



Dorking & District
University of the Third Age

newsletter



Number 84

September 2016

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Reports on Monthly Meetings, Days Out and Holidays

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Letter from the Chairman

During the summer the committee is able to pause and take a breath before picking themselves up and resuming their work delivering what members want from Dorking U3A.

They have achieved a lot this year already, with our major 25th anniversary events successfully completed, the newsletter given a slightly different focus, and a new initiative to ensure that everyone is able to join the groups they want.

Work goes on, however, and we will be reviewing the subscription in the autumn. It is several years since there was an increase and the committee has concentrated on keeping payments low. But our reserves are slowly dwindling and it is important to keep an eye on the situation and assess if we need to make any changes. We will keep you updated on the discussions.

Our next big event will be the Dorking U3A Open Day on Wednesday 26 October at the Christian Centre in Dorking.

We will have 16 groups taking stands and promoting the activities they offer. Our handbell ringers, led by Jill Sorrell, and the Singing for Pleasure group will be performing in St Martin's Church during the afternoon and Mike Stewart, group leader for Classical Music Appreciation, will be giving a piano recital.

There will be a plant stall organised by our new second gardening group and cakes for sale baked by members.

Please tell friends, neighbours, acquaintances and relatives about the day and invite them along any time between 10am and 4pm. Why not look in as well – there may be another group you hadn't thought about joining.



Phyllis Hughes, Chairman

Open Day

Wednesday 26 October from 10am to 4.30pm

in the Christian Centre and St Martin's Church

- Exhibitions on study and leisure groups
- Demonstrations including line dancing and mahjong

Cover picture:

Members on holiday in south-west Ireland in May (*Photo by Leslie Lester*)

Membership

Welcome!

A warm welcome to the 23 new members, listed below, who have joined since the Handbook was issued in June. On 21 August we had 676 members, but this includes a number who have not paid subscriptions for 2016-17, which were due on 1 April. Those who have not paid by 1 September will be removed from the membership list.

Mrs Susan Allen	Ms Liz Iddon	Mrs Linda Singh
Mr John Bligh	Mr Jerry Kelsey	Mrs Christine Stalker
Mrs Christiane Bligh	Mrs Maria Marsh	Mrs Ann Taylor
Mrs Caroline Brown	Mrs Yvonne McConnell	Mrs Mary Wicks
Mr Bob Brown	Mrs Valerie Page	Mrs Catherine Winter
Miss Hayley Duffell	Mrs Joyce Parish	Mr John Winter
Mr Clive Greig	Mr Simon Rainger	Mrs Alison Wright
Mrs Brenda Hamblin	Mrs Jean Samji	

Bob Crooks, Membership Secretary

In Remembrance

Muriel Brook, leader of the Shakespeare group

Sadly, Muriel Brook died on 16 May, just three months after she and Maurice celebrated their platinum (70th) wedding anniversary.

Muriel was born in 1924 in Leeds and during the war she worked in signals HQ in London. Before the family came along Muriel was an unqualified teacher with classes of 50 children. She gained an English degree at UCL and taught in Surrey secondary schools, becoming head of English at Howard of Effingham School. After taking her masters in American studies, she joined the English department at Godalming College until retirement.

Muriel set up the Shakespeare and his Contemporaries group in the early 1990s and her leadership always motivated and inspired us all. For the past five years, although no longer leader, she continued to participate in group meetings and impart her pleasure in and extensive knowledge of literature.

Muriel encouraged many of us to persevere with and enhance our understanding of the arts, including drama, poetry and opera. This year she regularly attended RSC drama screenings at Dorking Halls and concerts at Menuhin Hall.

Thank you Muriel for your calm generosity.

Rosemary Harbridge

Handbook Update

Monthly Meeting on 8 February 2017

The View from the Wings – a funny account of backstage theatre by Brian Freeland, who started in the theatre in 1959, working with the Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Scottish Opera, Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet and Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop company.

Watercolour Painting and Birdwatching

Although the preliminary meetings to discuss the establishment of the proposed groups were not well attended, it is evident that there is sufficient interest among the membership to set up two small groups in the near future.

However, before this can be achieved it will be essential to identify group leaders for both. Specialist knowledge is not a prerequisite of group leadership, rather a willingness to organise and manage group activities. Plenty of support will be available from other group members so the new group leaders will certainly not be expected to do everything.

If any member is willing to accept the role of group leader for either watercolour painting or birdwatching then please get in touch with me. If anybody is unsure and would like more information, please telephone me on 01306 898491.

Once we have identified a group leader for **birdwatching** it will be possible to move on to an initial meeting in order to agree the objectives and organisation of the group.

So far as **watercolour painting** is concerned, it seems essential to begin with some basic instruction in watercolour techniques. Ideally such tuition should be forthcoming from our membership. We are, therefore, enquiring whether any member will be able and willing to offer such help at least in the short term. Until we have resolved this particular conundrum the start of the new group will have to be delayed.

Lionel Cartlidge, Groups Co-ordinator

(01306 898491; eljaysee@ljcartlidge.co.uk)

Geoff Saunders, Assistant Groups Co-ordinator (tallship@eircom.net)

Painting for Pleasure

This group is now meeting on the first, third and fourth Thursdays from 1.30pm to 3.30pm in the Lincoln Arms. The cost is now £2 per head per session for coffee/tea.

Upwords

Please note that the leader of this group is now Hayley Duffell (07785 185975; hayleyduffell@gmail.com).

Second group on French Conversation

Parlez-vous français? Souhaitez-vous parler français?

Souhaitez-vous vous inscrire à un nouveau groupe de conversation français, niveau intermédiaire? Nous nous retrouverons l'après-midi du 2ème et du 4ème vendredi de chaque mois, débutant le 9 septembre. Si cela vous intéresse, ou si vous souhaitez en savoir plus, veuillez contacter Geoff Saunders, téléphone 01306 887493, adresse mail tallship@eircom.net.

