

Newsletter – April 2024

The photography Group visited the Sikh Gurdwara at Gravesend. More photos inside.



Another new group!

Group Name: It's Wine O'clock

I'm no wine buff but I enjoy a glass or three! Do you want to join me in tasting wines from different regions, pairing with cheese and nibbles? The group will meet on the **3rd Monday of the month 7–9pm at The Woolmarket, Horndon on the Hill SS17 8LE**. If you would like to join this group, please send me an email including your name and mobile telephone number so that I can add you to a WhatsApp group for communication going forward. Spaces will be limited due to the size of the hall so will be on a first come first served basis.

Looking forward to our first session on Monday 13th May 2024.

Any problems, please let me know. **My mobile is 07754 727011.**

Speaker for Thursday 11th April 2024

Our speaker on Thursday 11th April 2023 is Brian Carline. Brian's talk is entitled 'Our Street', and is a poignant yet amusing account of life in a typical industrial city in the 40s and 50s.

Brian was a school teacher for 35 years working in both inner and outer boroughs. He finished his teaching career as an Assistant Head teacher in a school in Essex. In his early teaching days Brian was also a comedian reaching the Gala Final of New Faces in 1977. In his retirement he has had published three books all with an amusing slant on education. His fourth book Soil, Sweat and Tears focuses on amusing advice for reluctant gardeners. Brian has also written three books on amusing aspects of life in the 40s and 50s.

Speaker for Thursday 9th May 2024

Our speaker for Thursday 9th May 2024 is Kim James, Chief Operating Officer, Healthwatch Thurrock.

Healthwatch are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Thurrock. We're here to make sure that those running services, put people at the heart of care.

Our sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf. We focus on ensuring that people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed and work to get services right for the future.

COMMITTEE CHAT

"Sometimes you feel you are talking to a brick wall", is a phrase I am sure we have all heard at some time in our life – almost certainly from our parents when we were growing up. Well, the Executive Committee (EC) feels the same.

*In last month's Committee Chat, it clearly stated that, **"We must respectfully remind all members that access to general meetings is via the side door at The Springhouse and from 1.30pm only. DO NOT come in the main entrance and queue in the corridor. You will politely be told to go out and come in the side door."***

*At our last General Meeting we had two EC members posted on the front entrance to re-direct members to the side door. Regrettably they were **subjected to some abuse** from 'members' who flatly refused to use the side*

entrance and others who used the excuse about needing the toilets and then 'conveniently' forgetting they should return to the main entrance and go around the side. **This will not be tolerated.**

Please realise that:

1. u3a general meetings are private functions. The u3a hires the hall from the Springhouse. It does not give u3a members, or Springhouse members, right of entry, other than as directed by the u3a.
2. Entrance to ALL members is via the side door from 1.30pm, unless they have a disability that prevents them from walking up steps.
3. Members with a disability may enter through the main door from 1.30pm, accompanied by ONE PERSON ONLY.
4. Queueing in the corridor is a health & safety issue and, as directed by Springhouse Management, cannot be allowed.
5. Entrance to the hall from 1.30pm is:
 - to allow time for the organisers to prepare the hall
 - to count attendees for insurance and health and safety reasons
 - to control ticket sales for trips and events.

The EC did not make these rules up for fun. The EC reserve the right to refuse admission to any member not complying with these rules.

A reminder that from 1st April 2024, new membership numbers come into effect for all members renewing their membership or joining the u3a. All interest group leaders will ask for your new membership card and record your membership number and a contact telephone number. For insurance and health and safety reasons, group leaders need to know who attends each interest group session and also to verify their membership is valid for 2024/2025.

At present the EC consists of 10 members, giving their time voluntarily to ensure our u3a operates as effectively and efficiently as possible for the benefit of some 450 members. Three of the EC will be standing down at our September AGM, leaving only 7 EC members left. Two of the EC standing down will have served their full 10-year term. We need to recruit additional members to the EC to ensure the continued success of your u3a. Nomination forms will be available from May. Anyone interested in joining the EC, please feel free to speak to any of the current committee members. We need new blood and new ideas please. More committee chat next month

Our u3a is very fortunate to see an increase in the number of members who are willing to start up a new group and with almost 45 interest groups to offer our members, now is a **timely opportunity to remind all of our members that they should contribute to costs of running the group activity they participate in.** With car insurance going through the roof and fuel and general wear and tear costs continually rising, we must all pay our fair share of any costs necessary to make the groups happen.

Our Policy document clearly state the correct values that should be paid and these are shown below.

Mileage or transport costs for interest groups are to be met by those involved and sorted out by them. The standard calculation for the donation is 45p a mile plus 5p per person in the car and then the total is divided by the number of people in the car. This covers insurance, fuel and wear and tear.

Please do not wait to be asked for your contribution, offer your payment without delay. Group leaders, please do not be embarrassed to ask for these expenses using the above calculations. And this includes any general running costs like room hire etc.

Reminder: There's no such thing as a "Free Ride".

Final Renewals opportunity is this month!

The preferred method of payment is Bank Transfer which is easy for anybody on Internet Banking. **The only thing I ask is for those paying using this method is that they send me an email confirming the payment. Also please put in the information box when paying, your name and membership number.** Alternative methods are of course cheque and cash, with this year an added option to pay by debit or credit card.

For those using Bank Transfer our bank details are Sort Code 20-34-69 Account Number 33122387. Unfortunately, 1 Member has paid using this method and failed to send me an email and their bank have not included any personal recognised date. I just have a reference number which means nothing to me, and also the Member did not include their membership number. The payment was received in the bank on 16th February.

**If you don't have your new card then get in touch with the
Membership Secretary.**

**You will need to register your new number with any
Interest Groups that you belong to.**

Interest Groups

Please Note.

Keep us all safe by not attending Group Meetings when you have a temperature or other symptoms of illness.

Groups may be found in alphabetical order in this Newsletter.

