



Greeting All,

April GM marks my 6 month anniversary as Chair, I hope it is so far so good!

My thanks go to all of you who have contributed to the monthly Newsletters, without you it would not exist. Don't forget that if you wish to publicise your group at the June Fair/GM then please contact Julia Scott your Groups Co-Ordinator.

Below you will see the updated "Rogues Gallery" of the Committee and you will notice that Penny Haigh is now a co-opted member until the AGM when we hope she will be a full member. Next month's GM will be chaired by Ken Pragnell as I will be on holiday.

Please put the 30th November in your Diaries as a reminder of our annual Dance, which I hope will be as much fun as it has been in the past.



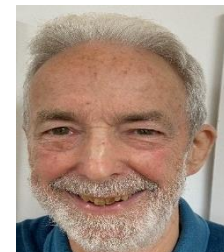
**NICK PHOTI, CHAIR /GM
MANAGER**



**GILL DAVIES VICE CHAIR/
SPEAKER SECRETARY**



**JULIA SCOTT VICE CHAIR/
GROUPS' CO-ORDINATOR**



**KEN PRAGNELL
TREASURER**



**DENISE REESE
EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR**



**BOB GETTLESON
WEB MASTER**



**ROSEMARY YATES
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**



**LINDA MARIS
COMMITTEE SECRETARY**



**LYN BRANDRITH
VCV SECRETARY**



**PENNY HAIGH
CO-OPTED MEMBER**

To contact any committee member please go to

<https://u3asites.org.uk/ver-colnevalley/contact>

and select with whom you would like to communicate.

Committee News

Refreshments



Group

Month

Croquet	April
Current Affairs/Family History	May
Garden Allotment/Geology	June
Grumpy Old Men	July
Grumpy Old Women	August
Singing For Fun	Sept
Table Games/Spanish	October
Walking Group 1 Amblers	November

Closing date for articles for Newsletter
NO LATER than the morning of **Friday 3rd**

May 2024

Please note articles received after the
deadline will be published in the next
newsletter if appropriate.

Please send your articles to
newsletter@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Groups News

Hi Everyone,

Good to see so many of you at the last
GM and thank you to the Creative
writing group and helpers for
providing everyone with
refreshments.

Our Cinema group met for the first-
time last month and enjoyed seeing
'Wicked Little Letters'. I'm hoping to
find another good film for us all this
month let me know any preferences.

I have nearly enough people to form a
Philosophy group, although I think
we need a person who has a great
interest in this subject to lead the
group. If you are the person for it,
please can you contact me asap.

I will have a sign-up sheet for canasta
at the next GM, they would still like a
few more members to join in.

Don't forget our group fair coming in
June, if you haven't offered to bake a
cake but would like to please email
me or catch me at the next GM. I have
about a dozen offers at the moment
and could do with some more,
remember there is a prize to be had!

Take care and see you all soon.

Julia

Speakers' Corner

Gill Davies

April 18th

Again, I can't quite believe my luck, but I have been able to
book Gail Stuart who just happens to be Eric Morecombe's
daughter! She is going to give a talk about her life with her
Dad. I feel sure we will all thoroughly enjoy her talk!

There is a QR Code on the first page of this Newsletter. To use
this, scan the code, from any directions for 360 degrees using
the camera on your smart phone. It is a direct link to the home
page of the VER-Colne Valley website. Not all phones are
compatible unfortunately.

Bob Gettleson. Web master

WELCOME

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS WE LOOK FORWARD
TO MEETING YOU IN PERSON.

Newsletter: Tina Photi: Email: newsletter@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk
Sound & Lighting: Roger Barry / Trevor Spinage
Catering & Supplies: Steve Bowler
Welfare: Pam Kimber: Email: c.kimber@ntlworld.com

