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Michaelmas Daisies and Rudbeckia in glorious
colour Waterperry Gardens

A word from the Chair

Hello and welcome to our Newsletter

As I write this month's article the rain is pouring down and it is looking extremely miserable however this morning, before it started, I was out leading the rambling group and we were saying how much we appreciate living in this country where we have four distinct seasons in the year. The changeable weather contributes to our beautiful countryside and although we all complain at times that it is too hot, too cold or too wet we should be thankful that we do not have the extreme weather that many parts of the world have to contend with. The news recently has been full of stories of serious floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters from which the UK does not suffer so we should be thankful.

Autumn is well and truly here and winter will be hot on its heels so holidays are now mostly memories and we can start thinking about activities nearer to home. This is probably a good time to consider joining a new u3a interest group. Many of the existing groups would welcome new members and the list of contacts are on our website or you can speak to Sue Bussey. If there is something you are particularly interested in but there isn't a group set up at present have a

go at starting one up, it isn't difficult and again Sue will always help getting you started. Interest groups are at the core of all u3a's and it is the best place to find new friends, particularly as the other members will have the same interests as you. I have always found that the more you become involved in something the more you get out of it and the more rewarding it becomes so make full use of our u3a.

The interest group contacts are obviously an essential part of the u3a and we will be holding an afternoon tea for them on 17th November. This will also allow for an exchange of ideas as well as updating them with things that are happening within the u3a movement, including the use of Beacon to assist with communications.

I have just caught the delicious smell of a casserole coming from the slow cooker which has been replaced by the salad spinner at the back of the kitchen cupboard until next year. The opportunity to enjoy some 'comfort food' after all the cold dishes of summer is always a bonus during the dark evenings at this time of year so there is always an upside to most things.

Best wishes

Don

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2023

Monthly meetings are in the Village Hall at 10.30am. Doors open 10am.

Please remember to wear your u3a badge and to register when you arrive.

4th Oct Philip Caine - Barrow to Baghdad and Back Again

1st Nov Peter Webb – Toulouse Lautrec and the French Music Halls.

6th Dec Lucy Lewis – Lighting a Fuse. A woman's life in the Army

(the programme may be subject to last minute change due to circumstances beyond our control)

You are invited to bring your own mug to the monthly meetings as it helps to save on cups but we will continue to make disposable cups available if you forget or do not wish to bring one.

Also bring your used stamps (separated into British/foreign) to put into the RNIB collection box

Forthcoming talks in October and November

At the October meeting Philip Caine will entertain us with his talk *From Barrow to Baghdad and Back Again*, taking us on whistle stop tour of what happened to him in his career, starting out as a 16 year old trainee chef in Barrow in Furness, then on to North Sea Oil rigs, to other roles in Algeria, Nigeria, Russia, Baghdad, Dubai and Iraq culminating with his current occupation writing thriller novels, inspired by his 10 years working in the Middle East.

In November art historian, writer and print collector Dr Peter Webb will tell us about Toulouse Lautrec and the singers and dancers in French Music Halls in the 1890s. Oooh la la!

Whatever the topic we can learn something outside our own range of experience and, hopefully, keep our minds flexible even if our bodies lag behind a little! Do come along and show your support.

Look out in the next newsletter for information about the speakers for next year. Dates of the main meetings in 2024 will be

10th January

7th February

6th March

3rd April

1st May

12th June

10th July

7th August

4th September

2nd October

13t Nov

5th December

(NB Thursday)

RAMBLING GROUP

Wednesday October 18th. Meet at the car park off Church Lane in Chalfont St Peter - unfortunately it is a pay and display car park (£2.10 for 3hrs). The 4 mile walk goes through Chalfont Park, passes Mopes Farm and the Scout camp site.

Wednesday November 15th. Meet at Primrose Hill Recreation Ground Car Park, Kings Langley WD4 8HZ at 10.00am. You need to get a ticket from the machine for 3 hours free parking. From Chipperfield come down Vicarage Lane, straight across into The Nap and bear right along Waterside then left into Water Lane and left again into Primrose Hill and the car park is a short way along on the left. From the Watford or M25 direction turn right by the church into Church Lane then right into Water Lane and then follow the previous directions. The ramble is nearly 4 miles and goes through the Bedmond area.

Don Sutton

U3a Annual subscriptions are due in January. Still remaining at £15.00, and still excellent value!

Please be reminded that monies will be collected by cheque or by cash. Further information will be in the next newsletter

Plenty of time to start looking for the cheque book or the cash hidden down the back of the settee!

