



Dorking & District U3A



newsletter



WHITE ADMIRAL, BOOKHAM COMMON

(Photograph Robert Edmondson)



"Welcome one, welcome all!!!"

THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, SANDHURST

(Photograph Walter Blanchard)

THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, SANDHURST (CHAPEL)

(Photograph Paul Jones)



Letter from the Chairman

This is definitely the last Letter from the Chairman that I shall write, and I shall make it brief!

My main thought at this point is one of gratitude to Dorking & District U3A.

I joined about twelve years ago, just before moving to this area to follow one of my daughters, and I knew no-one else here. In D&D U3A I found many new friends.



I also found that I was capable of things I had never thought I could do, and becoming your chairman was one of them. However, I could never have managed this without the amazing support and willing participation of committee members, Group Leaders, Newsletter Editor, organisers of Days Out and Residential Trips, and all the other marvellous individuals who do so much for us all. I could not have asked for more, and I am truly grateful to all of you.

I have also become involved in many other aspects of U3A, and these are covered elsewhere in this Newsletter. I would urge you to read about these other aspects, because some of you might wish to involve yourselves in other parts of the overall movement. There is much to be done to keep U3A going nationally and to bring our local activities to the attention of those who can benefit from them.

We now have a Vice Chairman, Bob Brown, who is willing to stand for election as Chairman at the AGM in May. I hope there will be other members who will be willing to join him on the Committee, in particular members who would consider the roles of Vice Chairman and Secretary.

I would like to thank Bob and the members of the new committee for taking this friendly and successful U3A into the future.

With my best wishes to them and to you all.

Doreen

Membership

Welcome!

A warm welcome to the following new members, who have joined since the last issue.

Gareth & Sandra Balle	Graham Hill	Elizabeth Ramkoleea
Jane Bellingham	Doreen Hull	Gavin & Julia Rowles
George & Melanie Bromley	Lorna Humphrey	Richard Rumble
Ann Brumfit	Karen Jackson	Judith Sherington
Jenny Clement	Pauline Jackson	Lindsay Smart
Christopher Cobb	Shannon Keen	Carolyn Smith
Peter Collings	David & Thelma Lark	Sarah Stinton
Heidi Darley	Sue Nichols	Gail & Roger Stones
Roy Davies	Simon Orlik	Diane Sutton
Brenda Deacon	Wendy Ottewill	Malcolm Tyrrell
Angela Farrin	Catherine Penny	Patricia Wade
Angela Gibson	Elizabeth Pettit	Joseph Warden
Doreen Glasspool	Claire Pullen	Anne Warren
Sheila Higgins	Kenneth Radclyffe	Ronald & Norma Watson

Membership subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2019 - 20 became due on 1st April 2019. Thanks to the many members who have already paid in response to my email at the end of February. Members who have not yet paid can do so via GoCardless on our website, www.dorkingu3a.org.uk, or by sending a cheque payable to Dorking & District U3A together with a stamped addressed envelope to Bob Crooks, U3A Membership Secretary, Deepdene, Longfield Road, Dorking RH4 3DE.

Subscription rates remain unchanged at £16 for single membership or £28 for joint membership for two people at the same address. You can also pay by cheque at the monthly meeting - but no cash please. If you joined after 31st October 2018 your membership is already paid to 31st March 2020.

Please note that if you used GoCardless last year you must set up a new direct debit payment this year as it is a mandate for a one-off payment only.

Bob Crooks, Membership Secretary

Tribute to Edgar (Eddie) Albert Meadows, 1926-2018

Eddie was well known to many in our U3A for his cheerful manner and willingness to help whenever needed. As a member of our U3A he enjoyed the monthly meetings, going on day trips and U3A holidays. For many years he distributed the Newsletter in his local area of Dorking and in more recent years helped with making tea and washing up after the Monthly Meetings.

Eddie died on Christmas Eve after a short illness in hospital and will be much missed by his family and many friends. There was a good turn-out at his funeral as befits a man who meant so much to so many.

Eddie's life was long and full. He married Patricia in 1950 and settled in Thames Ditton, moving to Dorking in the early 1960s. He was always very sporty, and played for the Dorking Cricket Team. In the 70s he also joined Dorking Lawn Tennis and Squash Club where he remained for the rest of his life. He loved driving and he joined Dorking Good Neighbours, a local charity which takes people without access to public transport to medical appointments all over Surrey.