Second Gardening group

This group will continue to meet at the Lincoln Arms at 10am on the first Monday of each month until at least the end of this year. A small subgroup has been formed to refine ideas for a programme of visits to members' gardens and elsewhere. These visits will be shared with Joan Searle's gardening group. This group will also work on ideas for a series of specialist talks and practical sessions.

Penny Tompkins (01483 203288; penny@cliffhanger.org.uk)

Regional Study Days

The study day on Friday 17 February 2017 at the Yehudi Menuhin School is a double bill: (1) My Life in Crime, presented by Richard Hawkins, Kingston U3A; (2) The Surrey Poet, presented by John Griffin. Booking forms will be online in January.

Days Out – Bookings Now Open

Friday 14 October: Exhibition of the Queen's clothes at Windsor

The cost is £30

Friday 25 November: The British Museum and Sunken Cities: Egypt's Lost Worlds *plus* an early evening meal

This outing has a slightly different twist in that an early evening carvery dinner is included for the first time, so we shall be starting out later than usual.

On arrival at the British Museum you will have plenty of time to wander round at your own pace and maybe get something for lunch. We will then locate the whereabouts of the exhibition of amazingly intricate and beautiful artefacts. These have recently been rescued from the seabed, where the remains of two Egyptian towns inundated by a tsunami 2,000 years ago have lain undisturbed.

The exhibition sets out to illustrate the relationship between Ancient Egypt and Greece and is bound to be absorbing. Following the death of Alexander the Great, his Greek general Ptolemy became the first of a long line of pharaohs to rule Egypt until the death of Cleopatra some 300 years later. Entry to this exhibition will be at 3.10pm and 3.20pm.

◀ At a prearranged time we will congregate and take a 10-minute stroll to the nearby President hotel for a three-course dinner at 5.30pm. The coach will pick us up to see the Christmas lights on the way home.

Here is a chance to see one of London's major exhibitions of the year, the Christmas decorations and enjoy a dinner in town with your friends. We expect to be back about 9pm.

Coach times for this trip only: Brockham 12 noon; Dorking Halls 12.10pm; opposite Waitrose 12.15pm; Knoll Road bus stop 12.20pm.

Leaders: Jean Williams (07770 874762) and Sue Grant (07881 911796) – these mobile numbers to be used only in the case of emergency.

Cost: £43

New Committee Members' Profiles

Penny Tompkins

Can you tell us a little of your early life?

I was born and brought up in Dorking. After qualifying as a solicitor in 1980 I worked within the financial services industry for several major insurers and also in private practice. I initially specialised in pensions law and during the mid-1990s was solicitor to the Pensions Unit at the Personal Investment Authority during the review of personal pensions. Subsequently, I was mainly involved with income protection and travel insurance, and also spent several years as a group company secretary.

What led you to join the U3A?

I wanted to meet people who share my interests – most of which I've had to neglect during my career. Time to catch up!

Have your expectations of the U3A been fulfilled?

Yes; but it would be good to further encourage newly retired/semi-retired folk to join to provide strong new blood for the future.

What U3A activities do you enjoy most?

I enjoy the second Gardening group that I have started and being a member of the committee.



What contributions can you bring to the committee?

It enables me to use all the commercial and interpersonal skills I have acquired during my career for a cause I feel strongly about.

Outside the U3A, what are your main interests?

My husband and I have three border collies which require 'working' to keep them from being creatively destructive. Think: two-year-olds and teenagers combined in three fluffy four-legged perpetually moving packages!

Tony Parker



Can you tell us a little of your early life?

I arrived at Kingston Hospital, the eldest of six boys – not sextuplets! – in 1949.

I was variously schooled in Surrey and Middlesex due to family moves.

At the age of 20 I emigrated to Australia (in the days of the £10 passage), part of a desire to circumnavigate the globe. After 18 months I returned because I had decided that I wanted to pursue a career in healthcare.

I obtained O and A levels in my mid-20s and then discovered chiropractic immediately prior to applying to medical school (enormous stroke of luck!).

I've enjoyed a lengthy career, having helped some 14,500 families thus far. I've 'taken my foot off the accelerator' in the last few years, but love what I do and can't really see full retirement any time soon!

What led you to join the U3A?

I gave a talk about chiropractic at a monthly meeting around four years ago., and was so impressed by the people I met on this occasion that I decided to give it a try when I had more time.

Have your expectations of the U3A been fulfilled?

Yes, decidedly! There's good social interaction with positive, often like-minded, upbeat people.

What U3A activities do you enjoy most?

I enjoy the Classical Music Appreciation and Creative Writing groups, which I find simultaneously an experience and indulgence! I've also revived the Luncheon Club.

What contributions can you bring to the committee?

Much of my life has been self-employed, so hopefully such experience will be of value to the committee.

What developments do you think could make our U3A even better than it is?

The recently discussed social 'gettogethers', of which we've had more this anniversary year and which the committee plans to continue.

Outside the U3A, what are your main interests?

Tennis – I play between three and six times most weeks; snooker less frequently. Healthcare; and social interaction and dinner parties.

Quiz Night

Tuesday 22 November, 7pm for 7.30pm

- **Following the success of the quiz night last February, here's another chance to show off your general knowledge.**
- **Price: £10, including meal. Buy tickets from Pat Smith.**

Articles and Verse

The Road to Mandalay

Geoff Saunders describes his fascinating cycle tour of Myanmar

For many years the country most of us call Burma was essentially cut off from the rest of the world. The military regime liked it that way. But a very brave and dignified woman from there caught the imagination of people with a sense of justice and freedom. We watched powerless as Aung San Suu Kyi (always known in Burma as The Lady) endured years of house arrest, separation from her family and humiliation. When eventually the military regime began to crumble and The Lady was freed, Burma (by now renamed Myanmar) began to open its doors to the outside world. The Lady herself asked tourists to come and witness the changes.

