



Dorking & District
University of the Third Age

newsletter





Paintings by Lorna Gwinnett (top) and Elaine Major

Cover picture:

Painting by Dorothy Rowe

Letter from the Chairman

This has been a complicated year, mostly because there are some important regulations that will affect us and because the new CEO of the Third Age Trust has recently offered further guidelines to U3As to enable us to clarify our responsibilities as a registered charity.



Most of you will have heard that new data protection regulations came into force on 25 May, and for some months we have been attempting to understand how these regulations will affect us. For a while it seemed that this would be much more complicated, but finally things have been simplified because we have been told that, as we are a membership charity, becoming a member means that members allow us to use the data given us to communicate with them. We trust that our attempts to protect your data will be as secure as we are able to make them, and we shall be taking on a new data management system to improve our methods.

There have also been some firmer guidelines regarding the payment of tutors, and again we have attempted to follow these. We must always remember that we are a self-help educational charity and we should find group leaders from our membership, following the mutual aid principles of the U3A.

At our AGM I often say 'thank you' over and over again. This year was no exception. We would not be a U3A without our marvellous and faithful Group Leaders. We would not be able to keep you in touch with what is going on without the work of Jim Docking and his team on the *Newsletter*, and the *Newsletter* would not reach you all without the work of Elizabeth Holmes and her large team of distributors. We would not present such a good image to the outside world without our admirable website under the management of Michael Docker, and you would not have chairs to sit on or tea and biscuits, or the range of interesting speakers at monthly meetings, without the work of Jenny Ford and her helpers. Your ever-patient committee has tolerated some tedious discussions and has kept a firm eye on our finances over this past year, and they have worked to provide you with some social occasions that have been much enjoyed. These will continue. Thank you, everyone.

Michael Docker, Penny Tompkins, Pat Smith and Jim Docking are standing down from the committee and we all thank them for their years of service to you. I am grateful also those who are carrying on: Irene Pinner, Bob Crooks, Jenny Ford, Geoff Saunders, Tony Parker, Lionel Cartlidge and Judy Perry, and we are pleased to welcome Bob and Caroline Brown, Austra Harmon and Beryl Sinclair to the committee.

We all hope that the next year will be as successful as the past 27.

Doreen

Membership

Welcome!

A warm welcome to the 36 new members, listed below, who have joined since the last issue.

Mrs Carol Bailey	Mrs Vera Hatley	Mrs Sarah Oakley
Ms Imogen Barker	Mrs Margaret Hodgson	Mr Tony Oakley
Mrs Valerie Breden	Dr Ian Jack	Mrs Lynette Palmer
Mr Andy Coleman	Mrs Kathy Jack	Mrs Lesley Rice
Ms Tricia Coleman	Mrs Gelhi Jones	Mrs Isolde Trenter
Mr Gerald Culliford	Mr Bryan Lynch	Mr Jon Weller
Mrs Yvonne Durell	Mrs Susan Main	Mrs Jennifer Wenham
Mrs Mireille Fiander	Mrs Elizabeth Mair	Mrs Geraldine Wild
Mrs Jeannie Gill	Mr Don Mair	Mr John Wild
Mrs Hilary Grinyer	Mr Neill McClelland	Mrs Lindsay Wooff
Mr Michael Grinyer	Mrs Christine McKnight	
Mr James Harman	Mr Roy McKnight	We now have a total of
Mrs Susan Harman	Mr Edward Morris	736 members.

Have you renewed your membership for 2018-19?

Membership subscriptions for 2018-19 were due on 1 April 2018. Thank you to the majority of members who have now renewed.

If you have not yet renewed and wish to continue as member, please pay your subscription as soon as possible, preferably via GoCardless on our website, www.dorkingu3a.org.uk, or by cheque payable to Dorking & District U3A and mailed to Bob Crooks, U3A Membership Secretary, Deepdene, Longfield Road, Dorking RH4 3DE.

If you don't have an email address, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Subscription rates remain unchanged at £16 for one person, or £28 for two people at the same address. If you joined after 31 October 2017 your membership is already paid through to 2019.

Bob Crooks, Membership Secretary

Congratulations!

- For the second year Judy Perry has been long-listed for the Exeter Novel Prize for unpublished writers for her novel *A Pregnant Pause*. The Exeter prize is quite prestigious and attracts hundreds of entries from all over the world, so it's an honour to be listed – though she is sorry not to have made it on to the shortlist of five. The same thing happened last year when Judy was long-listed for her novel *Peripheral Damage*.
- Wendy Lloyd bought the ticket at Sue Grant's Annual Cancer Research coffee morning held at Betchworth Golf Club in February
- Inga Sorensen pulled the winning ticket at the U3A Quiz on Saturday evening.

Group News

Astronomy

The Astronomy group has met a couple of times so far. At first we concentrated on making sure the lucky owners of telescopes – of whom there are quite a few – could set up and calibrate their instruments properly. This we achieved.

For observing we are, of course, dependent on the weather and the willingness of telescope owners to host a gathering, usually at short notice. Members of the group share their email details so they can receive the required notification. If you would like to be included on the list, please do get in touch.

