

**u3a** learn,  
laugh,  
live

**Wadhurst & District**

**NEWS**

**December 2022**

## Wadhurst u3a

*Registered Charity No: 1160124*

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Without Portfolio	<i>Norrie Hazell</i>

*To contact a member of the Committee, please use the dedicated number  
**01580 200647** or the email addresses listed above.*

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### TO JOIN Wadhurst & District u3a

Download a membership application form and a Gift Aid form  
from the 'About Us' page on: [www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk](http://www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk)

You can either

print, complete the forms and return them with a cheque for the  
annual fee of £25 to our membership secretary by post,

or

fill in the forms electronically, email them to our membership  
secretary, and pay the annual fee of £25 online to Wadhurst &  
District u3a.

Further details are given on the application form.  
Ring Sheila Jemmett at **01580 200647** if you have any questions.

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### ONLINE PAYMENTS TO Wadhurst & District u3a

Lloyds Bank, sort code: 30-98-77, account number: 48499968,  
In name of: *Wadhurst u3a*

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**NEWS Magazine Editor:** Philip Cheung

COPY DEADLINE for the March 2023 issue: 20th February 2023. Please  
email copy to the editor at: [newsmag@wadhurstu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsmag@wadhurstu3a.org.uk)

# FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

We are coming to the end of our membership renewal period for 2022-3. I would like to share with you some numbers.

About a year ago, in October 2021, our membership stood at 256, only marginally down from the high of 265 before COVID. However, at the end of the membership renewal period for 2021-2 we saw the real damage done by the pandemic, when 49 members did not renew. At the end of the current renewal period our membership may be down to as low as 180, despite the fact that 27 new members have joined us since the beginning of this year. This means that another 40 or so members will not have renewed for 2022-3.

Reasons for non-renewal are several. Many have not done so because they have not taken part in any u3a related activities during the long lockdown, and do not now find the physical or mental energy to start again. Others are vulnerable and isolating while the virus has not completely disappeared. Still others have simply lost interest in the activities of the u3a. Several trips organised by the Historic Building Visit and Gardening groups have been cancelled because of a lack of numbers, while others have been down-sized.

On the bright side, we are still attracting new members at the healthy rate of about 25 a year, many interest groups are running to the enjoyment of their members, and attendance at the monthly speaker meeting has climbed back from about 30 at the start of the year to about 60 in recent months. We shall ride out the storm but it will take time.

At the AGM I spoke about what the Third Age means (retired from full-time employment but still active and eager to learn) and the values of the u3a: self-help (we do what we can ourselves) and mutuality (the spirit of helping each other). When I spoke about u3a's helping each other by opening their interest groups to each others' members, some in the audience were upset. What I said

was not a new policy but one that I understand to have been agreed on by the trustees in 2016, although it has not been clearly and widely communicated. Some of our interest groups have accepted members from neighbouring u3a's since 2016. Nevertheless the trustees have now scheduled a meeting to look at this policy again and you will hear more on the subject in the months to come.

With best wishes,

Philip Cheung

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## THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Our birthday is a movable feast and the 9th edition was celebrated on 16th September 2022 by nearly eighty members with a tea party in the Commemoration Hall. Members brought cakes, tray bakes and sandwiches. The trustees 'contributed' (from the central fund) the birthday cake below.



Nearly all the our interest groups were represented on the cake and we had a competition to name five that were not. Six members

gave the correct answer and the winner was decided by a tiebreaker: guess the weight of the cake. The answer was 14 pounds and the winner was Angela Goddard. (Ms and not Mrs Goddard, we have both in our association.) In case you wonder where the nine candles are, the coach driver will tell you that he is driving up a stretch of road in the shape of the figure '9'.

David Slater supplied music from his keyboard to set the mood. He complained of playing second fiddle to a cake. John O'Dwyer ran a very successful raffle. Jane and David Austin organised the prosecco toast and the table decoration. Ken Turner cut the cake ceremoniously but Lynda Emberson had the unenviable task of cutting it into edible slices.

Everyone had an enjoyable time and we thank everyone who contributed to making the party a success.

