



## Stansted Mountfitchet



### *Introduction - Susan Sedgebeer*

In terms of our u3a 2022 has been an exciting year of growth and much promise for the future. We have enjoyed celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the u3a with a tea party in September closely followed by an Open Day where new people could discover what membership has to offer and where our own members could enjoy meeting friends and rediscovering our many and varied activities.

We have delighted in a vibrant selection of speakers at our monthly general meetings and have the prospect of a great variety to come in 2023.

As a way of thanking our Group Leaders for all the work they do to deliver a diverse and enjoyable range of activities, we gathered to enjoy a great lunch at The Cock Inn in Stansted in October.

Of the 54 new members who have joined since the beginning of the year a good number accepted the opportunity to meet together over coffee and biscuits in November. We discussed an imaginative list of potential new groups which has now been offered to the membership and from which certainly two or three will be ready to start in the New Year.

Then, of course, we have the resumption of our Saturday Seminar programme to look forward to. Many thanks must go to Sally Rich and Pauline Green for all their hard work to deliver five, possibly six, seminars next year. In times BC (before Covid) these were hugely popular events so watch out for the green light on ticket sales when they become available on 14th January.



One of our newer members, Stefania Balducci, is Italian and, although currently still in Italy, will move to Stansted in the new year to be near her daughter who already lives here. Stefania came to our Open Day in September where she joined the u3a and signed up for a number of our interest groups. She has written this from her current home in Rome.

*"I was born in Roma and lived all my life here till I went to Stansted where my daughter lives with her three beautiful girls.*

*When my pc is working again I can make lots of presentations of my town.*



*This is Fontana di Trevi during the lockdown. It is famous because if you throw a coin in the fountain you are sure you will be back in Roma. It is the source of water into the centre of the town. Now it is impossible to see without people."*

## Speaking Out

*Sue Bradbury*

One of the benefits of u3a membership is the talk freely offered to all members at our monthly meetings. In the last year we have had some excellent speakers on a wide range of subjects. Who can forget flying with John Hutchinson, ex Concorde pilot, from take off, through the sound barrier and on to landing? Or Jane Gosling's erudite guidance through the timber framed houses of sixteenth century Lavenham? Or Amanda Sutherland's disclosure of how women through the last two centuries changed their underwear and thus their shape in the pursuit of fashion? We have shared the memories of pop musicians and light entertainers and heard about interesting places on our own doorstep like Stansted Hall and Easton Lodge Gardens.

In August I invited volunteers to join me to begin work on a programme of speakers for 2023. Thank you Eileen (Quinn), Linda (Sendall) and Pauline (Green) for your input. What has emerged is a schedule of talks which promises great variety and interest, something to feel excited about hearing! We will hear the experiences of, among others, a prison governor, a cold-case police detective, a BBC weatherman, a Radio Caroline disc jockey and Ralph Fiennes' voice coach. You can circle the world on a motor bike or consider political cartoons from William Hogarth to Private Eye ... please come to listen and enjoy - they will be memorable!

You can find the full list, with dates, on the following page.

# Speaker Programme 2023

19th January

The Murder in the Red Barn: *Peter Maggs*

Peter has comprehensively researched a long ago murder in deepest rural Suffolk. He specialises in this kind of historical investigation and is the author of several books.

16th February

Medieval Maldon: *Dennis Eraut*

Busy quays, substantial housing, fine churches and flourishing artisan guilds, even a royal mint in the early years, Maldon in the middle ages was a prosperous port at the mouth of the Blackwater. Local resident and amateur historian Dennis Eraut will increase our appreciation of an often overlooked small town.

16th March

From Barrow to Baghdad and Back Again: *Philip Caine*

From a hotel business in Barrow Philip's career took him as a facilities provider to oil rigs in the North Sea, then to Africa, Kazakhstan and Russia. After seven hazardous years in Iraq he rounded off his career in the Gulf States. He is now the author of adventure thrillers and a prolific public speaker.

20th April

My Life in Prison: *Lindsay Whitehouse*

Lindsay was the Governor of several prisons including Chelmsford Prison. He was also the first Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex and has written particularly for professionals involved in the Youth Justice system.

