



Our virtual AGM at the end of June went well and it was good to see so many members present online. My Chairman's Statement has been re-produced on page seven in this issue.

I was disappointed that no members volunteered to replace two valued members of our executive committee who stood down this year. Should anyone wish to put themselves forward please let me know.

Now that most of us have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, some of our interest groups are meeting up again, specifically the groups taking place outside. Presently we will not be rushing to physically meet up for the monthly meetings as the risks are still far too high. Just because we can doesn't mean we should. We will continue to exercise caution and hope our members agree with this decision. For the time being we will continue holding our monthly meetings on Zoom. Due to holidays, there will be no virtual monthly meeting in August but we will be back in September.

In the meantime, stay safe and have a good summer.

Jackie Gellert, Chairman

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ROYSTON u3a news

AUGUST 2021 Issue 33

Secret listeners who bugged top Nazis



Dr Helen Fry

When Hitler's captured generals were taken to a luxurious mansion in London little did they know they were about to be duped in one of the war's most secretive intelligence operations.

Their gilded cage was Trent Park House where every room was bugged and secret listeners in the basement monitored their private conversations hoping they would divulge military secrets.

The mastermind behind this ingenious scheme was Thomas Kendrick, a British intelligence agent, and historian Dr Helen Fry highlighted the impact of his operation at our July meeting.

Thomas Kendrick



"It's a huge claim to make but it's my belief that it was as significant as the code breakers at Bletchley Park for winning the war," she said.

Kendrick was a spymaster in Europe until he was betrayed and expelled from Austria. Shortly before the war he organised a unit to listen in on German prisoners. Initially set up in the Tower of London with a staff of six, it rapidly expanded to Latimer House, Wilton Park and Trent Park, with 1,000 staff.

Tactics used by Kendrick included phony interrogations to lull prisoners into a false sense of security. At Trent House top commanders were treated with the utmost respect and softened up with meals and trips out.

Listening in at Trent Park



Women made up a third of the staff at the listening centres

"Pampering to their sense of importance and ego worked," said Helen. "They are totally hoodwinked. They don't know there's a whole secret world in the basement."

Key information revealed in this way helped turn the tide of the war – such as identifying the development sites of V1 and V2 weapons which were subsequently bombed by the RAF.

Only now is the scale of the achievements of Kendrick and his dedicated team of listeners being fully recognised.

"When George VI awarded him the OBE it was described as the best deserved OBE of the war. What a legacy of the man who lived in the shadows."

Pam Dajda

Knebworth House and the Lytton Family



Jill Campbell

Knebworth House is famous for its spectacular turrets and gargoyles silhouetted against the sky.

But beneath the stucco of the Gothic fantasy castle is a red brick house dating back to Tudor times, home to the Lytton family for 500 years.

Starting with Robert Lytton who established Knebworth in the 1490s, each generation has left a mark, with playwrights and poets, politicians and viceroys.

Knebworth archivist Jill Campbell was our guide for an engrossing journey through the changing fortunes of the house and the family at our June monthly meeting.

We heard how on inheriting the house in 1810 Elizabeth Bulwer-Lytton thought it so run down she had three wings demolished and plastered over the Tudor brickwork.

Her son Edward transformed Knebworth into a Victorian gothic dream. A popular author in his day, Edward is remembered for phrases like 'the pen is mightier than the sword' and 'it was a dark and stormy night.'



Knebworth House

Architect Sir Edwin Lutyens married into the family and modernised the house interior and gardens in a simpler style.

Knebworth became a tourist attraction in 1970 because of the huge upkeep costs and nowadays it is famous for rock concerts – attracting performers like Pink Floyd, Queen and Robbie Williams.

“The money we raised from the Robbie Williams’ concert paid for two tractors, a new sewage connection and two mammoths for the dinosaur park,” said Jill.

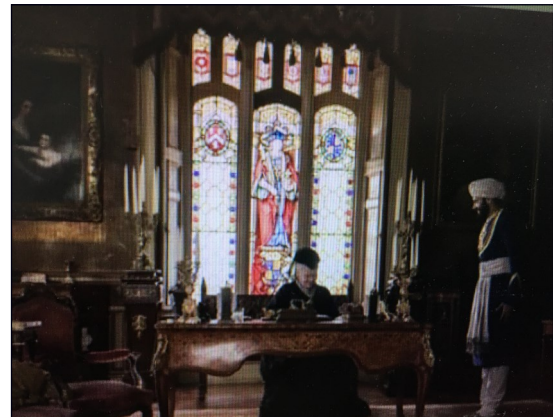
With the current estimate for repairs put at £9 million, filming at Knebworth is another money earner. Victoria and Abdul starring Judi Dench was set there along with episodes of Poirot, Midsomer Murders and a Strictly Come Dancing Christmas special.

