

An Autumn Message from the Chairman

How quickly the months pass. It's hard to believe that this is the Autumn Newsletter. I know that many of you have been catching up on holidays postponed because of the pandemic and also spending time with families. The long dry summer has made it possible to get back to some degree of normality.

Our membership continues to grow and our meetings, activities and outings remain popular and you will see evidence of this in this newsletter which contains accounts of outings, speakers, group activities and this year's u3a holiday. Members of the committee and group leaders have worked hard to put these activities in place and I hope that everyone appreciates their hard work as much as I do.

We value your on-going support and look forward to seeing all those who can make it at the next General Meeting.

Gill Sewell
Chair

The Committee

Chairman	Gill Sewell
Vice Chairman	Carol Dixson Smith
Secretary	John Dickenson
Treasurer	Philip Simmons
Assistant Treasurer	Barrie Lazarus
Committee Member	Maggie Giles
Flowers/cards/gifts Organiser	Carol Dixson Smith
Groups Convenor	Gill Sewell
Membership Secretary	Maxine Tilley
Newsletter/Publicity/Website	Patricia Lee
Outings Co-ordinator	Carol Dixson Smith
Speaker Secretary	Derek Piercy

Monthly General meetings at

Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall start 3pm

Friday 21 October

Friday 18 November

Friday 16 December

2023 we move back to the second Friday of the month

Friday 13 January

Friday 10 February

Friday 10 March

Groups please contact Gill Sewell Group's Co-ordinator on marjorieosegs@hotmail.com if you are interested in joining a group.

Or visit our website <https://u3asites.org.uk/sawbridgeworth/groups>

Interest	Convenor	When	Time
Active Walkers	Patricia Lee	Weekly Wed	9.30 am
Antiques & Collectables	Barbara Lazarus	Monthly 1 st Wed	2 - 3.30pm
Art Appreciation	Convenor needed	Monthly 2 nd Mon	1.45 - 3.30pm
Art-Drawing & Painting For Fun	Val Simmons	Monthly 2 nd + 4 th Thurs	2 - 4.30 pm
Bookends	Celia Wiley	Monthly 3 rd Mon	3 - 4.30pm
Bridge	Kathy Morris	alt weeks face to face/online	2 - 4pm Thurs
Card Games	Marion Martin	Monthly 1 st Mon	2 - 4pm
Chess	Stephen Vincent	Twice monthly Mon	7 - 9pm
Church Visits Mar-Oct	Rosemary Penketh	Mar-Oct 2 nd Mon	9.30 - 12.30pm
City Slickers	Brian Neal	4xYearly Sun	All day
Creative Writing	Sandy Sharpe	Monthly 1 st Tues	2pm
Croquet Group 1	Rosemary Stafford	May - Oct 3 rd Tues	2 - 4.30pm
Croquet Group 2	Rosemary Stafford	May - Oct 3 rd Thurs	2 - 4.30pm
Cycling 15-20 miles	Annette Norman	Monthly 2 nd Sat	10am Library
Flower Arranging	Mary Piggott	Monthly 3 rd Tues	10 - 12 noon
Food for Thought	Patricia Lee	Monthly 3 rd Wed	7pm
Friday 5-mile walkers	Chris Burton	Monthly 3 rd Fri	10am
Gardening	Kay Ballard	Monthly 2 nd Wed	2.30 - 4.30pm
Genealogy	Stephen Vincent	Monthly 3 rd Tues	3 - 4.30pm
General History	John Dickenson	Monthly 4 th Thurs	2 - 4pm
Green Fingers Gardening	Gill Sewell	Monthly 2 nd Wed	10 - 11.30am
Knitting & Crochet	Barbara Harpin	Monthly 2 nd Thurs	2 - 4pm
Loose Talk	Carmen Donoghue	Monthly 1 st Mon	12 noon - 2pm
Luncheon Club	Sheila Goodwin	Monthly 3 rd Tues	1pm
Mah Yong	Rosemary Stafford	Monthly 4 th Tues	10 - 12.30pm
Photography	Val Simmons	Monthly 2 nd Mon	10 - 12noon
Play Reading	Convenor needed	Monthly 4 th Tues	7pm
Poetry Appreciation	Eileen Miller	Monthly 1 st Tues	10 - 12noon
Scrabble 1	Lynn Glander	Monthly 1 st Mon	2 - 4pm
Scrabble 2	Joan Decourcy	Monthly 3 rd Wed	2 - 4pm
Singing for fun	Gill Sewell	1 st and 3 rd Thurs	10 - 11.30am
Strollers 1	Convenor needed	Monthly 4 th Thurs	10am
Strollers 2	Convenor needed	Monthly 2 nd Thurs	10am
The Book Club	Pearl Humberstone	Monthly 3 rd Wed	2.30 - 4.30pm
Thurs 5-mile walkers	Convenor needed	Monthly 4 th Thurs	10am
Trips & Outings	Carol Dixson-Smith	As programmed	
Walks 9+ miles	Chris Burton	Monthly 3 rd Fri	9.30am
Wine Appreciation	Derek Piercy	Monthly 2 nd Wed	7pm