So when the opportunity arose to join a cycle trip in Myanmar, I jumped at it. This was organised by Exodus, with whom I have travelled many times in the past. Their cycle trips include bicycle hire, guides, mechanics, hotel accommodation and backup vehicles. All we have to do is pedal.

The tour began at Inle Lake, where strangely our first stop was to taste wine at the newly established vineyard (U3A wine group

take note). The lake itself is shallow, and a large community lives by the shores and out on the lake, the houses and gardens built on stilts. Our cycle outings took us around the edge of the lake, while we returned to our base on boats.

Leaving Inle Lake, we had a challenging push up to the top of the escarpment, but were rewarded by fantastic views and a 20-mile downhill ride to our next destination. Out in the countryside people are very poor and work very hard to make a living. The most common vehicle in the rural areas is an ox cart, while road construction seems to be entirely manual. Large gangs of men, women and children dig, break stones and heat tar in barrels to widen narrow roads. Along the way there is no shortage of temples and shrines. Caves are particularly auspicious, and we came across many filled with Buddha images.



The commonest vehicle in rural areas is an ox cart

Photo by Geoff Saunders

Perhaps disappointingly, we arrived at Mandalay in the vehicles. The roads are choked with traffic and not ideal for cycling. Like much of the world, traffic in Myanmar drives on the right but, bizarrely, most of the vehicles are right-hand drive. This is no hangover from Britain's Burmese days, rather the choice of the Generals following astrological advice. This advice was also behind the decision to move the capital from Rangoon to a new site at Naypyidaw. In Mandalay the military occupy the huge pre-colonial fort at the centre of Mandalay, just as the British did.

We explored the picturesque areas around Mandalay by bike before taking a riverboat down the Irrawaddy to Bagan, a huge religious site which once had 10,000 temples and shrines. An earthquake in 1975 destroyed many of the temples, and the military cleared the area, leaving about 2,000 in various states of repair. Bagan itself is developing rapidly as a tourist attraction. Each morning a flock of hot-air balloons drifts slowly across the temple zone, while below, largely small-scale restaurants and hotels cater for the growing tourist population.

Infrastructure is developing rapidly. My three year-old guidebook suggested I would be lucky to find a mobile phone signal and that Wi-Fi was virtually unavailable. But the reality was different. It seems that even market traders had smartphones whilst all the hotels we used had Wi-Fi, though of variable quality.

It was a wonderful opportunity to see a country on the verge of change, opening to the world. From a bicycle seat you can see and experience things in a way not possible from a vehicle. We found people friendly and helpful. Surprisingly, given its position between China and India and Thailand, we found the local food uninspiring. Hopefully this will change with development.

Given the background to my visit, outlined at the start, it is perhaps appropriate that while I was in Mandalay The Lady took her seat in the new parliament. I wish her, and her people, well for the future.

Wanted!

Do you sometimes go on U3A holidays? Would you like to help in arranging these holidays?

I would be grateful for anyone on email and, preferably, with experience of Microsoft Word and Excel, to offer occasional help in the administrative work that is entailed in arranging holidays for Dorking U3A members.

Please contact me by phone (01737 843260) or email (annejim@docking.eclipse.co.uk).

Terence Touche

I'll tell the tale of Terence Touche (please note his surname rhymes with slouch).
He'd never hop or skip or run. Quite simply his idea of fun
Was sitting all day in his chair and rarely going anywhere.
For if perchance he had to travel, his peace of mind would soon unravel.
Unwelcome journeys near or far were made by taxi, train or car.

He thought that those who fence or ski were idiots of the first degree,
And badminton with shuttlecock he'd criticise and fiercely mock.
Tell anyone who'd listen that he'd never held a cricket bat,
Nor skated gracefully on rinks nor played at golf upon the links
Nor kicked a football in a field nor learned the winning way to wield
A tennis racket on a court, detesting every kind of sport.

'Twas not his forte, not his style to swim six lengths or run a mile
Or do some gentle fitness drills or walk among the vales and hills
Or jog along an urban street – in fact he rarely used his feet.
He'd solemnly and proudly vouch he rarely rose up from his couch.
The thought of cycling made him quail, 'Ridiculous! Beyond the pale.'

He'd say in a dismissive tone as, holding up his mobile phone,
He'd order in the things he sought – his groceries – and have them brought
By courier, a daily chore. 'To walk to shops is such a bore,'
Said he, while sitting at his ease, consuming Gorgonzola cheese.
'Let lesser mortals take a stroll. That is their allocated role.
Why strain myself when I can pay to have my meals here on a tray?'

His hubris though was torn asunder when with a flash and roar of thunder
A storm arose with heavy rain which beat upon his window pane.
The rain increased, the drains were filling – soon watery excess was spilling
Through the gap beneath his door and started covering all the floor.
The waters rose up wall and table while he stayed sofa bound, unable
Now to run or even swim, you'll guess his fate was rather grim.

He drowned within that muddy room. His leather sofa formed his tomb.
No one to mourn, no one to weep, no quiet death while in his sleep.
But should we sympathise or sob for Terence who was such a slob?

The moral comes as no surprise: HE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN EXERCISE!

Robert Edmondson

Monthly Meetings

Villains, Victims and Investigators: Adam Brand, 10 February 2016

Adam Brand, a graphologist, gave an extremely interesting talk on the subject of analysing handwriting.