Dates for your diary

Event	Date	Contact	Current Position
 Calendar Girls	Saturday 20 th April 2024	Maggie Fenn	Don't forget
 Garden Appreciation Chenies Manor Tulip festival	23 rd April 2024	Pat Hammond/ Ann Allam/ Barbara Nash	Contact Barbara if you wish to be added to the waiting list
 Walking Group 2	19 th April 2024	Angela Wright	Contact Angela
 Royal Opera House	29 th April 2024	Babara Croom	Sold out but put your name on the waiting list
 Walking in London Greenwich	8 th / 10 th May 2024	Bob Gettleson	Contact Bob
 Garden Appreciation Rousham Gardens Garden	9 th May 2024	Angela & John Wright	Please contact John if you are interested
 AMBLERS	26 th April 2024	Joy Dabson	
 Appreciation Ashridge House Rhododendron	13 th June 2024	Barbara Nash / Gill Founds	Details to be confirmed
 Lee & Stort River Cruise	19 th June 2024	Barbara Croom	Sold Out but put your name on the waiting list
 Garden Appreciation Church Gardens, Harefield	16 th July Date to be arranged	Cindy Binnions / Pam Baladi	Please contact either Cindy or Pam if you are interested
 Garden Appreciation Audley Manor	August Date to be arranged	Cindy Binnions / Pam Baladi	Details to be confirmed
 Denbies Vinyard	5 th August 2024	Barbara Croom	On sale April GM
 Garden Appreciation Swiss Gardens	September 2024 Date to be arranged	Bronwyn Hewer / Zandra Johnson	Date to be confirmed
 Voulez Vous Aha, Abba tribute band plus lunch	2 nd October 2024	Barbara Croom	On sale July GM
 Lion King	Wednesday 9 th October	Maggie Fenn	Sold out but put your name on the waiting list
 Garden Appreciation West Lodge Arboretum	October Date to be arranged	Sue Leakey / Anne Mitchell	Date to be confirmed
 Garden Appreciation Proposed Garden talk	November Date to be arranged		Date and venue to be confirmed
 VCV Annual Dance	Saturday 30 th November 2024	Nick Photi/ Gill Davies	Details to follow
 Garden Appreciation Christmas Garden visit	December Date to be arranged	Brenda Kember / Cathy Jones	Date to be confirmed
 White Christmas	3 rd January 2025	Maggie Fenn	Sold out but put your name on a waiting list



AMBLERS - Joy Dabson

Please meet for an 11am start, Friday 26th April, Heartwood Forest, Sandridge, St Albans, AL4 9QD

Day Trips and Events

Trips Contact Barbara Croom – trips@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Royal Opera House

Date – Monday 29th April

Price - £34pp

Depart GWP – 9am

Depart London – 3pm



A unique look behind the scenes at one of London's most prestigious theatres. The guided tour includes the rehearsal spaces, costume and props workshops and the auditorium. Learn some of the history of the building and how this came to be the third theatre on the site. There is a fair amount of walking involved but it does include pauses/breaks while the guide is talking. There will also be some time to visit Covent Garden
Waiting list only

Lee and Stort River Cruise



Date – Wednesday 19th June

Price – £58pp

Depart GWP – 10.45am

Depart Ware – 4.15pm

A two-and-a-half-hour cruise through Hidden Hertfordshire. We start with a two-course lunch at the Waterside Inn in Ware, then board the boat directly from the restaurant's private garden terrace. On the cruise we pass the Ware gazebos that overhang the river's edge, continuing along the flood plains of the River Lee to reach Hertford. We also pass the Amwell Nature Reserve which attracts a great many varieties of birds, before travelling on to Stanstead Abbots where we start the return journey.
Waiting list only

On Sale in April

Denbies Wine Estate

Date – Monday 5th August

Price - £37.00pp

Depart GWP – 8.45am

Depart Denbies – 3.15pm



Our visit to the vineyard is split over two sections. A 50-minute train tour takes us at a leisurely pace to some of the most beautiful viewing points in the vineyard. A recorded commentary enhances your trip making this an informative and comfortable way to experience the magnificent views of the vineyard and the North Downs. Cameras are recommended.

The indoor experience begins with a short film in the Denbies cinema with an insight into the workings of the vineyard and English wine production. Learn about the geology and history of the estate, experience the changes of the vineyard through the seasons and appreciate the wine making process from vine to bottle. This is followed by a short walk down to the cellars to try a selection of Denbies wines.

Our group will be split into two, one half doing the train tour first followed by the indoor visit after lunch, while the other group go vice versa.