Elizabeth Holmes



Just before going to press, we were given the very sad news of the death of Jenny Ford. Jenny has looked after our Monthly Meetings for several years, and she has been a highly valued Committee Member for the same amount of time. Many of you will also know Jenny from the many other things she has done for our U3A. Her loss will have a considerable impact on our U3A lives, both in terms of friendship and in terms of her contributions, and we shall commemorate this more suitably in a later issue.

Doreen Raine

Group News

Photography Group 1

On 5 February, U3A member Robert Edmondson presented an illustrated talk entitled " *The Science and Art of Butterfly Photography* " to members of Photo Group 1. Starting with some photos of the exotic species to be seen in the butterfly houses of Wisley and Blenheim he discussed how composition can improve the popular appeal of a photo and how to vary the interpretation of a subject by taking extreme close-ups, altering the angle of view or the lighting or showing it feeding on flowers.

Most of the talk was about butterflies found locally and how one can photograph the same species in different ways to illustrate aspects of its life including parasites, camouflage, courtship and mating. The cover photo is of a backlit White Admiral, taken on Bookham Common .

New Group: The Natural World

The newly formed Natural World group got under way recently with a presentation on the importance of rainforests. The natural world is an enormous canvas for our meetings and will mainly depend upon the willingness of members to lead meetings on subjects which interest and concern them. These are likely to range from the impact of global warming, the scourge of plastic, the future of manatees in the Americas to the beauty of British birds and many more topics both large and small.

The leader is Keith Dakin-White (kfra1992@googlemail.com) and members are invited to join the group which initially will meet in the Lincoln Arms pub (near Dorking station) at 10 am on the first Thursday each month.

Summer Bowling

The first U3A summer bowling session will take place on the Pippbrook Green on Friday 26 April, starting as usual at 2.30pm. You are advised to wear bowling shoes, flat soled shoes, or trainers of course.

David Pettman

Shakespeare Group

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays and we are now studying Richard II. This is one of Shakespeare's most interesting history plays. It is said that on seeing it, Queen Elizabeth, then ageing and frail, and hounded by the rebellious Essex, was heard to say "I am Richard"!

Shakespeare's Richard, also plagued by Bolingbroke, has been a foolish and deluded monarch heading for usurpation and death but he is a poet who thinks and speaks in beautiful verse.

We usually find a great deal to interest us in these wonderful plays, four centuries old and yet so up to date in their understanding of man's frailty!

Charmian Corner

Archaeology Group

Our Archaeology Group, at present comprising 11 members, meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Lincoln Arms.

In January one of our members showed a You Tube presentation about the Roman Writing Tablets found in London. In February, we went as a Group to the British Library in London to view an exhibition of Anglo Saxon Treasures. Everyone agreed that it was an unforgettable experience.

In March, one member gave a talk on early Greek Archaeology. In April, Emma Corke, director of the excavation at Cocks Farm, Abinger, will enlighten us on recent developments there.

Peter Horitz

Enjoying Gilbert and Sullivan

Our new group meets on the 4th Tuesday in the month. We are aiming to find out what kind of people Gilbert and Sullivan were, about the society in which they lived, and the influences this had on their operettas and other works. We will probably look at the operettas themselves and might consider the style of music and what makes Gilbert and Sullivan unique. We have recordings to listen to, books in which to delve, the internet to explore, and occasionally there will be a live performance to enjoy.

If you are interested in joining us, you will be very welcome.

Contact Joy Huxley 01737 843974 or email alan.joy@uwclub.net

Enjoying Gilbert and Sullivan at Leatherhead Theatre

Six of us enjoyed seeing *HMS Pinafore* and *Trial by Jury* performed by the Godalming Operatic Society on 1st March.

The orchestra played with feeling and a verve that boded well for the rest of the performance.

In amateur Gilbert and Sullivan, it is the dancing of D'Oyly Carte productions that I miss. How the 30 or so members of the chorus managed their musical manoeuvres on such a small stage at Leatherhead without bumping into each other was quite amazing!

Colourful costumes made the ensembles quite spectacular. The men were as smart as the Navy should be and the ladies' costumes were breathtakingly beautiful, especially the one worn by the Captain's daughter.

Sullivan's music is not always easy to sing to but the solos came over smoothly and clearly. It was pleasing to be able to understand the words of the songs, something rarely achieved by modern day vocalists.