18th May

100,007 Miles Around the World on a Motorbike: *Dr Patrick Garrod*

Pat and his wife Vanessa undertook this round the world trip 1998 - 2002 on a 1991 BMW bike. After the circumnavigation they crossed Africa twice more by motorbike, north to south and east to west. The bike is resting at the Beaulieu Motor Museum, Pat is travelling to us!

15th June

Political Cartoons: from William Hogarth to Private Eye: *Ian Keable*

Magician, speaker, author and often very funny, Ian speaks at conferences, corporate events, private parties and Arts Societies and now here in Stansted. From a broad repertoire we've chosen the topic above.

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20th July

Finally Laid to Rest – the Work of a Real UK Cold Case Team: *Ray Newman*

Ray is a former DCI and following retirement became one of the founding members of the Essex Police Major Crime Review Team which investigated a number of then unsolved murders and missing person cases.

17th August

Charity Shops: *Tony Earle*

There is a sameness about urban High Streets from which Tony finds relief in Charity Shops where anything might be found . . . an unerring guide to what's out if not quite to what's in, they yield up lots of interesting bits and bobs. Tony will bring some of his finds but says he is still looking for treasure!

21st September

Charlie and 'The Dig': *Charlie Haylock*

Fondly remembered in Stansted for earlier talks to this u3a, Charlie returns to talk about his role as voice coach to Ralph Fiennes in making the recent film version of John Preston's novelistic account of the 1939 excavations at Sutton Hoo. Unmissable!

19th October

Gales, Greenhouses and Global Warming: *Ian Currie*

Ian is a full time weatherman, broadcaster, columnist and editor of the Weather Eye magazine. He is a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society and runs a website [www.frostedearth.co.uk](http://www.frostedearth.co.uk) which includes daily weather forecasts. He now lives in Sussex and broadcasts on local radio to gardeners and growers.

16th November

Stay Tuned – I Could Say Something Brilliant At Any Moment!: *Ray Clark*

A witty and humorous talk about how Ray got into radio, his career in commercial radio in the UK and the USA, his time on Radio Caroline and his career on the BBC.

Arrangements for December are yet to be confirmed.

## Return of the Saturday Seminar

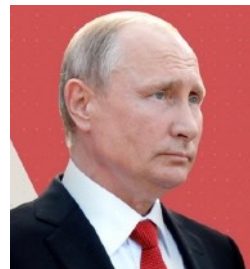
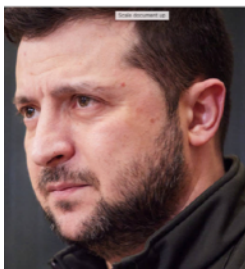
We are excited to announce five Saturday Seminars for 2023. Pauline and Sally have an excellent and diverse programme of Saturday Morning Seminars planned for 2023. The first on 25<sup>th</sup> February, is timed to recognise the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. David Morson will be exploring the history of the relationship between Russia and Ukraine which will give us some insights into what lies behind this tragic conflict.

Following this we have our usual eclectic mix of seminars planned with a Professor of Criminology, a Science Writer and Broadcaster, a foray into Environmental Issues and a finale from our own Art expert Jo Brookes, who will be taking us to Venice – not literally unfortunately. We are also hoping to arrange one more seminar, but the subject of this could be as much of a surprise to us at the moment as it will be to you.

We hope you will find something in at least one of these seminars to excite and interest you. All members will be advised by email of when and how they can buy tickets and there will be a small number of tickets reserved for those without internet access to buy at the general meetings. As ever, any ideas for future experts to come along to speak to us are welcome.

You can contact us, Sally Rich and Pauline Green at [saturdayseminars@google.com](mailto:saturdayseminars@google.com)

## "Old Russia to European State: A History of Conflict between Ukraine and Russia" by David Morson



Saturday 25th February 2023 will be the first Anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This talk will provide both a background to the War and document the stages of the conflict over the past year providing insights into the relationship between the two countries which underly the conflict. It will begin with the origins of the Russian State based originally in Kiev and its early rivalry with Moscow, to its incorporation into the Russian State, first under the Tsars and then under Communism, including the horrors of starvation and collectivisation under Stalin. Ukraine's involvement in World War II will be examined and its continued domination by the Soviet Union from 1945 - 1991, then its Independence and transfer to democracy throughout the 1990s. With the accession of Vladimir Putin and his increasing interference in Ukrainian affairs from 2000 to the annexation of the Crimea and Donbass Region in 2014, the talk will contrast relationships with Ukraine and Russia with the West, culminating with invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the events of the past year.