What is graphology? Adam stated that it is an art – not a science. There are no two people in the world with the same handwriting. Your handwriting contains the story of yourself, and graphologists are those who can read this story and interpret it for you.

Graphology is the analysis of the brain's subconscious expression through the medium of handwriting. It was first studied as far back as 1620 when an Italian doctor, Camillo Baldi, wrote a paper which was the first known printed publication on the study of the subject.

Mr Brand showed various forms of handwriting, including a copy of writing which changed from upright to slanting, which indicated a change in personality.

It was, in fact, the handwriting of notorious multiple murderer Dr Harold Shipman.

He also talked about two specific cases: one was the Dreyfus affair, a French political scandal that started in 1894 and centred on the question of the guilt or innocence of army captain Alfred Dreyfus, who had been convicted of treason. Handwriting experts were employed to resolve it in 1906.

The other case was the Lindberg baby episode in the USA, when the 20 month-old son of the famous aviator was kidnapped on 1 March 1932. Again, handwriting experts were called in to help with this case.

Handwriting analysis can be used in understanding health, partnerships, history and genealogy.

A very interesting and informative talk.

Judy Peace and Jean Williams

The Inns of Court: Ian Bevan, 9 March 2016

Most of us have always been aware of the existence of the Inns of Court and had an idea of their function but otherwise they have been a part of secret London.

So it was that Ian Bevan was able to cast some light in our darkness as he described and illustrated the four main Inns of Court, each of which bears a very distinctive emblem.

Many of the buildings were originally constructed in the 15th century. The Temple, for example, owes its existence to the Knights Templar who occupied the site for two centuries.

A lot of the buildings were destroyed or badly damaged by the Fire of London in 1666 or more recently in the London Blitz. The Inns have, however, been sensitively restored, so much so that it is often difficult to distinguish the new from the old.

All of the Inns have five features in common, namely a library, a treasury, a chapel, a hall and gardens. The hall of the Middle Temple is of original construction and possesses an outstanding double hammer beam roof.

The Temple housed some well-known characters including Dr Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Henry Fielding and, more

◀ recently, the Blairs. Lincoln's Inn is known for John Donne and Gray's Inn for Sir Francis Bacon.

There are many attractive courtyards and the gardens and some of the

buildings are accessible to the public, providing a delightful spot for City workers to spend a brief time away from the pressures of the everyday.

Lionel Cartledge

The Oregon Trail: Roger Shaw, 13 April 2016

Roger Shaw, who lived in America for seven years, drove along the entire Oregon Trail with his wife in 2013 and 2015. Thousands of immigrants were encouraged by the government to resettle after the east coast of the continent was swamped by an influx of people from Europe. Many were from Ireland which had suffered a devastating famine.

Half-a-million people made the journey from Missouri across the Rockies to the coast. They travelled in huge groups in covered wagons pulled by oxen. Each family had to take their own food as there were initially no trading posts along the route.

One wagon train consisted of 1,600 wagons, 10,000 oxen, 30,000 cattle and 60,000 sheep and was 300 miles long. All but young children walked, and many covered the entire 3,000 miles barefoot. Ten per cent of them died from cholera. On one trip 57 died in one day alone. Also, a lot of people drowned trying to get from one bank to the other because they could not swim.



Speaker Roger Shaw with Faith Docker (left), who gave the vote of thanks, and chairman Phyllis Hughes

Photo by Michael Docker

Although the native American Indians were helpful to the immigrants in the early days, relations soured as time went by. Problems really began in 1847 when half of the Cayuse tribe and all their children were wiped out by a measles epidemic introduced by the Europeans.

The Oregon Trail came to an end when railways provided an easier way to complete the journey.

Phyllis Hughes

The European Space Agency: Geoff Saunders, 11 May 2016

Working for the European Space Agency really is rocket science according to one former scientist who spent his career in the field.

Geoff Saunders told Dorking U3A members at their annual meeting in May

that the agency was one of Britain's best kept secrets. The work was a collaboration between Europe, Russia, Japan and America and was a huge undertaking.

He said that hundreds of thousands of

people were employed on the work which had so far sent 550 people into space.

British astronaut Tim Peake was currently on the space station orbiting the earth. Geoff explained that in real terms the station was barely above the earth. Even GPS satellites, which send information to such things as satnavs in cars, were further away.

The European Space Agency has already sent missions to Mars where scientists had gathered clear information that there was once water, which would be vital for the development of life.

They had also devised a project to

chase and orbit a comet. Geoff described this as particularly difficult as the gravity on comets was so weak that a person jumping off the surface would float into space forever. Therefore to land a craft on the surface had taken precise engineering and great skill. Photographs returned to earth had shown that comets were nothing like they had been imagined.

Current plans include sending a rocket to Jupiter to look at the moons. A craft leaving in 2022 would arrive at the planet eight years later.

Phyllis Hughes

Satirist to Insanity – Celebrating the Life and Work of James Gillray: Ian Keable, 8 June 2016

A visitor to our monthly meeting was shocked and delighted to find an original James Gillray print that he'd picked up for £1 is today worth thousands

Gordon Laidlaw had brought the family heirloom to the meeting after friends told him there was to be an illustrated talk by a leading expert on the early satirical cartoonist whose uncle was Mr Laidlaw's great, great grandfather

Proudly displaying his original Gillray print of the famous *Plumb Pudding*, featuring Pitt the Younger and Napoleon Bonaparte dividing up the globe, Mr Laidlaw explained 'I knew it was worth a lot of money... but to discover it was fetching around £14,000 means I'll now have to get it insured!'

Gillray was a good artist and a great draughtsman at a time that saw the start of democracy. There were no cameras in those days to record events and so his illustrations give us a tremendous record of interiors and costumes at that time.