Gilbert poked fun at the social prejudices of the day throughout *HMS Pinafore*. However in this production the humour was not overplayed but came quite naturally and had some good laughs.

We were surprised to see in the programme that *Trial By Jury* was placed between the two acts of *HMS Pinafore* instead of before or after as is usual. But this novel arrangement was presented as the Captain's nightmare, with the Captain dressed in nightshirt and cap. The ship's company, dressed appropriately, became the jury and court room officials while Sir Joseph's sisters and cousins and aunts were the plaintiff's bridesmaids. The Trial ended satisfactorily all round, the court room emptied (and presumably the cast had a quick change of costume off stage) and we were seamlessly returned to *HMS Pinafore* for the second act which was presented as delightfully as the first.

In true Gilbertian absurdity, the First Lord of the Admiralty appeared quite unabashed at seeing a naval Captain on the quarter deck in his nightwear! Congratulations to the Godalming Operatic and Dramatic Society for a very enjoyable evening.

Joy Huxley

Walking Group

We are a dynamic group that meets twice a month for local and more adventurous hikes into the surrounding countryside. In March, 14 of us visited the recently restored Silent Pool. The walk then took us along footpaths and lanes to Albury village and then on up to Albury Heath. Further on, we took the opportunity to visit the little Saxon church near Albury Manor. The 4.5 mile walk was much enjoyed by all.



WALKING GROUP VISIT TO SILENT POOL, 22ND MARCH 2019

(Photograph Jane White)

Self- Publishing Group

Our small group meets at my home at 10.30 on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month. If you have a book in your head aching to be set free – a novel, memoirs or a serious non-fiction tome - we would welcome you to our group. Our aim is to steer members through the various stages and technicalities of converting manuscripts to a digital self-publication format. We have registered with KDP, the self-publishing arm of Amazon which does cost a penny from the start to the end of the publication process. Contact me on kelsey@talk21.com

Ken Kelsey

Quietly Creative — the Quilting Groups

Our two Dorking U3A Quilting Groups meet in each other's homes every couple of weeks.

The small groups make for a friendly informal atmosphere where everyone can learn and support each other with their varying projects. As the groups have grown in confidence, members are happy work on their own inspired projects. No-one ever seems to be short of ideas to keep their hands busy.

Elizabeth decided to make her sister a bed runner as a birthday present to accessorise plain bedcovers and complement iris patterned curtains. We came up with an agreeable pattern that agreeably complemented a cream background and after months of choosing a pallet of purple and mauve fabrics, used the freezer paper method to produce a design with neat edges. She finished the project off with echo quilting (see cover photographs).

Deanne was inspired by Elizabeth's piece but developed a very creative design of her own, this time using the irises on her curtain fabric to interpret in the same bright blue and yellow

colours in scrap fabrics together with various embroidery stitches and subtle embellishment. The result really enhanced her room.

Debbie is using her dress and curtain-making skills to appliqué and embroider a small decorative wall hanging for her granddaughter. The process has meant dying several fabrics and she and others have learned to apply shisha mirrors, a common and distinguishing feature of a lot of Indian work.

In each group, we have people making cushion covers worked in traditional and crazy designs, quilts for pampered pets, friends and family, and bags. We hope our groups will come together to share ideas and are looking for ways to make this happen by visiting exhibitions and social occasions.

Juliet Eberle

Mittens on her patchwork quilt!



Poetry Please

A WEDDING

Our writing group presents a problem with a theme that I am dreading:
To write a learned witty piece upon the subject of a wedding.
Cynics say we laugh at funerals. On the other hand we cry
When two people join in marriage with the vows they specify.
When daughters leave the family home the mothers often shed a tear.
Fathers think the change will block the progress of the groom's career.
All the fuss, the preparation, all the worry and expense.
Hiring taxis, meeting in-laws, everyone is fraught and tense.
Invitations to be sent to colleagues, neighbours, family friends.
Who requires a special diet? Complication never ends.
Relatives for years forgotten have to be informed and told.
Hippie cousins, vagrant uncles brought into the family fold.
Formal speeches to be written. Venues are approved and checked.
A seating plan to be decided. Are the name tags all correct?
What about the bridesmaids dresses? Who will organise the flowers?
Acrimonious discussions that go on for hours and hours.
Then of course the photographs to be a memory of the day.
Done by friends or by professionals with a fortune then to pay.
Is it really worth the trouble? Will the couple stay the course?
Or will it soon, like many others, end in quarrels and divorce?
Should we really pose these questions- view the future with alarm?
Their lives could just as easily be filled with happiness and calm.
Cast aside these suppositions. Let your pessimism pass.
Drink a toast to every bridegroom marrying his chosen lass!