In the autumn, depending on members' wishes, we may begin an online course in modern astronomy together. If you would like to be included, please also get in touch.

Geoff Saunders [01306 887493; geoff.m.saunders@gmail.com]

Calling all table tennis players!

We meet every Friday in the Christian Centre. We are a friendly group and our meeting time has now become more user-friendly: **from 11am to 1pm**. If you can hit the ball across the net and you enjoy 'having a go', you will be very welcome.

Jean Williams [01737 845907; jean@williams77a.plus.com]

Science and Technology in Everyday Life

Are you interested in tomatoes, rubbish, clocks, genes, GPS, the cosmos? Just some of the many subjects we have looked at in our group. You don't have to be a scientist to join us, just someone who wants to learn about everyday things: what is their background? what is their future?

We have talks, visits and discussions. We recently visited the Royal Institution for a series of lectures put on especially for U3A. We also have proposed visits to a tomato grower where no soil is used. Another visit is planned to the local recycling plant to see what happens to our rubbish. We are also encouraged to share our own research on things that interest us.

At the moment I am the only woman in the group. Come on ladies, join me! Our group leader is Richard Rumble (richrumble747@gmail.com) and I am an enthusiastic member.

We meet at the Lincoln Arms near Dorking main station on the second Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm. As we may have arranged an outing, please check with Richard or me before turning up. All warmly welcomed.

Val Arundel [val@valarundel.plus.com]

Singing for Pleasure – come and join us!

We decided to include *Let's Sing a Gay Little Spring Song*, *Spring, Spring, Spring, Tulips from Amsterdam*, *Let's Do It*, *Waltz of My Heart*, *Little April Shower*, *When April Sings* and *Younger than Springtime* in our repertoire, a varied selection of popular songs.

Gina Eason, our accomplished pianist and conductor, usually selects the songs for us, but now feels ready to accept our suggestions for follow-up sessions. Hopefully you feel inspired to join us. Singing is good for you. No worries if you cannot read music.

We usually meet on the first and third Mondays, from 10am to noon at the Reading Room, Old Road, Buckland. Free trial session.

Meike Laurenson [01737 248909; melaurenson@talktalk.net]

What do you know about U3APlus?

U3APlus was set up by the Third Age Trust to raise awareness of, and to change attitudes towards, the problems some U3A members experience, especially issues that may affect their enjoyment of U3A membership, such as impaired hearing, vision or mobility.

Moreover, the Equalities Agency Support Service has made it clear that, although U3A is a member-led organisation, we are still viewed as a service provider in terms of being required to make reasonable adaptations so that all members can be included.

So it is all about **inclusivity!**

Our committee has therefore asked one of its members to have a particular responsibility in this area and to be known as our Helping Hand. Tony Parker is our Helping Hand, and he can be reached on 01306 884050 if you are experiencing any issues that prevent you from taking part in any of our activities. He may not be able to solve all our problems, but at least discussing things with him will be a start.

Remember: **Helping Hand – Tony Parker** (01306 884050).

Doreen Raine



Unlocking the Past

A member from the past and voices from the past!

We were contacted recently by the daughter of a very early member, Ischbel 'Pinkie' Searl. Pinkie was a member of our U3A in the early 1990s and, as a participant in the Oral History group, undertook to record Dorking residents talking about their memories. Pinkie's daughter wished us to have the boxes of cassettes, and the cassette player accompanying them, for us to use as we think fit.

Our current Local History group initially welcomed this gift with enthusiasm but, having seen the quantity of material and having recognised the time that transcribing would entail, the group members have had to concede that the material would be better in the hands of Dorking Museum. We had already agreed with Pinkie's daughter that this would be the next step if we were unable to do justice to the task.

In case this story resonates in the memories of some of our early members, this is what Pinkie's daughter told us:

My Mum, 'Pinkie' Searl, moved to Dorking after she got married in 1951. Mum and Dad first lived in a flat above the shops in Dorking High Street and then lived in several houses, all in Dorking, as their family grew. She had left school at 14 and had worked in a solicitor's office before this.

Amongst her favourite hobbies were painting, which she did at the Dorking Institute, and literature, making a twice-weekly visit to Dorking library to feed her voracious appetite for books. She even wrote a children's book, but this unfortunately did not make publication.

Mum joined Dorking U3A around 1990 and in 1992 started to visit elderly residents of Dorking to record memories of their lives in Dorking, resulting in about 150 cassettes! Unfortunately, Mum is now unable to recall talking to these residents, but fortunately these cassette tapes do hold valuable historical accounts of what life was like in Dorking, which our family have handed back to U3A.

Perhaps the enormity of the task defeated the earlier U3A group just as it has defeated us, but we hope that Dorking Museum will have the means to preserve these early memories of Dorking. Let me know if you can add to this story.

Doreen Raine

Bessie Bute

I'll tell the tale of Bessie Bute who thought that wildlife should be 'cute'.
The only animals she'd prize were those with large, appealing eyes
And skin with feathers, fur or hair. She had no sympathy or care
For other beasts like frogs or bees, or bugs which fell down from the trees.
Her face would harden, turning pale when thinking of a slug or snail.
Recoiling at the thought of bats, she'd smile at guinea pigs and cats.

