph Gellert

Blossom trees, a 10-metre spiralling Chinese dragon and traditional Chinese paper umbrellas bring a flavour of a faraway land



Christmas decorations in the Library

Five Milers head out to Madingley

Twelve of us gathered at the Plough in Coton for the November five mile walk. The weather was fine and dry as we left for a couple of miles of field walking before a short stretch of roadway into Madingley.

There we admired the frontage of Madingley Hall before making our return via the perimeter of the American Cemetery then south by field path to Coton.

A welcome refreshment break



Accompanied by fine warmish weather, the route provided a number of opportunities to admire long views from high ground between the two

villages. At the finish, excellent reasonably priced food was available at the Plough.

Peter Andrew

Admiring the church



'the route provided a number of opportunities to admire long views from high ground'

Retelling of the Scottish play

The Film group's recent showing of the stunning 2015 adaptation of Macbeth has been reviewed by film group member Sylvia Dean-Mays:

"I have seen many productions of Macbeth over the years and this was one of the best. It concentrated on the main story and focused on the words which came over beautifully.

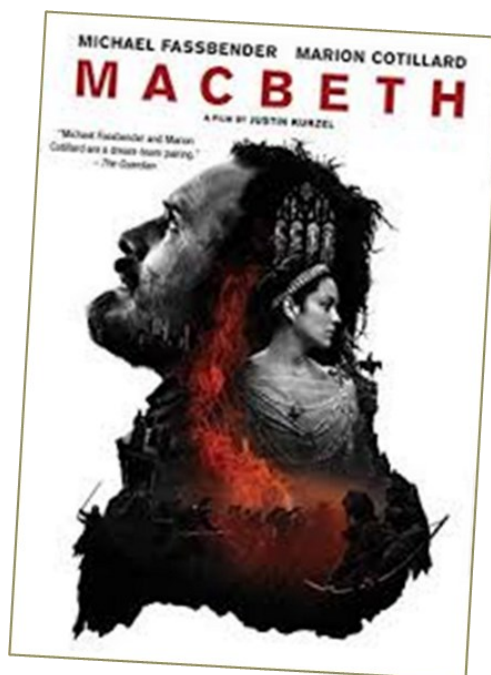
I felt great sympathy with Macbeth caught up in a nightmare of horrors and compelled to carry on despite his misgivings. I was left wanting to know why he had been cursed by the witches and why they hated him so much.

The King, James I, who had a hunting lodge at The Palace in Royston, believed in witchcraft and the divine right of kings. He was descended from

the murdered Duncan and it was believed that if the natural order of things was disturbed it could have fatal consequences.

Shakespeare seems to be confirming this in the play and trying to reassure James in his kingship. He altered a lot of Scottish history to do this. I don't know whether this worked or not but Shakespeare lived to write other plays, so perhaps it did. I'd love to know what James really thought."

Sylvia Dean-Mays



'I have seen many productions of Macbeth over the years and this was one of the best'

Taking a flight back in time

Fasten your seat belt and prepare for take-off back to the early days of air travel.

Reg Hounsell gave History group members a taste of what it was like to fly in the first passenger planes in the 1920s. Seating four or five passengers, the pilot sat in an open cockpit on the flight from Croydon to Paris.

It wasn't until the 1930s that aircraft carried more than 20 people as routes expanded to Egypt, South Africa and the east. With refuelling every few hours and night stopovers the first flights to Australia could take up to 20 days.

Airline food nowadays conjures up images of ingredients in tinfoil trays - a far cry from early inflight meals when stewards got up early to buy food at Croydon market to prepare in a room at the hangar before the flight.

Later on primus stoves were used on board to cook meals - including fried breakfasts. The main bonus of early air travel was that dining experience - with five course menus served on fine china and damask tablecloths.

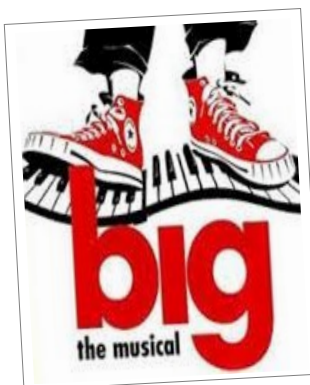
Reg's photographs illustrated how air travel has been transformed over the years. After the war Lancasters were modified for commercial flights, then came the likes of faster and more powerful Comets and Boeing 737s, heralding



Top: Dining in style.
Middle: Imperial Airways' silver deluxe passenger saloon.
Above: The 1930s Heracles and Hannibal set new standards of safety and comfort.

today's era of mass travel. Around 50 members enjoyed the talk and Reg thanked fellow air enthusiasts David Cording and John Fowl for their input.

Pam Dajda



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Comical, good fun and entertaining

Twelve intrepid Theatre group members bravely set off to London by train despite the threat of protesters, the possible lack of train seats and the busy rush hour crowds.

We went to see *Big The Musical* which is the story of

13 year old Josh wanting to be grown up. He gets his wish when he visits a fair-ground and pops his coin in the slot machine. The result was comical, good fun and entertaining. Jay McGuinness was lead man with Wendi Peters (who knew Janice Battersby

could sing), Kimberley Walsh and good old Matthew Kelly. This was our last theatre trip for 2019. Thank you to everyone who has supported the group through the year and I look forward to seeing everyone again in 2020

Deirdre Smith

Current Affairs group: Is Euthanasia really such a bad idea?

A challenging subject, they said. Certainly one to move us out of our comfort zones and discuss a subject we might not otherwise broach.

Of course, in England euthanasia is illegal - but might a managed end to suffering be a welcome relief? Not everyone agreed. Some countries allow euthanasia.

However, we were all aware of the pressure which might be brought to bear on individuals, family members and medical personnel. There was no consensus for changing the law, even whilst having sympathy for those who assist their loved ones for instance to travel to Switzerland.

Perhaps we should all have an allotted lifespan? That would give certainty for pensions, inheritance planning and the costs of long term care. But we might not be ready to go at the end of our allocation, if in fact we managed to live that long - health, activity, mind-set and other factors were too many and diverse to give this idea much traction.

Naturally, the discussion brought other matters to the fore, including wills and powers of attorney – financial and health. Perhaps a reminder for us all to do some things we prevaricate over for too long.



The group's next topic on Monday January 20 will be: *Vaccinations - should they be compulsory?* Meetings are at 3.30pm at Banyers House. New members are welcomed.

Marion Sweet

Dates for your diary

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**

March

Tuesday 31, 2pm
Hardwicke Hall at
Royston Town Hall

Andy Smith

will give a talk on
**WARTIME &
ROMANCE**

April

Tuesday 28, 2pm
Hardwicke Hall at
Royston Town Hall

Jill Campbell

will give a talk on
**KNEBWORTH
HOUSE & THE
LYTTON FAMILY**

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
Vice Chair
Treasurer & Speakers Secretary
Secretary
Membership Secretary
Minutes Secretary
Existing Groups Co-ordinator
New Groups Co-ordinator
New Members Contact
Publicity
Royston U3A News
Co-opted Committee Member

Jackie Gellert
Sandra Walker
Barbara Andrew
Karen Heaton
Marion Martin
Sylvia Fuller
Joan Westcott
Mel Chammings
Carla Bailey
Pam Dajda
Ralph Gellert
Eric Heaton

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karenroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 242989
marionroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 246876
sylviaroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 243006
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pam@dajda.net 01763 246234
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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 February 12, 2020