Robert Edmondson



Monthly Meetings

Fanny Burney: speaker Sir Brian Unwin

12 December 2018



Photograph Robert Edmondson

Sir Brian Unwin regaled us with the eventful life story of Frances Burney, which he recounts in his book *Tale in Two Cities*. Born in 1752 to a musician father Dr Charles Burney and Esther Burney, Frances (aka Fanny) was the third child of six children. Although mostly self-taught, escaping into a world of 'scribblings' which she kept secret from her patronising father, she frequented the most influential of society, notably Reynolds, Sheridan and Samuel Johnson.

Thanks to the support of an older brother and aunt, she became a literary celebrity with her first novel *Evelina* in 1778. Initially published anonymously to guard against her father's wrath, it brought her recognition and acceptance in a male dominated society and was

closely followed with *Cecilia* in 1782, *Camilla* in 1796 and *The Wanderer* in 1814.

Although her novels were popular, surprisingly it is for her diaries and journals published shortly after her death in 1842 that really underpin Fanny's enduring reputation as a writer. They encapsulate the life and times under King George III and Queen Charlotte whom Fanny got to know intimately during her five years at court from 1785 as the Second Lady of the Robes, a position she reluctantly took on to help further her family's prospects and fortune.

In 1791, through her sister Susanna, Fanny met the writer Germaine de Staël and General Alexandre D'Arblay, a hero of the French Revolution whose political views had led him to take refuge in Juniper Hall, in Mickleham.

In 1793, despite her father's disapproval, she married the impecunious D'Arbley and in 1794, gave birth to their only child Alexander.

In 1802 she left her Camilla Cottage on the Norbury Estate to follow her

husband to France where he had been offered a government position under Napoleon Bonaparte. The outbreak of the Franco-British war caused the family to remain in France for ten years, a life she describes in her *Waterloo Journal*, written between 1818 and 1832. She survived a pre-anaesthetic mastectomy described in unerring detail in a letter to her sister Charlotte and her journals, and a journey to Trèves to rejoin her wounded husband.

Dr Unwin's affectionate portrayal of Fanny is that of a single-minded and resilient woman who was able to adapt to her circumstances whilst enthralling others with her wit and description of life around her. She outlived both her husband who died of cancer in 1818 and her son who died in 1837 and was buried with them in 1840 in Bath.

Beryl Sinclair

Unexplained Mysteries and Cover-ups: speaker Andy Thomas, 9 January 2019



'What do we take for granted?' So started Andy Thomas's exhilarating exposé on coverups - challenging our acceptance of information on trust and our failure to question evidence to avoid being seen as mavericks. We still live in a world of denial in spite of scientific

advances which should provide alternative theories. However often ridicule or denial are good ways of closing down conversations.

Events such as the 2009 giant spiral 'UFOs' spotted in the skies in Norway could be interpreted as alien spacecrafts but was explained away as a Russian missile gone wrong. No further mention has been made of further spirals spotted in the skies.

Strange sightings such as Loch Ness or Big Foot tend to be discredited as hoaxes in spite of photographic and even DNA evidence that could suggest something out of this world.

Scientists and celebrities like Brian Blessed continue to go on exploratory expeditions to present us with alternative scenarios. Loch Ness has mostly been discredited as debris or photographic hoaxes, but fossils found in 1975 suggest that these dinosaurs may not be as extinct as we think.

One in ten people believe that they have seen ghosts and CCTV can now pick visuals of poltergeists or recurring spiritual phenomena. Paranormal claims are often rejected by sceptics and overshadowed by the antics of more celebrated scientists.

Philippa Langley came to public notice for her contribution to the exhumation of Richard III in 2012. Her admission that she had been led to the exact spot by psychic experience was never mentioned.

Disquieting stories are often edited out – many believe that the X Files series include real truths to test our acceptance of them. Governments are allowed to redact documents even when asked by the public to open up files under the Freedom of Information Act. And when conspiracy theorists suggest alternative explanations for worldwide events such as the Kennedy shooting or even the Moon

landings, these are quickly dismissed to protect the establishment, new or unexplained life events. In 1917, in Fatima, thousands of people witnessed a gloriously coloured sun and experienced showers, steam and dry episodes in quick succession giving rise to the belief in miraculous apparitions.