Amblers

Tessa Duggan 01375 670212

Jenny Radford 01375 676338



The first day of Spring 2024 was the day before our March amble. The weather was lovely, it was sunny and warm, no wind and we all felt a bit overdressed in our winter coats. It was a very pleasant walk at Coalhouse Fort and afterwards we sat outside drinking teas and coffees. I don't know if any amblers succumbed to the lure of

the delicious looking cakes in the tearoom, they were very tempting.

Our next amble will be on **Thursday 18th April** and we'll be going to **Westley Heights** (Langdon Hills Country Park), High Road, Basildon SS16 6HU. We're hoping the bluebells will be out, but if not, we'll still enjoy the walk (hopefully no trees will fall down this year!) Meet us in the car park behind Miller and Carter at the **later time of 11am.** Look forward to seeing you there.

The Amblers group is full. If you are interested in joining the group, we have a waiting list and will add your name.

Photos by Jenny Radford

Art Group

Jim Westgarth 01375 859432

Sally Taylor

The Art at Mucking Tuesday sessions have now settled into a good routine and the intention is to keep these meetings ongoing throughout the year!

Most group members turn up to do their own thing, but if anyone wants any assistance say regarding perspective or colour mixing, I'll do my best to help out.

The outdoor Art Group sessions are now up and running for the spring and summer months, the main difficulties here being the weather; the first meeting at Wat Tyler Park on the 18th March was somewhat hampered by intermittent light rain and indifferent light conditions and so we didn't get much done. Let's hope that things brighten up a bit for our next meeting!

The next Art Group Outdoor session will be at the Plotlands cafe at Dunton on Monday 15th April @ 10.00am.

The next Art at Mucking meeting will be at the Thameside Nature Park on Tuesday 16th April @ 12.30pm (the Centre closes @ 5.00pm).

For any u3a members that may be interested in joining, I would recommend coming to the Tuesday session as this is perhaps a more comfortable environment with amenities such as the cafe and toilets to hand.

Bird Watching

Dave Snow 01375 461885

Book Group

Ann Bailey

Dawn Lloyd-Warne 01375 461885

This month we discussed Hazel Prior –*Call of the Penguins* – This was the follow up to "Away with the penguins" which we had a couple of months ago and enjoyed. A nice easy read was the general consensus.

This time we have Maisie Dobbs by Jacqueline Winspear about a genteel private detective in the 1930s. I read this series of books years ago when I was still employed in the Library Service and enjoyed them. One of the reviews of this book says " *These are the rare books that make you want to get home from work early, light the fire, pour a glass of wine and spend all evening reading.*" I agree totally with that statement. I wonder if the rest of the group will?

As the book was a few years old I was worried that some of the members may already have read it so at the last minute I grabbed a handful of Aline Templeton books from the library as they had a few titles on the shelf, just in case. About half the group chose one of these as the cover looked much more bloodthirsty than "Maisie Dobbs". I have no idea what these are like other than they are set in Scotland. It will be interesting what the verdict is.....

Written by Sue Green standing in for Ann while she is recuperating.

Wednesday Boules

Dave Jardine 07551 952211

We are back playing **each Wednesday** now the rain has stopped. We meet behind the Springhouse at **10.15 for 10.30 start**. After we have played, we enjoy a well-deserved coffee and good biscuits.

The cost is £2 which it covers the cost even if you do both groups. We have spare boules if you wish to give it a try. Look forward to seeing you there.

Wednesday afternoon players

Paul Brice 07788452852

Wednesday Afternoon Boules continue every week **starting at 1.30pm**. We play behind The Springhouse Club at a cost of £2 per week. If you are unable to come along in the afternoon you would be welcome to come along to the morning instead. The 2 Groups are interchangeable.

PÉTANQUE/Boules

Colin Munro **07770 854318**

Carol Munro

On Friday mornings. Please get in touch if you are interested.

Canasta

Pauline Kerridge **01375 462232**

Every Wednesday at the Springhouse Club at 2.00. Everyone welcome.

Our Welfare Officer is Colin Munro. **Mobile: 07770 854318**

Contact Colin if you know of any member who is in need of our thoughts and best wishes, due to bereavement or serious illness. Please give their name and the reason for the need.

It is most helpful if you can include family member names where necessary.

Couples Lunch

Dave and Jean Angus **07711359127**

This month we went to the Sir Henry.

We had such a great time at our February lunch but it is a pity that our report for the visit to Sir Henry is nowhere near as good. While the company was great, the food was OK, but the ambiance of Sir Henry restaurant left a lot to be desired and was very dark and dismal inside where we were put on two tables. The restaurant accepted our booking together with our deposits and meal requests as they asked, but after it all went through, the Sir Henry staff decided that it would not be possible for us to pay our bills after all as separate "couples" as we have been doing for the last 18 months. However, we pressed



ahead because we have been doing this for so long now we thought that on the day it would be easy.

OH NO!! We had asked Couples to purchase their drinks at the bar themselves to avoid any confusion with the staff and thought it would make things easy for paying the bill but that was not the case. This Restaurant just could not cope with Group visits so it is not one we shall be visiting again. We had such a good time last month at Eyna that being let down by the Sir Henry was a huge disappointment. We were told that there were table numbers and so we would have to pay by table number but when it was pointed out there were no numbers on the tables the staff said "that is OK we know what they are" and it is a pity they do not know their Menu and the costings so well. It put a dampener on what could have been so much more fun. We had a laugh but it was a bit of a "damp squib" at the end.



Jeannette and Michael were missed again as Jeannette is still rather poorly at the moment but well on the road to recovery now and hopes to be able to join us next month. We all signed a card for her from the Couples Lunch Group and made a collection for flowers and chocs, so Michael could have some goodies too, and

they were overwhelmed by the thoughtfulness of their friends in the Couples Lunch Group. Dave and Jean delivered the goodies on the way home and were invited in for a cup of tea and a catch up chat with Jeanette and Michael and that was very nice. Well, "here's to the next time" hoping for a nicer experience than the Sir Henry could offer us all.