Day Trips and Events Continued

On Sale in July

Voulez Vous Aha

Date – Wednesday 2nd October

The Tereza Joanne is a permanently moored boat on the Thames hosting a variety of shows and events. ABBA clique is one of the best tribute bands in the business and the matinee performance includes a two-course lunch. We will be served the main course soon after our arrival followed by the first half of the show. Dessert and a hot drink are served in the interval, with the bar open throughout the afternoon.

Full details to follow.

Theatre Trips

Theatre Trips Organiser: Maggie Fenn
Email: theatre@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

The interest list does not guarantee a ticket. Payment is required before your name is added to the booking list for the event.



CALENDAR GIRLS

Saturday 20 April 2024 – Matinee performance

Theatre The Mill at Sonning

Pick up Point Greenwood Park

Departure Time The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am

Return Time Approx 5.00 pm

Price £86

LION KING

Wednesday 9th October 2024

Theatre Lyceum Theatre, London

Pick up Point Greenwood Park

Departure Time The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am

Return Time Approx 5.15

Price £47



FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

Thursday 22nd August – Matinee performance

Theatre Regents Park Open Air Theatre

Pick up Point Greenwood Park

Departure Time The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am

Return Time Approx 5.30 pm

Price £46

WHITE CHRISTMAS

Date: Friday, 3rd January 2025, Matinee Performance

Theatre: The Mill at Sonning

Pick-up point: Greenwood Park

Depart: The coach leaves promptly at 10.30am

Return: Approx 5pm

Price: £89





u3a If you wish to receive the monthly National u3a Newsletter follow the link below, they also do a "Bitesize" edition, signing up is easy. (Control and click to follow link) [You can sign up via website.](#)

FLIGHT INSPIRATIONS AVIATION GROUP NEXT MEETING TUESDAY 7th MAY 2024 from 10am to 12pm Including presentation, Q&A, and discussion – ON ZOOM 110 YEARS OF AVIATION HISTORY IN HERTFORDSHIRE 1913 – 2023 – SPEAKER GUY THOMAS

Image: de Havilland DH.106 Comet



The Flight Inspirations u3a Aviation group is organised by Don Mobley of Stowmarket u3a and Barbara Cordina of Lea Valley u3a. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 10am.

Hertfordshire aviation has influenced culture and society in various ways, serving as a catalyst for technological innovation, fostering a sense of pride and identity within the local community and contributing to the broader narrative of human achievement in flight.

Iconic aviation heroes from Hertfordshire include Frederick Handley Page, who in 1929 bought land at Radlett and developed Handley Page Aircraft Ltd. Sir Geoffrey de Havilland set up de Havilland Aircraft at Stag Lane, Edgware in 1920, then moved it to Hatfield in 1930 where it continued to operate until 1994. His contribution to aviation lies in pioneering spirit, innovative designs and a lasting impact on both military and commercial aviation. He played a pivotal role in shaping the course of aviation history and his legacy continues to influence the industry to this day. Today the aviation industry in Hertfordshire continues as research, design and development with three main companies operating in Stevenage. The Airbus Defence and Space site is Europe's leading supplier of Satellites, MBDA is a world leader in missile systems and The STEM Discovery Centre is an education facility, developed in partnership with North Hertfordshire College, Airbus and the Hertfordshire LEP.

This event is open to all u3a members and is free of charge. To register please email the following, details of the zoom link will be sent to you nearer the date:

barbaracordina@btinternet.com / oneisbingo@gmail.com (Don Mobley)

These talks are part of the u3a educational programme so you can also book directly with Eventbrite via the national website- www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events. (ctrl+click to follow link)

The committee has been asked to post the link below which is from the East of England u3a so that you can look at their montly Newsletter. They hope there is something that you find intersting unfortunately most of the details have come too late for you to participate in but keep the link for future reference.

[April 24 East of England Bulletin Final PDF.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#) (ctrl+click to follow link)

<p>U3A National Office The Third Age Trust 156 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8EN</p>	<p>Open Mon to Fri 9.30 to 16.30</p>	<p>U3A National Office Contact Phone: 020 8466 6139 Website: www.u3a.org.uk Email: national.office@u3a.org.uk</p>
---	---	--

News and Features

A trip to a bygone age.