In *Chariots of the Gods*, Erich von Daniken meticulously researched and ascribed ancient paintings and sculptures to alien sightings. Many believe the Pyramids to be alien devices to access mind control. The fact that the construction of the pyramids in Egypt has sparked such debate and controversy, with Houdin's new theory of internal ramps being ridiculed even though there is no evidence that external ramps were ever used, adds to the mystical quality of the pyramidal shape.

So, when reading or watching the news, ask yourself:

*Am I seeing the 'whole truth'?
Probably not!*

Beryl Sinclair

The Wey and Arun Canal Trust

speaker Kevin Crawley, 13 February 2019



Kevin Crawley along with his wife and other members of the Trust are devoted volunteers who have been restoring major sections of this canal which fell into disuse after the arrival of the railways.

The volunteers call the canal "London's Lost Route to the Sea". Kevin is a Boat Master and whilst they teach people to become Boat Masters, the volunteers do just about all the jobs to restore the canal themselves.

Kevin covered the history of the Arun Canal from when it was first built in 1580. The Dukes of Petworth, Pulborough and Arundel decided that they needed a shorter route to the sea in order to take goods to Littlehampton instead of by road and then sail around the coast. The people of Guildford also decided they could do a better job and built the Wey Navigation

which linked the Thames at Weybridge to the Arun Canal near Shalford. The Wey and Arun Junction Canal opened in 1816. This provided a direct route from the South Coast to London through the canals without having to take the much longer route around the coast. The canal also had a further extension added to Basingstoke from Godalming. This latter section of the canal has been only partly restored as far as the tunnel near Basingstoke due to the population of bats living in the tunnel which cannot be disturbed.

Kevin described several restoration projects his team have been involved with. One prime concern is saving and recycling water. They have installed pumps at every restored lock to pump water lost from every opening of the lock back up to the higher level. They have three boats they use for carrying passengers: a narrow boat for up to 40 people, an electric boat and a small boat for up to 10 people, all used for public trips. They have many special trip days throughout the year (Easter Bunny, Halloween and Father Christmas).

Funding these substantial engineering projects is raised from donations, bequeaths and profits of about £100,000 a year from their trips and sales.

On the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Wey and Arun Navigation they borrowed a horse

from the Wey Navigation to pull one of the boats for boat trips.

They look after a wide variety of wildlife including Swans, Cygnets, Ducks, Heron as well as the flora, fauna and fencing along the side of the canal.

John Sinclair

Panorama of the Thames

speakers Jill Sander and John Inglis, 13 March 2019



Panorama of the Thames is photographic record of a 26 mile stretch of banks (including the architecture, bridges and islands) of the River Thames spanning Greater London.

The talk included several audio-visual sequences presenting aspects of the visual history of the Thames and comparing them with up-to-date photographic panoramas. The speakers showed a 16th century map of the Thames

and several famous paintings by Canaletto, Samuel Scott, and John Constable.

In 1829 the Leigh Panorama, a watercolour work represented the Thames from Richmond to Westminster and comprised 45 pages joined together to give a 60 feet long panorama of the banks. The speakers also showed examples of early black and white images of points of interest along the Thames, such as Molesey Lock (photographed by Mr Taunt) and industrial areas like Docklands.

Having obtained a copy of the Leigh Panorama, Jill and John digitally restored the images and oversaw the inclusion of additional information on the areas and buildings shown. The result was

published by Thames and Hudson as *Panorama of the Thames*.

Aspects of the Leigh Panorama were compared to the present-day panorama created by John Inglis. John and Jill failed to get funding so he photographed the panorama himself in. This part of the project started at the Western boundary of Greater London.

When the grounds of Brunswick House at Vauxhall were compared to the same location on the river some 200 years later, the garden grounds had given way to skyscraper glass and steel apartments. A further comparison showed that at the Strand on the Green, Chiswick, only a limited number of buildings survived - mostly pubs and churches.

The original artist of the Leigh 1829 Panorama is not named, but he produced a very detailed work so that the many types of boat portrayed on the Thames could be identified. Together with further research, this formed the basis of a separate audio-visual sequence, which gave details of several types of craft. For example, the Thames wherry, typically 26 feet long with a beam of 5 feet 8 inches, was the water taxi of the period. Depending on the distance of the

journey, it was propelled by one, two or three watermen. *Peterboats* were designed for fishing and were usually up to 22 feet long. The last *Peterboat* is thought to have finally decayed in 1927 at Putney. *Lighters* (63 feet x 17 feet), types of flat-bottomed barge powered by long sweeps, could take the substantial loads of larger ships and carry them with the help of river currents.