“Work is never-ending, it goes on all year-round and we’ve got a great maintenance team,” said Jill. “Looking after the archives at Knebworth House is a fantastic job.”

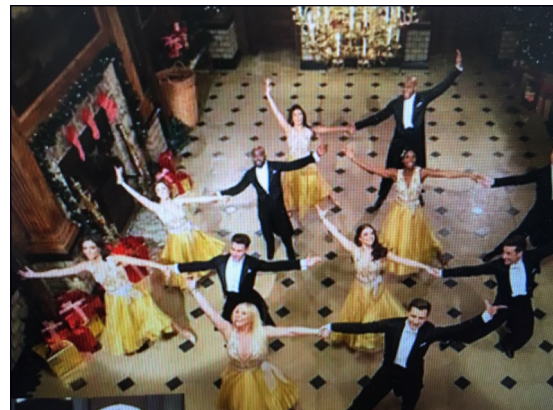
Pam Dajda



Viceroy of India Robert Bulwer-Lytton 1876-80



Judi Dench as Queen Victoria filming at Knebworth

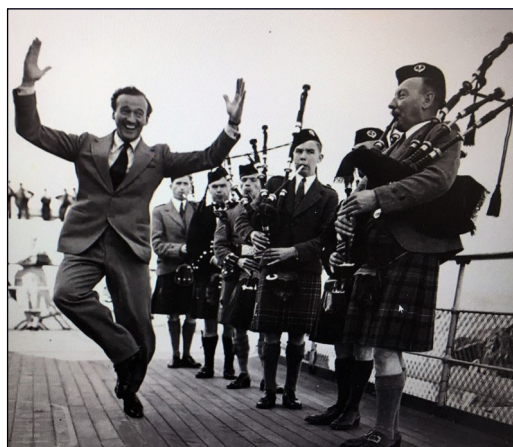


Strictly comes to Knebworth

Cunard and its star-studded history



Steve Herra



Always entertaining - David Niven on board



Living the high life - film star Paulette Goddard

The Cunard line is renowned for attracting stars of stage and screen on board - and Steve Herra has been lucky enough to meet many of them.

As a purser on the QE2 and Cunard employee for many years Steve's recollections of Cunard's star-studded history made for an entertaining talk at our May monthly meeting.

Steve actually hosted the embarkation party on the QE2 for Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, but famous faces have always been a regular sight on the Cunard line.

The story started in 1840 when Canadian civil engineer Samuel Cunard won a bid to supply a mail service across the Atlantic. His first ship a paddle steamer RMS Britannia made its maiden voyage from Liverpool to Halifax in just 13 days.

Charles Dickens was an early passenger, enduring seasickness and a spartan cabin that flooded during a stormy crossing.

Conditions improved with baths and electric lights in later additions to the fleet. Luxury really arrived with the first funnel ship Mauretania with opulent

furnishings giving the feel of a country house hotel.

The boom years came after the First World War with thousands booking to cross the Atlantic. The launch of the Queen Mary in 1936 attracted the famous from Mae West and Marilyn Monroe to Winston Churchill and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Rumour has it Cary Grant met one of his five wives onboard.

During the Second World War the Queen Mary was used to transport troops. Because of the U-boat threat, a clock was fitted to alter course every

20 minutes to zig zag across the Atlantic.

Competition from air travel brought the golden age to a close in the late 1950s and with declining passenger numbers the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth were sold off.

But the prospect of crossing the Atlantic in style has a lasting appeal and Cunard's new flagship Queen Mary 2 is hailed as a true icon harking back to the legendary age of ocean travel.

Pam Dajda

Current Affairs: What is Working Class?

The unexpected result of the Hartlepool by-election where Labour was ousted from what was long considered a safe working class seat provided a fascinating topic for discussion.

Pondering what the term "working class" signifies today, Peter Andrew prepared a thought-provoking paper for the group's July meeting. Typical phrases have long been commonly used to describe the working class such as low pay, limited skill, manual work, physical labour and paid by the hour.