### David Morson

David has been a teacher of History, Politics, Sociology and Religious Studies in Secondary Schools from 1968 -2011 and holds Degrees in all of these subjects, plus The History of Art. He has been a Local Government District Councillor for twenty years and a Member of Churches Together In Stansted for over thirty years. He currently is a volunteer in a Care Home. His interests include Drama, Art and Historical Film. David has been accorded MIFLL Membership for his contribution to Life Longing for both young people and adults. His u3a Talks have included, The First World War, The Spanish Civil War. The Origins of World War II and the Cold War from both Western and Eastern Perspectives.



# A year with the Garden Group

*Susan Sedgebeer*

In its first year, the Garden Group has been entertained by talks on Horticultural Photography, The History of a Kentish Garden and Plants for Dry Places. We have enjoyed private tours of Ulting Wick, The Cambridge University Botanic Gardens, The Gardens of Easton Lodge, Dragons and Langthorn's Plantery. A number of us visited the RHS Hyde Hall Flower Show and also BBC Gardeners' World at Audley End. We will round off 2022 with a Christmas Tea Party and a not-too-serious Quiz.

In 2023 and beginning with the February edition, we have been invited to submit a regular Gardening article for the Link in Stansted.

Our group activities will continue with a series of garden visits when the weather becomes more favourable and have an additional programme of speakers and presentations, together with our own Gardeners' Question Time, lined up for our enjoyment, so you could say the future is coming up roses for us!

We meet on the second Monday afternoon of each month, unless otherwise advised so if you fancy joining us you will be very welcome.



## Day Coach Trip - Thames Cruise and Savill Gardens Egham 15th June

*Patricia Somerfield*



This was a trip down memory lane for me having stayed at an Egham Tudor Mansion 59 years ago to the day.

We arrived at the Runnymede Boathouse for a superb two hour cruise on the River Thames passing by Windsor Castle in the distance. We were served with a very appetising Ploughman's lunch on our return to Runnymede where we rejoined the coach for a short drive to The Savill Gardens.

The Savill Gardens were created in the 1930's and consist of 35 acres of interconnected shrubberies and flower beds. The visit concluded with a very enjoyable and most welcome Afternoon Tea.

A memorable day trip with glorious weather.

## Trips with the Bus Pass Group

A small but select group of members set off for Southend-on-Sea, our May outing and always a popular destination. The journey is long but the bus passes through so many interesting areas that the time flies.

Unfortunately when we arrived the museum was closed but with the choice of a walk down the pier, which is over a mile long, a bus ride or walk to Leigh-on-Sea, also Thorpe Bay and Shoeburyness in the opposite direction, there was plenty to please everyone.



Passing the Kursaal (see 'photo) on my way along the Prom, I was reminded of trips taken to Southend as a child to see the annual illuminations. The Kursaal was the main entertainment attraction, in addition to the machines at the entrance to the pier. My Father got a knack with the "Hand" machine and I still have some of the prizes he won for me! The Kursaal was built in 1901, one of the world's first purpose-built amusement parks. It is Grade II listed which probably accounts for the fact that it is still with us today.





## Visit to Talliston House

### *Lynda Webb*

Six of us had a very interesting tour around Talliston House, Great Dunmow on 16<sup>th</sup> November. The original owner, John Tallow, took us around this most extraordinary 1930s council house which enables the guests to visit various places in the world at various times in the past. Would you believe that it is now on the National Register of Historic Houses, alongside Windsor Castle and Sandringham! See: <https://www.historichouses.org/house/talliston-house-gardens/tours/> or [www.talliston.com](http://www.talliston.com) for more information.

Finally, we arrived in the kitchen and found it was Monday 1954 and we'd arrived in Louisiana! Here we sat around a wooden table and enjoyed cakes and lots of cups of tea . . . very much needed and enjoyed.