Cribbage

John Green

We meet fortnightly on **Tuesdays at 1.30pm in Gardner Hall, Fobbing.**

Our next meetings will be **Tuesday 16th and 30th of April**. Cost £1 includes refreshments. All welcome.

Family History

Sue Green 01375676441

Peter Craggs

Our meeting in March had Kathy Chater giving us a talk on lunacy genealogy records. Nearly all of the group were able to make the meeting so it was lovely seeing so many of you. We had a sumptuous feast after with all the cakes. It really made an occasion of it. Thank you to all the excellent bakers, and Graham for loaning the projector. We had a great time.

Our next meeting in the **Evangelical Hall in Fobbing Road, Corringham is at 2pm on Wednesday 17th April. We are very pleased to welcome Barbara Taylor, a u3a member, not a member of our group, who volunteers on a couple of transcription projects.** She is coming along to tell us what is involved in volunteering and about some of the interesting things that she has found. (A transcription project involves manually entering details from printed records into a searchable database for the benefit of others). I know that a couple of our members have also used their spare time volunteering with other projects. It will be interesting seeing what is involved. You never know we may find some of the group with free time to also join in.

Because of a surge in requests to join our group, Peter and I have reluctantly made the decision to close it for the time being to new members. At our April meeting, in the break for tea, I am hoping to discuss a way forward to accommodate the members we have and to plan for the future. If there is anyone in the wider u3a who would like to start a second/supplemental Family History Group please get in touch.

Flower Arranging

Christine Lambert

Linda Tilbury 07928 221626

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month at the Gateway Centre, from 10am to 12 noon. The cost is £2.00

We are a friendly group and you are very welcome to join us. There is a cafe where you can purchase a cup of tea or coffee. Just ring or turn up if you want to know more.

It was the tulips in my garden this month that caught my eye. They were



originally a Turkish wild flower in the 16th century. The name tulip comes from the Turkish for turban, which they do resemble, they were shipped over to Holland in the 17th century, Holland are still the largest producers of tulip bulbs There are hundreds of varieties, one of the meanings of tulips is "perfect and deep love"

Our first meeting the choice was the Hogarth

Curve, (a lazy S shape) which we all tried again, there was some lovely arrangements.

The second meeting we all do our own choice. It is always interesting to see the colours and at this time of year there is



a lot of foliage used from our gardens. The results are here in the photo, as it was so near Easter a lot of us used that as our choice . We had a tree laden with eggs and flowers, two lanterns filled with flowers, a stand with the Hogarth curve displayed on it, a tall tree with flowers and ribbons, some pretty baskets and arrangements and a yellow and white arrangement made to display in a church for Easter. We were even visited by Shaun the sheep as seen in the photo.

We always finish with a cup of tea or coffee and a nice chat

Photos by Brenda Osborne

French Basic Conversation

Diane Wallace

Sally Taylor

This is a small group by choice, because it allows every member a chance to speak. The group meet on **the first and third Thursday afternoons of the month**, and each member takes it in turn to host sessions in their home. We have some existing knowledge of French vocabulary and grammar and this is put to use to form sentences in order to speak to one another. The members go out of their way to help and encourage one another.

Gallery Visits

Jenny Lees

01375 360786

Chris Henderson

Gardening Allotment News

The calendar says it's Spring. The recent warm days have encouraged trees and shrubs to, at last, start showing us the colour of their leaves. But it has still been very wet and the allotment has not had time to dry out between the showers and heavy spells of rain. Easter is approaching fast so now is the traditional time to plant potatoes. I have the bed dug but testing the soil by pushing the spade blade into the soil and rocking back and forth it sounded very squelchy so best to wait for it to dry out more before attempting to planting the potatoes. Too wet and they rot. Easter is early this year, so a few more days will not affect the growing period. April brings the showers and probably more heavy rain. Nothing changes year to year, so I say to myself just get on with it and work within the conditions provided. Easy to say, difficult to achieve!

As I have said before, my enthusiasm to go to my allotments to dig or tidy up the plot is a bit lacking. Not completely removed the weed and grass from around the bramble roots due to the constant spells of rain. In the summer I will be complaining about the lack of rain!!

I dug a small patch and planted a few shallots and have continues to dig for the onion sets. The top few inches are very solid where the soil has dried

leaving it very wet beneath. The onion seed I set in the green house has produced thin onion plants which I have carefully transplanted into a deeper container to continue growing. Same with the tomato, pepper and chilli plants I had growing in the heated propagator. Yes, it is getting very crowded in the green house.

I really do need a drier spell to plant at the allotment. Why did I ask for rain? Think I have said that before. Weather is always a good topic for conversation. I'm sure you will agree - us gardeners are never satisfied!!

Please take care and have fun. Michael Farman

Lawn Mower Repairs & Servicing.

I am a member of Stanford u3a.

My interest is the repairs and servicing of lawnmowers and all types of garden machinery. I would like to offer the members of our u3a my services. I will come to you to carry out the repairs and maintenance jobs so there's no worry about getting heavy machinery into your cars. There will be some costs involved but if I can't fix it, there will be no costs required. Please email me: **John Reynolds** with your enquiry.

Golf

Paul Brice 07788 452852

The Golf Group meets every Monday (except Bank Holidays), ready for a 9.30am start. We play at Dunton Hills on the Par 3 course which is currently charged at £9 for 18 holes. Standard of play is varied so anybody should be able to fit in. Occasionally the course is unplayable so then we may use the driving range.

We occasionally play on full courses so please make your interest known if you wish to join us on these occasions.

All players at playing at their own risk.

The only thing we ask is if you do plan to come along then please let me know as we occasionally change to start times to suit the course and ourselves. We also have a **What's App group** so if you wish to join that and receive updates, then let me have your Mobile number.

Holiday Travel

Carol Smith 07845 233640

Mel Fox

Italian

Verena Carter 07808513453

This meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month.

The venue is the Evangelical Church Fobbing Road from 2 till 4 o'clock.