Our visit was to the Milestones Living History Museum in Basingstoke which is set up in a very large hangar and contains a varied collection of buildings replicating what was in the town during the period 1900 to 1940. Everything was faithfully copied so that the display was an illustration of the town when it was the centre of a mostly farming community.



There were steam driven machines which carried out a wide range of functions and it was surprising that some of them were made locally. Everything on display demonstrated the precision of the engineering and the skill it took to carry out the various tasks.



Even the shop selling items for household use showed that these were meant to last a long time. This was not a throwaway culture where items could be quickly changed when the next model arrived.

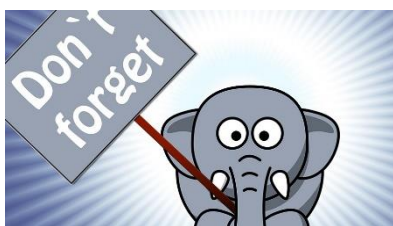
There were no electrical devices on display and so much depended on sheer physical effort. There were various displays with figures showing different working practices and it was clear that this was a hard life with not very much in the way of financial remuneration.



Walking around gave the impression of a small town and bustling community satisfying the needs of the local agriculture community. It was a very well laid out display and a complete contrast to the world of today. There was a lot of evidence of the skill required to utilise the various machines that were exhibited. In some ways it was a humbling experience as it made you realise how life was especially difficult for that generation.

There was a restaurant on site and a gift shop selling amongst other things replicas of the toys and games of the period. Also hidden away there was a small pub where some of us enjoyed liquid refreshment to the sound of a pianist playing songs of the period; I should add that it was a birthday celebration for one of our members. A very enjoyable day out with a kind M25 both ways. Well done Barbara for organizing it.

Ron Fenn



If you have tickets to see Calander Girls at Sonning

Saturday 20 April 2024

Pick up Point Greenwood Park

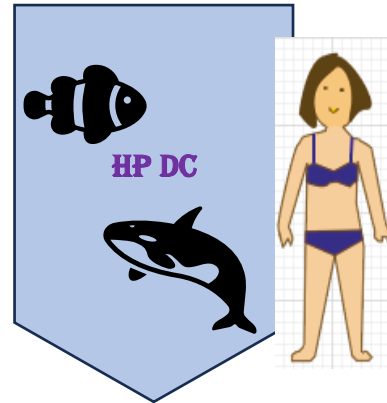
Departure Time The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am

Return Time Approx 5.15 pm

News and Features

Received from the Creative Writing Group – by Paul Littlefair

HERTS PLUNGERS DIVING CLUB



NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

At the Committee meeting on 23rd February 2024, concern was raised that some members are not treating diving in a respectful and serious way. It was noted that one member brought chocolates and crisps into the pool because he 'wanted to do a somersault dive with tuck'. Another gave a similar reason for taking a two-foot-long pike onto the high board.

Accordingly, the Committee has reluctantly had to compile a set of rules setting out basic etiquette which we expect all members to follow. These are:

1. Don't drink and dive; you'll spill it.
2. Shouting 'Geronimo!' when entering the water is frowned on, especially when done more than ten times in the same session.
3. Conversely, shouting 'Don't jump!', when others are on the diving board, is off putting.
4. Dressing as a shark, orca, narwhal, piranha, Creature from the Black Lagoon, or any other aquatic predator can cause distress to other pool users and must cease forthwith.
5. Tasing other members while pretending to be an electric eel is reckless and dangerous, and also invalidates the Club's insurance policy.
6. Using a jet powered backpack to prolong dives, so that the diver hovers in mid-air for a lengthy period, is banned from now on. In a recent incident, members queuing for the high board had to wait for two and a half hours while an 864-somersault dive with 213 twists was being attempted.
7. Practical jokes such as putting itching powder in wetsuits, leaving superglue on the springboard, releasing live jellyfish into the pool, or attaching string to members' swimsuits so that they dangle in mid-air after diving, are expressly forbidden.
8. New members must not make the same old stupid jokes when being asked why they want to join the Club. These include 'I wanted to test the water', 'It will give me a sense of porpoise' and especially 'I thought I'd take the plunge'.