## **The AGM - 20th October**

We lost one trustee in Pam Coyne, who has been membership secretary since the summer of 2019 and who has resigned. We voted in two new trustees: Marianne Whittingdale, who is our new secretary, and Jane Austin, who's been co-opted onto the committee of trustees since the summer as interest group coordinator and webmaster. The other officers and trustees were all re-elected unopposed.

We say goodbye, with grateful thanks, to Pam and we welcome Marianne and Jane on board. We also thank Mike King who has stepped down after serving as secretary for the maximum allowed three years, and Norrie Hazell who has looked after the speakers during this past year and organised the speaker programme for 2023. The list of current trustees and their roles are listed on the front inside cover.

The meeting also voted for a new logo for our u3a, *Wadhurst & District u3a*. This will appear on our posters, on the website and in this magazine. However, our bank account name *Wadhurst u3a*, and our url (uniform source locator), *wadhurstu3a.org.uk* are unchanged.

## The Tea Rota

Lynda Emberson is coordinating the Tea Rota for the Monthly Speaker Meetings. Please sign the rota if you can help, giving your telephone number. We need three helpers at each meeting.

Lynda will remind you a few days before the meeting that you have signed to help. Conversely, if for some reason you are unable to be there, please let Lynda know.

## Our stall at Wadhurst Farmers Market

Jane and David Austin set up a stall in the Commemoration Hall at Wadhurst's Farmers Market in October. Thank you to everyone who helped out on the day. We were delighted that over 80 people (members, shoppers and visitors to the area) stopped at our stall to learn more about what Wadhurst & District u3a has to offer.



# SELECTED GROUP NEWS

*Wadhurst & District u3a has 25 Interest Groups to offer. Here are news items from some of them. Do not hesitate to contact the convenor if you are interested in an interest group. Contact information can be found on the centrefold. You can also email the convenor using the 'Blue Bird' on the relevant group page in Wadhurst & District u3a's website:*

[www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk](http://www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk)

## NEW INTEREST GROUPS

We are exploring the possibility of establishing some new groups. These include:

- Armchair Traveller (winter months only)
- Croquet at Wadhurst (summer months only)
- Pétanque (Boules) at Ticehurst (summer months only)
- History Revisited
- Spanish Conversation

If any (or all) of these groups appeal to you, please contact our group coordinator, **Jane Austin** via the website or at

[e.jane.austin@btinternet.com](mailto:e.jane.austin@btinternet.com) or 07837 958867

with details of the group(s) you are interested in.

Similarly, if you have any ideas for new groups, then please let us know and we'll see what we can do to make it happen.

## **FRIENDLY COMPUTERS**

*Philip Cheung*

The aim of the group is to help u3a members to use more effectively their personal computers, tablets and smart phones, to send emails and messages, to access the internet to look for information, to buy, to bank... etc.

We shall not meet in December but resume in January. I shall continue to help with Apple's operating systems (OS) and devices and Sheila Jemmett will help with the others OS's and devices.

Please contact me using the information in the centrefold or on our website if you wish to come to the meetings.

## **HISTORIC BUILDING VISITS**

Paul Brown, the convenor of the group, will be stepping down at the end of the year. We thank Paul for organising many visits and for the support he gave the other organisers. His help was particularly valued during the past year, when a drop in participation as a result of COVID caused many visits to be cancelled or re-scheduled.

The group now needs a convenor to *lightly* coordinate the visits organised by others. A volunteer would be much appreciated.

## **Planning for 2023**

Early in the New Year, Valerie O'Dwyer will be convening a planning meeting to draw up a programme of visits to historic buildings for 2023. Do keep a look out for the date and come along with your ideas for interesting places to visit.

In the meantime, based on members' suggestions, we have a number of other outings that may appeal to you. These are listed below.

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### **The Musical Museum at Kew Bridge - The History of Music Production**

A group visit to the museum will involve live presentations of a range of instruments and inventions including musical boxes, reproducing pianos, organs and self-playing violins. We will be able



to see the intricate workings and amazing sound of an orchestrion that recreates the sound of a concert orchestra. Group visits conclude in the concert hall, where the Mighty Wurlitzer theatre organ can be demonstrated. Light refreshments will be served.