She even took a perverse pride to emphasise the strict divide
Between the Chosen and the Sinners, the ugly losers and the winners.
When visiting the local zoo she knew exactly who was who.
She'd view the birds, the deer, the goats and lions, weasels and the stoats,
Dismissing all the pain and strife that they inflicted in their life,
Her narrow minded attitude a sentimental platitude.

So ignorant she could not see the wonder of the bumblebee.
Her prejudice would never ebb. Confronted by a spider's web
In autumn spangled by the dew she did not have the slightest clue
Of how all creatures interact. Oblivious of the basic fact
Concerning predators and prey: the hunters and the food they slay.
She'd scorn the numerous other creatures with warts or scales upon their features.
The ones which slithered, crept or crawled, whose reputation she had mauled.

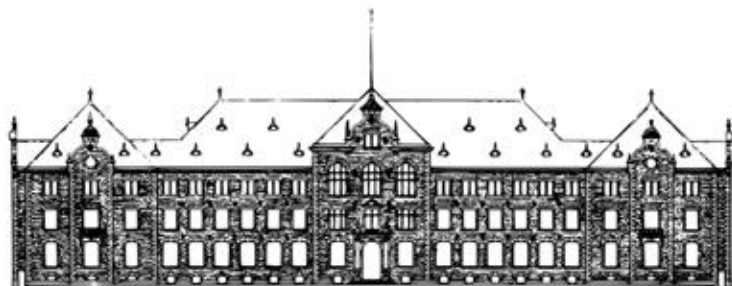
Each lizard, beetle, fly or worm would make her turn away and squirm.
She did not value, rate or need the presence of the centipede.
The shimmer of the dragonfly drew from her no admiring sigh.
The butterfly with rainbow wing would fail to make her spirit sing.
Their larvae, with their horns and hairs, elicited no wide-eyed stares.
She saw it as her bounded duty to disregard their complex beauty.

Deciding on a holiday by rambling in the USA,
A trip far from the daily strain of travel in a rush hour train,
She knew not fickle fate had planned a tragic and ironic hand.
Whilst walking in a forest there she met a female grizzly bear
With two young cubs – a splendid sight, but far from taking rapid flight
And doing what she had been told, Bess undertook an action bold,
Said 'Ahh' and gave the cubs a hug, a silly smile upon her mug.
The mother bear, now most annoyed, became distinctly paranoid
And gave poor Bess a vicious blow which very quickly laid her low.
And as she lay there, senses reeling, she cried, 'But they looked so appealing
Wide-eyed and furry with a look just like the Disney *Jungle Book*.'



- ◀ The moral now I'll tell to you. Judge animals by what they do.
For few wild creatures you may bet will make a docile household pet.
Despite their elegance and grace, a savage mask behind the face
May be preparing to attack, consider you a tasty snack.
But better still, before you fall: DON'T JUDGE WILD ANIMALS AT ALL!

Robert Edmondson



Narkover College

As your teenaged son's headmaster I must tell you, Mr Blaster,
That his behaviour leaves a lot to be desired.
We encourage self-expression but he gives the firm impression
That many nods in that direction are required.

The graffiti which he scrawls on the nearby village walls
Is a constant source of obloquy and shame.
Though his words are always rude and his drawings very crude
His poor spelling gives the school a dreadful name.

He is selling marihuana at the college's gymkhana
Despite receiving very strict advice.

I fear that what he's doing will lead some boys to ruin
For he charges well above the current market price.

The liquor he distils in the chemistry lab stills
He is selling at the local leather works.
Whichever way you view it, it is wrong for him to do it,
For he knows full well that's the chemo master's perks.

I am told by Mrs Sessions that he gives biology lessons
To her daughter in the pavilion after supper.
This is bad for discipline, as that daughter, Geraldine,
Is the mistress who's in charge of Vb Upper.

Worst of all he's spreading rumours about me and Mrs Loomas
Which is causing me considerable unease.
I would have a lot to fear if her husband got to hear
When he gets home from serving overseas.

All in all I have concluded that he ought to be excluded
And yet I'd like to give him one more chance.
I would certainly much rather, with assistance from his father,
View his many misdemeanours more askance.

The thing I have in mind is he's not been very kind
In besmirching Mrs Loomas's good name.
But if you can guarantee that he'll end this calumny
I'll treat all his many scrapes as just a game.

Oh, splendid, Mr Blaster! Now, as your son's headmaster,
I can tell you teaching him has been a boon.
Now that we see eye to eye I can see no reason why
He shouldn't be school captain very soon.

Ken Kelsey

● This is one of 42 delightful ipoems n Ken's recently published *A Book of Humorous Poems*.

Deliberations on Democracy

The concept is not a straightforward one, as Maria Marsh explains

Let us have a show of hands in favour of democracy. I am fairly sure that in almost all communities throughout Britain we could guarantee that all our hands would be raised in favour, including mine. So why have 'deliberations' in the title?

During a discussion on democracy in the Current Issues 2 group, we became very aware that there are a number of factors that are important to a well run democracy. These few notes are a reflection of that discussion with a few additional points.

Wikipedia produced a useful definition: 'A system of government in which citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body, such as parliament'. So far so good, but there are many different interpretations as to how this can be achieved and what values underpin these decisions.