Maida Splash
Secretary, Herts Plungers Diving Club

Walking Group 3



Despite the heavy rain and with true VCV spirit and determination Walking Group 3 ventured out on their March walk around the footpaths of Redbourn. The walk was approximately 4.5 miles and led by Margaret Simpson and Elaine Roberts starting and finishing at the Chequers Pub. A lot of us found out that our Waterproof Gear was not Waterproof, so a visit to the hiking shop is on the cards. Despite the weather, we all enjoyed the walk and the welcome lunch.

Thanks to Margaret & Elaine for leading this walk.

News and Features



Walking in London March 2024 - Bloomsbury - Bob Gettleton

The name Bloomsbury dates way back to the 13th century when the land was owned by William De Blemont who, according to Wikipedia, was also known as William De Blemund.

The area was known as Blemunds Bury, i.e. House of Blemund, and this later became just Bloomsbury as it is known to this day.

In the 17th century the area was owned by the 4th Earl of Southampton who created Bloomsbury Square. Ownership was later passed to the Duke of Bedford by way of marriage.

The area is best known for its culture and educational establishments along with hospitals and, of course, The British Museum, which was established in 1753.

The cultural element is best illustrated by the “Bloomsbury Group” which included Virginia Woolf, John Maynard Keynes, E. M. Forster, Vanessa Bell and Lytton Strachey. These people had a huge influence on modern day attitudes to feminism, pacifism and sexuality.

Our first stop was Bedford Square. This was established by the Duke of Bedford (the Russell family) in the 1720s. The gardens are private and may only be accessed by residents of the square.



The architecture surrounding the square is impressive. There are quite a few Blue Plaques in the square, notably Anthony Hope Hawkins, a barrister and writer. He was the author of *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Others of note are William Butterfield (architect) and Millicent Fawcett (suffragette). There were too many to stop at them all.

Our next stop was in Montague Place where we had a good view of Senate House, which is now the administration centre for London University. During World War 2 it housed the Ministry of Information. George Orwell worked at the ministry and used this building for *The Ministry of Truth* headquarters in his novel 1984. It is widely believed that Hitler instructed the Luftwaffe not to bomb Senate House as he intended to use it as his own HQ once he conquered Britain.

We stopped at the impressive building which houses the London School of Tropical Medicine, the names of past leading research doctors along the building’s façade.

We briefly stopped in Malet Street from where you can see the glass back entrance to RADA, the well-known School of Dramatic Arts. Some very famous actors attended RADA including Alan Rickman, Tom Hiddleston, Anthony Hopkins, Roger Moore, Richard Attenborough, Kenneth Branagh and Joan Collins. The list is endless, certainly far too many to mention them all.

Next, we visited the central square of London University. This University was founded without any religious connection. It was known as the “Godless University”. The frontage of Birkbeck College dominates but the gardens are pretty too. Catering for the students are several street food booths. The smells were enough to make us feel peckish, if not ravenous. At one end of this square, you will find the Catholic Church of Christ the King. This is a grade 1 listed building built in the 1850s from Bath stone. This church was so convinced the 2nd coming of Jesus was imminent that it prepared for the event, including keeping clothes for Jesus to wear. Why they thought he would arrive in Bloomsbury rather than Jerusalem nobody is quite sure.



We moved on to Gordon Square, named after Georgina Gordon, the wife of the 5th Duke of Bedford. There are several Blue Plaques, mostly for the Bloomsbury Group. There is also one for Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale. Our next stop was Tavistock Square. Here you can see the BMA headquarters outside which a terrorist bomb exploded on 7th July 2005. The square also contains the last London home of Charles Dickens. Inside the gardens, there is a statue of Mahatma Ghandi and this tree which was planted in the 1990’s commemorating the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima.

John then took us into Woburn Walk, the first purpose built pedestrian only street in London which dates back to 1822, which you would be hard pressed to find without a guide. There is a Blue Plaque for W. B. Yeats who lived at number 5 and another for the novelist, Dorothy Richardson, who lived at number 6. There are shops and cafes on both sides. The road is short and very pretty.