We are progressing well with our group trying to expand our vocabulary and grammar in a fun way. We can only take any new members if they have some knowledge of basic Italian.

The book which we use is BBC Talk Italian 1 which is available on Amazon if any new members wish to get it.

Line Dancing 1

Susan Moss 07905314987

Beverley Brice 07522368810

Christine Hartnell 07771554174

At Horndon Village Hall every Wednesday 10.15-11.45 – cost £2.

We are still looking for new or returning line dancers as there are still spaces available. Come along and give it a try! Nothing too advanced or difficult and if you are a complete novice come along at 10am for 15 minutes of one-to-one

instruction to help you learn some basic steps and a simple dance.

It's never too late to start and it is fun.

Recently one of our members had a special birthday, Brenda is still dancing at 90 years of age!!!!Contact Sue or Bev for further details.

Line Dancing 2

Carol Munro 07766 035554

Sue Moss 07905 314987

Every other Tuesday starting at 10.00 – 11.00 at the Methodist Hall in Horndon-on-the-Hill. As our numbers have now grown at our line dancing group, we are sorry to advise that we have now had to close our group, due to the size of our hall.

Local History Group

Barbara Ward 07748 151735

We will be at the Evangelical Church Hall on 4th Monday of the month at 2.00 pm. Please get in touch if you are interested.

Please do not just turn up at a meeting but ring or email me first to ensure there will be space.

Local Research Projects

Diane Wallace

Sue Green 01375 676441

This group has been investigating aspects of life in Stanford-le-Hope mainly from 1950 to late 1970s. At the start, a team of members helped with research in Grays Museum. We have interviewed over 30 long-term residents, recording their recollections and with members transcribing them. It is hoped that the oral recordings, plus transcripts, and timed summaries, will be placed with Essex Record Office when the research has been completed. We also have been given written accounts. The many various topics that people have told us about are being put together and written up by the two main members of the group.

Although we are now getting to the end of this, we will continue to ask if other general u3a members or people we have interviewed, could check some of the details such as names, dates and facts. We are very appreciative of any such help and also of the past support we have received.

London Walks

Dave Snow 07490 069740

Brian McDonald

Our London Walk for March was to the Earl's Court area, somewhere that we had not been before. We heard about everything from Doctor Who's TARDIS to one of the Magnificent Seven including Hattie Jacques, Willie Rushden and even Princess Diana.

There was the King's Head pub where Australians gathered for their cold beers and the Polish Corridor where Polish Officers set up businesses after WW2 on Earl's Court Road. Cromwell Road was, for some unknown reason, named by Prince Albert. It now has blue plaques for Benjamin Britten and Alfred Hitchcock along with a huge digital advertising board to distract the motorists!

After lunch we saw many of the large, stylish houses with their stable blocks in the mews, all sadly a thing of the past and now turned into numerous flats. Who knows, The Avengers could have been filmed in any one of those mews! In one of the mews was a showroom for Morgan cars, with prices to match the affluent area.

There were stories of pubs frequented by murderers and politicians who had affairs. Brompton Cemetery was, of course, one of the magnificent seven burial grounds set up around London after local churchyards became full. This is still in use unlike the old Earl's Court Exhibition Centre which is no longer in existence. There are two entrances to Earl's Court station and it seems that it doesn't matter which you choose as you still get home at the same time, that is if you don't get on the right train!

Lunch and Chat

Chris Brown 01708 852023

Lunch and Chat meets on the first Friday of the month 11-00am at the Langdon Hills Golf Club, Lower Dunton Road RM14 3TY.

****Unfortunately we need to close the group to new members as we are guests at the golf club and cannot ask for additional tables. However I'm happy to create a waiting list and if there are sufficient numbers look at starting a second group if people are interested.****

Memory Lane

Sue Green 01375 676441

Jennifer Freeman

The Memory Lane Group was founded by and for members to record their individual memoirs and the social history of their forbears to enable the stories of their respective families to be shared with their current families and this proved to be the case this very month.

Two members of the group attended family funerals to which they took not only flowers and condolences but also their memoirs and social history write-ups that related to the specific family of the deceased.

One of the instances was the funeral of a first cousin of a family member named Christine. Despite the regular exchange of Christmas cards, the member and the relatives of the deceased had not seen or conversed with each other for many years so when the ML member provided Michael 'the boy' – aged 84 years, and Caroline his sister her records of the family social history they were 'over the moon' with the write-up. Additionally, her nieces – the three daughters of the deceased – all requested e- mailed write-up details.

It was a similar story in regard to the other ML member who attended the funeral of a distant uncle but had not seen or conversed with several family members for many years and similarly also took with her the social history write-ups and the complete family tree so at the wake, the opportunity to provide details including birth, baptism, marriage certs, naval record and photographs added to the poignancy of their meeting.

Another ML member is due to attend a 90th birthday party of her father's brother and will similarly take her write-ups, certificates and photos to share with her family at this event.

These instances reinforce how the ethos of the Memory Lane Group has proved so worthwhile notwithstanding the pleasure and enjoyment experienced by its members and the enjoyment and ever-present laughter continued at this month's meeting on 12th March.

The focus topic for the March meeting was grandparents or a great grandparent. It was evident from the exchanged family stories, records and family photographs, just how hard family life was for the working classes in the mid-19th century – early years of the 20th century and the resulting early ageing effect that this had on our forebears. A great grandparent of one member – born in 1851- was widowed aged 27 with four young children and very little income so life was very hard, but went on to remarry two years later and have three more children. A photograph of this formidable lady dressed in black was provided but the hardship effect could be witnessed in just how old she looked for her years.

One member spoke about the many interesting holidays that she has had complete with providing photographs and maps and then at the end advised that in fact she had given a presentation at the Springhouse on this very topic – that is how good the input was.

The meeting next month will have been held on 9th April where the topic will be markets of bygone days and East End traditions.

Mixed Craft Group

Marilyn Edgings **01375 677425**

Barbara Purser **01375 677095**



This month some of the ladies completed the applique bag they were making from various materials including felt. As you can see the designs are all different in their own way. A partly finished bag is included in the photo.