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### **HQS Wellington – Victoria Embankment, London**

Reopening to the public in April 2023 with personal tours available on Sundays. A Grimsby Class Sloop, HQS Wellington began her successful career in the 1930s. Laid down in September 1933 at Devonport Dockyard, launched in May 1934, she entered service in January 1935. Her purpose was as an Imperial Patrol Sloop destined for the New Zealand Station.

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### **Brick Lane Old Time Music Hall, London**

The only permanent home for music hall, Brick Lane Music Hall is a totally unique venue. They offer a range of shows, including traditional music hall bills as well as new productions with more up-to-date material. Daytime shows include a three-course lunch (£55), and matinee performances include afternoon tea (£45), served during the interval. Named after its original home in Brick Lane, the Old Time Music Hall is proud of its East London heritage and its active role in the Borough of Newham.

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### **Magic Circle, Euston Station, London (Members may also like to visit the nearby Wellcome Museum)**

On selected Mondays throughout the year, the History and Mystery event is aimed at u3a groups and individuals. Doors open at 11am with complimentary teas and coffees served at the bar and the performance begins at 11.30am. The event includes tours of the HQ including highlights from the museum collection, 'close-up' magic performance and a short show in the theatre. The event finishes at 1.15pm. Ticket Cost £21 plus travel.

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If you have not already registered your interest, but would like to be included in future communications about these visits, then please contact **Jane Austin, Group Co-ordinator** on 01580 200647 or by email [e.jane.austin@btinternet.com](mailto:e.jane.austin@btinternet.com). Please remember to leave your contact details and the venues that interest you.

## Temple Church

*Philip Cheung*

A group of nine visited the Temple Church in September. The church is located in an area called 'Temple' that stretches from Fleet Street down to the Embankment, has its own tube station, and is owned and occupied by the two Inns of Court: the Inner Temple and the Middle Temple. It is built in two parts, the original Round Church consecrated in 1185 and a rectangular section added about 50 years later.



*Temple Church with its Round Church and rectangular chancel, from the outside and the inside. (photos by Rosemary Collins).*

The Round Church is in the characteristic style of the 12th century owners of this parcel of land, the Knight Templars. They were an order of soldier-monks founded during the Crusades to protect pilgrims to the Holy Land. Their network of commanderies and fortifications stretching across Europe to the Levant soon developed into the world's first multinational bank from whom kings and nobles borrowed to fund campaigns at home and abroad. In 1312 envy of their wealth and power caused the



order to be disbanded. In the centuries that followed and after several changes of ownership, the Temple land became the property of the Inner Temple and Middle Temple, which have evolved from the colleges of lawyers who have been on site since the days of the Templars.

Under the auspices of the Templars, the Temple Church was one of the few places where King John felt safe to meet and negotiate with his rebellious barons. As a result, the church became closely associated with the Magna Carta. After the celebrations of the charter's 800th anniversary in 2015, the *Magna Carta Exhibition* has remained on display in the church. It was much enjoyed by our party.

Worth a mention is the effigy of William Marshal (1146-1219), 1st Earl of Pembroke, who is buried in the Round Church. An exemplary knight, he was a tournament champion in his youth, unhorsed Richard the Lionheart (some say a unique feat) while fighting for Henry II in a father-son conflict, loyally served King Richard and especially King John, became regent of the kingdom in 1216, when 9 year-old Henry III acceded to the throne, and led the loyalists to defeat the rebel barons and Prince Louis of France who had invaded England in 1217.



After lunch we visited the Inner Temple Gardens. The gardeners among us told me that the tree dahlia just visible behind us in the photo is probably the only outdoor flowering specimen growing in the UK. The vibrancy and scope of the planting have benefited from the vast sheltered site and this year's extended summer.

We took the train to Charing Cross station and walked along the Strand to the Temple Church, past the Savoy Hotel, King's College, London and Somerset House. On the return journey we strolled along the Embankment through various gardens, passed again the Savoy Hotel. It is named after Count Peter of Savoy, the maternal uncle of Eleanor of Provence, Henry III's queen. The Count became one of the king's closest advisors and was granted the land on which the hotel now stands.