Penny Bulgin

HOLD THAT DATE!

Interest Group Contacts' Meeting

We are planning to hold the next meeting for members who run or help to run interest groups (or are thinking about doing so), **on Friday, 17th November at 2.15pm in Sarratt Village Hall**. I shall be sending out emailed invitations to the Group Contacts listed for each group, but if they will be unable to attend, and/or a small committee runs the group, then please pass the invitation on to other members to represent the group, as we would like someone to attend from each one.

Although we would like to pass on some new information first, especially about the possibilities of using the u3a Beacon system to help with the administration of bigger groups, the meeting will also be an opportunity to meet some of your Committee members, and for informal problem sharing/solving. Tea/coffee and cake will also be involved! Please let me know if you would like to join us. Sue (Interest Group Co-ordinator) – phone 01923-245454 or email sue.bussey@ntlworld.com

WALKING GROUP

We've been out and about, mainly fairly local this summer.

Early August Terry and Sue led 9 of us from Ashridge House. A route found on "Outdoor Active" which took us via Golden Valley to Hudnall corner then on to Little Gaddesden. The graveyard there had an accommodating seat around a tree for our coffee stop.

Later in August John Guy and Colin Harrison had pleasant weather for a group of 10 walking from Boxmoor to Bovingdon and Bourne End. They had a fieldside rest and refreshment and only two brave souls crossed over via the canal lock.

Our September 12 walk, happily after the heatwave, was up to Harefield and down to Springwell Lake, Inns Lake and Stockers Lake. And 10 walkers were joined by 5 more group members to share a picnic lunch in Val's garden. It felt quite like old times. Always pleased to see any member tempted to try out a walk with us

Val MacDonald



Singing4Fun: HELP!

The Rickmansworth/Sarratt Joint Singing4Fun group is looking for someone prepared to lead our monthly meetings, following the death of much-missed choir leader /conductor, David Clough. The meetings are held from 10am to 12 noon on the third Wednesday of the month at the Junction at Christ Church, Chorleywood.

There are about 20 members of the group but we are never all there at the same time, so attendance at each session ranges from 10 to 15 or so. We do have a very able accompanist and the emphasis is on the "fun" bit as we are a group of very mixed ability, not all being able to read music. However, we do tackle a wide range of music – folk songs, show tunes, or popular songs, with a lot of laughter, and invariably end up feeling uplifted after our sociable morning.

If you would like to help the group to continue, or just want to know more, please contact Sue Bussey on 01923 245454 (you'll have to announce yourself because of the BT Callminder) or email sue.bussey@ntlworld.com



JAUNTERS GROUP

Trip to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, August 2023

Well, what can I say, what a Jaunt!! An absolutely brilliant day out! It helped that the weather was on our side – blue skies and sunshine – and the content was stunning!

The 'Commandant's Parade' (dress rehearsal for the Sovereign's Parade a couple of days later) was truly impressive. On arrival, we were greeted by our two guides for the day, both hugely knowledgeable and ready to answer all our questions. After coffee, we made our way to the stand where we witnessed the passing out parade. Over 600 cadets were there, of which around 200 would be completing their training and 'passing out' at the Sovereign's Parade on Friday, 11 August, 2023. Imagine the noise of the marching feet, the accompanying music, everything executed to perfection. What a performance! The only unfortunate statistic of the day was that there were 25 cadets who succumbed to the heat and fainted!!

After lunch, we were taken by our guides to the various prestigious rooms and buildings that are just a small part of the RMA, and learnt more of the history of Sandhurst. The two memorial chapels were really interesting. Their motto is 'Serve to Lead'. This famous establishment of excellence produces men and women (total equality these days) who almost inevitably go on to great success in whatever their field might be.

To those of you who thought twice about joining this well organised, great day out, you missed a treat! Thanks Jaunters!!