Ian Keable kept the packed meeting

intrigued with the historical facts and illustrations of Gillray's incredibly detailed hard-hitting prints of 18th-century politicians and

members of the Royal Family. Although his reputation plummeted during the Victorian climate of moral righteousness, Gillray is now accepted as the first, and the greatest, political caricaturist. His intricate etchings and uncompromising and fearless depictions of people in high places made his contemporary William Hogarth seem tame by comparison.

Patricia Payne



Ian Keable (left) with Gordon Laidlaw holding his original Gillray print of *Plumb Pudding*

Photo by Michael Docker

Women Inventors – An Exploration in Technology and Social History: Stephen van Dulken, 13 July 2016

More than three million inventions have been patented since they were first registered in 1618 but comparatively few of these have been from women. Patents specialist at the British Library Stephen van Dulken explained why he thought this might be so.

Until the start of the 20th century women were not allowed to study engineering and so were unlikely to have had some of the necessary technical skills. In Victorian times men were considered to be the bread winners and women were expected to be the homemakers.

Even so, women did invent the first washing machine and a selection of corsets. Their inventions were often patented under their husband's name, while many female names actually belonged to men.

Many inventions by women were

related to their domestic situation. One in America was for a self-cleaning house, several for things to lift long skirts off the ground in the era of horse-drawn vehicles, while others items involved baby care, fashion and cosmetics.

The board game Monopoly was first devised by a woman Elizabeth Magie, but a salesman stole the idea and patented the popular game. The paper bag was the idea of Margaret Knight, and disposable nappies were thought up by Marion Donovan. Mary Anderson thought windscreen wipers might be a good idea.

Stephen said that only a handful of people ever made money from their inventions. One was Ruth Handler who created the first Barbie doll. Her husband did not think it was a good idea, but eventually a rocket engineer designed the doll. Since then three billion been sold.

Phyllis Hughes

Days Out and Group Visits

The BBC, 12 February 2016

Our tour started on the balcony that overlooks the vast newsroom, so familiar from our television screens, where our guides explained the process of news gathering from around the world and its subsequent transmission. We saw Helen Willets presenting the weather forecast, live and apparently unscripted. In another studio we were given the opportunity to try our hand at giving an impromptu weather forecast or presenting a scripted news bulletin on camera.

It was interesting to learn that newsreaders are journalists, responsible for writing their own scripts, whereas the weather men and women, all qualified meteorologists, perform virtually 'off the cuff'.

We visited the surprisingly small *The One Show* studio where we were taken through the complexities of the programme's production.

After a stroll across the courtyard to the impressive foyer of the old Broadcasting

House we learnt that the art deco building, opened in 1932, now houses 2,000 staff and embraces the latest technology, though it is mainly concerned with radio.

In one of the Radio 4 studios some of our members were invited to perform, in a short, scary play, while another member was encouraged to provide appropriate sound effects with a selection of

strangely old-fashioned equipment, including coconut shells to create the sound of galloping hooves.

Before we left our guide played us a recording made during the Blitz, when the newsreader paused momentarily as a bomb exploded just a few floors above him, rocking the building. His panache in continuing was awesome!

Angela Rixon

Oxford, 15 March 2016

We arrived in the city soon after 11am and there the decisions began. What to do? What to see? The choices were myriad.

Some members elected to stay all day at the Ashmolean, the university's museum of art and archaeology, founded in 1683. Its world-famous collections range from Egyptian mummies to contemporary art, and include antiquities, coins and Western and Eastern art dating from 8000BC to the present.

Others elected to brave the cold and wander the streets of Matthew Arnold's 'sweet city with her dreaming spires', past the Bodleian and the Radcliffe Camera to famous colleges. There are over 30, each with their own histories and stunning architecture.

My friends and I chose Magdalen,

founded by William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, in 1458. In the chapel, built in 1480, we were treated to a magical recital as we stood dreaming of the famous alumni who had passed before, including Cardinal Wolsey, Oscar Wilde and CS Lewis.

Reluctantly we left and retreated to the Grand Café at 84 The High, a stunning Grade-listed building, once Oxford's most important coaching inn. By 1866 Frances Cooper was running a grocery business there. His wife, Sarah Jane, displayed her surfeit of marmalade in the shop, and thus the Oxford Marmalade was born. Some of our party visited other colleges as well as Oxford's Natural History Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum and raved about them all.

Judy Perry

Exbury Gardens & Steam Train, 14 April 2016

Exbury was purchased in 1919 by Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, a keen collector of rhododendrons and azaleas, which he excelled in hybridizing. His sons and grandsons continued in this tradition, resulting in the achievement of many prestigious horticultural awards, and to this day the estate remains under the

stewardship of the Rothschild family.

With 22 miles of pathways to explore, our party soon dispersed in different directions. Carpets of bluebells and primroses lit up some of the woodland glades and a vast meadow of daffodils provided bright banks of colour.

Displays of rhododendrons and azaleas



◀ were sadly missing as the massed bushes were still in tight bud, though the occasional blaze of purple and crimson from some of the Japanese varieties brightened the winding pathways.

Magnificent magnolias and delicate cherry blossom braved the chilly breezes and even without massed floral displays the visit was made more than worthwhile by the size and variety of the splendid trees, pride of place surely being awarded to the great American pine soaring to 123ft.

The rock garden was constructed with stones imported from the same quarry as those used to build Stonehenge. Lionel de Rothschild always dreamed of having his own railway, so commissioned the layout of a 12½in gauge track encompassing the rock gardens and passing through woodland glades and across meadows,



Photo by Angela Rixon

with bridges, signals and two stations. On the 1¼-mile journey today's visitors travel in small carriages towed by one of the three steam engines built especially for the Exbury line.