SPEAKER SECTION

Forthcoming Speakers

October 21 - The Heritage of Gilbert and Sullivan – by Mr Bernard Lockett

November 18 – A Funny Thing Happened On The Way... – by Mel Rees

December 16 - When Policemen and Doctors start to look young – by Keith Baldwin
the "Tallfellow"

More information on these talks please visits our events page

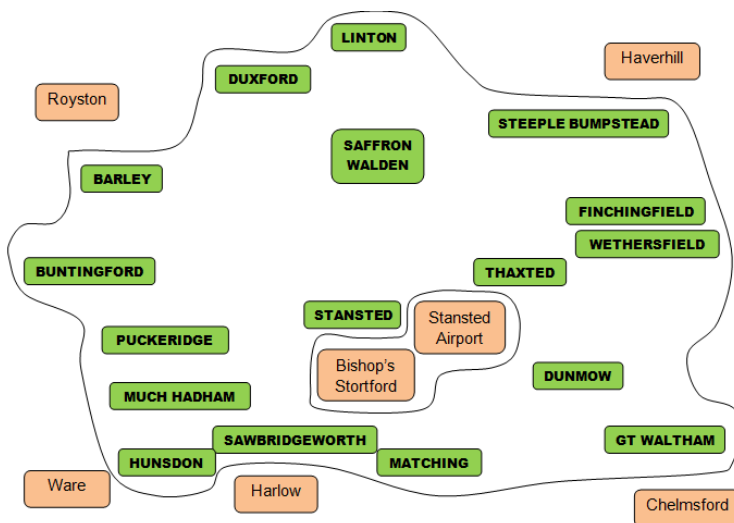
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Previous Speakers

The Hundred Parishes

The talk at our July meeting was entitled A Stroll Through the Hundred Parishes and was given by Ken McDonald.

The Hundred Parishes is an area of the East of England which encompasses around 450 square miles of northwest Essex, northeast Hertfordshire and southern Cambridgeshire. The area comprises just over 100 administrative parishes, hence its name. It contains over 6,000 listed buildings and many conservation areas, village greens, ancient hedgerows, protected features and a historical pattern of small rural settlements in close proximity to one another. It is largely unspoilt and is richly endowed with many fine examples of agricultural and built heritage.



The Hundred Parishes Charity was launched in 2014 and is dependent on membership from individuals, families, organisations, parishes and councils. The Society aims to increase awareness, enjoyment and care of the Hundred Parishes and to encourage people to walk. The Society runs various walking groups.

There is an informative website, with a What's On section and details of the 102 walks which

range from 1 to 17 miles. Every Parish is now included in at least one of the walks, which all use public Rights of Way. Members of the Society regularly walk the routes and report any obstacles to the relevant authority, most of which are quickly remedied. Ken said that the walking routes also detail tea rooms and pubs on the way!

