



u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Dorking & District u3a

Newsletter

Winter 2020



THE GIRL WITH THE PEARL EARRING (COPY)

painted by and in memory of Maureen Collinge (member of Art Appreciation 2 and friend)

THE NATURAL WORLD -
BEYOND THE RECORD PHOTO
(photographs by Robert Edmondson)



PHOTO 1: BRIMSTONE BUTTERFLIES



PHOTO 2: SYCAMORE BUD



PHOTO 4: EYEBRIGHT FLOWER



PHOTO 3: GOATSEARD SEED HEAD

Letter from your Committee



WELCOME to our first printed Newsletter since the Spring. This year has been challenging on many levels and as we move towards 2021, I should like to thank Group Leaders and members who have managed group activities in gardens, coffee shops or simply online, and have in this way supported each other.

I am indebted to the new Committee who since August have navigated the complexities of COVID regulations and the intricacies of IT to ensure that the Dorking u3a continues to facilitate Monthly Meetings and other events. As we face the longer winter evenings, we feel it is important that we keep the spirit of our u3a community alive.

This issue of the Newsletter features stories and reports from members - it is extraordinary just how busy and committed they have been. We also invite those of you with computers to log onto our revamped website which features photographs, articles and poetry submitted by members over the last months. It also informs you of forthcoming events. In particular, to read the clever poem from Treasurer Ianthe Cox in its entirety, please visit www.dorkingu3a.org.uk

You will notice from the cover that National Office introduced a new style logo over the summer. They have also launched Radio Podcasts so that members can share experiences and achievements. The National u3a Choir has been working hard on creating a song, 'Savannah', despite the difficulties of singing together virtually.

The Committee joins me in wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful Christmas and New Year in the hope of better and brighter days.

Beryl Sinclair
Chairman / Editor



Membership

Welcome

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

Chris Braidwood
James Chatfield
Annette Collinge
Veronica Goodenough
Janet Harrison
Diana James

Theresa Langmead
Martin Le Ray
Sue Neve
Margaret Nimeh
Diana Ross
Peter Spackman

Sharing through learning



Over the last months, we have all come to appreciate how important friendliness and 'sociability' are within the u3a. Sharing knowledge and experience is one thing, meeting and connecting with each other is another, often overshadowed by the Lifelong Learning or the 'University' tag.

Let's embrace inclusiveness, enthusiastically shared experiences and community spirit. The primary objective is to support other members. We should not underestimate the value of a light-hearted conversation and a listening ear! The u3a isn't simply about learning. Our group leaders do tremendous work, sometimes they appreciate some assistance as well!

Whether you would like to benefit from or contribute to this feeling of community spirit, please contact me or Hilda with a view to finding out how you could help others in the u3a.

Let's get back to the real u3a roots: have fun, camaraderie and laughter.

*Tony Parker
Vice Chairman*

Meet your Committee



"As Secretary, I am the focus of communication within our u3a and with the outside world. Responsibilities include making sure the Committee have a complete Agenda and accurate Minutes for their meetings. I also work with Groups that express an interest in MOOCs." **Geoff**



"I have been Treasurer since November 2017. I ensure that financial dealings for our u3a are properly accounted for and that they are ready for annual examination at the AGM, for the Charity Commission and by an independent Inspector. I produce monthly accounts and financial forecasts the help the Committee plan for the future. I also ensure we comply with all legal requirements of the Commission and the Third Age Trust. My other responsibility is to organise and run the Fun Education Residential trips either in the UK or overseas." **Ianthe**



"As Membership Secretary, I maintain details of all members and groups on the Beacon membership database. This enables us to send out emails to all, or specific groups of, members. I also hold the Zoom 'Pro' licence for our u3a which lets us host online meetings for groups and monthly talks so that we are not restricted to Zoom's free version time limit." **John**



"As Members Contact I am the person to call if you have any comments, concerns or suggestions or are in need of information. Making new members feel welcome is important." **Hilda**