If there are any new u3a members who would be interested in trying out the craft group, come along to The **Baptist Church in Corringham on the first Tuesday of the** month and see for yourself or get in touch with either Marilyn or Barbara.

Photos by Marilyn Edgings

Music Makers

Mo Wakeling 07902 649122

The new folk music group is up and running. We have ten members who play a range of instruments including small pipes, piano accordion, penny whistle, ukulele, guitar and percussion. Our first two sessions have allowed us to practise arrangements for some old Scottish and Irish songs and a couple of sea shanties. We are starting to introduce harmonies in our singing too. We are looking forward to expanding our repertoire over the next few sessions to include a wide range of folk and traditional songs. **We now meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays in the afternoons.**

Old British Motor Cycle and Car Enthusiasts

Graham Edgings 01375 677425

Six of the Motorcycle Group went to the Military Museum at Maldon, Essex. As with all museums there were plenty of exhibits to read about and look at. The museum has a collection of armour, swords, polearms, muskets and clothing from the English Civil War. The section also covers the ancient weaponry dating back to Viking times from the 1300s onwards. The museum has an extensive range of Special Forces equipment including the only surviving Cockleshell Heroes canoe. It survived because it got damaged when it was being launched from the submarine and it was brought back to England and left in storage and forgotten about for many years until the owner of the museum spotted the canoe and bought it and had it renovated. As well as many other exhibits we saw the original Embassy Siege assault kit used on the Iranian Embassy in London in 1980. *Photo on Brian McDonald's camera.*



Photography Group

Jenny Lees

01375 360786

Chris Henderson

The day finally arrived for one of our members at least to cross the Thames by ferry from Tilbury to Gravesend, for the first time. We had previously been thwarted by the extremes of weather caused by the inevitability of global warming. It was a fairly windy but warmish day and walking onto the ferry gangway resembled the old Cake Walk at the fairground if people can remember that. There were a number of passengers making the journey using their bus passes generously provided by Thurrock Council- something they did do right ! Many of us were of course, hoping this wouldn't be our last venture over to Kent by ferry before the subsidy by Thurrock Council was to end. Surely, somewhere bordering the Thames there must be a philanthropist who wants to help carry on such a noble and worthwhile tradition....!



We first of all, continuing the u3a tradition, found a cosy little café for coffee and snacks. Our main aim was to visit the Sikh Temple or Gurdwara. It is visible as soon as you disembark the ferry as the roof of the

building is quite high and it is one of the largest Gurdwaras in Europe. Gurdwara means, 'the door to a new beginning'.

We were met by Jagdev a Sikh volunteer who I have been communicating with to arrange our visit. If anyone wants to arrange their own visit all details are online. There are certain procedures to go through but they are a very welcoming religion and feel it is important to be part of their community. Both men and women have to cover their heads before entering the temple and there are 2 separate areas where each sex has to remove and store their shoes. Jagdev first of all took us outside to explain some of the architecture and intricate murals. The temple has football pitches and they have both male and female teams. You do not necessarily have to be Sikh to join them. He also mentioned their

individual flag which is vertical and wrapped and identifies their Gurdwara. Their car parks can also be used in conjunction with the local council on certain days. They have a reciprocal arrangement. Yes, the site is very big.

On re-entering the Gurdwara I was very grateful for the underfloor heating as I had managed to step shoeless in the only puddle. It is an impressive site with magnificent stairs and balustrades and a lovely blue main dome. There is a lot of coming and going and you are made to feel very welcome. While of course remaining civilised, there is not a 'hush hush' feeling that you might get in a

church. Don't be put off by the many stairs if you want to visit as there is a lift.

Jagdev gave us a tour of about an hour and a quarter. He took us into the 300 seat and the 500 seat dining rooms where there is also a stage. These are



used for weddings and other ceremonies. We covered most parts of the temple and were lastly taken into the kitchens where there were mighty woks and vessels on off the floor gas rings. These were necessary to cook the food which is available all day for visitors, the community and the homeless. They sometimes also take the food to the homeless. Like many charities and communities in Britain, most of this is done by volunteers. I remarked on the Tesco trolleys outside the kitchen, 'Were they stolen...?' – tongue in cheek of course– Jagdev said that they do a lot of business with Tesco so, as with the car parks, there is a reciprocal arrangement. We were then led into the dining hall where we were welcome to eat and drink with no mention of money. I collected my tray and was given what I believe was a vegetarian meal which included rice,

chapati, beans in sauce and spiced yogurt. It was much appreciated. I drank water but could have had tea. After this, Jagdev had to rush off to a meeting. We very much appreciated his time with us and he made it very interesting.

On making our way to the Wetherspoons in the main town we discovered that the temperature had dropped and the wind had strengthened. After eating, some of the group decided to make their way home. Those that stayed on photographed some more of the local architecture and managed to find the only seated statue of Elizabeth 2nd and the statue of the Seikh that Jagdev had mentioned who fought for England and his own country. He was commemorated for this. This took us almost to the ferry so due to the icy wind we decided to brave the choppy waters and head home on what we hope was NOT our last trip on the ferry. Pocahontas will have to wait till next time.

Jenny Lees. (photos by Jenny Lees)

Next meeting 12th April –sharing photos at Mucking Wildlife Centre

Play Reading 1

Beryl Woodcock

We meet on the last Friday of each month but we are full at the moment but if anyone would like to make another group, we would help you to get it up and running.

Tea, Cake and Play Reading

Deb Foster 01375 677971

This month we started to read ***The End of the Food Chain*** by current play writer Tim Firth. He is a very prolific writer whose works include the script for Calendar Girls and later he co- wrote the musical by the same name with Gary Barlow. The play is set at night in a grocery distribution depot, where the job is so boring and monotonous. We were reading the parts of a group of young lads, full of sarcasm and juvenile humour. They entertained themselves by devising well organised games of food sport – frozen sprout tag, smartie in a flan-base tiddlywinks, frozen fish sword fighting to name a few. This had us in hysterics as we visualised these antics taking place.