A small group of us set off early to travel to St. Margaret's where we started a 3.5 mile walk to Broxbourne, firstly along the side of the Stort Navigation then crossing to the New River and on to our destination. For once, the weather was kind to us with a good amount of sun to keep us warm. Along the Stort there are a lot of canal boats, apparently occupied as permanent homes but boats are not allowed on the New River. Baby ducks and Coots were plentiful and we stopped many times to watch them. Arriving in Broxbourne it was time for a coffee followed by a pub lunch beside the Stort.

The New River carries water from Amwell and Chadwell in Hertfordshire to the City of London, terminating at Clarksenwell, where the water is stored. Built in 1609 and 1623, the brain-child of Hugh Myddeton, this river still serves the same purpose today as it did in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The advantage of travel on a bus is you get to go places off the beaten track and you see so much more. Our next trip is to Epping on market day so why don't you join us?





Some members of the Poetry Group  
pictured at the December meeting

## The Delights of Poetry for Pleasure

*By Julia Cook*

The best words in the best order. **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

Poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history. **Plato**

Poetry is the revelation of a feeling that the poet believes to be interior and personal which the reader recognises as their own.

**Salvatore Quasimodo**

You can find poetry in your everyday life, your memory, in what people say on the bus, in the news or just what's in your heart. **Carol Ann Duffy**

This year's poetry sessions have proven these words to be true. Our afternoons musing over Hardy, Yeats, Pam Ayres, Wendy Cope, Shakespeare to name but a few have produced many, many subjects for lively conversations. With the understated but assured leadership of Pat the group chose topics for the year, including parties, school days, Spring, Love, weather and climate change as well as the surprisingly anarchic sessions with poems themed around a single letter of the alphabet as the requirement. Initially intended to be the first letter of the poet's name these sessions morphed excitingly and with a little ingenuity allowed for any poem you were drawn to.

All the poems we read exerted a kind of authority over us. Chat ended when a reading began and respect for the elevated, carefully chosen, sometimes beautiful words brought with them a hush just as if we were 5 years old having a great story read to us, thumbs in mouths! Into this quiet the poets' reflections reverberated leaving open a door to the group to share knowledge, memories and experiences – the cumulative total of the group's years on this earth offers a wealth of capability in this respect but the sharing of it is such fun and so good for us too. So many satisfying discussions were had, shepherded by the insights of the poetry, and for some of us a few 'oh yes I know that feeling' moments.

The last two years have been troubled and difficult for all of us with the megaphone of a constantly barking media raising anxiety. Sometimes it feels very loud. Our poems have been much calmer companions offering wisdom, reflection and laughs. So, sustained by Pat's comforting pots of tea and biscuits we left each session with our inner peace enhanced by a score of poems and the pleasant prospect of the gathering together of our choices for our next meeting.

P. S. If you get asked what you want for Christmas why not ask for a book of poetry. Gyles Brandreth's 'Dancing by the light of the Moon' is to be recommended and it is also the source of the quotations at the beginning of this article.

## Stansted u3a Creative Writing Group.

### *Report from Allan Love*

Well, what have we been up to? Over the past year we have carried on meeting at the Dog and Duck in Lower Street, some of us sample the beer (excellent) some tea or coffee (also great) and one of our number has eaten there – apparently that was also a good choice. We have gossiped and of course, shared what we have written using ideas/prompts such as 'Just ask for Angela'; 'Travelling abroad'; 'Pieces of paper'; and, for our next meeting, 'The box with people inside'.

We have lost one member and gained a couple of others so there are now eight of us with another lady saying that she enjoyed her taster visit and will be back.

For our u3a's anniversary earlier in the year we all contributed a paragraph to a collective piece about a factory's annual 'beano' trip to the seaside and also all had a go at producing our own short radio script. That was challenging as none of us had ever really tried that before, so there was quite a bit of chat about what should and shouldn't be included, and that was before any of us got to grips with content.

For the coming year there are no particular projects in mind although we are always open to ideas. It would be good to bring together the collected works so that everyone else could enjoy them as well but, as yet, that's only a 'it'd be nice if...' kind of idea. So maybe you could take this idea further?

## The Best Christmas

*By Yvonne Ayres, a member of the Creative Writing Group*

Ollie gazes out of his classroom window watching the raindrops racing down the glass. He's hoping for snow. Christmas cards show children on sledges, building snowmen and having snowball fights. Snow looks much more fun than rain. A sledge is on his Christmas list.