Peter Crook and Angela Rixon

Art Appreciation group visit to the Wallace Collection, 27 April 2016

The Wallace Collection is a national museum that displays the art collections brought together by the first four Marquesses of Hertford and by Richard Wallace, the son of the fourth Marquess. It was bequeathed to the nation by Lady Wallace (Sir Richard's widow) in 1897.

The numerous treasures include an outstanding collection of 18th-century French art in the exuberant rococo style popular in the time of Louis XIV (1715-1774) and Madame de Pompadour. There are many famous paintings by Paul Rubens, Titian, Rembrandt and others, including the English Old Masters Thomas Gainsborough, Joshua Reynolds and Edwin Landseer. There are rooms devoted to European and Asian armour

and weapons and corridors lined with displays of maiolica (tin-glazed earthenware).

A guide introduced us to the Sèvres porcelain pieces, elaborately decorated in bronze gilt, explaining the difference between the soft paste and hard paste methods with the craftsmanship and wastage involved in each. We saw some exquisitely ornate chandeliers, gilded clocks and furniture.

A condition of the bequest is that no item may be removed or sold from the Wallace Collection, even for an exhibition at another museum. The ever popular *Laughing Cavalier* by Frans Hals (1624) stays in Hertford House.

Robert Edmondson

St Albans, 16 May 2016

Formerly known as Verulamium in Roman times and the first major town on Watling Street, running northwards from London, the city now takes its name from Alban, martyred for his Christian beliefs in AD209.

Dominating the skyline stands the magnificent cathedral, which now houses the shrine of St Alban. Smashed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, this artefact was painstakingly reconstructed in 1993 and attracts pilgrims from far and wide.

Several of us joined a tour of the cathedral with a professional guide, exploring the vast, impressive interior with its elegant Norman arches, 13th and 14th century murals and the longest nave in Britain.

A pedestrian bridge leads into the 100-acre Verulamium Park, with its remnants of the old city walls, sweeping meadows and mature trees, all set around a long flowing lake. We enjoyed watching various species of ducks,

flocks of Canada geese with goslings and mute swans with cygnets, and were especially enchanted by the coots, some pairs busily collecting nesting materials, others feeding their tiny crimson-headed chicks.

The park is also home to the award-winning Verulamium Museum with recreated Roman rooms, imposing mosaics and assorted artefacts including glassware, bones, metal work and pottery, all illustrating the daily life of this major city in Roman times.

Near by a modern building protects an amazing excavation of part of a large Roman villa clearly illustrating the hypocaust, its central heating system, and with beautiful mosaics dated at AD200.

Another short walk leads to the great Roman theatre excavated in 1847 and the foundations of a row of shops, a villa and a secret shrine.

Peter Crook and Angela Rixon

Archaeology Group visit to Bignor Roman Villa, 17 May 2016

The villa was first unearthed in 1811 by farmer George Tupper when he was ploughing, and it is assumed that he struck the *piscina* (bath house). More excavations followed, and the villa became a beacon for tourists. It was opened to the public in 1814 and is still owned by the Tupper family. Over the years, the family have gone to great lengths to ensure that the mosaics are well preserved for the future, including covering them with thatched roofs supported by stone walling: a delight to the eye.

Subsequent excavations over the years have shown that the villa started small, as a farmstead in about the first century, and was extended and altered over several generations into a large villa covering nearly two hectares.

The mosaics have the most amazing

geometrical designs and some are picturesque. These include the shepherd Ganymede being carried up by an eagle to become the cup bearer to the Gods; the four seasons; the dolphin; Venus and the two gladiators with the *redarius* (umpire); and Medusa in the bath house.

These mosaics date mainly from the fourth century and all are stunning in their colour and the skill of the craftsmen. The collapsed floor in the north-west corner reveals the hypocaust system, and the surrounding mosaics of Venus and the gladiators are quite amazing and are said to be some of the finest in Britain. They are so lifelike!

To stand in the museum so close to artefacts some two thousand years old is a sobering experience.

Henry Willis

Mottisfont, 17 June 2016

In Graham Stuart Thomas's famous walled rose garden, an abundance of roses festooned arches and walls and filled the beds, while underplanting allows no space for weeds. The overall scheme of pink, ivory, blue and purple is interrupted in one corner by a mass of the fragrant golden shrub rose 'Graham Stuart Thomas'.

A guided tour of medieval Mottisfont began at the 'font', a spring which has never run dry, and which from Saxon times was used for meetings ('moots'), giving rise to the name Mottisfont. The meeting font was probably why this site was chosen in 1201 to found an Augustinian priory. The priory housed a prior and 12 ordained canons, representing the 12 apostles, who went out into the community teaching and performing priestly duties. The priory also offered hospitality to pilgrims.

Mottisfont was said to have its own relic, a finger of John the Baptist – although our guide suggested about 30 other religious houses made the same claim! The estate thrived, producing wine, fruit, meat and fish, plus bread baked to feed travellers. But the good times came to a tragic end with the Black

Death in 1348. No food was produced; pilgrims did not come; three priors died within one year; the land became neglected and the structure of the buildings suffered. But the priory continued functioning until the Dissolution. Mottisfont was dissolved as a priory but given by Henry VIII to Lord Sandys, his Lord Chamberlain, in exchange for the village of Chelsea!

Lord Sandys transformed the medieval structure to create a Tudor mansion, which remained until the 18th century when it was remodelled to the house existing today. The interior now reflects the life and interests of the last private owners, Gilbert and Maud Russell, who gave Mottisfont to the National Trust in 1957. Maud was a social hostess with a wide circle of artistic friends, notably Rex Whistler, whose decoration of the saloon with elaborate *trompe l'oeil* pillars and illusory vaulted ceilings and pelmets are the grand finale of the house tour.

On an outside wall, the artist Boris Anrep had created a charming mosaic angel with the face of Maud Russell, his close friend and lover for many years.