Taking the headings below, what questions could we reasonably discuss in relation to Britain and would we all agree on the answers? Probably not, although the joy of a democracy is that at least we can have discussion.

Is the structure of Parliament the best way of supporting democracy?

Do we need two houses of Parliament? Why is one house elected and the other chosen by birth and/or political patronage? Scotland, Ireland and Wales have their own parliaments: should England have one as well? Do people outside London feel that London and the South-east have a louder, more insistent voice?

How well does the voting system and subsequent legislation meet the needs of individuals or particular groups?

Do we ask whether the wishes and needs of 16- to 18-year-olds are best represented by their parents and grandparents or do they deserve more of a say? Can we hear the silent voices of the elderly living in care homes in the parliamentary debates and subsequent legislation?

Is the majority 'first past the post' system the best system for representing the wishes of all citizens?

What do we think about the fact that out of the 100% of people eligible to vote in a general election the highest percentage reached was in October 1950 with 83.6% while the lowest was in May 2005 when only 59.4% of eligible voters went out to vote? Given that no party since 1945 has gained more than 50% of the vote, are we happy that any Government had a real mandate to make sweeping changes? As a country should we consider compulsory voting and/or proportional representation?

How easy is it to keep our laws up-to-date?

Most recently we have seen Mark Zuckerberg defending Facebook. The detail is complex and difficult to understand, as shown by the questions asked and not asked by the American Senate and House of Congress. At the moment Mark Zuckerberg is refusing to answer questions of our own House of Commons Committee, so do we know and are we in a position to put in place sufficiently detailed laws to ensure our own privacy and the impact of technology on our institutions and businesses? The fairly recent attack on the NHS comes to mind.

Parliament enacts laws, but do we have sufficient ways of ensuring that the law is kept?

If our bank is raided by hackers, are there sufficient systems in place to ensure that we get our money back and that the thieves are brought to justice? (Not an arbitrary example as I know two people who have experienced just that in the past month.)

Do we have access to the truth?

This is becoming an increasingly difficult challenge. Fake news – in other words, lies – were apparently told in the last Presidential election. Everything Donald Trump does not like he calls fake news, so how do we know what to believe? Look at the headlines and, clearly, different newspapers present different facts and opinions. What real evidence do we have from which to determine the truth?

We have freedom of speech, but do we really listen and respect alternative views and opinions?

Our democracy is dependent on trying to gain an understanding of others and most of our schools try to encourage such an approach, but to what extent is this reflected on *Question Time*?

A lot of questions; but, as I said at the beginning, at least we have the joy of living in a country where questions can be asked and discussed. However, having asked the questions and experienced the involvement of debate with friends, or even in U3A Current Issues groups, what are our next steps in doing something about those things that we would like to put right? The very least must be that we use the single vote we have each been allocated at every election opportunity we have.

Time Gentlemen, Please

Jim Docking explains his work on Dorking public houses

People often ask me how I came to undertake research into the history of local public houses. Many seem to think it was in order to get free drinks, courtesy of generous publicans; others assume that I get payment for the work involved. Both these assumptions are wrong! I have never been offered free alcohol, but three pubs did give me a cup of coffee. Far from getting paid (the Dorking Museum doesn't do this) the work leaves you out of pocket – not so much when you obtain source material from Dorking archives in the room above the Museum, but when you use sources from elsewhere. Two parishes each charged me £20 for using material from their collections. No royalties are given for books produced for the Cockerel Press, the publishing arm of Dorking Museum, though authors are given some copies *gratis*. The real reason is simply that I was asked to complete the work by David Langford, who had been asked to edit a book on the subject.

Where do I get my info from? Local publicans, though often interested, cannot usually provide information, though I have come across some notable exceptions. For pubs in the town, which formed the basis of *Time Gentlemen Please*, the archives in the West Street Museum have been the main source, and the Surrey History Centre in Woking has also been very useful. The staff at both these centres are extremely helpful and sometimes point to sources you had never thought of. For pubs outside the town, which will be the subject of another book, provisionally called *Come on, drink up!*, finding material can be tricky. Big exceptions are Westcott, Capel and Newdigate, where most or much of the work has already been completed, sometimes in tremendous detail. Betchworth has a good collection of material, too, and accounts of Brockham pubs can be found in Meg Ryan and Keith Harding's book, *Betchworth Within Living Memory*. Some parishes have unofficial archivists or residents with a fund of knowledge. In Headley, for example, Peter Denyer is a great source of knowledge, as are Tony and Lora Hine in Brockham.

The internet can be very useful. Googling the name and place of the pub usually yields basic information such as the date a pub was established and closed. But for human interest, the best website is 'British Newspaper Archive'. Feeding in the name and location of a pub produces a Google-like list which looks a bit gobbledegook at first, as the extract for The Old House at Home on the next page demonstrates.

However, once you click on the item, the newspaper item comes up (though it will need adjusting on your screen to be useful).