I acted as guide during the visit, having read and learnt much from Brian Harwood's book: "Fixer and Fighter - the life of Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, 1170-1243". But I only touched on about 100 years in the history of the Temple Church. There is much more to learn and see, perhaps on a return visit.

## **The Houses of Parliament**

*Jane Austin*

It was a gloriously sunny day for our visit to the Houses of Parliament; a temperature over 22 °C at the end of October must surely be a record.

Despite the dreaded train replacement service, everything ran like clockwork on the day. On arrival at Charing Cross, and after a coffee and chat, we made our way through Trafalgar Square to Whitehall. Here, we witnessed 'freedom of speech' in action. Hundreds of parents and children had turned out to march for more affordable childcare. Traffic was halted as the police guided the procession towards Downing Street. It was a peaceful demonstration, and it did not hinder our walk along Whitehall.

We arrived at the Houses of Parliament in good time for us to clear security, receive our ID badges and familiarise ourselves with the new multi-media devices. The idea of not having a personal guide was disappointing initially but most of us agreed that the mobile devices were a much better option. Alongside the audio recordings,

the handheld display screens showed pictures and short video clips, as well as timelines and maps of the rooms and chambers we would visit during our tour. The devices also had the advantage of allowing everyone to do the tour at their own pace.

We entered through Westminster Hall with its magnificent hammer-beam timber roof. Just a few weeks earlier, this historic Hall had been the location for the Lying-in-State of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Here too on 20th January 1649, the trial of Charles I took place. He was found guilty of attempting to "*uphold in himself an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will, and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people*". He was sentenced to death and executed ten days later.

Westminster Hall is the oldest building on the Parliamentary estate. It has played a central role in British history, and it is from here that all the major institutions of the British state grew - Parliament, the law courts and the various government offices.



After taking in the atmosphere of the vast Hall, we then walked through to St Stephen's Hall. On the site of the royal Chapel of St Stephen's, this is where the House of Commons sat until the chapel was destroyed by fire in 1834. If you look closely, you can see four brass studs in the floor which mark the former position of the Speaker's Chair.

## Wadhurst u3a Interest Groups

Interest Group	Convenor	Day of Month	Time	Venue
Art at Ticehurst	Peter Sewell	last Friday	14.00	<i>check with convenor</i>
Art at Wadhurst	Sheila King	2nd Tuesday	10.00	Orchard Room
Art Appreciation	Margot Yeo	<i>check with convenor</i>		
Book Group One	Georgina Cheung	<i>check with convenor</i>		
Book Group Two	Janet Pelham	<i>check with convenor</i>		
Bridge	Lesley Thompson	Thursdays	10.00	Sparrows Green Pavillion
French Conversation	Paul Brown	2nd Monday	14.00	<i>check with convenor</i>
Friendly Computers	Philip Cheung	<i>check with convenor</i>		
Gardening	Sheila Jemmett	3rd Tuesday	10.00	Commem Hall
Historic Buildings	TBA	<i>See website for latest news</i>		
Knit & Natter	Kate Metcalfe	1st Tuesday	14.30	<i>check with convenor</i>
Life Writing	Jessica Brown	alternate Tue	10.00	<i>check with convenor</i>
Mahjong	Norwill Hazell	2nd & 4th Thu	14.30	Sparrows Green Pavillion
Mindfulness & Relaxation	Sue Swift	4th Friday	10.30	<i>check with convenor</i>
Modern Architecture	Jane Austin	every 6-8 weeks	<i>check with convenor</i>	
Play Reading	Philip Cheung	<i>check with convenor</i>		
Science & Technology	Philip Cheung	2nd Tuesday	14.00	Sparrows Green Pavillion
Scrabble	Juliet Conrad	<i>Temporarily suspended– awaiting new members</i>		
Table Tennis	Philippa Standley	Tuesdays	12.30	Uplands Sports Centre
Ten Pin Bowling	Lynda Emberson	<i>check with convenor</i>		
Theatre Visits	Lynda Emberson	<i>check with convenor</i>		
Ukulele	Iris Glover	Mondays	10.00	<i>check with convenor</i>
Walking	Sarah Parry	2nd Thursday	10.00	<i>check with convenor</i>
Wine Appreciation	David Austin	4th Wednesday	17.00	Carillon Cottage
Yoga	Sara Irwin	Mondays	9.30 / 11.00	Zoom
Uplands Sport Centre - <i>contact Jane Austin for activities offered</i>				