Pat Verrall

Chichester and harbour tour, 21 July 2016

A full coach of U3A members set off for a harbour tour and a visit to the city centre on what must have been the loveliest day this year so far. The scenery of the South Downs on the journey was spectacular and we soon arrived at Emsworth harbour. Our coach driver dealt calmly with some (very selfish) illegally parked cars and we were soon on the quay ready to go – when Betty had a

surprise for us all. To celebrate her 90th birthday the day before she had bottles of Bucks fizz and champagne flutes for us all to raise a toast before joining the boat.

We had one-and-a-half hours gently touring the harbour area, with our charming captain giving us some interesting historical information while some enjoyed more of Betty's Bucks fizz. The boat was solar-powered, so very

peaceful, and we enjoyed the scenery and seabirds. At one point two Spitfires flew over in formation – fabulous. Jean suggested she had arranged this for Betty's birthday, but this is open to question!

Afterwards we joined our coach again to be driven in to Chichester city centre to

alight at the cathedral with a few hours to enjoy lunch, sightsee and shop as we pleased. The city and the cathedral were delightful to explore. Leaving at about 4.30pm we enjoyed the return journey and glorious scenery after an excellent day out.

Liz Iddon

Holidays

Holiday in Ireland, May 2016

On the way to Tralee we stopped at Blarney and some of our more energetic members walked to the castle to kiss the Blarney Stone, while others experienced the Biggest Shop in Ireland. Meanwhile, as we drove on, our driver Tony regaled us with funny stories and historical information.

On our first morning we set off for the Ring of Kerry. We stopped at the Old Bog Show Village, which gave us a fascinating insight into the lives of people in past centuries.

As we continued, the countryside grew more mountainous, yellow gorse lined the roads, the fields were full of sheep and brightly painted houses dotted the land. We saw a coastline of rugged rocks, cliffs, great sandy beaches, inlets and lakes. In Kencare we saw beautiful stained-glass windows in the cathedral.

The next day we explored Killarney, but when the time came for our jaunty ride to Muckross House it was raining hard. The jaunty traps offered little protection, so after a brief trot we headed



The group at Lady View Photo by Laurie von Weber

indoors for the guided tour.

Thursday was our free day to explore Tralee, with its beautiful park, gardens, fine churches and excellent museum. In the evening we had Irish music in the bar.

Friday was fine again for our drive around the Dingle peninsular, the most westerly area of Ireland. We had lunch in Dingle, a colourful harbour town where I had the best fish chowder ever.

On our way home via Shannon Airport we stopped at Foynes Flying Boat Museum, from where the first flying boat had crossed the Atlantic.

Jane Blackadder

Holidays in 2017*

The Castles, Historic Houses and Gardens of North Wales

Sunday 23 to Friday 28 April 2017

Transport: Coach from various points in Dorking and for day trips

Hotel: Half-board at the three-star St Kilda hotel

Itinerary: En route by coach from Dorking we visit the medieval Powis Castle and world famous gardens. Day events on holiday include a light lunch and talk on Anglesey and visits to the beautiful 18th-century Plas Newydd Country House and Gardens, the National Slate Museum (with Blue Badge guide), Portmeirion, Caernarfon Castle (with Blue Badge guide), Bodnant Gardens, Conwy Castle and Aberconwy House in Conwy and Llangollen. Optional scenic excursions are from Blaenau Ffestiniog to Porthmadog, the Snowdon mountain railway (weather permitting) and canal boat trip through the Vale of Llangollen and across the famous Pontcysyllte Aqueduct built by Thomas Telford.

Cost: £599, with single room supplement of £39.

Deposit of £75 by end of November 2016. Final balance 56 days before departure date.

How to book: Please ask Jim Docking for a four-page colour brochure, which gives full details and booking form (01737 843260; annejim@docking.eclipse.co.uk). Brochures will also be available at monthly meetings.

Austrian Lakes and Mountains

Sunday 24 to Saturday 30 September 2017

We stay in UNESCO World Heritage site in the beautiful region called the Austrian Lake District, featuring some of the most spectacular lakes and mountain scenery in the country, including the massive Dachstein mountain.

Hotel: Half-board at the four-star Seewinkjel hotel, Fuschl am See, on the shores of Lake Fuschl. The hotel has spacious rooms with traditional furnishings, modern bathrooms and balconies overlooking mountains or the lake.

Itinerary: On Day 1, fly from Gatwick to Munich, then private coach to the hotel. Visits on holiday include Salzburg and the medieval Hohensalzburg fortress by funicular; the three lakes of Mondsee, Attersee and Wolfgangsee, the most famous in the region, with dramatic mountain scenery; Hallstatt, one of the most beautiful villages in the Austrian Lake District, clinging to the slopes of the Dachstein foothills; the ice caves in Werfen, the largest ice caves in the world; and Hohenwerfen Fortress, the castle where the film *Where Eagles Dare* was filmed.

Cost: £885 per person (holidays abroad next year are more expensive because of the low exchange rate) based on a minimum of 25 passengers. No single room supplement, but £62 extra for double room with sole occupancy and £92 supplement for superior room.

Deposit £200 by end of October 2016. This requirement is early to take advantage of the cheapest air fares when booking opens in November. Further details and forms from Jim Docking (see above).

* Subject to approval by the Committee

Publications by Members

***Fear and Freedom Crossing the Oceans* by Marilyn Heatley**
Grosvenor House Publishing, £25

My sailing adventure began when I met Barrie in 1999 and subsequently met his sailing friends Richard and Lynne. I found myself included in their plans to circumnavigate the world on their yacht, *Lady in White*, for five years.

We decided this was an experience not to be missed. I had no sailing experience but the others had small craft experience.