"As a new member of the Committee, I was fortunate to inherit monthly speaker bookings arranged by past and current committee members. Deanne and I have put together an interesting and varied programme, taking us through to December '21. Whilst these are currently via Zoom, there is built-in flexibility to convert to 'live' presentations as soon as possible." **Linda**



"With Linda, I am responsible for arranging our monthly speakers which we hope you will find interesting. Additionally I am part of the team who arrange our 'Days Out' programme which I hope we can resume some time in 2021." **Deanne**



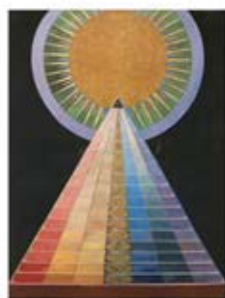
"I joined the Committee as Groups Coordinator having recently retired from a career in construction equipment. I hope to help promote the activities of our Groups and assist them in continuing to be a vibrant and vital part of Dorking and District U3A." **Gareth**



"I look after the www.dorkingu3a.org.uk website, keeping it up to date and fully functioning. If you want to know about upcoming events, see a talk you've missed or contact the Committee, it's all there along with some brilliant writing, photography and artwork by members." **Mike**

Group revival

Over the months, we have celebrated the work done behind the scenes by many groups who have been meeting in gardens, cafés and online. A group leader meeting on 8th December assembled some 30 members to exchange news on what they had been doing and how they had been meeting, many suggesting new ways of keeping their interest groups alive in forthcoming months.



Art Appreciation 1 have kept in touch under the guidance of Pat Lucas and Rosemary Hobbs, and Robert Edmondson gave an insightful overview of artist Hilma af Klint (1862 - 1944). Born in 1862, af Klint grew up in middle-class privilege, encouraged by her naval commander father to paint. After graduating from the Royal Academy in Stockholm, she worked as portrait painter and illustrator before turning to radical abstract works from 1906. A free

-thinker and theosophist, she was fascinated by scientific discoveries, spiritualism and seances, covering her paintings in an esoteric language of signs and symbols. Her mystical beliefs gave the art world an excuse to disregard her work until her paintings were gifted to the Stockholm Museum in 1970 by her nephew. In 2018 some of her 1200 pieces and 150 notebooks were put on display.

A recent documentary ***Beyond the Visible: Hilma af Klint review – fresh canvas for art's mystical maverick*** (available on You Tube) argues that several decades later, af Klint's abstract pictorial themes influenced Kandinsky, Mondrian, Miro even though she was not acknowledged at the time.



The **Horsley u3a French Conversation** group for which I am a leader have decided to Walk and Talk during the autumn months, doing a 'nature trail' around local woods and a visit around Hatchlands where I caught the sinewy moves of a statuesque kingfisher (*martin-pêcheur*). VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE!

In November, the **Natural World** group also met on Zoom to be treated to a brief exposé, again from Robert Edmondson, on different wild-flowers and trees to be found on Ranmore Common.

His short talk '*Beyond the Record Photo*', illustrated with photos, showed how natural history photographers can attempt to record more than merely the colour and form but also some aspect of the life history or ecology of a subject, thus adding value and interest to the picture. His photo 1 shows a female brimstone butterfly (on the right) rejecting the advances of an importunate male! (see cover)

Under the title '*Common Local Flora*', Robert showed the photographic possibilities in even the commonest local flora - all photos were taken close to Dorking, on Denbies Hillside.

Did you know?

Photo 2 illustrates the emergent sycamore in bud.

The tall sycamore tree is thought to have been introduced to the UK by the Romans. The name derives from the ancient Greek *sūkomoros*, meaning "fig-mulberry". Due to its winged seeds (known as 'helicopters'), which are produced in profusion in mature trees, and its adaptability, the sycamore is able to colonise all kinds of habitats, including parklands, woodland and waste ground. In 1833 six agricultural labourers met at a sycamore tree in



Tolpuddle, Dorset to discuss their poor wages and living conditions. Arrested for swearing a secret oath and forming a union, they were sentenced to seven years hard labour in Australia. Mass public protest led to the men being pardoned and freed. The 320-year-old sycamore tree where the Tolpuddle

Martyrs met has become a symbolic birthplace of the Trade Unions movement.