Drawing on the social back-

grounds of their own parents and grandparents members discovered a great variety - self-made businessmen, a foreign-born surgeon who became a leather-cutter in England, a son of a Polish peasant farmer who became an officer in the RAF and a descendant of an hereditary peer.

Traditionally class has been used as a means of placing people in a hierarchy in society to know how to interact and what to expect from them. A person's job is a good indicator of their class with judges and financiers in

the upper class, non-skilled manual workers in the lower or working class, and everyone else ranged between them in the middle class, sometimes divided into upper and lower middle class.

Members felt that with changes in modern society - the greater focus on small family units, geographical mobility, wider availability of university education and the growth of well-paid trades such as self-employed electricians and plumbers - the phrase working class was no longer the best criterion to judge people.

The general view was that the term is somewhat old-fashioned and there are better ways to assess people. Having said that, there is still a substantial group of people who are disadvantaged, less likely to go to university and unlikely to progress in business

Group leader John Kershaw thanked Peter Andrew for leading a stimulating discussion and added: "We are going to re-visit this subject later in the year because everyone found the topic fascinating. We think there is a lot more to discuss."

Richard Dajda

Get back in the swing - join the Golf group

Golf is a great game to play at any level and with the lifting of lockdown new members are welcomed along.

The Golf group meets on Thursday afternoons at Kingsway Golf Centre in Melbourn to play nine holes and the emphasis is firmly on having fun rather than playing competitively, says group leader Peter Walden.

"We've currently got eight regulars and we'd love some new recruits to come and join us."

"When Royston U3A Golf group originally started we all played badly and we're gradually getting better. We're a friendly group and play for pleasure not to outdo each other."

If you've never picked up a golf club in your life Peter advises having a couple of lessons to master the absolute basics before joining the group as "the only thing we can teach is how not to hit the ball. We're very qualified on that!"

Post lockdown the group is looking forward to restarting a popular part of the day - getting together again for a post-match coffee and chat.

If you're interested in having a go and would like more details contact Peter at golfroystonu3a@aol.com

Nick Scully about to tee off watched by the rest of the Golf group ...no pressure then !!



Sunshine and mud for Five Mile Walkers

The group is enjoying getting out and about again exploring the countryside in all sorts of weather - as Eric Heaton and Peter Andrew report.

On a glorious June morning 12 of us met at Therfield for a four mile walk through beautiful countryside. It was so good to be together again walking through beautiful countryside.

We were fortunate to see a Red Kite soaring overhead and we disturbed a herd of deer enjoying their lunch. On our return to Therfield a few of us stayed for a picnic on the green due to the pub being closed.

This was probably the last walk with John Collinge who has been a regular before his move to Norfolk. We will miss John's company but wish him well for the future.

A good walk and a good start to our renewed group.

In July, 13 of us gathered at Mill Hill Plants at Rushden for a six mile walk along a varied route including woods, pastures, through a farmyard to the village of Wallington where author George Orwell lived when he wrote Animal Farm.

We continued our walk at times through very muddy sections including one area which became an obstacle course before returning to Rushden. A good walk in good company through some of the area's prettiest countryside and eight members stayed for a welcome lunch.

Mud, lots and lots of mud and we didn't lose anybody!

Out in the sun at Therfield



A muddy challenge in Rushden

A funny thing happened to the Gardening group

Getting out into the garden has been a lifeline during lockdown and fuchsia expert Nick Dobson shared advice, tips and jokes with Gardening group members.

In an online talk 'a funny thing happened to me on the way to the potting shed' he highlighted the humorous side of gardening.

Nick got the gardening bug as a boy after being inspired by Percy Thrower and went on to become national fuchsia champion.

"From the earliest days gardens have been enjoyed as sanctuaries of peace and calm. And as well as hard work there's humour to be found there too," he said. Flowers like the Monkey Face orchid which smells of orange and the Flying Duck orchid which is only found in Australia proved his point.

The sky's the limit when it comes to humorous privet topiary, as illustrated by a prized privet pig and a spectacular Taj Mahal.

Plants with interesting names like Sneezewort Yarrow and Yellow Toadflax - also known as dead men's bones - were used in herbal medicine to relieve a variety of ailments from toothache to ulcers.

His topical gardening tips included:

- grow tomatoes earlier by planting Super Marmande
- wear gloves when handling wallflowers as their common name Blister Cress confirms their reputation for blistering sensitive skin
- plant marigolds and cosmos to protect runner beans

Returning to his love of fuchsias, Nick recommended award winning Annabel with its double white and pink tinged flowers. Also a big dahlia fan he suggested Blue Bayou and Pink Sylvia for their striking colours.