As with most research, the work is a mixture of reward and frustration. It's obviously rewarding to find something interesting, such as the history of

A LANDLORD DRUNK

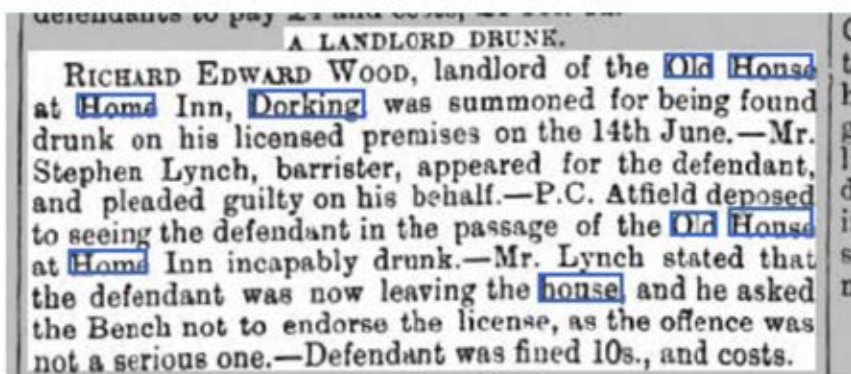
... LANDLORD DRUNK. Richard Edward Wood, landlord of the **Old House Home Inn, Dorking**, was summoned for being found drunk on his licensed premises on the 14th June.—Mr. Stephen Lynch, barrister, appeared for the defendant, and pleaded guilty on his behalf—P ...

Published: Tuesday 28 June 1892

Newspaper: Sussex Agricultural Express

County: East Sussex, England

Type: Article | Words: 91 | Page: 3 | Tags: none



a lost pub or the existence of pubs that no one else knew about. Frustration comes about when a bit of history can be found but a vital piece mysteriously eludes you. This frequently happens when you find that an incident in a pub – perhaps a brawl, or a visitor being drunk and disorderly – led to a trial, but the verdict cannot be found.

At the AGM in May I gave a short talk on some lost pubs in Dorking, but here is an account of a lost pub in Headley that I didn't mention but will be among the accounts in *Come on, drink up!*

The Clermont, Tot Hill, Headley

The date when this pub was first established is not recorded, but the building dates back to 1846. The Petty Sessions report of 1892 notes that the owner then was Reginald F Pagden and the licensee Thomas Mayne; while no accommodation was offered, stabling was provided for six horses. The clientele, like the Cock Inn, was described as 'working men and travellers'.

The Clermont had its fair share of incidents. In October 1891 a labourer was fined 15s for stealing apples, valued 6d, from the premises of the inn. More seriously, in July 1899 another labourer, James Johnson, claimed that he was given insufficient change for his beer, which Harold Skinner, the landlord, denied, upon which Johnson broke a window and refused to leave when requested. Skinner managed to eject him, but Johnson returned 20 minutes later, accusing the landlord of possessing a half sovereign which ▶

- ◀ belonged to him and threatening to break every window unless the money was returned. Skinner called PC Erricker, who asked Johnson to go away, which he did, only to return and put his fist through a bar window, upon which the constable remanded him to appear before the Epsom Bench. Unfortunately, we have no information about the outcome. The next year, however, Skinner was himself summoned for allowing his cows to stray on to the road, for which he was fined 2s.

On Boxing Day 1902 a fracas at the Clermont involved 11 men, apparently already in great trouble with the police, who were summoned for disorderly conduct and refusing to leave the premises. Because of a hole in his pocket, David May, the landlord, had dropped some money on the floor and one of the men had claimed it was his. He and his unsavoury mates then 'unmercifully beat' the landlord, who nonetheless managed to eject his attackers. But the next day they returned, singing, shouting and playing mouth organs and refusing to leave. In the melee that followed, May, and two customers who were assisting him, were seriously hurt as they tried to eject the men. The main defendant was fined £5, two others £1 and 7s 6d. Whether or not it was because of these incidents, May left the following year and was succeeded by Mr WH Hill.

The next landlord, Thomas Gray, was also involved in disorderly incidents, partly at least of his own making. In July 1909 a customer, Edward Jones, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly. The court thought that Jones might have just gone home had not the landlord followed him out, swearing and threatening to fight him. Jones was fined 7s 6d, but Gray himself was accused of using obscene language and he too was fined 7s 6d. Gray was again summoned two years later for being drunk in charge of a horse and waggon and fined 10s plus 7s 6d costs.

A local resident, Yvonne Stubble, mentioned in the account of the Cock Inn, lived at the Clermont from 1943, when she was 12 years old, until 1952. She remembers how her father, John Pryke, was at first the landlord, succeeding Mr Russell. When her father went bankrupt Yvonne's eldest brother, Roy Pryke, took over. Yvonne remembers the Clermont as 'grotty', with the only toilets outside, but a happy place all the same. Her grandmother looked after the garden, where she kept many chickens. The house had four bedrooms (but did not offer accommodation), an upstairs sitting room and a dart room. The bar was placed centrally between two rooms. During the Second World War Canadian troops used to visit the pub, and Yvonne's father used to accumulate watches that the soldiers left in lieu of payment until the men received their pay.

The Clermont was closed in 1958 because it was owned by the same brewery as the nearby Cock Inn. It was then turned into a private residence called Clermont House, while Roy Pryke moved to the Cock Inn.