Julia Saddler

If you would like to be added to our circulation list, please send your details to Mike Hawkins at juliemike.hawkins@btinternet.com



GARDENING GROUP

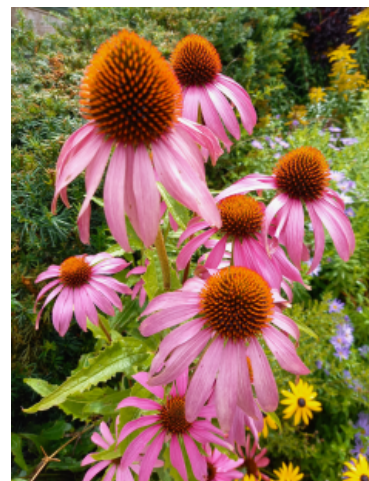
The August outing of the Gardening Group saw more than 40 people gathered at Church Gardens, Harefield on a warm but showery day, to enjoy a return visit to this most enchanting place. The 17th century house and walled gardens are privately owned by Patrick and Kay McHugh and their ongoing restoration from near dereliction has been a labour of love for this talented and resourceful family for nearly 30 years so far. We were welcomed by Kay and two of her daughters in the newly built tea rooms, and given an introductory talk highlighting recent work, casually describing their achievements *"we built the tearoom building, but we are getting too old to do the roofing, so the girls tiled the roof"!!*

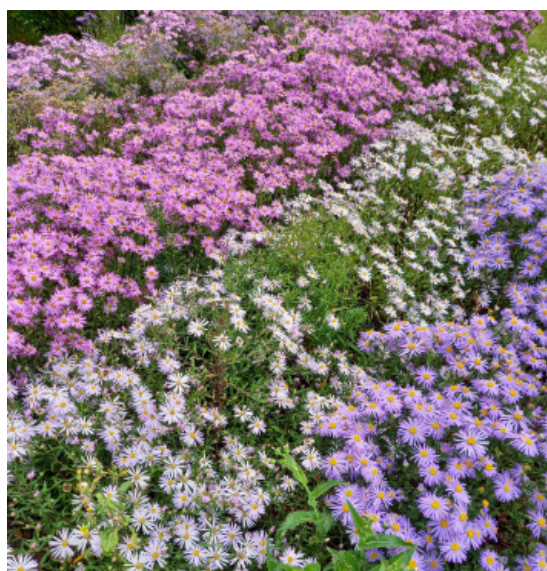
We were then invited to tour the gardens at our leisure, and to have our tea and homemade cake whenever we wished to come and get it. As it was raining at that point, most opted to start with refreshments, and very good they were too. When the showers abated we headed outside, and were soon walking the pathways in the lovely walled gardens, admiring the perennials, the glorious dahlias and the abundant produce – beans, sweetcorn, greens of various sorts, squashes, soft fruits, and trees laden with apples, pears and medlars. We found owner Kay on her knees weeding the beds; and were astounded to learn that she does all the gardening herself with no paid or volunteer help. This woman is truly astonishing!

The adjacent cutting garden was full of colour and provides flowers for one of the daughters, who sells bouquets as a sideline. We also spent time admiring the recently installed large wildlife (and wild swimming) pond, with its planting already very well established and home to many dragonflies. A stream with an ornamental bridge over it has been built to channel rain run-off; and adds to the charm of the whole area. Church Gardens proved once again to be a great venue for us to visit. We cannot wait to see what they've done next time we go!

Church Gardens is open to the public on Sunday afternoons from April to October and for some special events. Check their website for details and booking churchgardens.co.uk

Pam Litton





The Garden Group meetings will be indoor events at 10am on Monday mornings during October to March (and possibly April) and we charge a small fee of £3 for attendance to help cover the costs of the hall and speakers. If you have ideas for places for the Gardening Group to visit next year please let us know.

9th October - talk by The Rose Society.
If you have any roses still in bloom do bring them along towards a table display
13th November - talk about Tudor Gardens
11th December party

GARDENING GROUP CONTINUED....

For our last outing of the 2023 season, the Gardening Group organised a coach trip to Waterperry Gardens in Oxfordshire, which was a great success, with 40 members enjoying the dry and mild day. This was a destination known to some of the group but certainly new to many of us, and what a treasure it turned out to be!

The gardens and garden centre cover an area of around 20 acres and surround an 18th Century manor house, built on the site of a much older property. In the 1930s, Miss Beatrix Havergal took on the lease of the house and grounds from Magdalen College Oxford and, with her friend Avice Saunders, established the School of Horticulture for Ladies, which they ran for 40 years. Today the gardens still provide horticultural training courses and gardening apprenticeships.

We were advised to go 'in Michaelmas daisy season', hence the trip was planned for September. And we were not disappointed, as the long mixed herbaceous borders and the nursery stock borders were a riot of colour, with so many varieties of Michaelmas Daisies (Aster family, with some now classified as *Symphotrichum*, which doesn't exactly roll off the tongue!). Other autumn-flowering perennials such as *Heleniums* and *Rudbeckias*, made glorious colour combinations. The walled garden had a wonderful display of dahlias, and vegetable beds, with a huge bed of squashes and pumpkins being the stand-out area. Other areas included an alpine garden, rose gardens, orchards, and wild areas alongside the Thames. Another interesting feature was a National Collection of alpine Saxifrages, grown in beautiful, raised stone beds, with scree slopes and rocks providing the perfect conditions.