The Goatsbeard (photo 3) refers to the fuzzy seed head but the flower itself consists of yellow rays with fringed tips and closes at noon, giving rise to the saying '*Jack go to bed at noon*'.

Finally the Eyebright (photo 4), a low-growing, annual plant found in clumps is semi-parasitic. As its common name suggests, Eyebright was used by traditional herbalists for the treatment of different eye disorders.

Line dancing

Six ladies have regrouped at Follett Hall under the rhythmically able lead of Gill Crooks.

Gill has a wonderful way of mixing some more demanding routines such as the Lambeth Walk with the gentler moves of Chilli Cha Cha and Waltz Me to Heaven. And of course, social distancing is the order of the day although it doesn't detract from the good humour and sociability of the group.



Jigsaw Exchange

With a winter of restrictions looming, many will find time dragging, but for those who enjoy them, jigsaw puzzles can be completely time-consuming.



So Hilda came up with the idea of a jigsaw exchange. She has over 100 mainly 1,000-piece puzzles. There is a small membership fee of £2 so that we can buy new puzzles and you can borrow as many as you want for 50p a puzzle or £1 for more than one.

If you are interested, ring **Hilda Burden** on **01737 842516**.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ



You hope to divide your round Christmas fruit cake (no icing or filling) into 16 equal-sized pieces. You are allowed to make only straight cuts - how many cuts do you need to make?

Answers on page 15.

'Don't let the group wither on the vine' - a message from the Military History group

The short email from a group member was succinct – '*keep our u3a Military History Group intact*'.

Our group is in its sixth year and meets every month with members taking turns to give illustrated talks. As well as learning from the talk and discussion, members come to meetings to enjoy the company of friends. Fortunately, we have been able to maintain a consistent number of ten or twelve members.

It was clear that the lockdown would last for a considerable time and this posed a real threat to our very survival. How could we keep together what had taken five years to build? If face-to-face meetings were no longer possible, then we had to use electronic means: Zoom, emails, WhatsApp.

We used emails to commemorate anniversaries of military historical events. In May the topic *Operation Chastise* explained how Guy Gibson was awarded the Victoria Cross for successfully leading his squadron of Dam Busters. A lively exchange ensued within the group and this led to another online presentation on the Vulcan

Bomber delivered by a former crew member.

WhatsApp wasn't quite so successful but with IT support, Zoom enabled us to replace our face-to-face meetings; of course it couldn't replace the personal group interactions and not all members felt able to join in.

To complement Zoom talks, we now produce a regular Military History Group e-Newsletter which 'brands' the group by adding a different dimension to the email. Recent topics include a book review on *Field Marshall Claude Auchinleck*; *Two Minutes Silence* in Farnham; Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, and Monopoly and prisoners of war.

All members are invited to contribute and communicate with the group through feedback on a previous article, a personal view on a military event, a description or analysis of a battle, a book review, in fact anything that keeps the group alive and members speaking to each other.

The local village electronic news sheet advertised the group's existence and agenda and this,

with other activities resulted in three new members joining the group.

In August, we held our first face-to-face event. It was a well-attended socially distanced meeting in a member's garden: no agenda, just coffee and doughnuts and an opportunity to talk to each other after five months of 'hibernation'. We did however decide on an autumn programme of events and also considered a move to a venue with better facilities.

We decided that we would share our experiences and discussions with other groups by recording our Zoom talks.

Our glass is half full - the group remains positive. Time will tell but we cannot be complacent. Even with subsequent lockdowns and government restrictions we believe that our group's format is robust enough to see us through the next year and beyond – in fact group attendance has increased.

The model is flexible - we believe that come spring we will be in our new venue, meeting face-to-face when our first act will be to open a bottle and raise a glass to a battle won.

Barrie Friend



VIEW OF A CRICKET MATCH ON COTMANDENE, DORKING. ON THE LEFT, A GRAND HOUSE (DEEPDENE), A MILL AND WALLED GARDENS IN THE FOREGROUND.