Monthly Meetings

Gilbert and Sullivan: Bernard Lockett, 14 March

Charmian Corner

Bernard Lockett, a trustee of the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival held over three weeks every year in Harrogate, was our speaker in March. He began by confessing that G&S were a bit like Marmite: you either loved them or loathed them.

From the large audience who turned up to hear his talk it would seem a majority of our members are in favour. What were these theatrical compositions? We always think of them as the Savoy Operas or 'comic operas' but Gilbert and Sullivan themselves never claimed they were operas. Bernard classed them as the forerunners of the modern musical. G&S composed 14 of them in the years they worked together, which remains a record in the musical theatre.

WS (William Schwenck) Gilbert came from a wealthy family and was destined for the law, but after two years as a barrister he scorned the



Our March speaker Bernard Lockett
(photo by Robert Edmondson)

law, seeing it as favouring those rich enough to bribe their way out of it. He became a playwright.

Arthur Sullivan was a chorister from the age of 10, studied at the Royal Academy of Music and in Leipzig and became a composer of church music. It was the writer FC Burnand who tempted him to write for the musical stage when he asked Sullivan to compose the music for *Cox And Box*, his adaptation of a stage farce.

Luckily Gilbert, in his role as theatre critic, saw the show and when

he thought of putting one of his plays to music approached Sullivan – and the magical partnership was launched.

Although their first attempt, a show called *Thespis*, was not a success and they then went their separate ways, Richard D'Oyly Carte, a theatrical impresario, persuaded them to work together again and the highly successful *Trial By Jury* was the result.

In it, Gilbert sent up the British legal system, and in their next collaboration, *The Sorcerer*, had a go at the social classes – which show, apparently, is very popular in America.

The Belgian Royal Family – murder, madness and mayhem: Melanie Gibson Barton, 11 April

Juliet Eberle

At this regular monthly assemblage of the habitually curious and attentive at the bewitching hour of 2.30pm in the Christian Centre our lively speaker, Melanie Gibson Barton, launched us into an insightful history of a subject I knew virtually nothing about.

Melanie explained how the constitution and distribution of power developed in Belgium, this small country lying so central and surrounded on all sides by other major European countries. Their royal family only came into existence in 1830 but they have had a wide impact on the world.

King Leopold I was our Queen Victoria's uncle, as she married her first cousin, Albert. We heard how King Leopold II exploited the Belgian Congo, wreaking brutal devastation on the black population as he plundered the wealth of this vast country for his own benefit. King Leopold III surrendered to the

Germans without consulting his government, sparking a political crisis after the war.

We heard about King Baudouin, who was the last ruler of the Belgian Congo until its independence in 1960, and how he was popular until the death of his first wife, Astrid of Sweden.

I had no idea that Belgium once had an imperial connection to Mexico when the Austrian Archduke Maximilian took his wife, the young Princess Charlotte of Belgium, to establish rule there. Their philanthropic goals of helping the poor were not so well received by his European backers and he ended up being shot while Princess Charlotte was back in Europe trying to raise funds for their good work. The strain resulted in her ending her days in an



institution. Again, this talk brought home the connection with Edouard Manet's 1867-68 painting, *The Execution of Archduke Maximilian*.

Melanie knew many personal details of this influential family as well as their detailed history and presented her talk with a wide range of slides, and so I think, like me, U3A devotees came away having learnt a lot, their curiosity aroused by a speaker who knew her subject fluently and brought it alive for us.

Dorking's Lost Pubs: Jim Docking, 9 May

Pam Toler

The May meeting of Dorking U3A was a busy one. The AGM was efficiently dealt with and then we listened to an interesting talk by Jim Docking on the story of Dorking's lost pubs. A book, co-written by Jim Docking and David Langford and titled *Time Gentlemen, Please*, has sold in the region of 8,000 copies.

Jim gave us a brief history of some of the lost pubs, such as the Pig in the String, once in Chart Lane South. First mentioned in the 1861 census, the pub was later called The Volunteer. The George Inn stood on the site which is in the High Street called the Lemon Tree. This inn served customers for over 300 years.

The site of the Chequers Inn is now occupied by Robert Dyas. The 18th-century bow windows have been preserved and the building retains several important wall paintings on the rear staircase.

A house stood on the site of what eventually became the Bell Inn, dating back to at least 1427. It was variously occupied by a butcher, tanners and a linen draper. From 1591 it became an



inn, allegedly frequented by none other than Dick Turpin, the highwayman.

On the High Street, the 17th-century Red Lion Family Hotel was once the most important inn in Dorking. The court leet and general quarter sessions were held here. In 1906 the Red Lion was used to demonstrate a new domestic appliance – the vacuum cleaner – and a television was installed there in 1936.

If you wish to learn more of the wonderful history of Dorking pubs, the book can be purchased from the Dorking Museum or Waterstones. Thank you, Jim – I bought the book!

Residential Trip

Yorkshire, 30 April – 4 May

Jim Docking

On a wet and miserable morning 29 of us set off on a coach ride to Harrogate, where for four nights we would reside and be well fed in the comfortable Cairn Hotel. Once off the motorway and resorting to narrow lanes, our driver, Geoff Jones, manipulated his large vehicle around tight corners and into narrow entrances with remarkable skill. As our guide, Claire Bostel, remarked, Geoff could turn his coach on a sixpence.