**To email convenor:** On the u3a Wadhurst website (see below) select the Group concerned.

Click on the **Bluebird** icon (top right corner) to send an email.

**To leave a message:** ring **01580 200647**. State your name, tel number and the group(s) of interest.

\*\*\* Consult our website: **www.wadhurstu3a.org.uk** for up-to-date information. \*\*\*



From here, we entered the Central Lobby. Octagonal in shape with an elaborate tiled floor, this is the crossroads where corridors from the Lords, Commons and Westminster Hall all meet. It acts as the meeting place for members of both Houses, and where MPs can meet their constituents. In the windows surrounding the Central Lobby our attention was drawn to the metal grilles. These were originally in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons, and installed to ensure MPs were not distracted by the sight of women! The grilles also obstructed the view of the women themselves and were symbolic of the continuing exclusion of women from Parliament. Suffragettes used the Ladies' Gallery during their campaigns demanding votes for women. The grilles were finally removed in 1917 and relocated to the Central Lobby.

From the Central Lobby, we made our way to the 'Not Content' Lobby. This is one of the division lobbies where members divide for a vote. The lobby to the right of the Speaker is always used for those voting in favour (the 'Ayes'); the lobby to the left is for those voting against the motion (the 'Nos').

Our next stop was the Royal Gallery - the largest and, possibly, the most impressive room in the Palace of Westminster. It was designed to be imposing and almost every part of the Gallery is highly decorated; portraits of monarchs and their consorts adorn the walls. Steeped in history, the Royal Gallery has hosted numerous receptions for dignitaries including Haile Selassie, Nikita Khrushchev, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, Angela Merkel and King Felipe VI of Spain. It is also the room in which Kofi Annan marked the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery in a speech to Members in 2007.

During our visit, we were also able to see some significant documents including: The Accession to the Throne, signed by Queen Elizabeth II in 1952; papers relating to the Partition of India and, more recently, the 2013 Act of Parliament which ended male-line succession to the Crown.

Continuing our tour, we entered the House of Lords and the House of Commons with their characteristic red and green benches. We also noticed all the sound and camera paraphernalia to support live broadcasting, now an accepted part of a modern democracy.

Certainly, over the last few years we have been able to witness first-hand the many heated discussions- Brexit, partygate, budgets, fuel prices, living costs, the NHS, social care and housing shortages to mention just a few.

We ended our tour with a sandwich lunch in the Jubilee Café with its beautiful, vaulted ceiling (but limited menu!), followed by a visit to the gift shop (eye-wateringly expensive!).

Leaving the building, more peaceful demonstrations were underway along Whitehall. The street was alive with people and banners appealing for “freedom for women in Iran” and “an end to deaths in police custody” and many more causes. Some of us were lucky enough to see the changing of the guard in front of Downing Street, and a peek behind the railings revealed a removal van at the front door of Number 10..... As Ms Truss’s boat sailed out, Mr Sunak’s sailed in! Who says politics is boring?

(See back cover for more photos taken during the visit.)

## PLAY READING

*Philip Cheung*

We shall be having a break in December before restarting in 2023 with:

<i>Yes, Minister</i>	by	Anthony Jay & Jonathan Lynn	A play derived from the original TV series with a new female advisor.
<i>Trial by Laughter</i>		Ian Hislop & Nick Newman	William Hone, a hero of free speech, stood trial for ‘impious blasphemy and seditious libel’ in 1817.
<i>Murmuring Judges</i>		David Hare	A serious swipe at the British system of justice.

We meet roughly once a month at each others’ homes. When a host



has been designated he or she will send invitations to the readers on our list.