(Copyright Dorking Museum)

NEW: Local History Group

Are you interested in local history? Did you know that 2-day cricket matches were played on Cotmandene as early as 1773; that in the 1800s, football was played in Dorking High Street on Shrove Tuesdays?

When lockdown is over we hope to establish a Local History group to concentrate on Dorking and surrounding villages. It would be a friendly discussion group, with members able to choose what aspects of the area we concentrate on at the each meeting. If interested, please ring **Hilda Burden** who will in due course let you know the date and place of an initial meeting. Contact: **01737 842516**

Monthly Meetings

Shakespeare's London, 11th November 2020

Annamaria Dall'Anese



Those of us who were able to join Annamaria Dall'Anese via Zoom on 11 November were treated to her vivid and absorbing presentation on 'Shakespeare's London'. In a brief synopsis of his early life we learned that Shakespeare, born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, was educated at Edward VI school until aged 14. History, Latin and the Classics were subjects from which he would draw inspiration for his plays.

He first came to London around 1590, most likely on foot, a journey which would have taken him 4 or 5 days. We saw artists' impressions of buildings which would have been familiar to him at the time - a long low-rise Norman church on the site of the present day St Paul's Cathedral, Blackfriars Playhouse, of which a replica stands in Stanton, Virginia and the original open air Globe Theatre.

In 1623 John Heminges and Henry Condell published a First Folio of 36 plays by Shakespeare, consisting of Histories, Comedies and Tragedies. It is thought that but for this, some works may have been lost.

Surprisingly no repeat fees were paid for performances of a play - just a single payment of possibly £5.

As Shakespeare's home was in Warwickshire, he rented various places in London and purchased Blackfriars Gatehouse together with three friends, as an investment. He owned a large property in Stratford-upon-Avon, of which only the garden remains.

The original Globe Theatre had no roof although the stage had a canopy and the galleries were under cover too. To stand in front of the stage in the open air as a 'groundling' cost 1d, a seat in the gallery cost 2d or 3d to add a cushion. As the Theatre was on the waterside people often arrived by boat. Prominent subjects of the day, such as religion and law were reflected in the plays and the city of Venice is a recurring theme. Props used by actors were simple, as up to 40 plays might be performed

in a season. Disaster struck when special effects caused a fire during a performance of Henry VIII.

Shakespeare's plays were also performed at Court for Elizabeth I and James I.

The modern Globe Theatre was commissioned and rebuilt on the

South side of the river by Sam Wanamaker, who sadly did not live to see its inauguration in 1997.

Annamaria was a very informative and engaging speaker on a subject of great interest.

Linda Willmott

Shakespeare & his Contemporaries

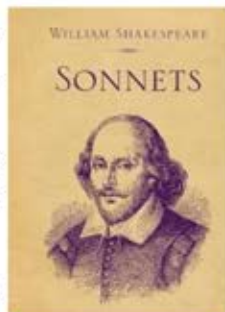
This friendly group led by Charmian Corner and facilitated by Jackie Rance has resumed meeting twice a month online to discuss the Bard's works and life, through readings and film.

They are currently reading and studying some of the sonnets from the Fair Youth sequence.

Shakespeare's 154 sonnets, published in the quarto in 1609, cover themes such as the passage of time, love, beauty and mortality.

The first 126 of Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed to a young man, and the last 28 addressed to a woman – a mysterious 'dark lady'.

For more information contact Charmian Corner on **01306 883374** or email charmian.corner@care4free.net



NOTE

If you do not have access to IT but would like to enjoy some of the monthly meetings, we can send you DVDs for the price of postage.

Please contact John Sinclair on **01306 711542**

Surrey Ghosts, 9th December 2020

Rupert Matthews

Surrey resident and historian Rupert Matthews has written about 15 books on Ghosts and haunted buildings. His fascinating talk described three local paranormal phenomena which he himself has investigated .