Nick was thanked by group leader Maureen Hersee for his tips, jokes and most entertaining talk.

Pam Dajda

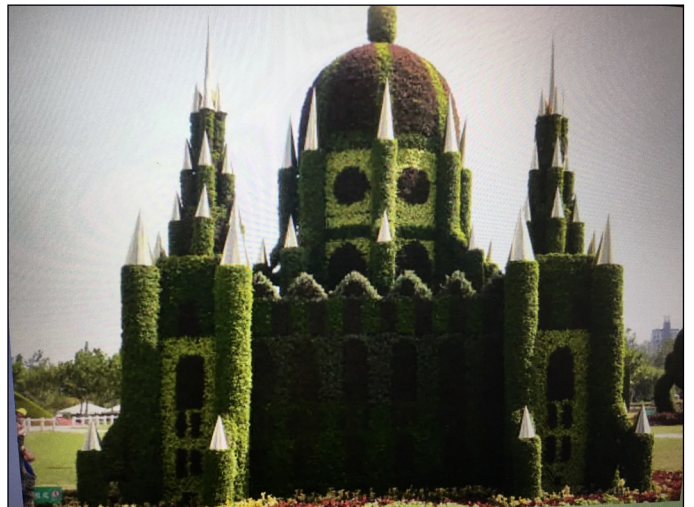


Monkey Face orchid



Flying Duck orchid

privet pig



Taj Mahal in privet

High times in lockdown for the Wine Appreciation group

When it comes to socially distanced get-togethers the Wine Appreciation group does it well by meeting online for a virtual 'picnic'.

To keep spirits up during lockdown we have held several tasting events over the past few months lead by James Aldridge of Corney & Barrow who so far has

enlightened us about wine, gin, port, Madeira and sherry and his suggestions for food pairings.

James supplied up to seven samples to taste and compare at each event. We learned about the regional climate, the vineyard location where the grapes were grown, the

wine produced and the production method, the number of bottles produced and the noticeable differences between each tasting sample.

A great time was enjoyed by all as driving home at the close of each online event was not necessary.

Weather permitting a socially distanced cocktail making garden get-together for Wine Appreciation group members is planned in August.

Jackie Gellert

Stepping out with the Strollers

The Short Walks Group is getting out and about again with strolls around the Therfield, Melbourn and Shepreth areas.

An impressive turnout of 17 members joined the first walk in June. Setting out from Dunsbridge Turnpike they followed the River Shep, on footpaths, to Fowlmere Road and the RSPB Nature Reserve, pausing at the old watercress beds where the Shep rises. The route was about three miles, flat and easy going in fine weather. Members enjoyed a choice of refreshment venues at Hot Numbers, Dobbies and the Green Man Beer Garden and looked forward to the next outing.

Fourteen members joined a walk on Therfield Heath in early July and enjoyed good walking conditions in mild weather. Thanks are due to Brian Holsen who had previously checked the route. Most of the group enjoyed refreshments and a chat at the Heath Café after the walk.

And at the end of the month seventeen members turned out for a very enjoyable walk on footpaths south of Bassingbourn. Thanks go to Barbara Rout for leading the way.

The group meets on Thursday mornings and is aimed at members who enjoy meeting up for a chat while taking gentle exercise

on local public footpaths. Routes are planned at about three miles and take into account the need for safe car parking and

refreshment facilities at the starting points, which are kept reasonably local to Royston.

David Walker



Pausing at the old watercress beds where the River Shep rises

Dates for your diary

AUGUST

No monthly meeting

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 28, 2pm on Zoom

GOSSIP FROM PHARAOH'S VILLAGE

Our guest speaker, **Janet Brewer**, Egyptologist, will give a fascinating talk about Tutankhamun, the other Pharaohs and the people who built their tombs.

OCTOBER

Tuesday 26, 2pm on Zoom

GREAT BRITISH ECCENTRICS

Have you ever wondered why Britain has had so many eccentrics over the centuries? Great British Eccentrics & Rogues is a highly amusing talk by guest speaker, **Paul Robbins**, which looks at some of the world's great Eccentrics & Rogues who just happened to be British!

Easy Guide to Interest Groups

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM		Art	Fitness (non U3A)	Birding	Walkers: Strollers	Book Club 2
		Golf Croquet	Seated Exercise (non U3A)	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 (non U3A)
		Pottery (Hand Building)	Ukulele		Quiz	
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.