Finally, we were shown a sequence detailing the wildlife of Hurst Meadows (80 acres of thus far protected flood plain left when Hurst Park Racecourse was developed for housing). Thus ended a remarkable afternoon in which the landscape, social history, architecture, industry and natural history of the banks of the River Thames were celebrated.

The old and new Panoramas of the Thames can be seen on the website

[www.http://panoramaofthethames.com](http://panoramaofthethames.com).

Peter Shelley

Days Out

Windsor Castle, Tuesday 22 January 2019

Alwynne Tidy

We arrived in Windsor under glorious blue skies in time to watch the Changing of the Guard. We then headed for the castle, which was built by the Normans in the 11th century. It is the longest occupied palace in the world. After going through strict security, we took a very informative walk around the castle grounds.

The two building complexes, the Upper and Middle Wards, are separated by the Round Tower built on an artificial mound by Henry II. It now houses all the castle archives.

The Upper Ward houses the State Apartments which include some of the most richly decorated castle interiors and are hung with paintings from the Royal Collection, works by Rembrandt, Rubens, Canaletto and Gainsborough. A catastrophic fire in 1992 destroyed the north east corner of this magnificent building but fortunately most paintings, furniture, and treasures were saved. The exquisite restoration, completed in 1997, aimed to be as authentic as possible.

The Lower Ward holds St George's Chapel designed in the Perpendicular Gothic style. It contains the royal mausoleum of Henry VIII, Jane Seymour and Charles I. As we left the Chapel, we could see the Albert Memorial Chapel built by Henry III in the 13th century and converted into the Albert Memorial Chapel between 1863 and 1873.

The audio guides we were given detailed the many interesting tombs, vaults and chapels. We were fortunate to see the wedding dress of the Duchess of Sussex - such a beautiful gown!

Back in the coach, we enjoyed a fascinating drive around the park with lovely views of the castle from the Long Walk. The Victoria and Albert mausoleum is in this park. By this time, the beautiful blue skies had made way to snow. After tea at the Windsor farm shop and café, we gladly returned to our warm coach and headed home after a most enjoyable day.

Canterbury Cathedral, Tuesday 19 February 2019

Sue Olive



A beautiful sunny day boded well for our trip to Canterbury and a very smooth coach drive to the city gave us a good start. We met our guides at Christ Church Gate where we divided into small groups of seven for the tour of the Cathedral.

Although the whole building is undergoing extensive renovation with scaffolding everywhere, inside we were given an informative tour of the highlights.

The first point of interest was the magnificent medieval Great West Window depicting among many other bible stories the banishment of Adam from Eden. The glass was preserved from war damage by being stored in the crypt. The story of how the cathedral was protected against Hitler's determined bombing by tenacious fire watchers on the roof with buckets of water is most impressive.

Our visit continued with the story of Thomas Becket's martyrdom after a long dispute with King Henry II, resulting in Canterbury becoming one of Europe's most important pilgrimage centres.

Thomas Becket's tomb was destroyed on the orders of King Henry VIII in 1538 as *'he had been a traitor to his king and defied his honour'*. The site of the tomb is marked by a candle in the Trinity Chapel.

We tiptoed into the quietude of the Great Cloister with its beautiful fan vaulted ceiling and fascinating little heads of The Green Man looking down on us. Then into the Chapter House with a magnificent ceiling of Irish Bog Oak where the monks assembled daily to discuss day-to-day activities and read a chapter of their Benedictine rule.

St Gabriel's Chapel in the Crypt contains the oldest Christian murals in the country. The Chapel was walled in to provide support for the tower above, but when the wall was demolished in 1950, they found remarkably preserved 12th century paintings of the Archangel Gabriel announcing the birth of John the Baptist to his father Zacharias.

Then to the magnificent Gothic Quire. Its French architect, William of Sens, fell from scaffolding whilst inspecting the blue central roof boss. Health and Safety were not so rigorous in the 12th century, it would seem! But the structure was finished by his young assistant who was known as William the Englishman.

After lunch in one of the many cafés in the city centre, we reassembled in the Stonemasons' Workshop where we were shown around by the highly skilled and enthusiastic craftsmen.