Ken gave an extremely informative photographic presentation showing the variety of walks. These detailed ancient churches and chapels, unusual straw finials, silly signs, grand houses not visible from the road, buildings with diverse architecture and a few unusual sights. The beautiful photographs were sufficient to entice members to explore this interesting area on our doorstep and appreciate the depth of heritage it contains.

Prosthetic Perils

Our August Meeting gave us an entertaining and humorous talk by Andy Smith. Andy is a double-amputee since losing his lower right arm and leg in an accident over 30 years ago. He was in hospital for 6 months where he was made aware of his limitations but also discovered what we take for granted. He acknowledged that we had all been through tough times but felt we are helped by our UK sense of humour. Andy suggests that whilst life with a disability is often challenging, it can have its lighter side. He recollected wartime stories from an old neighbour, who had fought in WW1 and Douglas Bader, which he felt helped to prepare him for his personal trials to come. Andy told us several anecdotes and stories, which he had converted into poetry. These poems included Top Spin (Ride on Brighton Pier), Bed Sore Blues, Tell Me About The War, Pop, Love Hearts and Lockdown Family Christmas. In addition, Andy and his wife travel to West Africa once a year to support and encourage victims of trauma. What an amusing, motivated and inspirational speaker!

Group Activities

South Coast Cycling

On Sunday 26 June eleven members of the Sawbridgeworth u3a cycling group, with three non-cycling partners, met up at Burley in the New Forest on the way to our four day trip to the south coast.

After a picnic overlooking the Burley cricket pitch we ventured into the New Forest for an off-road cycle of about 16 miles. The route was more interesting than planned as last minute changes took us over fallen trees, gorse bushes and a closed track whilst enjoying the beauty of the Forest. The walking group had a more straightforward route and even managed to find time for a visit to Burley Tea Rooms. After a short drive we all settled into our hotel, The Balincourt at Boscombe, and then headed down to the local Harvester – a beautiful location



with great views right out to sea.

We woke up to a bit of rain and so we delayed our start on day two. The walkers enjoyed a trip on the bus to Poole while the cyclists breezed along the promenade with the aid of a strong tail wind to Mudeford Sandspit. Here we caught the little ferry to Mudeford Quay which fortunately had enough space for eleven bikes.



After a brief stop at Highcliffe Castle our route continued in pursuit of the largest cream slices on the south coast. We weren't disappointed when we arrived at the café in Stewart's Christchurch Garden Centre: the slices were so big they needed to be shared! We cycled along the river to Christchurch and then back to Boscombe. Unfortunately the wind had not changed direction so it was heads down back along the promenade. Both cyclists and walkers had worked up a good appetite which we satisfied at a local Italian restaurant.

The following day the cyclists went the other direction along the coast towards Poole, where we caught the chain ferry to Studland. Looking up we saw three familiar faces waving down to us from the top deck of the Bournemouth Breezer.



Both groups met up at Knoll Beach and we all enjoyed some free time in Studland, with some adventurous souls taking a dip in the sea. It was good to have the wind behind us all the way back to Boscombe.

Our final day took us to Hengistbury Head where the cyclists swapped bikes for walking boots. Everyone enjoyed a circular walk up on the heathland, down to Mudeford Sandspit and back along the shore overlooking Christchurch harbour. We enjoyed a final lunch at the aptly named Hungry Hiker before setting off for home or extending the trip as some lucky members decided to do.



We all agreed the area around Boscombe is a great choice for flat, coastal cycling as the promenade is open to cyclists all year except July and August. Just be prepared for a bit of head wind but the good news is there's usually a tail wind to look forward to. A big thank you to Chris Burton for organising all the routes. Here's to 2023.