If you would like to read one or more of these amusing/intriguing plays, please contact me using the information on the centrefold or through Wadhurst u3a's website.

## **MODERN ARCHITECTURE**

*Jane Austin*

In October, the renowned architect and Ticehurst resident, Elsie Owusu OBE RIBA FRSA, took time out of her busy schedule to talk to the group and guests about the refurbishment of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, a project which she co-led. Elsie's presentation provided a fascinating insight into the many challenges facing architects and designers as they balance the needs of sponsors and clients with the limitations of historic buildings.



Special thanks to Elsie and to St Mary's Church, Ticehurst for hosting the event which was followed by coffee and biscuits in their beautiful new Meeting Room (see picture).

Members of our u3a Modern Architecture group are planning a guided tour of the Supreme Court in the summer.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

*Philip Cheung*

At our December meeting we shall have a light-hearted look at :

*‘recent inventions that made a difference to our lives’*

where everyone will say as many or as few words as they like on their chosen invention to start a conversation. We shall be generous with ‘recent’. Anything within the past 50 years will do.

You are welcome to join us on Tuesday 13th December at 2.00 pm, Sparrows Green Pavilion, even if you have never been before.

In the new year, we shall revisit “Energy Storage on the Grid Scale”. This is an essential group of technologies that complements intermittent electricity sources such as solar or wind. We made a survey of these technologies three years ago and there must be important developments and/or new ideas since.

## **TEN PIN BOWLING**

*Lynda Emberson*

This is shared between Hawkhurst u3a and Wadhurst u3a. It has been running successfully since last September and we now often have to open two lanes. If anyone from Wadhurst would like to join us but has no transport, please let me know. Meanwhile, I would be happy to add you to our growing list if you are interested in joining us. I just need to know before the date so I know how many lanes to book. We generally avoid school holidays as it gets very noisy but it is usually the last Thursday of the month.

Our next session will be on 26th January 2023, 2.00 for 2.30pm at Hollywood Bowling, Knights Park, Longfield Road, Tunbridge Wells. TN2 3UW.

The cost is £7 for two games. This is a special concessionary rate which I have agreed with management. There is no competition, but much fun and laughter. If you cannot throw then try pushing with the special apparatus provided. You can even have the sides up which does give you an advantage but it’s all about personal best.

For further details please ring 01580-201994 or email [lynda@embersons.net](mailto:lynda@embersons.net).

## THEATRE GROUP

*Lynda Emberson*

It has been difficult to get started again since COVID. There were experiences of obtaining tickets then being told they were not wanted. Transport for a shows further afield has also proved a challenge. We have often been able to do car-share but this is not always an option and I believe Uplands Mini Bus is no longer for hire. I did put out a flyer in September for a local show but there were no takers. If however there is an interest I will try again.

## WALKING

*Sarah Parry*

The U3A Walking Group has continued its monthly walks through the year although we had a break in August and had a non-walking lunch at my house instead: the first such occasion since Covid. It was one of those blisteringly hot days and we all huddled under whatever shade we could find but it was good to see so many members of the group there.



Some new members have joined us and we've had a variety of walks, including the Ashdown Forest, above. As usual, I'm very grateful to members who volunteer to take a walk of their own choosing. However, if you like walking but don't feel you want to organise one, you're still always welcome, dogs also (at owners' risk!).

We meet on the second Thursday morning of every month and our walks are designed to be between about 3 and 5 miles so we're back in a couple of hours or so. Some walks manage to include a stop at a café but when they don't, we try to remember to include a "banana break".



*These two pictures were taken on our November walk at Wadhurst Park when we were lucky enough to have a dry and sunny day.*

*The countryside around us is so beautiful and we are so lucky to have it on our doorstep. Let's make the most of it and enjoy what it gives us!*

## **Bus No.45 to Sienna**

*Eileen Ramm*

From the back of a bus in September  
I watched ten thousand sunflower heads  
In a hundred fields  
On the way to Gatwick, to Florence, to Sienna.

Always the same heads, bowing the same way,  
Brown and tired and spent bare but for seeds.  
No yellow spiking exclamations of petals demanding the sun  
No petals at all – where had they all gone?