'Oliver.' The sound of his teacher's voice makes Ollie jump. He rushes to join his classmates lining up to go into the hall. Unfortunately, Ollie's forgotten he's wearing his old dressing gown and manages to trip on the trailing cord, dropping the stuffed toy that's supposed to be a lamb – although the jury's out on that one. Mrs Tucker gives a tired sigh as she waits for Oliver to retrieve his 'lamb', thinking 'three more sleeps until the end of term'.

The first performance of the nativity play goes as well as it ever does. Some gabble their lines, some whisper them and others just forget to speak at all. But they receive loud applause from the rest of the school and effusive thanks from the Head. Ollie files back into his classroom with everyone else. He doesn't have a speaking part in the play, but is pleased that he managed to stand still in the right place; quite an achievement for the six-year-old. However, he's now minus the lamb. Shrugging off his dressing gown he decides not to tell Mrs Tucker. (She's busy trying to untangle Mary's hair from Angel Gabriel's broken wing.)

The next morning Ollie checks the weather as soon as he wakes. It's still raining.

'Mum. Do you think it'll snow today?' he asks hopefully on their way to school.

'I doubt it sweetheart. It's much too mild for snow.' Ollie doesn't get a chance to ask any more about the weather before he has to go in. It's while he's searching for his lost lamb that Ollie notices that it's stopped raining. For the rest of the day he watches out for the snow, to no avail. After tea, Ollie has to go back to school for the last performance of the Nativity. He's very excited because his dad is coming to watch. Mum insists he wears his gloves saying that it's turned quite cold. Maybe it's going to snow at last thinks Ollie as he hops from foot to foot anxious to get outside to check on the weather.

*Continued on page 11*

Disappointingly, the snow still hasn't arrived by bedtime or the next morning. On the last day of term Ollie looks out of his bedroom window and is thrilled to see everything glistening white. Dressing in record time he gobbles down his breakfast cereal and pulls on his wellies. Once outside he realises that it isn't snow but just early morning frost. Shoulders hunched and hands thrust deep into his pockets he trudges to school, wondering if he'll get his wish of a snowy Christmas; there's only two more sleeps left.

Christmas Eve arrives at last, and although it still hasn't snowed all the grown-ups agree that it's definitely cold enough for snow. Ollie goes to bed still hopeful that his wish will come true. The youngster is still awake when he hears soft footsteps and the rustle of paper during the night. Some of his friends claim that Father Christmas doesn't exist but Ollie isn't prepared to take the risk of peeping to see who's in his room. He keeps his eyes firmly closed until he hears the click of his bedroom door as whoever it is leaves. After checking his now bulging stocking, Ollie finally gets to sleep.

It's still quite dark when he wakes, but Ollie's sure it's morning; he can smell the turkey cooking. He grabs his stocking and spills the contents out onto his bed, searching for the chocolate he's certain will be there. By the time he's examined everything from inside his stocking it's light enough for Ollie to see that there's still no snow.

'Look at all the presents Father Christmas left us,' calls his mum from the kitchen, as Ollie comes downstairs. He grunts in reply, staring out the window.

'Cheer up Mr Grumpy,' says his dad ruffling Ollie's hair as he sits at the breakfast table, 'it's Christmas.'

Ollie scowls muttering, 'there's no snow. What's the use of asking for a sledge when I can't use it.' He wanders over to the heap of brightly wrapped gifts sitting under the Christmas tree. He can't see anything big enough to be a sledge, which adds to his gloom. This could be the worst Christmas ever.

'Breakfast first. Then presents,' says his mother as she sets the table. 'But there'll be no unwrapping of presents until you stop sulking Oliver,' she adds. Mum only calls him Oliver when she's really cross or upset with him, so Ollie takes the threat seriously, and does his best to cheer up.

Ollie has opened all his presents receiving everything on his Christmas list, except the sledge. But there's a glimmer of hope. Perhaps granny and grandad will be bringing it when they come round for lunch. To his delight, grandad duly arrives with a large parcel tucked under his arm and Ollie eagerly rips off the paper. It's a huge box of lego, which is nice, but not what he'd hoped for. Swallowing his disappointment Ollie eats his roast turkey and pulls crackers with his grandparents making the effort to laugh at all the silly jokes - even when he doesn't understand them. More presents arrive with his aunt, uncle and cousins who join them after lunch. But, sadly still no sledge; or snow.