Our cycle group meets at 10am on the first Saturday of the month outside Sawbridgeworth Library. We cycle between 16 and 20 miles, with a refreshment stop. New members are always welcome. Please contact annettenorman90@gmail.com

Wine Appreciation

It was interesting to see that the three House wines offered by the glass at the Hotel for our latest u3a holiday were Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc. This reminded me of the old adage ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) which could now be expanded to anything other than these three wines.

Our August meeting of the Wine Group had as a theme "anything but Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc" and we had a lovely summer evening sitting outside sampling some interesting alternatives.



Why not try an "Alberino" with fish, a lovely zingy acidic apple flavour with a hint of lemon blossom. This wine comes from Galicia in Spain and is excellent with seafood salads and as an aperitif.

We found many unusual wines from Italy for example Gavi from the Piedmont region using the Cortese Grape. Passerina from Southern Italy and Pinot Bianco from the high mountains of Northern Italy. These three are only a small sample of the wide variety of grapes found in Italy and we are always finding new and different grapes

to sample and enjoy.



Another wine that can be drunk as an aperitif is Furmint, a dry white from Hungary. We tasted a pale Furmint, from an old vineyard. It had good acidity, with flavours of pear, apple and citrus. This is from the Tokaji region and has been grown there for over 500 years and is now thought to be one of the oldest grape varieties still in cultivation. At £8.00 per bottle from a local supermarket most of the group would buy this again.



The group also tasted a wine from Austria which in the past had a poor reputation for wine exports. The wine sampled was Gruner Veltliner and both examples of this grape were liked by the group as a light easy drinking wine going well with food.



All these wines are available from local supermarkets and varied in price from £6.99 up to £11.99 so why not try something different the next time to pop to the supermarket. One cost saving advice we often use is to wait until there are 25% discounts on offer for six or more wines (most supermarkets do this regularly).

SAWBRIDGEWORTH U3A SOMERSET HOLIDAY 2022

On Sunday 28th August, sixty - one U3A members set off for a holiday based in Wells, Somerset, in a huge coach driven by Steve of Don's Coaches in Dunmow. Wells is known as the smallest city in England but is big in charm.

Our first stop was at Aerospace Bristol which before 1939 was the largest single aircraft manufacturing unit in the world. After a substantial mixed platter lunch [which was set out under the tail of Concorde towering above us] we went round the museum. This is held in vast hangars able to hold a wealth of transport equipment ranging from the early 1900s to the modern rocket engines, passenger jets, missiles and even a remote control submersible vehicle. Full size bi-planes, helicopters and vehicles were on display along with various engines, all of which had been manufactured in Aerospace Bristol.

We were then split into three groups and given an instructive talk about the last and most recent Concorde which was brought back to the Bristol hangar after its last flight. The guides were extremely knowledgeable and I think we all learnt something, including why the French insisted Concorde was spelt with an e at the end! We were then able to go inside the plane which was fully fitted out as it was on its last flight and also see into the cockpit which was crammed with instrument buttons and switches.

On arrival at The Swan Hotel in Wells we were very quickly accommodated by the efficient staff and we located our rooms which were spread widely throughout this large, old, former coaching inn with cobbled courtyards. We learnt from the city guide that a previous owner had purchased the two properties opposite the hotel and had them knocked down so that guests could look directly onto Wells Cathedral and its grounds.

Sunday evening's entertainment of a quiz was put together by Diane and Carol who at times probably both thought it would have been easier to herd cats! Between us all we managed to rake up general knowledge and trivia but deciding who had the correct answer to write down wasn't always easy.

On Monday we set off towards Taunton for Hestercombe Gardens. These were created in the 1750s to provide a series of landscapes [as in paintings] with woodland, lakes, a temple, follies, statues and waterfalls. The formal garden behind the house was designed by Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens and completed in 1908. The layout was stunning with symmetrical paths and water courses, pergolas and lawns which could be viewed from different terraces and at different angles. We were surprised how green everything was and how much was in bloom, proving that they had received a lot more rainfall than us. We then completed our trip here with a splendid buffet lunch in the former stable block.