I'm really looking forward to the next act!

Quilting

Carol Smith 07845 233640

The Quilting Group meet on the first Monday in the month,

Starting time 2 o'clock until 4 o'clock. We do a lot of talking and laughing, as we are a very friendly group of like-minded people, with Tea and Coffee a must, and also Cake or Biscuits.

If you are interested why not come along and see what we do get up to.

No pressure will be put on you, if it's not what you want OK.

Please ring me on 01375 675998 and I will tell you where I live and how to find us.

Quiz Group

Sue Green 01375 676441

Ann Bailey

Well, what can I say about the Hassenbrook quiz? We fielded four teams of intrepid quizzers to this one. Oh dear. What a mistake! To say we were out of our comfort zone was putting it mildly. I think we fell off a cliff!

When the music round first question was a song with the lyrics "Dog goes woof", Cat goes "meow" Bird goes "tweet" and Mouse goes "squeak", and the next were a couple of rap songs we knew then that we had massive gaps in our knowledge! We were so bad it was funny. How one of our four teams came out on top is the biggest mystery of the Quiz Groups history. They either did amazingly well in the marathons—lots of so-called celebrity baby pictures, plus obscure countries and a stonkingly difficult food anagram list, or the youngsters in charge of the scoring were incredibly Maths challenged.

Well done to Hassenbrook for giving us a challenging night and to the team that let us leave with heads held high. (The rest of us were at least in the top half of the table so a miracle all round). The song was "The Fox" by Xlvis by the way and yes, I am still none the wiser.

If you would like to join in, email Sue to be put on the mailing list to see where we are going next.

Ann's Quiz is back!

1. When were postcodes first introduced?
2. Who invented the adhesive postage stamp?
3. Which football team are known as The Blades?
4. Who wrote His Dark Materials?
5. Which Archbishop had the name of a tree as one of his Christian names?
6. Which type of window is also the name of an Oxford college?
7. Which bird is also known as a merle?
8. To which 2 men are Betty and Wilma married?
9. If you were visiting Keukenhof, what flowers would you expect to see?
10. Which bird is also known as the sea-parrot?

Answers on page 30

Ramblers

Chris Gomm 07905 117622

Benfleet Station to Leigh on Sea - 25th April 2024

We will meet outside the ticket office of Benfleet Railway Station on Thursday 25th May, commencing our walk at 10:50am.

For those wishing to travel by train we will meet at Stanford Le Hope Station at 10:15 to catch the 10:30 train. This train arrives in Benfleet at 10:42.

Anyone that has previously done this walk will know how very pleasant it is with views over Two Tree Island and Hadleigh Castle.

There are several nice pubs in Leigh where I'm hoping you will be able to join me for lunch. Once we've been fed and watered, we'll head to Leigh-on-Sea station and catch the train for our return home.

Contact : Christine Gomm for further information.

Scrabble

Magda Norris

Our Scrabble group is meeting fortnightly at the **Gardner Hall in Fobbing**. We start at **1.30 pm for about 2 hours**. See Cribbage for dates our next meetings.

Singing for Fun

Barb O'Grady 01375 670461

A fun-filled afternoon singing a wide range of songs. We now sing some with music accompaniment. We meet on the third Monday of the month at the Evangelical Hall, Fobbing Road, Corringham, at 2pm.

Please contact me for more details if interested, or just turn up!

Singles lunch

Christine Codd

Meetings will be Wednesday on week 2.

Ten Pin Bowling

Jean Jardine 07551 095221

Our next meeting is on **Friday 3rd May** (it's too busy in school holiday time) at the **Hollywood Bowl at Lakeside** . We meet at **10.00 for coffee 10.30 to play**; we pick up our coffee from M&S as the coffee machine at the bowling alley does not always work. The cost is £3.75 for two games. Please wear flat non slip shoes. All are welcome to join us.

Ten Pin Tuesday

Kevin Brice 07973349288

The Ten Pin Tuesday interest group meets on the **third Tuesday of each month**, other than during school holidays. The group meets at the **Hollywood Bowl, Lakeside** for its ten pin bowling sessions. We have two games per session.

Our next Ten Pin Tuesday Bowling session is on **Tuesday 16th April 2024.**

19th March 2024. **Meet for tea and coffee at 10.00am with bowling commencing at 10.30am.** New members welcome, please email or ring first.

Trips – Day

Chris Gomm 01375 406285/07905 117622

Jean Jardine 077551 952211

The details for all trips shown in the Newsletter are available on our website;

A handy form is at the back of this newsletter

Thursday 2nd May '24

Tenth Anniversary Afternoon Tea

In order to celebrate ouru3a's tenth anniversary we are holding an afternoon tea at Ye Olde Plough House in Bulphan. Arrival time 12:30 for a 13:00 sit down. As many of you will be aware this is an excellent venue and should we be lucky enough to have a sunny day we will be able to have the doors open onto the gardens which are very pleasant indeed.

For this is a special event our committee has kindly agreed a subsidy.

This brings the cost per head to a very reasonable **£23.00 per head.**

The tickets will be available from 1:30 at our April general meeting.

Payments can be made in cash or by cheque payable to "SLH U3A"

Bardfield Vineyard and Blake House on Tuesday 4th June '24

This interesting vineyard is situated near Braintree.

We will be greeted on arrival ahead of our guided tour. We will explore the Tudor building, meet the alpacas and stroll the vineyard before enjoying 4 tasting of home grown wines.

After our tour we can enjoy a Ploughman's lunch of ham or cheese.

We then head over to Blake House to browse the farm shop and craft centre or perhaps visit their tearooms.

The tickets are **£40.00 per head for this event and will be on sale at our April meeting from 1:30.**

Payment can be made by cheque payable to 'SLH U3A' or by Cash. Pick-ups at Lampits Hill 9:10, Springhouse 9:20 and the Oak 9:30

Hastings 15th July 2024

This will be our second trip to this popular resort Our first trip to Hastings was way back in 2017. We enjoyed the trip then and expect to this time as well.