Apparitions, though rare, tend to be known to witnesses and may even engage in rational conversation with them. One well-reported apparition was that of enraged resident Mr Thompson who is said to have entered Anna Porter's house in Esher one day. Anna, a well-respected widow, questioned her maid who denied seeing the gentleman. Anna then went to Thompson's shop and house, only to be told that Thompson had collapsed in Kingston from a massive heart attack earlier that day.

Ghosts tend to appear momentarily but do the same things time after time. At the White Horse Hotel in Dorking a gentleman, said to be the ghost of Duke of Norfolk, Edward Howard, has recently been seen in and just outside one of the upstairs bedrooms. Polesden Lacey is allegedly frequented by a brown suited ghost in tight-fitting trousers, walking by the little ornamental bridge at the end of Nun's Walk. It is said to be the ghost of Richard Brinsley

Sheridan, owner of the house from 1804 for about ten years.

Witnesses tend to be consistently able to describe 'true ghosts' quite accurately. It is harder to find 'true witnesses' able to describe 'folklore' ghosts such as the one of a Celtic warrior galloping on a black horse, waving a sword over his head, along the road from the Anstiebury Camp, an iron age hill fort, towards Dorking.

Poltergeists (a German term) often appear in homes where people spend a lot of time rather than in public places. Poltergeists, though invisible, may unnervingly carry objects around, build up their activity then suddenly stop, never to appear again.

They tend to focus on a specific person, generally female, aged 13 to 23 and subject to deep emotional upheaval. One such notable local phenomenon occurred in 1977 in an ordinary Merrow Council house, near Guildford. Occurrences started with loud knocking, rattling pipes and the sound of footsteps, followed by random scribbles on a phone pad and ending with a message saying "Ha! Ha! Ha! Got you that time!"

John Sinclair

Midnight came - a poem by Ianthe Cox

Midnight came and we greeted the New Year
2020 was full of optimism and held no fear
Boris was 'in' with a huge majority
Giving him the power and much authority
For a mandate to make our country great
Unaware of the horror lying in wait

An enemy from the Far East was on its way
To create devastation and complete disarray
Corona Virus known as COVID-19
Was approaching our shores completely unseen
A virus so deadly and spreading worldwide
So many ill and so many have died

We are a nation of reasonable wealth
Providing a service to look after our health
Protecting our Medics and Nurses from strife
Became the watchword for trying to save life
By March the virus was spreading too fast
Boris ordered a Lockdown, thank goodness, at last

.....
Global transport was now stopping
Pollution levels were also dropping
The skies and oceans were showing an improvement
Wildlife was benefiting from unrestricted movement
Was this Nature's way of teaching us a lesson?
It certainly seemed that was the impression

.....
A vaccine we are told is now very close
Possibly requiring more than one dose
Doctors, Nurses and Care workers first to be done
Care homes and the elderly ad infinitum
Until this happens, we must remain on guard
Supporting the restrictions, however hard

Although the going may sometimes seem tough
We Senior Brits are made of stern stuff
We survived the Sixties after all
Sex n' drugs and Rock and Roll
We will get through this and survive
To meet again socially very much alive.

Haida – People of the Pacific North-West, Geoff Saunders

The Haida are one of Canada's First Nations whose home centred on a group of islands off the coast of British Columbia, close to the Alaskan border.

They have an oral history stretching back perhaps 10,000 years. Their islands were one of the few places in North America to escape the last glaciation. Initial contact with Europeans was positive for both parties, developing into a mutually profitable trade in furs and metal goods. Haida wealth enabled a great artistic explosion, most visible in what we know as 'Totem Poles'. You may have wondered at them in the British Museum.

After many decades of mutual benefit, small-pox reached the islands with devastating results. Some 90% of the population perished and efforts by the Canadian Federal Government to assimilate the First Nations resulted in further disasters. But a cultural revival has been underway for some years, and a rediscovered past is helping to guide the future of the Islands and People.

Travelling to the islands, now known as Haida Gwaii, could be simple. There are daily air services to two tiny airports. But for a more reflective journey, the traveller journeyed via rail, bus and coastal ferry. Then for two days in an open boat to reach the very heart of Haida culture, the World Heritage site at SGang Gwaay, a small island deep in the National Park, called Gwaii Haanas in the local language, *Place of Wonder*. For any traveller, surely a suitable destination?