Royston U3A AGM 2021

Chairman's Statement

The past 2 years have possibly been the most challenging years ever since we started Royston U3A, not least for you our members. The way we work and connect with you changed considerably but throughout we have remained contactable and have been providing as much as we possibly could to you.

HOW WE HAVE DEALT WITH THINGS?

With the onset of the pandemic, the committee looked at alternative ways that could be used to communicate with and support our members. We started producing a 'Keeping in Touch' leaflet giving members useful contacts and also letting members know what theatre, concerts etc could be accessible to them free of charge online. We also made every effort to get members to use technology ie Zoom so that they could meet other members and also be part of the monthly meetings with guest speakers. The year was particularly difficult for those of our members who do not and did not embrace technology so were not able to meet face-to-face with family or friends, but our committee members made every effort to maintain some regular telephone contact with many members not on email.

Outings and events had to be cancelled but thanks to today's technology, mainly with Zoom, many of our groups were able to function and once again members could communicate and feel part of what Royston U3A could offer. Groups, such as Current Affairs, French, Book Clubs, Wine Appreciation and the Art group all managed to function successfully via Zoom. We also managed to have some excellent speakers for our monthly meetings – the beauty being that they could be based anywhere but still deliver their talks to us. Obviously, many of the other group activities had to be cancelled until the Government allowed us to meet up again, albeit with immense caution.

Great thanks go to Pam Dajda and Ralph Gellert, for ensuring that the Royston U3A News still continued to be published

despite quite a number of the group activities not happening. The production of this publication was quite an achievement during these difficult times but what they produced was immensely appreciated and of great value to the membership.

During the period since the last AGM our membership numbers have dropped slightly due to several members sadly having passed away and others moving closer to family members not based in Royston. However, despite moving to different parts of the country, quite a few members have remained as members due, once again, to the benefit of technology – it doesn't matter where you are you can log onto Zoom from anywhere in the world. Amazingly, during the pandemic, we have attracted quite a few new members. As you are aware, we were fortunate to be able to extend all members' membership period free of charge for 12 months, until 31st March 2022. As an added bonus, by using technology we have also enjoyed some exceptionally good guest speakers who did not need to be within commuting range of Royston.

None of us have been able to avoid the impact the pandemic has had on our lives and those close to us, but Royston U3A has survived and the committee continued to be supportive to many of our members by making 'buddy' telephone calls, ensuring that members living on their own were coping. Although not able to meet up at least there was a friendly voice over the phone.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Regarding the future of Royston U3A, it is most disappointing that not one of our members has stepped forward to join the committee after we announced that there were three openings due to current committee members standing down. I am also giving advance notice now that many of the committee will be standing down as of next year, so unless members

come forward there is a risk that Royston U3A will not survive in a year's time. However, I must convey massive thanks to my fellow committee members for their friendship, support and commitment to me and to Royston U3A members for the past two years, namely:-

Sandra Walker as my Vice Chair. Sandra has been a good sounding board and kept me smiling even when times have been hard and I have been stressed out.

Barbara Andrew, Treasurer and Speakers Secretary. Thanks to Barbara for all her hard work and the efforts she has put into finding the great variety of guest speakers and keeping our finances in check. Barbara is standing down from the Speaker Secretary role but will continue being Treasurer.

My gratitude also goes to **Karen Heaton** who, after several years is, regrettably, standing down as Secretary.

Marion Martin, Membership Secretary – Marion's diligent record keeping with her membership spreadsheets is incredible as it also ensures that you receive the *Third Age Matters* publication.

Sylvia Fuller our Minutes Secretary whose patience and discipline at committee meetings ensured that we get meaningful committee meeting minutes.

Joan Westcott our Groups Co-ordinator; the past two years have been very different as far as her role was concerned but she did as much as possible to motivate and keep in touch with group leaders.

Carla Bailey - New Members Contact. Carla kept contact going with some of our newer members and I know members just loved and do love talking to her.

Pam Dajda - Publicity. Although Pam has been mentioned already, I have to thank her for her writing skills that have made everything

really interesting and informative during this tough period within Royston U3A – she has tremendous journalistic talent.

Ralph Gellert – who produces and publishes the Royston U3A News over many late nights and early mornings prior to it being distributed as well as producing the pre-meeting website homepage graphics. He also produced our 'Keeping in Touch' leaflets.

Eric Heaton – has been a valued co-opted committee member but is also standing down this year from that role.