What does Hastings have to offer? The town has many hidden gems. Amongst its famous fishing net huts is Hastings Contemporary Art Gallery. A trip on the East Cliff or West cliff railway is a must. Visit Hastings Castle, an area of outstanding natural beauty. You could have time to visit the nearby town of Battle famous for the 1066 battle of Hastings.

Coach Pick-up Times – Lampits Hill 8:30, Springhouse 8:40, The Oak 8:50.

The cost of this trip is a bargain at **£22.00.**

Tickets will be on sale from Chris Gomm and Jean Jardine at our **May General meeting from 1:30.**

We will accept cheques, Payable to "SLH U3a" or Cash

Theatre Visits

Tina Smith 07899915184

Carol Lindsell 07906436445

UKE3A

Madeline Beesley 01375678576

The Ukulele Group entertaining the Stanford and Corringham Townswomen Guild.

It was a very enjoyable afternoon and we have been invited back in December.



Photo by Steve Fortt.

Some of the Ukulele Group also sing with the Thames Opera Company and on Saturday 20th April they will be taking part in a Concert at the Towngate Theatre. It will be an amazing night and if you haven't been to an opera concert before, please give this a go.

Our patron, Roderick Williams, who sang at the King's Coronation, will be performing as well as other internationally renowned soloists who will bring a tear to your eye with their beautiful voices.

If you are interested get in touch with Madeline as she will let you know the promotion code for cheaper tickets.

Quiz Answers

1.1959

2. Sir Rowland Hill.

3.Sheffield Utd.

4.Philip Pullman.

5.Dr.Rowan Williams.

6.Oriel.

7.Blackbird

8.Barney Rubble and Fred Flintstone.

9.Tulips

10. Puffin

Wine Appreciation

Graham Hodgson 01375 675588

Jean Jardine 077551 552211

This month we journeyed to the Rioja region of northern Spain. The geography of the area is also a contributing factor, spanning a terrain that stretches 75 miles from north-west to south-east resulting in diverse climates, topography and soil types – all of which further influence quality and wine style.

Tempranillo is the most important grape and is at the heart of Rioja's best wines. It makes abundantly fruity, light wines and has a special affinity with oak-ageing, becoming graceful, silky and perfumed with time. A typical crianza will be a blend of mostly tempranillo with some garnacha to add body. Graciano (a fine Rioja speciality, prized for its aroma and acidity) and mazuelo (the Riojan name for carignan which gives tannin and colour) are also used to complement the final blend.

Crianza: wines must spend a minimum of one year in oak barrel and one in bottle before release. **Reserva:** wines spend one year in oak barrel and two in bottle. Reserva wines are some of Rioja's finest. **Gran Reserva:** wines are usually made in the best vintages where the fruit quality is rich enough to support three years in oak barrel and two years in bottle. Many Spanish reserva and grand reserva come in rather beautiful wired bottles which, obviously do not improve the taste but look nice.

The wines we enjoyed:**Blanco 2022** – This elegant dry white Rioja is fruity and easy drinking, made with Viura and Tempranillo Blanco grapes. Has notes of citrus, exotic fruits and fresh white flowers. This wine pairs well with seafood, tapas and salty snacks.12.5% alcohol content. 12.5% alcohol content.

Rosado 2022 – A fresh and lively dry rose with flavours of strawberries and red cherries, with floral aromas, made from Tempranillo grapes. Can be enjoyed served chilled with tapas and seafood. 13.5% alcohol content.

Lomas del Marques 2017 Reserva, red – Smooth and refined, made from Tempranillo and Graciano grapes, tasting of berries and spice and goes well with Lamb and pork. 13.5% alcohol content.

Our favorite was the red Reserva.

Ann's Column

Ann Bailey

I'm sitting here with yet another bag of frozen wonky peas, wrapped in a tea towel, perched on my knee. They have been thawed and frozen so many times over the last few weeks. My son has decided to empty the attic ready to put more insulation and flooring down. I had no idea there were so many boxes up there. He found 3 dinner services, 2 of them were unused and the 3rd was my Grandad's retirement present, but there comes a time when you have to be realistic as to what you keep. The younger members of the family have their own households and choice of crockery etc. The jigsaws were rather damp, as were some books. We certainly filled the blue bin. There are still a couple of boxes left; one is full of family history, which was an ongoing project of my husband's and the other one contains approx. 35 years of nature notes from when we moved into the house. We have watched the hedge grow up over the years! When we first moved in, there were cows in the field behind us and the hedge was low enough for them to lean over and munch the sunflowers. Now, of course, the hedge blots out a lot of the A13 traffic noise in summer and is filled with elderflower, hawthorn, honeysuckle and wild roses. The blackthorn is a bit further along. The bird feeders have been kept filled, so most days there have been 8/9 varieties of birds. The sparrows and blue tits are never still. Simon put a feeder on the hypericum by the back window, and it's been great to see the long-tailed tits on it, so near the house.

Hopefully, I'll be at Longstanton for Easter, meeting up with one of my brothers and sisters-in-law for coffee and hot cross buns, traditional ones please. I found the following Native American saying which seem quite apt.

"When the last tree is cut down, the last fish eaten and the last stream poisoned, you will realize that you cannot eat money."

**** Interest Group Co-ordinators***

Sandra Isaacson and Marilyn Edgings are keen to advise, help and encourage new groups.

If you are willing to get involved – on your own or with a colleague–do get in touch with them. We need more of the over-subscribed groups and some new ideas as well. It involves finding another couple of people who like the same things as you do. You can meet at home, go out, or find a venue. You will need to keep a list of members and their contact details.

All relevant emails are near the back page of a printed edition.