NOTE: We are hoping to feature this talk in spring 2021.



TOTEM POLES,
BRITISH MUSEUM

U3A Profiles : A Walk to the Beach!



I wanted something meaningful to do this summer and settled on walking to the nearest beach.

Littlehampton was a mere 75 miles away by footpath. It would take 4 days.

I teamed up with an experienced walker, Adam, and agreed to 'bivvy' at each overnight stop: this involves sleeping in a large weatherproof bag and meant carrying a bivvy bag, inflatable mattress and sleeping bag as well as food and water, waterproofs etc. It also involves praying for fine weather. I ended up carrying 18kg on my back. This was heavy at the best of times; lugging it up Leith Hill and along the Surrey Hills was 'interesting'.

DAY 1: 6am start, walk to Leith Hill Tower along Greensand Way then to Peaslake and beyond. We stopped around 7pm and found a quiet spot to bivvy.

DAY 2: 6am start, then, yes, FLAT! We headed for Cranleigh then along the Wey & Arun footpath. This is a beautiful walk. Parts of the canal have been renovated, others left (as yet) to wildlife.

DAY 3: 6am start. My turn to navigate. Despite the best that technology can offer I am guaranteed to get lost. But I set off with high hopes: a couple of wrong turns were speedily sorted out. Two hours into the walk, Adam stopped and said 'Damn.' Adam does NOT swear! He pointed to a distinctive farmhouse to the right. 'We passed this an hour ago.' I handed over navigation rights, deciding it was best to have some hope of arriving at Littlehampton on Day 4, rather than wandering hopelessly over the South of England.

DAY 3 AND A HALF: we reached Pulborough Brooks, rested and enjoyed. Clouds were gathering and the wind was rising so we thought we'd bivvy early. At bivvy-spot I checked my texts. A message from a friend: "*Weather report dire. Storm Alex due to hit South Coast.*" We had planned to go over the South Downs the next morning: climbing it in gales and heavy rain would be nigh on impossible. It was already getting dark and rain was

falling but we had little choice. It was hard to find footpaths by torchlight, harder still in heavy showers and gusts of rain, but we floundered through marshes and climbed hills. Hour after hour.

Around 1.30 am, Adam halted. "*We must rest,*" he said. He didn't tell me until later that he'd started hallucinating and was seeing faces in the bushes.

By 6am we were walking again. We had very little climbing left and marched through Arundel and onto the exposed and winding embankment of the River Arun. Storm Alex was at its worst with wind-driven rain cutting through waterproofs as if they were cottonwool. For the next 2 hours I was

actually glad of my 18kg rucksack as we staggered slowly onwards.

Finally, 9.30 am, Littlehampton! Breakfast in Wetherspoons then a windswept foray to the beach. Our Walk to the Coast had taken 3 days, 3 hrs and 30 minutes. We'd walked 114km, 42km of which we had walked on Day 3.

It had been an adventure. And best of all we raised £1900 for Shelter.



Pat Smith



CHRISTMAS QUIZ

In 'The 12 days of Christmas' song, how many gifts had been received altogether by the end of the 12th day?

What was the running total by the end of the 12th day?

Answer page 20.

Scribblers Group — the brief was to write a short story with a twist at the end.

Lost on the Heath



It was a beautiful autumn day on the heath, with just a light breeze and bright sunshine

illuminating the amazing dazzle of colours of the various trees. I had walked some way when I heard the woman calling and saw her ahead on the path I was following. *'Teddy, Teddy, where are you, please come back'*.

Approaching her I could see how agitated she was and asked what was wrong.

She started to sob as she told me that a large hairy dog had come bounding up, bowled her over and, by the time she managed to get back on her feet, both the assailant and Teddy had disappeared. She told me that Teddy was a small, quite scruffy little moppet who meant the world to her since the death of her husband. As she talked, I took in her appearance; in her late seventies, impeccably dressed in a blue coat, matching gloves, smart linen trousers and most unsuitable shoes. She told me her name was Ivy, and this was her first visit to the heath as she preferred the familiarity of the paths

near her home. However, she so wanted to see the autumn colours that she had driven down from London and found herself here and now, so regretted it.