As Ollie gets ready for bed he stares excitedly out the window. Bright stars twinkle from a black sky. It feels very cold. It could snow tomorrow, but that's not why Ollie's fizzing with anticipation. He's just found out that tomorrow he'll be up in the sky among the stars on his way to a family skiing holiday in France. There will be lots of snow. The best Christmas present ever.



Tree decorated by the Knitting Group for the Christmas Tree Festival 2022, at St Mary's Church, Stansted



## KNITITATION

*Louise da Costa*

Traditionally, knitting is dismissed as an occupation for elderly grandmothers! The tide is beginning to shift as the benefit to our mental health from engaging in crafts is finally being recognised. Wisdom obviously comes with age!!

Some years ago, I attended a talk given by James McIntosh who had written a book called 'Knit and Nibble' – an introduction to knitting plus cake recipes! In summary, James had reached a dark place in his life and was suffering from depression. A friend taught him how to knit and slowly stitch by stitch he found comfort and purpose through knitting. He managed to complete his first jumper; it was far from perfect, but it gave him a sense of achievement. His story made me think about my own knitting journey and examine what it is about knitting or crochet that is so enjoyable.

My mother and maternal grandmother were both accomplished in sewing, knitting and crochet. I showed a temporary interest as a child but only really applied myself later in life. I began by knitting scarves and progressed from there, teaching myself to crochet from books, online videos and with help from friends. I like a challenge and there are always new stitches, techniques and intricate patterns to stretch my brain! However, I have also learned the joy of working on something simple and repetitive like Granny Squares. Knitting/crochet becomes meditative once you fall into the rhythm of it. Hence the title of this article (KNITITATION), a term invented by James McIntosh! For myself, the rhythm of making knots with needles helps to untangle my mind when I'm stressed. Focusing on the task in hand is very soothing.

Wool shops are heaven! Colour makes me happy! I can lose myself, spending time poring over a rainbow of shades, finding it hard not to 'squish' the yarn. It takes huge self-control not to add to the growing 'stash' already taking over the house. You know when there is a knitter resident in your home because you can't open a cupboard without balls of wool falling out! I'm running out of places to hide it!!

There are many adventures to be had with this wonderful hobby - from knitting for charities to yarn bombing! If you fancy giving it a go, come and join the knitting group on a Friday morning for coffee and cake! (Cake is an integral part of knitting - the two always go hand in hand!) We are a friendly group with a variety of skills. We currently meet at 'The Dog and Duck' pub in Stansted on the second and fourth Friday of the month (11.00-12.30 pm).



*"What happened to Your hand?"*

## REDISCOVERING JESUS

*(It's not what you think)*

A memory from Liz Johnson

As a child growing up in Australia, I had above my bed a lovely picture which I cherished. It was of a beautiful garden, and in the middle of the garden was Jesus, dressed in the kind of robes we imagine He would have worn, sitting on a chair. At His feet, sitting on the lawn, was a little boy holding a model aeroplane. Standing beside Him was a young girl and sitting on His knee was a little girl, holding His upturned hand. The three children were wearing modern day dress. The caption beneath the picture read, "What Happened to Your Hand?"

As the years went by, I left home and travelled with my brother to England, to see where we had come from, to live and work on this side of the world, and do some travelling on the continent. After over thirty years in Australia, my parents eventually sold our family home and returned to England. My mother had always wanted to come "home". Just the mention of primroses made her go weak at the knees!

I never thought to ask my parents about my picture and I didn't think about it for a very long time. I assumed it had disappeared along with so many other things when they sold the house.

Over half a century later, I found myself wondering what had happened to my picture. In an idle moment, (or an inspired one), I Googled "What Happened to your Hand", expecting nothing, but to my amazement, there staring at me from the screen was my picture. I couldn't believe it. There was definitely a tear in my eye. Feeling very excited, and a bit overwhelmed, I ordered it immediately. It arrived stuck to a backing board. Sure enough, it was my picture. There was no caption below it, but I knew what it was!