I retired from my job in my mid-fifties and commenced a Competent Crew sailing course. We had a steep learning curve and the book is the result of the seven journals I wrote during the trip.

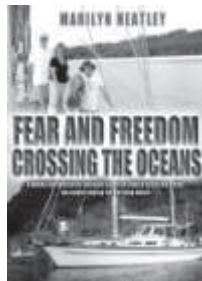
I have written it from a female perspective describing all the ups and downs of life on a yacht. I have described my gripping fear during our worst storm in the Mediterranean and on some of the

rough sea passages; how we confronted an intruder on the yacht in Fiji, as well as the astounding beauty of the scenery.

Sometimes having to moor in the roughest areas of town; the charm of the people we met (even a few not-so-charming people on occasion) and the wonderful eclectic wildlife we observed over five years' travelling.

We spend half our time in Dorset and, although no longer sailing, we still enjoy living near the sea.

The book can be obtained by emailing me at barrieandmarilyn@gmail.com.



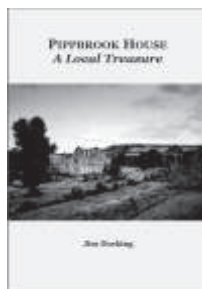
***Pippbrook House: A Local Treasure* by Jim Docking**
Dorking Local History Group, £5

This book covers the history of the present house and previous houses on the site. The present building, designed by George Gilbert Scott and built in 1856-58, is a Grade II*-listed building, a category limited to just 5.5% of listed buildings. It is noted particularly for its exquisitely painted ceilings, carved woodwork and ironwork.

The book contains detailed chapters on the main owners, notably the Crawfords (prominent politicians), the Formans (industrialists) and the Aggs (bankers and Quakers).

The last chapter traces events from December 1930 when the house was under municipal ownership, with sections on the Dorking Women's Voluntary Service, claims about the house being haunted, the Dorking Area Action Plan and the debate about future developments.

The book is obtainable at the Dorking Museum, local bookshops and from Jim.



***The Nutcombe Papers* by Ken Kelsey**

Amazon, £10

Ken Kelsey has been a member of the Dorking U3A since its inception. Older readers will remember the witty verses that he wrote for earlier editions of this *Newsletter* as well as his intellectually challenging puzzles. Indeed, he has previously published *They Could be Verse*, a book of humorous poems, and *The Ultimate Book of Number Puzzles*.

In this new comic novel, Ken writes in his typically amusing style about the bizarre events in the lives of the inhabitants of the sleepy village of Nutcombe. For instance, we read about Stephen Grimshaw's stag night; Albert Gold's winning ticket on the Irish Sweepstake; Joyce McNaughtie, the verger who lived up to her name; Peter Penny, a proud bigamist; Amos Lovejoy, the local undertaker, who encounters *rigour mortis erectus* in the corpse of Daniel Dowd and, in another story, tries

to win a competition for the finest casket; Sidney Pollifax, who gets revenge on his bossy wife; a water crisis and the threat of 'diluted water'; the attempts of the prostitute Daisy Dimple to sue a client who refuses to pay after unsuccessful business; Jasper Sly the arsonist (in verse); Ronald Ross, leader of the bus drivers' union, and his frustrated attempt to organise a strike – and lots more.

You will find plenty to make you smile and laugh out loud in this clever and very amusing novel.

The book can be bought on Amazon UK.



***When I became English: Post-War Germany to England* by Meike Laurenson**

Amazon, £9.99

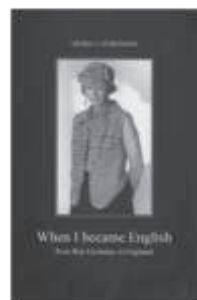
After a long spell as a member of Dorking U3A's Family History group, Meike Laurenson looked at letters, poems and diary entries, which inspired her to recall events of her varied life as a local smallholder, forming the basis of her book.

Now that her small flock of Shetland sheep have all gone to heaven, and the chickens and geese have been devoured by foxes, living on the land is linked to supporting local artists.

'An unsentimental but reflective account of a life written in the form of a series of short essays that sparkingly

cascade into a brilliant and indivisible whole.

'Meike's sharp perception of herself and those who have journeyed with her through the years is conveyed to the reader with both feeling and lightness of touch but without at any point sacrificing either her integrity or humanity.'



Sean Hawkins,
The Ancient House Bookshop

Dorking & District U3A now publishes a *Handbook* once a year (this year in June, but in future in March) and a *Newsletter*, which in future will be in June, September and December. Each *Newsletter* includes an update on the *Handbook*.

Contributions for December's *Newsletter* should be sent to the Editor (details below) to arrive not later than **Saturday 29 October 2016**.

Articles, poems, puzzles and drawings are welcome, as well as reports on U3A activities. If possible, please type your contribution and, if you have the facilities, send it by email, either as an attachment in Microsoft Word or in the main body of the email. If you send a handwritten contribution, please write names of places and people in CAPITAL LETTERS.

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Please note the following changes since publication of the *Handbook*:

- Secretary and Groups Co-ordinator Lionel Cartlidge's email address is now eljaysee@ljcartlidge.co.uk
- Holidays are being organised by Jim Docking with assistance from Diane Sutton (see also page 7)
- There are vacancies on the committee for Vice-Chairman and Minutes Secretary



Clockwise from top left:

- The 25th anniversary dinner at Betchworth Park Golf Club *Photo by Laurie von Weber*
- Members roam the famous rose gardens on a day trip to Mottisfont (see page 16) *Photo by Sue Grant*
- A meeting of new members at the Lincoln Arms in June *Photo by Michael Docker*
- Geoff Saunders (right in photo) on his cycling tour in Myanmar (see pp6-7)