Two other fascinating places to visit on site were the museum and the church. The Museum of Rural Life, housed in a 18th century granary, was a superbly curated collection of horticultural and agricultural tools and paraphernalia; it was extraordinary to see the wealth of custom-made specific tools and gadgets for so many functions, including an asparagus bundler, and little bootees for lambs and goats to wear in wet weather to prevent foot rot.

The tiny church of St Mary the Virgin was a wonderful and unexpected bonus to this trip. Part of the building is late Anglo-saxon, added to in the 12th century. Some of the window glass from the 13th century is still intact, and other beautifully decorated stained-glass windows are 14th century. There are 12th century floor tiles and 15th century memorial brasses; and a nobleman's tomb with his stone effigy in medieval armour. It is described as an architectural gem, and none of us visiting it could argue with that! All in all, Waterperry proved to be a hit with the Gardening Group and one that would be worth visiting at any time of year.

Pam Litton

Nature in Focus.

There are some wonderful pictures taken by u3a members on the national u3a website and you can share your own photos of elements of nature or wildlife. [As I did - Ed] All you need to do is upload your photos via an online form at u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes/found-in-nature

The following advice comes from Capital Gardens

Bowl-shaped flowers with open centres such as crocus and some roses are easy for most insects to get to. Lipped flowers, like sages and laburnum, provide a landing area for bees to sit on comfortably while they nose their way in and are often sought out by bumblebees and solitary bees.

Flowerheads composed of many small florets with deep wells, such as *Verbena bonariensis* and scabious, are just the right shape for the long tongues (proboscis) of moths and butterflies.

In short, a having a range of flower shapes will attract a greater variety of pollinators. And if your garden is big enough, planting in blocks does them an additional favour as they'll expend less energy flying from flower to flower.

Highly-bred double flowers with many overlapping petals and closed centres are hard for pollinators to access. Many also produce little pollen or nectar. If you can, choose a diversity of plants that will provide flowers for as much of the year as possible. Avoid using pesticides, nature will find its own balance!



Top tip for autumn- pile up some of the fallen leaves in the garden rather than removing them. This can provide nesting material for hedgehog hibernation and insect prey for visiting 'hogs or other creatures

Beacon is a national u3a database we use for Sarratt & District u3a and most information is sent out by email using Beacon in order to keep costs down. If the newsletter is not reaching you call Penny on 01923 776143 she will be pleased to get your details updated. If you don't have access to email arrangements can be made to post the newsletter to you in return for a small administrative charge to cover costs - speak to Penny.

CHATTERBOX

The link to the latest news about our interest groups

Grab this chance - The Music Group meets in the afternoon of the 4th Monday of the month when members take it in turns to choose CDs to share from a variety of genres, based on a monthly theme. It rotates round members' homes and is now looking for new members to join in, expanding musical horizons with tea and chat too.

For more information contact Sally at 1sallyjlewis@gmail.com

Get in at the start - There are sign-up sheets on display at the monthly meetings for new groups: Book Group3, Art Group 2, Classic Books 2, Wine Appreciation Group 3, and Walking with your dog. If you are interested in joining any of these new groups but unable to get to a monthly meeting at Sarratt Village Hall please contact Sally at 1sallyjlewis@gmail.com to put your name on the list.

If you enjoy spending time in Suffolk you may be interested in visiting a transport museum located south west of Lowestoft, The East Anglian Transport Museum. Run by volunteers (as always such activities would not survive without enthusiasts who are willing to help in a wide range of roles) it is open on Thursday and Sundays and is well worth a visit, as your editor and friends can testify, having enjoyed the afternoon riding the trams and trolleybuses which volunteers have restored and maintain.

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should be submitted to the Editor Janet by 23rd November 2023. It would be lovely to have input from some of the other groups. If you have any comments about the newsletter or items you would like to see contact Janet at j.taylor0402@ntlworld.com

Please remember to take photos of your u3a activities which we might be able to use on the website or the rolling screen or in the newsletter. Some 'action' photos would be welcome and try different perspectives sometimes. If you enjoy what you are doing it will show. If you take pictures of people please check that you have permission as it is assumed that any u3a members shown in photos submitted for the newsletter are happy to be included.