Group Timetable				
	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
Monday				
am	Golf Coffee & Cake	London Walks Golf	Art Group Golf	Golf.
pm	Quilting. O.B.M.& Car Uke3a Memory Lane	London Walks	Singing for Fun. Uke3a	Local History
Tuesday				
am			10 Pin Tuesday Art at Mucking	
pm	Mixed Craft. Italian Beginners.	Scrabble/Cribbage	Italian Beginners.	Scrabble/Cribbage
Wednesday				
am	Flower Arranging Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Flower Arranging Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1
pm	Canasta. Boules pm	Canasta. Boules pm <i>Singles Lunch</i>	Family History Canasta. Boules pm	Canasta Boules pm
Thursday				
am			Ambling	Rambling
pm	French Basic conversation.	SLH & District u3a General Meeting	French Basic Conversation Wine Appreciation	T.C.& Play Reading <i>Couples Lunch</i>
Friday				
am	PÉTANQUE Ten Pin Bowling 1 Lunch & Chat.	PÉTANQUE Photography	PÉTANQUE Gallery Visits	PÉTANQUE Birdwatching Playreading 1
pm	Lunch & Chat.	Music Makers Photography	Gallery Visits	Music Makers

LINE DANCING 2 meets every fortnight on Tuesday morning

Contact Details for Interest Groups

Groups with NO spaces have been highlighted. Please check with the leaders if you would like to join a group. Bk - need to book a place.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Ambling	Tessa Duggan	01375 670212	
	Jenny Radford	01375 676338	
Art	Jim Westgarth	01375 859432	
	Sally Taylor		
Bird Watching	Dave Snow	074900 69740	
Book Group	Ann Bailey		
	Dawn Lloyd-Warne	01375 461885	
Boules (Wed.am)	Jean & Dave Jardine	01375 679410	
Boules (Wed pm)	Paul Brice	07788 452852	
Boules/Pétanque (Friday)	Colin & Carol Munro	07770 854318	
Canasta	Pauline Kerridge	01375 462232	
Coffee, Cake & Chat	Jean Jardine	01375 679410	
	Beryl Smith	07486 020009	
Couples Lunch (bk)	Dave & Jean Angus	07711359127	
Cribbage	John Green	01375676441	
Day Trips (bk)	Chris Gomm	07905 117622	
	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	

Family History	Sue Green	01375676441	
	Peter Craggs	01375 643749	
Flower Arranging	Christine Lambert	01375 678131	
	Linda Tilbury	07928 221626	
French Basic Conversation	Diane Wallace		
	Sally Taylor		
Gallery Visits (bk)	Jenny Lees	01375 360786	
	Chris Henderson		
Golf	Paul Brice	07788 452852	
Holiday Travel (bk)	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	
	Carol Smith	07845 233640	
Italian	Verena Carter	0708513453	
Line Dancing 1 (Wed)	Susan Moss	07905314987	
	Beverley Brice	07522368810	
	Christine Hartnell	07771554174	
Line Dancing 2 (every other Tues)	Carol Munro	07766 035554	
	Sue Moss	07905 314987	
Local History	Barbara Ward	07748 151735	
Local Research	Diane Wallace		
	Sue Green	01375676441	
London Walks Bk	Dave Snow	07490 069740	
	Brian McDonald		
Lunch and Chat (bk)	Chris Brown	01708 852023	
Memory Lane	Sue Green	01375 676441	
	Jennifer Freeman		

Mixed Craft	Marilyn Edgings Barbara Purser	01375 677425 01375 677095	
Music Makers	Mo Wakeling	07902 649122	
Old British (bk) Motorcycle & Car Enthusiast	Graham Edgings	01375 677425	
Photography	Jenny Lees	01375 360786	
	Chris Henderson		
Play Reading 1	Beryl Woodcock		
T. C. & Play Reading	Deb Foster	01375 677971	
Quilting	Carol Smith	07845 233640	
Quiz bk	Ann Bailey		
	Sue Green	01375 676441	
Ramblers	Chris Gomm	07905117622	
Scrabble	Magda Norris		
Singing for Fun	Barb O'Grady	01375 670461	
Singles Lunch	Christine Codd		
Ten Pin Bowling (bk)	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	
Ten Pin Tuesday (bk)	Kevin Brice	07973349288	
Theatre shows (bk)	Tina Smith	07899915184	
UKE3A	Madeline Beesley	01375 678576	
Wine Appreciation	Graham Hodgson	01375 675588	
	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	

Platinum Jubilee and in Memory of our late Queen Elizabeth 2nd .



As many of our members will remember, a collection was made to purchase some trees for the above occasion. We thought we would update you on how the trees are coming along. In total five trees were purchased and all are doing well, with thanks to our

Tree Watering Group and, of course all the rain we have had of late. They are planted at The Billet ground near the old tennis courts. Please see below a couple of photos which were taken last week. The photos will be in colour on the advance notice.

Carol Munro



Contact details for Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a

Chair – Bernie Smith

Vice-Chair – Kevin Brice

Treasurer –Paul Brice

Secretary –Janet Deeney.

Membership Secretary – Richard Fox

Newsletter Editor – Chris Henderson

Interest Groups' Co-Ordinator –Sandra Isaacson

Assistant Group Co-ordinator –Marilyn Edgings

Welfare and Disabilities Co-Ordinator – Colin Munro

Policy Documents Administrator – Michael Miller

Advance Notice Email – Chris Henderson

Website Manager– Michael Farman

Website Assistant Manager – Chris Gomm

Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/slh>

National u3a Organisation

www.u3a.org.uk

Tel 020-8466-6139

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Stanford-Le-Hope and District EVENT BOOKING FORM

Event (Trip/visit/show)	
Date of Event	
Your name	
Membership Number	
Contact Telephone number - Essential	
Mobile Number to be used on day of the Trip	
Email address	
Cheque/Cash value* <i>(Indicate if it is cheque or cash)</i>	

*Separate payment required for each event

If you are booking for more than one person, please list clearly their names and membership numbers here.

Pick up point *(If travelling by coach please indicate which pick up point you prefer)*

Lampits Hill (Bus Shelter)	Springhouse Club Corringham (Bus Shelter)	The Oak (By the bus stop) Grays
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