Donning high viz jackets and hard hats, we ascended the outside of the building in a scary wire cage to the height of the fan vaulting of the main nave. The view over the Quire and the beautiful eastern

windows gave us some idea of what these dedicated craftsmen were achieving.

To sum up the day, we ended up with an idea of what is being done to restore this beautiful building with enthusiasm and obviously enormous cost, which was very impressive in these financially stressed times. We all had a most interesting and enjoyable day, thanks to the U3A's Days Out Committee.



Photograph Robert Edmondson

Sandhurst Royal Academy, Tuesday 19 March 2019

Caroline Brown

On a wet morning 53 people set off by coach to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

We were given a lovely welcome by five guides (all had impressive careers in the army: bomb disposal, the intelligence service, active service in Bosnia/

Afghanistan). They took us through to the Wellington Room for coffee, where there was an enormous wall painting depicting the Battle of Waterloo (from Wellington's point of view) and a smaller, not so spectacular, painting of the same battle (from Napoleon's point of view).

In the past the British army got little training when in battle and the lack of knowledge gave John Gaspard Le Marchant (one of the finest British cavalry commanders of his generation) some concern. In 1801, Le Marchant set up the first British military academy and staff college. During the nine years as the first lieutenant-governor of the college, he trained many officers who served with distinction under Wellington. Unfortunately, Le Marchant was killed during combat in 1812.

Modern-day training starts on "Ironing board Sunday" for obvious reasons. It would also be the only time students are allowed to use the front steps until the "passing out" parade. Training takes 44 weeks and falls into three terms.

To tie in with these three terms, three Sovereign's Parades are held each year to mark the "passing-out" of cadets. "Boy" Browning as adjutant at Sandhurst began the tradition of riding a horse up the steps at the end of the parade which still continues to this day.

We visited the Indian Army Memorial Room which was the original chapel and still had the beautiful stained-glass windows with many images and features from the past. There was a short visit to the Royal Memorial Chapel, after which the group walked on to the "famous" front steps to have the group photograph taken before the bus arrived to take us back. A warm and sunny return journey ended very enjoyable and interesting day.

ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, SANDHURST aerial photo and crest
(Photographs Bob Brown)



Art Appreciation Group: the FRIDA KAHLO EXHIBITION AT V&A 24 October 2018



I became aware of Frida Kahlo when reading an article about the V&A's summer exhibition 'Frida Kahlo, Making Herself Up'. Many artefacts Frida used as part of her public image were locked away in her home, La Casa Azul, Mexico City, at her death in 1954, and lay undiscovered until her 'wardrobe' was finally opened up in 2004. These artefacts formed the basis for the exhibition, giving an insight into the remarkable story of her fight to overcome great adversity, and turn herself into a Mexican icon and highly regarded artist.

Born Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Caldera in 1907, she was determined not to be ground down by the slings and arrows of her unhappy life. Polio at 6 years old left her with a limp, and a tramcar/bus collision when 18, caused severe damage to her spine and lifelong bouts of severe pain and depression. While undergoing

many operations, and confined to her bed, Frida turned to painting as an inspired outlet for her mental and physical energies. Frida's mother set a mirror over the bed, reflecting images which Frida could record to express her thoughts and fears. Aware that she would never have children, and would spend the rest of her life as a semi-invalid, Frida set about re-inventing herself as someone worthy of notice.

The exhibition was laid out as a series of displays in successive 'rooms' divided by intervening 'tunnels', leading us through Frida's early life events, i.e. childhood polio; then followed photographs of early adult travels in the US (Gringoland) and the appalling motor accident when aged 18, followed by overwhelming despair, friendship with Trotsky and her membership of the Communist Party in 1928.

In 1929, Frida embarked on a stormy marriage to the very much older artist, Diego Rivera and, while undergoing continuous medical treatment, set about working on the rehabilitation and presentation of herself through Art.

The introductory room employed prints, sketches, photographs and early paintings to show scenes from Frida's early years. A table-top map of her home, *La Casa Azul* (The Blue House) separated the first two sections and a short 'dark tunnel' leading to a photo-montage of the accident and an X-ray showing the injuries she had suffered; together with the Miracle Paintings (votive offerings left beside a church altar as a perpetual request for grace and help).