Like ten thousand old ladies plodding their way to chapel,  
Along dusty, unmade roads and clotted dirty lanes  
These bowed heads in unison Considered Their Fate.

I imagined them in their glory – the pure yellow of their  
Petals, the black contrast of their plump bellies, their height  
And domination of the fields.

And I wondered: Did they all face the same way when they died?  
I studied and tried to work it all out, content to let someone else  
Make the decisions on Bus No.45 to Sienna whilst I watched a giant  
Screen film flick past, frame after frame, frame after frame.

They all DID face the same way, in their ruinous state.  
Row after row from smallest to tallest did face the same way,  
Like a returning army either in glory, or defeat.

And I ask myself: When does the last petal lose its grip and drop  
To the ground – when is death achieved? If I sat all day in an  
Ageing field of sunflowers, would I observe a death or – more like

I think it all happens at night, when the approaching Dawn of  
One more day of achievement, of doing, of busy just seems too  
much to face,  
And the last few petals shudder and jar themselves of their grip and  
fall to the ground.

It is then that the face does lower its countenance and Death is  
come.

# The Corgis' Lament

by Muick and Sandy - as woofed to Jessica Brown

She always had a handbag hanging from her arm  
Large and black and shiny, perhaps it kept her calm.  
Sometimes it held sandwiches, sometimes doggie eats,  
But whatever, It was always filled with treats.

We didn't live in kennels, No!  
Castles were our home,  
And palaces like Buckingham whose gardens we could roam.

She left behind her horses,  
Her favourite pony Emma,  
And should she go to Ascot?  
That was a dilemma.

In London we were good as gold,  
Our fur all soft and fluffy.  
Sitting by the footmen  
Watching her go by.

We loved our hols in Scotland,  
It made us bark with joy  
To wander with our mistress up and down.  
She always wore a headscarf and a pair of muddy boots,  
A tartan skirt, a string of pearls, and don't forget her crown...

We dashed around the countryside  
Chasing grouse and pheasant,  
and in the process getting awfully mucky..  
So they plunged us in a golden bath  
Filled with foaming bubbles,  
They scrubbed us with a scrubbing brush,  
And made us smell quite yucky.

We often went to Sandringham  
And had to call her Ma'am.  
We celebrated Christmas there,  
And saw in the New Year.

We anticipated lots of gifts  
And sang carols round the tree.

“One rule”, they said,  
“Don’t lift your leg,  
“You’re not allowed to pee”.

Now our dear Queen has passed away,  
Prince Charles is Charles the King.  
He’s not so keen on corgis –  
King Charles Spaniels are his thing.

Who to live with now she’s gone  
Created quite a fuss,  
Perhaps we’ll live with Fergie –  
She’s better than Liz Truss.

## **Christmas in Gloucester**

*Val O’Dwyer*

If you have never been to Gloucester Cathedral make a detour if you are ever in the West Country. It is a gem. Not too large, it feels friendly the minute you step inside after leaving the courtyard with its full view of the delicate architecture of the newly cleaned limestone building. There is no charge for visiting, although donations are very gratefully received as the upkeep for these buildings is enormous. Instead there is a cafeteria serving delicious lunches, sandwiches and teas. An excellent shop and many, many functions and activities for young and old throughout the year. Whenever we have visited the whole cathedral is buzzing with activity.

When we join one of our daughters and our grandchildren for Christmas in Gloucester one of the greatest pleasures is to attend the Christmas Eve family carol service. The cathedral is always packed with Mums, Dads, Grandparents and children. Go early in order to get a seat even though there are many extra ones put out.

The whole building is beautifully lit and there are 6 huge Christmas trees placed at intervals.

When the service of 6 lessons and carols begins the whole congregation is silent and a lovely voice singing Once in Royal David’s City rings out. A procession of clergy and the choir progress



down the central aisle. Lessons are read by a variety of people both young and old. The Dean always gives the most amazing nativity talk, often with the help of puppets, which keeps everyone enthralled. Every time a carol is sung the choir progress to one of the trees and surround it and at the end of the carol the tree lights come on - magic.