Today it sits on my bedhead, there being no room to hang it, but at least I am happy and secure in the knowledge that other people have known this picture, and there is a strange satisfaction in having it safely in my house once more.

On my bedroom wall, instead, is another beautiful picture that I found once in a market. It is of a wild and stormy hillside with mountains in the background. It's almost night time. In the foreground is a lamb with its foot trapped in a bush. Jesus, with His shepherd's crook, is bent down beside the lamb trying to free its foot. The lamb is looking up into Jesus's face. There is no caption, but no caption is necessary. Jesus had found the lamb that was lost.



## Arthouse Film Group in 2022

*By Jo Brooks*

This year the group have continued to watch films from other cultures - "Bait" ( about Cornish fishermen), "Nomadland " (set in the American West), "Shoplifters" (set in Japan), "Minari " ( about a Korean American family in Arkansas), "The Past" (an Iranian man in Paris), "Untouchable" ( set in France), and, in December we will be discussing Rififi directed by Jules Dassin in 1955. A brilliantly filmed - and very influential - black and white film about a gang of robbers in Paris. Next year we hope to continue to have a varied selection of challenging and enjoyable films.



A scene from "Bait"

## The Pub Lunch Group's Year

*By Jenny Jordan*



The group enjoying lunch at the Great Hadham Golf Club

This group has never had any problems in attracting members - we have over 40 on the list but fortunately not everyone is available on any one date. Several of the pubs we use have an upper limit of 30 for a group lunch and some even fewer. We usually ask to be seated at two or three long tables rather than individual tables of 4 or 6, more sociable!

Before Covid we used to be able to negotiate the price but those days sadly are gone. However some of our favourite venues will provide a set price for main course and dessert, with four or more dishes to choose from. This year we've visited The Swan at Thaxted, the Prince of Wales at Broxted, the Harvest Moon and the Nag's Head, both in Bishop's Stortford, Great Hadham Golf Club, the Cock Inn at Stansted, Birchanger Social Club and the Coach & Horses at Thorley Street, Bishop's Stortford. Suggestions for new venues are always welcome, but sufficient car parking space is an important issue. We're lucky to have several welcoming pubs a short drive from Stansted and maybe in some small way we've helped keep them going!

With over 15 people on the waiting list there's clearly a need for a second group, perhaps on a different day of the week. A volunteer to lead the group is all that's needed and it would be a great start to the New Year.



## News from The Singers



The singers started October on a high with our concert at St John's Church. Bearing in mind Covid anxieties as well as cost of living concerns we anticipated ticket sales might be lower than before, but the atmosphere in the church was warm and enthusiastic. We hope our guests enjoyed the evening as much as we did. We decided to restrict the refreshments to wrapped items only and this seemed to work well. There was a retiring collection at the end of the evening in aid of Uttlesford Food Bank and we would like to thank everyone for their generosity.

In recent weeks we've been rehearsing for our next performance, a Christmas concert at Great Hadham Golf & Country Club. Apart from 2020, we've been invited to sing for their guests each December since 2012 so guess we're doing something right! The performance is split into two sessions, the first welcoming the lunch guests with traditional carols while they arrive and get settled at their tables. While lunch is being served the choir decamp to an adjoining room where we are well looked after with tasty sandwiches, mince pies and coffee / tea. The second session begins when the guests have finished their lunch and we present a varied repertoire, closing with an invitation to join in with well-known Christmas favourites. It's always a very popular occasion for the singers and signals a welcome start to the festive season.

*Jenny Jordan*

## AND FINALLY . . .

A poetic offering: the author thinks it best to remain anonymous

You fool! Where has my hyphen gone?  
You've left it out again.  
I put it in when I was young,  
And there it should remain.

It's part of me, my name, you lout.  
It should not be ignored.  
All sorts of people leave it out.  
What's wrong with them? Oh Lord!

If once again I have to shout,  
'Hey! Where's my hyphen gone?'  
I'll go berserk. 'You've left it out  
Again! It's simply wrong.'

It's John Reeve-Butler, with a dash.  
A hyphen. Heaven knows  
What's wrong with you? D'you  
want some cash  
To put it where it goes?

So, when you write my name,  
please take  
The utmost tender care  
To put my hyphen in that break  
Twixt Reeve and Butler. There.



## And a smattering of seasonal humour