On the journey, we visited Harewood House. Not far from Leeds, this imposing residence, built by Edwin Lascelles, was furnished by Thomas Chippendale, born 300 years ago in the nearby town of Otley.

We began the first day in Harrogate on a walking tour of the beautiful spa town, famous for its Royal Hall, green open spaces and Montpellier Gardens, extravagant hotels and Bettys tearooms. The afternoon was taken up with a visit to Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth, the former home of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë, located at the edge of Yorkshire moorland. The exhibits tell the story of the sisters' lives and reveal their amazingly tiny handwriting, which, unlike some other authors, contains no deletions or substitute text. Many of us hadn't realised that, apart from their writings, the Brontës were accomplished painters.

The morning of the second day was taken up with a guided walking tour of York. Oddly, perhaps, the guide gave the cathedral a miss but included the very interesting Merchant Adventurers' Hall. Here, a guide explained how this timber-framed building was constructed by a fraternity made up of York citizens to provide a base for charity, worship and business in the centre of the city. Today, it is also a scheduled ancient monument and Grade I-listed building. Although there have been many additions and changes to the hall over the years, the main functions of business and charity remain the same today.

There are three main rooms in the hall: the Great Hall, where the medieval merchants first gathered to conduct their business and to socialise; the Undercroft, used as an almshouse to help the sick and the poor until as late as 1900; and the chapel, offering spiritual care to the merchants and the inmates of the almshouse.

The hall also remains the everyday



base for the 160 members of the Company of Merchant Adventurers of the City of York. A Merchant Adventurer was someone who risked or 'adventured' his or her own money in overseas trade, bringing back goods and wealth to York. They invite you to discover the secrets of this unique guild hall and its 660 years of history. In the afternoon we drove to Fairfax House, reputed to be the finest Georgian townhouse in England.

On the third day we first visited Ripon, with its cobbled streets and bustling market and, of course, its cathedral (dating from the seventh century but rebuilt several times) containing a Saxon crypt and carved choir stalls. After lunch we went on to marvel at the extensive ruins of the 12th-century Cistercian Fountains Abbey, beautifully located by a river and ponds.

After lunch we were treated to a guided tour of Newby Hall.

This late 17th-century house is full of Adam interiors, art, tapestries, Chippendale furniture and classical sculpture. In the grounds is a room containing almost 70 dollhouses, each exquisitely furnished, and an exhibition of teddy bears. Covering 25 acres, the gardens include a double herbaceous border sloping from the house to the River Ure.

On our last day, before the long drive home, we visited Yorkshire Sculpture Park, where 60 sculptures are set in beautiful 500 acres of grounds.

Days Out

Royal National Lifeboat Institution, 21 March

Paul Smith

'Humber, Thames, Dover, Wight, Portland, Plymouth: southwest two or three, slight, rising slowly, good.' With this encouraging forecast our U3A crew commenced boarding at 0825GMT and soon set a course for Poole harbour. We arrived at the RNLI College, a spacious purpose-built complex opened in 2005 and new headquarters of the charity. After a coffee break and time to visit the gift shop and foyer exhibits we were treated to lunch in a large circular restaurant with 180° views of the harbour and Twin Sails bridge. Afterwards we were split into two groups to start the tour.

Our group guide, Chris, advised that the RNLI was founded in 1824 by Sir William Hillary following his concerns after major shipwreck disasters. Since then its lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 142,000 lives. The RNLI now provides a 24-hour search and rescue service for the UK and Ireland from 238 lifeboat stations, plus various inland waterways and tidal reaches of the Thames. It also provides seasonal lifeguard services and operates specialist flood rescue teams when fast-moving flood water puts lives at risk. It is far more than a rescue service – the RNLI works with international organisations to educate, train and equip lifesavers to make drowning prevention a global

◀ priority. This was summed up neatly as 'Train one, save many.'

Chris was extremely knowledgeable with a good sense of humour and provided us with a great insight into the RNLI, which relies on a community of volunteers, fundraisers and supporters.

After varied informative film clips we were then ourselves called to a 'shout' and ushered swiftly into a lifeboat simulator. The screens showed us to be at Dover harbour. We took crew positions and, with a new recruit at the helm, steered out to where we could see black smoke billowing from a collision between a container ship and oil tanker. We could see other vessels and helicopters rushing to assist, realistic flames and figures in the water. At the flick of a switch the sea suddenly changed from calm to choppy, then to high winter swells. The horizon fell, rose and rolled alarmingly. The weather worsened to force seven with waves crashing against the bow and over our windows. This was a realistic and exhilarating experience! All too soon, our rescue mission over, we motored back to port in awe of those who do this in real life.

We were then led to the large Sea Survival Centre. With features including a four metre deep training pool with wave machine, high-powered water hoses, strobe lighting and loudspeakers, a wide range of weather conditions can be experienced and many survival skills, including capsize drills, learnt. Improvements in lifejackets from early cork to modern versions equipped with



beacons, plus life raft improvements and equipment were explained.