At the singing of the last carol the children are encouraged to surround the tree and join in and the final light goes on.



Our Christmas has begun.

We have a family tradition started by my father many, many years ago. On the nearest Sunday in November between his birthday and my husband, John's, we would have a family lunch for everyone. That was 21 of us!! At this lunch we had to decide what the theme for our Boxing Day fancy dress would be. Father had decided that Boxing Day is a let down after Christmas Day so we needed to do something in the evening. Themes have varied widely throughout the years. 'In appalling bad taste' (useful items from the charity shop), Victorian, 'Widest Kipper tie' TV characters. This last one caused much merriment as we all hid at 6.00 p.m in various parts of the house and then reappeared when a bell was rung.. My 6ft 2"



father dressed as Andy Pandy, John in a pedal car with bobble hat as Noddy. Other times I can remember my very pregnant sister wearing a black rubbish sack to cover her bump and said she was a black hole. One year it was hats. Tennis courts with net, racquets and balls, birds nest, birthday cake hats. We are an original thinking family!

Anyway, the tradition continues today including the youngest generation and causes much merriment and no phones or texts are ever seen as we are too busy laughing and having family fun.

## Remembrance Sunday

Philip Cheung

Fifteen wreaths were laid at the War Memorial in Wadhurst on Remembrance Sunday morning, by the Parish Council, the Police and Fire Services, the schools, the Girl Guides and Brownies, the Scouts, the WI, the History Society, Probus and other organisations in the village including the u3a. I laid the wreath from the u3a but two u3a members also laid wreaths: Rosemary Collins for the British Legion and Joan Page for the Trefoils, recycled or 'forever' brownies, who have exceeded the eligible age of 7 - 10.

There was a large gathering of well over a hundred people. I met our two Police Community Support Officers possibly for the first time, as also our fire engine, out of its garage and parked by the road in homage. Last Post and Reveille was played by a young member of Wadhurst Band, followed by the recitation of the Kohima epitaph:

*When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,  
For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today.*

At the memorial service that followed in Wadhurst Church, the vicar, the Rev Paul Radcliff asked those who remembered the Gulf War to raise their hands. More than half the congregation did so. Then he asked them to keep their hands raised if they remembered the Falkland War,... and Suez, ... and the Korean War, ... and ... By the First World War there were no raised hands in the church. "That," the vicar said, "is why we have Remembrance Sundays."

Children from the Primary School read clearly and unhurriedly the lives of Walter Tull, and and Noor Inayat Khan. Second lieutenant

Tull, killed in action in 1918, was the son of an Afro-Caribbean father and an English mother and a professional footballer. Inayat Khan GC, was a Muslim-Indian and SOE agent who, because of her fluent French, was sent to Paris to work with the Resistance. She was betrayed, captured and executed by the enemy.

I was glad to be part of these quiet, dignified gatherings to remember those who gave their lives for others.

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings are on the third Thursday of the month, at 2.30 pm.

<b>Jan 19</b>	<b>MY PARENTS' WWII IN CHINA - Philip Cheung</b>
This talk tells the story of my parents' wartime adventures with glimpses of the bigger picture in a possibly unfamiliar theatre-of-war for an English audience.	
<b>Feb 16</b>	<b>JOHANN STRAUSS: THE WALTZ KING - Ian Gledhill</b>
Inheriting the title of 'The Waltz King' his music went on to conquer the world. We look at his life and music.	
<b>Mar 16</b>	<b>A CONSPIRACY THEORY OF THE WORLD - Andy Thomas</b>
Why do people increasingly believe in conspiracy theories and what is the evidence to support them?	
<b>Apr 20</b>	<b>WHAT MAKES A 'SUPER STAR' - Simon Mott</b>
There are 10 secrets in making a superstar and this mystery person used all of them.	

Monthly speaker meetings, with a cup of tea and biscuits, are free for members of Wadhurst & Distract u3a. Non-members are welcome, with an admission charge of £2.00.



Wadhurst & District u3a members chose a glorious autumn day for their visit to the Houses of Parliament.

Welcome to the Palace of Westminster