We carried on scanning the heather and clumps of trees, calling out for *'Teddy'*. Despite her shoes, she walked quickly and kept up a continuous dialogue about her late husband and how Teddy was her constant companion, in the garden, in the house, in the car, on visits to friends. There was something odd about her and I wondered if she might have a touch of dementia so, more reason to help her find her beloved pet.

We had been searching for about an hour and still no sign of Teddy and, just as I was about to suggest we return to her car to see if he had found his way there, a brown, hairy mutt came running towards us and Ivy shouted *'there's my Teddy!'* But, as he reached us, she proceeded to kick out at the dog, who dropped something from his mouth and circled us warily.

'Get away you brute, leave my Teddy alone,' she screamed and proceeded to pick up the ragged object the dog I thought to be

Teddy had dropped, clutching it to her chest. Poor lady, Teddy was not an actual dog but, just a toy. Ivy turned and headed off, muttering, but I felt I shouldn't leave her and as I caught up with her she told me, in no uncertain terms, that she was quite fine and could find her way back to her car.

I followed her and she did make her way to the car park where she got into a battered old Mini, slammed the door and reversed back, spraying sand and gravel as she roared off out onto the road. I had done my best - Ivy and Teddy were reunited and, hopefully, she would find her way home.

Gillian

Many a slip!

It had been a long three days, but now the waiting was almost over. Daphne was sitting on the terrace of the Grand Hotel, Bournemouth, an unopened newspaper on her lap, a third cup of coffee and her phone on the table before her. Outwardly she was calm as she reviewed her meticulously laid plans yet again, justifying her actions, while ignoring her conscience. The alibi was perfect.

Ever since her father's death three years ago, she had watched her mother's gambling addiction spiral out of control and one by one his valuable art collection was sold to feed the habit. Daphne could wait no longer as only the most valuable painting remained, *The Return of the Hunters* by Pieter Breughel, its last valuation several years ago had been £11 million.

Last Wednesday evening, it had

been easier than she had anticipated to slip extra pills into her mother's bedtime drink and then manipulate a smothering feather pillow over her slight frame.

Now it was Friday and Daphne was waiting for their cleaner, Elsie, to enter the flat in Eaton Square and unwittingly fulfil her part of the plan. Daphne's mind moved on to the more pleasurable thoughts of the fortune which was about to be hers, when her reverie was interrupted by the sudden vibration of her phone. She forced herself to take several deep breaths before answering:

"Good Morning. Daphne Van Leuk."

"Oh, Miss, it's terrible, I really don't know how to tell you". Elsie's voice rose to a squeak with the drama.

"I found Madam dead in her bed when I came in this morning".

"Oh how awful, Elsie! What a dreadful shock! You must call Dr Harrison straight away and I'll catch the first train home."

"Yes, Miss. Oh dear, such a lovely lady, Mrs. V. and always so kind to me. Why only yesterday when I

called in for last week's wages she gave me that old picture over her bed – you know, Bruggle I think it's called. I've always liked it".

"No!" It was Daphne's turn to squeak. "She couldn't have!"

"And why would that be, Miss?"

And finally, "*Bah, humbug*"!

CHRISTMAS



Let's get it over with.

As we prepare for one of the strangest Christmases in memory, from singing carols on ZOOM to online shopping for turkey, sprouts and warm woolly socks, there are always the curmudgeons who play down the merriment of the festive season! But where did the saying come from? I came across one explanation whilst watching a recent episode of Countdown.

Although associated forevermore with Ebenezer Scrooge, the misanthropic anti-hero of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the word 'humbug' (meaning 'hoax' or 'deceit') came into the English language long before Dickens wrote his 1843 festive short story. In fact, it was already popular with people of taste and fashion as far back as 1751. According to the *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* by Francis Grose (1731–1791) to 'hum' in English originally meant 'to deceive'. The word 'bug' is derived from the Middle English 'bugge' (which also gave rise to the English term 'bogey' and the German 'böggel' (meaning böggel-mann or 'goblin').