Our evening entertainment definitely stretched our brain cells, with anagrams, picture recognition and logos to identify. Then came the "Feely Bags!" Diane had gone to great lengths to confuse us with objects she had buried in bags of beads which had to be identified. Some of the group had very vivid imaginations!

Our afternoon destination was Coates English Willow Visitor Centre at Stoke St Gregory. Unfortunately, they were not able to give us a tour of the workings but we watched a very informative video which showed the whole process of growing, harvesting and treating willow and how its uses have changed over the decades. The museum was a delight with numerous different items from the 1850s to the present day displayed over two floors. We learnt how willow has been used in a wide range of forms in farming, fishing, transportation and in the home. The company had almost folded with the development of more modern materials but by diversifying they are now the producer of the best quality charcoal as well as making willow fencing and baskets. Some of the U3A painting and Drawing for Fun group took advantage of the charcoal being on sale.

After a stroll around Wells for a bit of shopping on Tuesday morning, we met up with a local guide who told us about The Swan Hotel and nearby Crown Hotel which were both significant coaching inns. She then took us to the front of the cathedral where she pointed out particular features such as the stone sculptures of scenes from the Old Testament, the holes near the trumpeting angels where music from the organ could be heard by people outside. She explained how the ordinary people would be unlikely to ever set foot inside the cathedral and would look at the building as a monument to God. We then went to Vicar's Close, a charming lane with cottages either side which were built for the exclusive use of the clergy in the cathedral. Something that many of us didn't know is that a church would become a cathedral if a bishop was appointed there but when there

wasn't one, it would revert to a church. Our tour inside the cathedral was amazing with many of us saying it was the most stunning cathedral they had been into. The architectural features were pointed out and the history of the development over the centuries including how the building was prevented from collapse. The Chapter house was beautiful and the choir stalls had colourful tapestries and carved wooden seating.

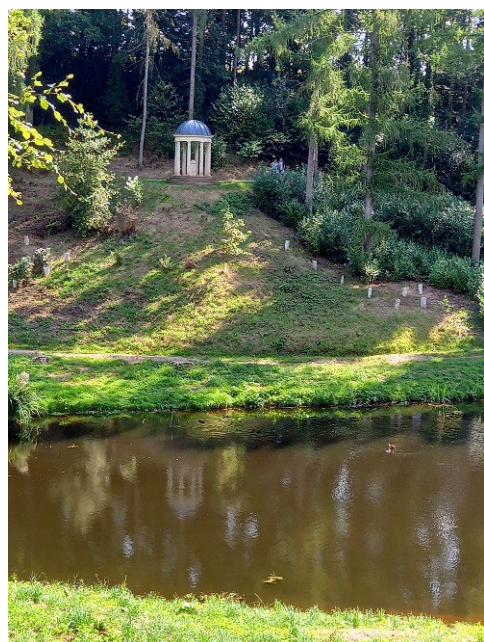
We then had lunch in the Vicars Hall which amazed our guide who wondered how Carol had managed to book it. Little does she know about our chief organiser!



Aerospace Bristol - The last Concorde and a bi-plane



Hestercombe Gardens





Coates English Willow Museum and the White Rabbit from the Sculpture Trail

The afternoon was free for us to take in the Bishop's Palace and the tranquil gardens with the moat running through and great views of the cathedral. We also saw the well - known ritual of the swans pulling the rope in the moat to ring a bell in the hope of getting food.

On Wednesday we travelled by coach to Bishop's Lydeard where we picked up the steam train to Minehead. The carriages were pulled by a Great Western Engine and many of us reminisced about steam trains in our youth and the smells that went with them! The journey was great fun, with lovely scenery, and was punctuated by our very enthusiastic volunteer guard who gave us what she called, "Useless information," (which turned out to be very interesting!) which included a place along the line where the Beatles had been allowed to be filmed crossing the track.