After donning high-vis jackets we were taken over to the All-Weather Lifeboat Centre – a production, engineering, repair and maintenance base. The RNLI has a fleet of over 400 lifeboats and now constructs these in-house, currently building six a year – mainly the Shannon class, introduced in 2014 and costing £2.4m each. Rather than propellers the latest launches have high-powered water jets which can be rotated for maximum manoeuvrability.

Dangers of high tides, not wearing lifejackets at sea, cold-water shock and hypothermia were emphasised. The RNLI helped more than 29,000 people in 2017 and rescued an average of 23 people every day. By the entrance to the complex was a stainless steel sculpture of a rescue. Inscribed on the back of the plinth were the names of over 400 rescuers who gave their lives saving others.

We cast off for home with renewed respect for the sea and immense admiration for the professionalism, bravery and dedication of those in the RNLI. Our grateful thanks go to boatswains Sheila Knight and Sue Willis for an enjoyable yet sobering, very informative and instructive day.

Diversions & Delights

True Calls to Operators (or so it is claimed)

Travel Centre Enquiry

Customer: 'I've been ringing 0800 2100 for two days and can't get through to enquiries, can you help?'

Operator: 'Where did you get that number from, sir?'

Customer: 'It was on the door to the Travel Centre.'

Operator: 'Sir, they are our opening hours.'

Samsung Electronic

Caller: 'Can you give me the telephone number for Jack?'

Operator: 'I'm sorry, sir, I don't understand who you are talking about.'

Caller: 'On page 1, section 5, of the user guide it clearly states that I need to unplug the fax machine from the AC wall socket and telephone Jack before cleaning. Now, can you give me the number for Jack?'

RAC Motoring Services

Caller: 'Does your European Breakdown Policy cover me when I am travelling in Australia?'

Computer helpline

Tech Support: 'I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop.'

Customer: 'OK.'

Tech Support: 'Did you get a pop-up menu?'

Customer: 'No.'

Tech Support: 'OK. Right-click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?'

Customer: 'No.'

Tech Support: 'OK, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?'

Customer: 'Sure. You told me to write "click" and I wrote "click".'

Legal requirements while travelling in France

Caller: 'If I register my car in France, do I have to change the steering wheel to the other side of the car?'

Knitwear company

Caller: 'Can you please give me the number for Woven?'

Operator: 'Woven? Are you sure?'

Caller: 'Yes. That's what it says on the label: Woven in Scotland.'

More computer assistance

Operator: 'Ridge Hall, computer assistance; may I help you?'

Caller: 'Yes, well, I'm having trouble with Word Perfect.'

Operator: 'What sort of trouble?'

Caller: 'Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away.'

Operator: 'Went away?'

Caller: 'They disappeared.'

Operator: 'Hmm, so what does your screen look like now?'

Caller: 'Nothing.'

Operator: 'Nothing?'

Caller: 'It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type.'

Operator: 'Are you still in Word Perfect, or did you get out?'

Caller: 'How do I tell?'

Operator: 'Can you see the C: prompt on the screen?'

Caller: 'What's a sea-prompt?'

Operator: 'Never mind. Can you move your cursor around the screen?'

Caller: 'There isn't any cursor: I told you, it won't accept anything I type.'

Operator: 'Does your monitor have a power indicator?'

Caller: 'What's a monitor?'

Operator: 'It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?'

Caller: 'I don't know.'

Operator: 'Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?'

Caller: 'Yes, I think so.'

Operator: 'Great. Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall.'

Operator: 'When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?'

Caller: 'No.'

Operator: 'Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable.'

Caller: 'OK, here it is.'

Operator: 'Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer.'

Caller: 'I can't reach.'

Operator: 'Uh huh. Well, can you see if it is?'

Caller: 'No.'

Operator: 'Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?'

Caller: 'Oh, it's not because I don't have the right angle – it's because it's dark.'

Operator: 'Dark?'

Caller: 'Yes – the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window.'

Operator: 'Well, turn on the office light then.'

Caller: 'I can't.'

Operator: 'No? Why not?'

Caller: 'Because there's a power failure.'

Operator: 'A power... A power failure? Aha, OK, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?'

Caller: 'Well, yes, I keep them in the closet.'

Operator: 'Good. Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from.'

Caller: 'Really? Is it that bad?'

Operator: 'Yes, I'm afraid it is.'

Caller: 'Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?'

Operator: 'Tell them you're too bloody stupid to own a computer!'

Dorking & District U3A publishes the *Newsletter* and *What's On?* four times a year in March (spring issue) June (summer), September (autumn) and December (winter).

Contributions for the autumn newsletter should be sent to the Editor (details below) to arrive not later than **30 July 2018**.

Articles, poems, puzzles and drawings are all welcome, as well as reports on U3A activities.

Please try to limit reports to not more than 300 words.

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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Clockwise from top Left: Paintings by Leila Thorogood, Paulione Whitehead, Lorna Gwinnett and Elaine Major



Juliet Ebrle thanks all those who kindly supported Cancer Research UK by buying tickets for this quilt last year at the Barn Dance at The Guildings in Newdigate and elsewhere. The raffle, pulled at a quiz at Oddfellows Hall on 24 March, was won by this lucky lady Wendy, seated by the quilt.