The next section was filled with rows of display cases, fitted with a turned wooden pillar at each corner to resemble a Mexican style bed. Many, their display surfaces covered in white sheeting, contained an alarming display of prosthetics, corsets and other appliances into which Frida was strapped to support her damaged body, and enable her to move. Others contained boxes of pills and jars of creams, to keep ever-

present pain at bay and more happily, some held lipsticks, powders and paints used for putting on a brave face.

Another 'dark tunnel' followed, leading to the final section - a joyous explosion of Mexican colour provided by many of Frida's patterned *Huipils* (*Mexican woman's square-cut blouse tops*) and skirts.

These were displayed in a large, centrally placed, over-flowing 'shop window' of a show-case: so eye-catching that it was an effort to turn away and focus on the wall-mounted texts describing the lives of the native Mexican women from whom Frida sourced her huipils, and on whom she based her image.

The exhibition certainly lived up to its name, and has given me an understanding of her life and how it inspired her to "Paint my own Reality". Certainly a character to be reckoned with!

Anne Blanchard



Photographs Robert Edmondson

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT U3A

*"No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main" (John Donne)*

D&D U3A is not an island, it also is a piece of a wider movement, a part of the main. The 'umbrella' organisation is the Third Age Trust, with a Chairman and a Board of Directors. The Directors are Trustees elected by us, the local U3As in a Region, and in the SE Region the Trustee is Bob Duckmanton. The Trust also has a National Office at London Bridge where paid employees provide a back-up service to all U3As, offering guidance in many essential matters, particularly legal and administrative matters. They are not there to 'tell us what to do', though often their guidance on what we should **not do** is very important – one highly important aspect last year was guidance on the data protection regulations.

But that is not all. Around us, as most of you know, there are many local U3As, and in the UK there are about 1300 U3As, with a total of well over 400,000 members. With such high numbers, it is easy to see that communication between National Office and us, between individual U3As and between regions is complex and sometimes nearly impossible.

There exist therefore some 'intermediaries'. The first that is relevant to D&D U3A is the **Surrey U3A Network**. All U3As in Surrey, and even some just over the borders into London, Hants and Sussex, can join this Network. I have been its chairman for the past four years, and my main concern has been to increase 'networking' between neighbouring U3As and to provide speakers on shared concerns at our meetings. You will also know that the Surrey U3A Network organises the excellent Study Days at the Menuhin Hall.

The second intermediary is the **South East Forum**, which organises the Summer School at Chichester University. Caroline Brown has set up an attractive display of the programme for this year at Monthly Meetings.

The Summer Schools have been very popular and successful for many years, and there is a small team of U3A members in the SE Forum who set up the programme and undertake all the administration and collaboration with the University. The SE Forum also runs an annual conference in East

Grinstead, with speakers on a wide range of topics, and provides opportunities for networking with a wider range of U3As.

The above is just at local level. There is more on the wider scale – the national magazine (*Third Age Matters*), a monthly Newsletter sent out by e-mail from National Office, a national Summer School, a national conference, national subject advisers... all to support the self-help learning that is the main aim of U3A.

If any of you wish to know more, or even wish to become involved in any other aspect of U3A life, I shall be happy to answer any questions – or you can look at the respective websites.

Happy searching! And happy U3A-ing!

Doreen Raine

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Autumn Residential Trip

A 5-day trip to Norfolk is being planned for early October. The trip is likely to include a visit to Anglesey Abbey, Norwich, the Sandringham Estate, Holkham Hall, Felbrigg Hall, Blickling Hall and gardens and a cruise on the Norfolk Broads.

It is hoped that the trip will cost no more than £500 covering half-board (breakfast and dinner), coach travel and Blue Badge Guides..

Please look out for further details on the U3A website and in the next issue of the Newsletter. If interested please contact Ianthe Cox on 01737 843105; ianthecox72@gmail.com.

Dorking & District U3A publishes *Newsletter* and *What's On?* three times a year in April/May (Spring), September (Summer/Autumn) and December/January (Winter).

Please could contributions for the **Summer/Autumn edition** of the Newsletter reach the Editor (details below) no later than **mid July 2019**.

Contributions including articles and photographs are all welcome, as well as reports on U3A activities.

Please try to limit reports to no 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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QUILTING GROUP—BED RUNNERS BY ELIZABETH SHAW
(ABOVE) & DEBBIE MOYNIHAN (BELOW)
(Photographs Juliet Eberle)





CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL, 19TH FEBRUARY 2019
(Photographs Robert Edmondson)