On our arrival at Minehead we took the short coach journey to Dunster which is a charming village with interesting buildings and shops. Some of us ventured up the steep lane to Dunster castle, the original position of the Saxon castle being the attractive Keep Garden from where there are great views of the surrounding countryside. The house was built in the castle grounds between 1868 and 1872 and lived in by generations of the Luttrell family. The inside was very interesting and furnished throughout. On the way down to the village some of us came across the lovely Secret Garden which was full of roses, lavender and dahlias and had the village church as a backdrop. Others chose to explore the walks through the gardens, the Watertmill and the village itself.

On Thursday morning we set off for Sawbridgeworth and on route we stopped at the Aldwick Estate which is a vineyard nestled in a valley at the end of a very narrow lane which somehow or other our driver Steve managed to negotiate. He had already gained vast experience from the narrow roads around Hestercombe! After a short tour of the vineyard where we learnt about the different types of grapes, their growth and harvesting, we sat down in the light and airy barn to sample 3 different wines. We then learnt about how the family had developed the vineyard and how they work with the community to use local products and services. The setting was lovely and we enjoyed a two course lunch and wine (of course) which ensured that most of us fell asleep on the way back home.

Reading this I'm sure you will have noticed that Carol must have ticked every possible box in order to find places of interest and different experiences for everyone to enjoy. In our learning journey (the remit of the U3A!) we covered History, Science & Technology, Geography, Nature, French (Le Concorde!), Domestic Science (lots of food sampling!), Maths (calculating how much we'd spent at the bar and in the shops!), Horticulture, Architecture, Art and Music.

Carol made a brilliant choice in The Swan Hotel as it is in the heart of the delightful city of Wells. The accommodation and meals were excellent and the staff coped remarkably well with the large group of us, even asking us to come back anytime!

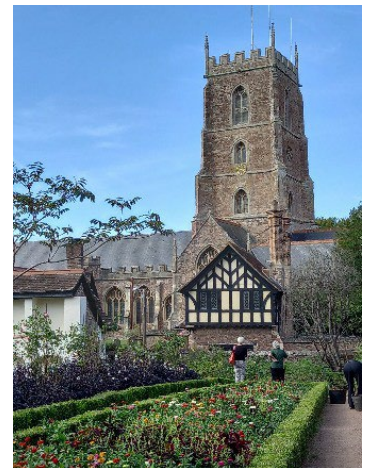
Thank you Carol, Diane and the group for a very enjoyable holiday in a lovely part of England.
Mary Stewart



Carol for a moment enjoying being the Bishop of Wells/ Steve our driver resisting temptation at the wine tasting/At the vineyard



Steam train trip to Minehead



Dunster Village, Castle, Church & Secret Garden



Wells City sights



A Visit to The Shepherd Neame Brewery and Whitstable

In early July our trip to the Shepherd Neame Brewery in Faversham took place. The coach left early in case of heavy traffic, but our clever driver made sure our route avoided the heavy traffic around the QE2 bridge and we arrived in Faversham in time for a coffee and a look around the town. Faversham is a town full of History and attractive interesting historical buildings. We strolled to the Visitor Centre where we had a guided tour of a collection of illuminated ancient Faversham Charters which included an original copy of the Magna Carta. We returned to the Brewery for our tour.

Once there we donned our High Viz Jackets and waited for our guide. We were divided into groups and started the tour with our guide. There has been a brewery on this site since 1525.



