



Dorking & District u3a

Newsletter

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Winter 2021



BOOK TREE AT POLESDEN LACEY (photograph Beryl Sinclair)



ABOVE: A MINIMALIST CHESS SET (*photograph Robert Edmondson*)

BELOW: ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP (*photograph Pat Smith*)





Welcome!

When I sat down at the beginning of December to put the Newsletter together, I wondered if I should bother. After all, only two articles had been contributed - there appeared to be no news or photographs to share with members!

And yet it's been a busy summer and autumn.

The Committee has worked hard to bring a raft of interesting monthly meetings to a live and virtual audience, despite IT and broadband difficulties. We have had encouraging numbers of new members signing up. Many groups have started up again, some with a stronger membership than ever before – *Military History* and *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* to name but two. We've added new groups to our repertoire and we've begun a programme of days out.

Restrictions permitting, next year promises to be even busier, even adventurous. We will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the u3a movement and we are planning visits, a residential trip and celebratory summer activities which we hope will bring more members together.

There is a lot to do and much to look forward to. But we need support - we already have a cohort of people working behind the scenes to deliver the newsletter, to organise groups. The more people get involved the lighter the workload. Just this week, a long-standing member offered to help with refreshments at our new venue for Monthly meetings, another offered to help with the summer barn dance. Without help, the u3a movement would die – so **don't be shy, give it try!** Help make Dorking u3a stronger than ever before.

Here's to an eventful 2022. The Committee joins me in wishing you all a peaceful new year.

Beryl

MEMBERSHIP

Membership subscriptions

Since June, we have a large number of new members who have joined the Dorking u3a and we are pleased to welcome the following:

Adrian Winslow	Michael and Rosemary Dudley
Alison Hynes	Mike Owen
Andrea Hope-Frost	Muriel Moorley
Anne Lloyd	Nick and Helen Gunning
Barbara Lees	Pamela Coles
Barbara Walker	Pamela Richards
Beverly Hubbard	Paul Warham
Brian Willmott	Pauline Greenwood
Carol Rosier	Roger Stephens
Caroline Lore	Rosemary Davie
Carolyn Wilson	Rosemary Miller
Charmian and David Murley	Royston Williamson
Chris and Maggie Power	Sally Howe
Freda Lewis	Sandra Marsh
Gail Allen	Sheila Ayling
George Wielebnowski	Sheila Stocks
Gill Sperrin	Stephen Ince
Jane De Beneducci	Sue Goodey
Janet Spring	Sue Goodman
Joy Trollope	Sue Goodwin
Judith Johnson	Susan O'Brien Barnard
Keith Baxter	Sylvia Read
Linda Tobitt	Zonia Phethean
Maureen Killick	Mary Wolf

Sadly we also say goodbye to a number of members who have not renewed their subscription. Regrettably we must treat them as lapsed and will take them off our distribution list.

John Sinclair

ONE YEAR AFTER THE VAXX!



When the pandemic grabbed us by the throat in March 2020, we shut up our lives and pondered how many years it would take for a vaccine to be produced. Few could have imagined that the first jab given to a member of the public would be less than nine months later. A monumental effort of science and supply chain logistics had done the seemingly impossible.

Full of optimism, I rushed to re-book a previously cancelled visit to Cyprus, to re-connect with old friends, and soak up some of the much-missed Mediterranean lifestyle. But I was getting ahead of myself. Before the vaccine rollout could gather pace, we had to endure a stringent lockdown as a new variant of the virus swept through the country and the world. Cyprus was postponed again.

But the vaccines did roll out and the lockdowns eased as the worst effects of the virus were mitigated, hospital numbers dropped and the world began to open up. Cyprus loomed on the near horizon once again!

By October, there was just the on-line obstacle course of certificates and contacts to complete before we set off for the airport, with trepidation, and checked our bags. The terminal, though busy, was comfortable, everyone duly masked and seemingly in awe of actually travelling!

Arrival was another obstacle course of paperwork, passports and machines but once completed, and outside in the early evening air, the feeling of freedom struck home!

Here we were, we had done it and could look forward to a relaxed and fulfilling time, sunshine and swimming, friends to meet and meals to eat. Then another on-line obstacle course to return home.

Maybe this is the new normal, tricky but doable. A year ago, a new normal seemed unimaginable.