If you found this interesting, then don't forget to look out for Rosemary Harbridge's proposed new group, **Words, Words, Words**.

Please register your interest with Rosemary on rharbridge@sky.com; 01306 881520

Calendar of Events: January 2021—December 2021

January	13	<i>Zoom Monthly Meeting</i>	A schoolgirl's war by Mary Smith
February	10	<i>Zoom Monthly Meeting</i>	The Wasbies by Elizabeth Lockhart-Mure
	24	<i>Zoom Monthly Meeting</i>	Climate and the Environment by Brenda Ainsley
March	10	<i>Zoom Monthly Meeting</i>	The Story of Butlins Holiday Camps by Stephen Wells
April	14	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	The Rise and Demise of Accents by Susan Purcell (TBC)
		<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Haida – People of the Pacific North-West, by Geoff Saunders (TBC)
May	12	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Dropping the Habit by Marion Dante
June	9	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Behind the Scenes on Wimbledon Centre Court by Alan Chalmers
July	14	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	A Conspiracy History of the World by Andy Thomas
September	8	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Anne of Cleves by Helen Poole
October	13	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	The Mysterious Disappearance of Amy & Amelia by Jim Barnes
November	10	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Brinks-Matt Gold Bullion Robbery by Ian Brown
December	8	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	A Royal Christmas by Siobhan Clarke

SURREY u3a NETWORK STUDY DAYS

It is hoped that the following study days will be re-organised at the Menuhin Hall from mid-2021:

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPES OF SOUTH EAST ENGLAND - Dr Geoffrey Mead

THE MOST FAMOUS PHARAOH OF THEM ALL: TUTANKHAMUN - Clive Barham Carter

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH STYLE - Paul Atterbury

UNDERSTANDING TURNER: THE MAN, HIS LIFE & HIS WORK - Professor Maria Chester

THE ART AND OBJECTS OF THE MUGHAL EMPERORS - Ursula Weekes

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY - Professor David Perrett

THE ART OF DRAWING - Colin Wiggins

ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD - Imogen Corrigan

Dorking & District u3a publishes a **Newsletter** and **What's On** three times a year in April/May (Spring), September/October (Autumn) and December/January (Winter).

The **Newsletter** cannot survive without contributions from members. Articles and photographs are all welcome, as well as reports on u3a activities. Please try to limit reports to no more than 300 words and if possible, submit a typed contribution 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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ANSWERS TO CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Christmas Cake: 5 cuts, with 2 vertical cuts splitting in quarters followed by 3 horizontal cuts.

If you move the cake, you can do it in 4; cut it in quarters, stack the 4 pieces vertically, and cut them in half with a vertical cut, repeat the stacking and half the 8 pieces one more time.

The 12 days' of Christmas: 78 and 364

EDITORIAL NOTE:

Many National Trust properties have been closed for most of the year. As a long-time volunteer at Polesden Lacey, I was looking forward to the house re-opening for the Christmas period. The staff have been really creative and kindly shared their pictures with us to lend a little Christmas cheer to the cover of the Winter issue.

LAND OF ALL SEASONS 2020



SPRING BLOOMS

(Photographs by Beryl and John Sinclair)



STORM CLOUDS OVER LEITH HILL PLACE

(Photograph by John Sinclair)



BEE BUSY! *(photograph by John Sinclair)*



HATCHLANDS AUTUMN- KINGFISHER IN FLIGHT

(Photograph by Beryl Sinclair)



CAPEL - MOTIONLESS SUMMER!

(Photograph by John Sinclair)

CHRISTMAS AT POLESDEN LACEY 2020

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COURTYARD ILLUMINATIONS
(courtesy of Eddie Hyde)



POLESDEN LACEY - BILLIARD ROOM
(courtesy of Cate Jaques)



POLESDEN LACEY - CENTRAL HALL
(courtesy of Caroline Bates)