The name has changed through the years to reflect the owners at that time. Beer requires pure underground water, so it is fortunate there is an artesian well below the area which provides an endless supply of the water needed in beer making. Many gallons are needed for every vat used in the beer making process. Our guides showed us the brewing process. The huge Vats go through various processes and most of these are now mechanised. Timings and ingredients vary according to

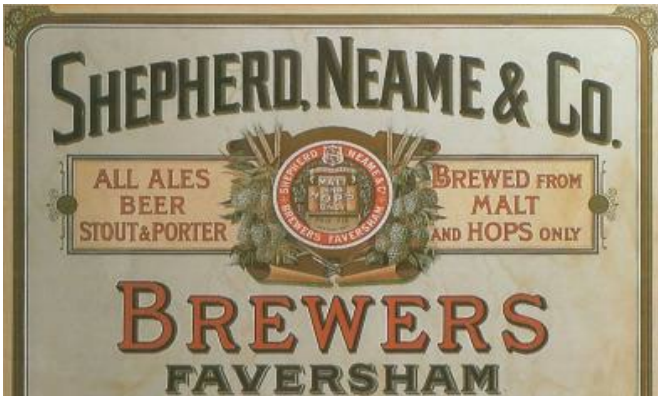
what is being brewed. There are several steps in the brewing process including malting, mashing, boiling, fermenting, filtering and conditioning. Malted barley is added to the brew to release starches and hops are added later to some brews. Both lager and beer are produced with some being for export and some under licence. Today Shepherd Neame is Britain's largest independent family brewer, and it produces 50 million pints every year and exports it to more than 35 countries.



During the tour round the brewery which was very interesting we were told about the Hawk which is flown during the day. Its purpose is to keep other birds from landing in the brewery and scavenging the dropped wheat barley and making a mess around the site. One group even got to meet the hawk and to watch it fly.

Our tour ended and we gathered in the dining room for a delicious lunch followed by a question-and-answer session. Those who wanted to went to the shop to make any purchases they wanted to.

We all then returned to the coach ready to travel to Whitstable.



We then travelled to Whitstable where we were to spend the afternoon. It was now a hot and sunny afternoon. When we arrived most of us enjoyed a wander along the front as far as the harbour. Purchases of Kent cherries and other items as well as icecream were made and many enjoyed sitting in the sun and chatting until it was time to return to the coach and the journey home to Sawbridgeworth. A very enjoyable day.

Whitstable



GENERAL QUIZ ANSWERS

1. In which country did the Lockerbie trial take place HOLLAND
2. Which organisation adopted the name Consignia in 2001 THE POST OFFICE
3. Kenneth 1 and Kenneth 11 were kings of which country SCOTLAND
4. In which position did Peter Shilton play for England GOALKEEPER
5. What is a Māori haka? A CEREMONIAL DANCE
6. Whose first screen test report read; Can't act, Can't sing, Slightly bald. Can dance a little? FRED ASTAIRE'S
7. Who captained the winning 2003 World cup team MARTIN JOHNSON
8. Which industrial gas has the smell of garlic? ACETYLENE
9. Which American 1953 autobiography is entitled 'Call me Lucky' BING CROSBY
10. In 1985, which city became the first to be awarded the title European City of Culture? ATHENS
11. What nationality was THE EXPLORER VASCO de Gama? PORTUGUESE
12. The world's first launderette opened in 1934, in which country AMERICA
13. In which US city was Fashion designer Gianni Versace murdered in 1997? MIAMI
14. In which European country was decaffeinated coffee first produced GERMANY
15. John Montagu was a committed gambler who did not like leaving the gaming table, even to eat.
What famous foodstuff was named after him? THE SANDWICH – HE WAS THE EARL OF SANDWICH
16. In what part of America did Southwark Theatre open in 1752 PHILADELPHIA
17. On average, which of the following is the heaviest: an African elephant, a white rhinoceros, a polar bear or a hippopotamus AN AFRICAN ELEPHANT
18. What is the traditional colour of willow pattern crockery? BLUE
19. Pictures of which star were used as bait in a computer virus that struck world-wide in February 2001 –
a Elizabeth Hurley, b Sarah Michelle Geller, c Anna Kournikova d, Jennifer Lopez C – ANNA KOURNIKOVA
20. Which of the following was the only British Prime Minister to have been assassinated? Clement Atlee, Spencer Percival, Henry Addington, George Canning GEORGE CANNING

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for news in between our Newsletters