My indebtedness goes to all of them for everything they have done for Royston U3A and for me, without them we would have been sadly lacking.

Looking to the future...as the UK emerges from the latest lockdown and we start to get back to relative normality, to be on the safe side for our membership's wellbeing, we will, for the time being continue holding our virtual monthly meetings via Zoom.

On a personal note, I have considered it a great privilege being Chairman of our very special U3A and once again I would like to thank you all for your loyalty and support during these particularly difficult times.

Jackie Gellert
Chairman, Royston U3A

June 29, 2021

Interest Groups

1st and 3rd ThursGROUP	DAY	TIME	FREQUENCY	GROUP LEADER
Art	Mon	9:30am	Variable on Zoom	Sylvia Jordan
Birding	Wed	8:30am	Monthly 1st Wed	Carol McGeoch
Book Club 1	Tues	2:00pm	Monthly 1st Tues on Zoom	Deirdre Smith
Book Club 2	Fri	11:00am	Monthly Variable on Zoom	Janet Burton
Book Club 3	Wed	10:30am	Monthly last Wed on Zoom	Elizabeth (Lee) Towers
Classic Novels	Fri	2:00pm	Monthly last Fri on Zoom	Sue Biggs
Clay Shooting	Wed	2:00pm	Monthly variable	Frank Martin
Current Affairs	Mon	3:30pm	Monthly 3rd Mon on Zoom	John Kershaw
Curry Club	Mon	12:00pm	Suspended	Reg Hounsell
Events & Outings (open to all)	Variable	Variable	Suspended	Sandra Walker
Film	Wed	2:00pm	Suspended	Carla Bailey
Fitness (non U3A)	Tues	9:30am	Weekly on Zoom	Kathy Hounsell
French Conversation	Mon	1:00pm	Fortnightly Variable on Zoom	Barbara Fielden
Gardening	Thurs	2:30pm	Monthly Variable on Zoom	Val Fairbanks
Golf	Thurs	1:00pm	Weekly	Peter Walden
Golf Croquet	Mon	10:15am	Weekly	John Bishop
History	Tues	2:00pm	Suspended	Reg Hounsell
Jazz Appreciation	Wed	7:30pm	Suspended	Reg Hounsell
Life Stories	Wed	11:00am	Suspended	John Bell
Mixed Crafts	Thurs	2:00pm	Suspended	Rosie Cowsley
Patchwork	Wed	10:00am	Suspended	Maureen Strugnell
Petanque / Boules	Fri	2:30pm	Weekly	Jane Dottridge
Pilates (non U3A)	Fri	1pm & 2pm	Weekly on Zoom	Kathy Hounsell
Pottery (Hand Building)	Mon	2:00pm	Suspended	Rosie Cowsley
Quiz	Thurs	2:00pm	Suspended	Sharon Camilletti
Seated Exercise (non U3A)	Tues	10:45am	Weekly on Zoom	Kathy Hounsell
Solo Sundays	Sun	2:30pm	Monthly 2nd Sun on Zoom	Sandra Restall
Theatre Trips	Variable	Variable	Suspended	Deirdre Smith
Ukulele	Tues	12:00pm	Weekly on Zoom	John Bishop
Walkers: Five Mile	Wed	9:45am	Monthly 2nd Wed	Eric Heaton
Walkers: Strollers	Thurs	10:15am	1st and 3rd Thurs of month	David Walker
Who do you think they were?	Thurs	10:45am	Suspended	Sharon Camilletti
Wine Appreciation	Variable	Variable	Variable on Zoom	Jackie Gellert

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

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 welcome too - to Pam Dajda at publicityroystonu3a@gmail.com

Contacts

Please use the Royston U3A website contacts page to email us with any queries.

For general information about Royston U3A please contact the Chair or Vice Chair.

For information about interest groups please select the option Interest Groups Co-ordinator stating the group in which you are interested.

For information about membership please select the option Membership Secretary.

For queries about our website or if you wish to send updates please select the option Website and Updates.

Royston U3A Committee

Chairman	Jackie Gellert
Vice Chair	Sandra Walker
Treasurer	Barbara Andrew
Speaker Secretary	Barbara Andrew
Secretary	Marion Martin
Membership Secretary	Marion Martin
Minutes Secretary	Sylvia Fuller
Groups Co-ordinator	Joan Westcott
New Members Contact	Carla Bailey
Publicity	Pam Dajda
Royston U3A News	Ralph Gellert