Our next stop was Cartwright Gardens, once a residential street but now has mainly hotels. The name derives from Major Cartwright who was born in 1740 and lived at number 37. He was a political activist somewhat ahead of his time. He argued for Suffrage and annual parliaments. He fell out of favour with the establishment when he supported American Independence.

We then moved on to Marchmont Street where we saw a 1970s book shop called Gay is the Word. There are Blue Plaques here as well – one for Emyln Williams and another for Kenneth Williams (no relation). Kenneth Williams lived above a hairdresser's shop which is still there.

Brunswick Square was the next port of call. The main interest here is the Foundling Museum, which was previously the Foundling hospital created by Thomas Coram. This hospital's benefactors included Handel who often played to the children, and also Hogarth who added funds to the hospital. In 1742 the word hospital had a broader meaning than its use today. Rather than a place for treating the sick, it related to hospitality. In 1905 the Foundling Hospital moved to Berkhamsted. 99 years later, in 2004, the Foundling Museum opened on the original site.



In Bernard Street there is a plaque to J. M. Barry. He used the flat as the basis of the Darling home in Peter Pan. Barry bequeathed the copyright of Peter Pan to Great Ormond Street Hospital. When the copyright expired, an act of Parliament was passed to grant this copyright in perpetuity.

Russell Square station is also in Bernard Street. This is one of the few London Underground stations that has the original red tile exterior. Our route took us along Herbrand Street, the site of something called The Horse Hospital. But this is not what the name suggests it appears to be a place to buy refreshments.

On Guilford Street there is a Blue Plaque for Richard D'Oyly Carte who, as you no doubt know, founded the opera company that still bears his name. There is also a plaque commemorating Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas who was a secret agent during World War 2. As the plaque shows, his codename was White Rabbit.

We moved on to Queen Square. There is some doubt about which queen had this square dedicated to her. There is a statue in the square but that doesn't make it clear. It is most likely that it was Queen Charlotte, the wife of George 3rd. This is supported by the name of the nearest pub, The Queens Larder. It is said that Charlotte hired the pub basement to store food for George 3rd while he was being treated for his bouts of madness.

As you approach Russell Square you see the magnificent Kimpton Fitzroy Hotel, formally the Hotel Russell, which opened in 1900. Nowadays you can stay there for around £330 per night, breakfast extra. Russell Square is one of the largest gardens in London. It was laid out in the early 1800s on the site of Southampton House which had been demolished. In good weather it gets quite busy as many people get out of their offices to enjoy the gardens and eat their packed lunches. One of the local businesses is the publishing house Faber and Faber. This company is famous for turning down George Orwell's Animal Farm.



The walk ended outside the British Museum. The museum was founded in the mid 1700's when Sir Hans Sloane bequeathed his collection of over 71,000 items to the nation. As more and more items were added there was a need for expansion. The current building was built by Sir Robert Smirke in the 1820s. The museum houses some controversial items such as the Elgin Marbles and the Rosetta Stone. It also came to light that some 2,000 items had been stolen but not noticed. Some of these items were seen for sale on Ebay. The then head of the museum had to resign as a result of this.

So, with thanks to John Colmans for another splendid walk full of facts and humorous anecdotes, this ends the report.

News and Features

The Petals' Easter Arrangements



Quiz Answers
 1. Holby City & Casualty ; 2. Emmerdale;
 3. Hills; 4. Portsmouth; 5. Tobermory;
 6. Irish Sea; 7. Ermine Street; 8. Daniel
 Defoe; 9. Fire; 10. Iron

- 1 Which two soaps are set in the county of Wyvern?
- 2 Which soap was made in Esholt until 1997 ?
- 3 What was EastEnders' Kathy Mitchell's maiden name?
- 4 In which port were Dickens and Brunel both born?
- 5 Which Womble was named after the town on the Isle of Mull?
- 6 Which Sea joins the St George's Channel and the North Sea?
- 7 Which Roman road shares its name with a type of fur?
- 8 Who wrote the novel Moll Flanders?
- 9 Pyrophobia is a fear of what?
- 10 What word can follow "cast", "pig" and "steam"?