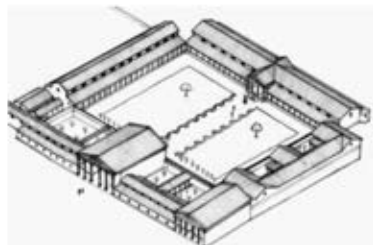
Geoff Saunders

ARCHAEOLOGY



The Archaeology group has met regularly through lockdown but the thought of yet another Zoom was too much. So on 24 August, ten members of the group and guests drove to Fishbourne Roman Palace. Close to Chichester, this is one of the largest Roman dwellings dating circa AD70 discovered in Britain - it well deserves the name 'Palace'. It houses some of the best black and white and coloured mosaics in the country and is set in what must once have been magnificent grounds. Sadly, some of the Palace is now under the local housing estate!

Our visit was all the more interesting in that Frank Pemberton, a stalwart of the group, had joined the first excavations in the 1960s, so shared his wealth of experience and anecdotes to the group before we went in.



It's hard to pick out highlights in such a well-presented and fascinating visit. But for me it was particularly fun looking at photos of the early excavations in search of a youthful Frank!

A re-created Roman garden with a huge fig tree and other plants was intriguing and I loved the informative boards which did everything possible to stimulate our imaginations as to what the original buildings must have looked like. In a nutshell, magnificent, beautiful and an intimidating display of wealth and power.

Many thanks to Sybil and Frank for organising the visit which was not only a chance to expand our knowledge but to actually meet and chat informally – what a change from Zoom.

Pat Smith

Do you know the answer?



A tiny bone found at Fishbourne Palace revealed that a certain animal arrived in the British Isles some 1000 years ago. What animal is it?

Answer: the rabbit.

QI GONG

What is 'qi gong'?

Pronounced 'chi gong', qi means 'life force' the energy that powers our body and spirit and gong is the term meaning work or gather. Qi gong together means a form of movement and a state of mind that allows the life force to renew and work in one's body.

The "five elements" (wood, fire, earth, metal and water) affect the flow of energy in our bodies and are central to ancient Chinese medicine and to qi gong health exercises.

What does qi gong do for you?

When suddenly last year, I couldn't move as freely as before or take part in activities I previously enjoyed, I wondered what kind of exercise I might take up. Then I spotted a small group doing tai chi in the park - the balletic moves and calm composure of the group inspired me to find a tutor who could take on a u3a group. Our tutor Jo Thompson explained that qi gong introduces basic moves that all can master in order to strengthen, even heal limbs. It also improves breathing, thereby increasing the flow of energy and helping to control pain. All the things I was looking for.

Can anyone take part?

The best feature of tai chi and qi

gong is that they adapt to almost any fitness level.

The gentle low-impact sequence of movements is easy on joints if you have arthritis or back pain. You can even do them seated if needed. And research shows that qi gong directly alleviates anxiety and improves self-esteem.

What are the basic moves of qi gong?

Twelve weeks into the course and what I love most are the names of some of the moves - 'pushing up the heavens', 'white crane walking', 'pulling the bow to shoot the arrow', 'wise owl gazes backward', to name just a few!

Of course, I miss doing Zumba or line-dancing but qi gong has opened up a whole new meaning to gentle exercise and well-being thanks to a sympathetic coach Jo and a lovely group of ladies who were prepared to take a gamble on a new form of exercise.

Beryl Sinclair



A MINIMALIST CHESS SET

"All chess players are artists!" (Marcel Duchamp, 1887-1968)



Chess, the most popular board game in the western world, has existed in its modern form since about 1500. It may be regarded as a battlefield without blood, a conflict without casualties. Though most serious games are now played using the Staunton set designed in 1852, new sets are still being designed based on political and military battles and on children's stories, e.g. the Alice books by Lewis Carroll.

Abstract sets are common too and are even obligatory in Islamic countries where true believers are strictly forbidden to handle graven images. Some striking abstract sets were devised by Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp.

However, despite the competition from such eminent predecessors I decided to design and make a minimalist abstract chess set based solely on logical

and mathematical principles- the shape of each piece would correspond to how it moves on the board and its size would indicate its importance and power in the game. There was to be no visual relationship to castles, horses, kings, queens or to real or imaginary conflicts.

Years ago, during a voluntary conservation week cutting back invasive rhododendron near Hastings I obtained some thick straight branches of rhododendron wood. A friend seasoned the wood and sectioned it into "sticks" with a cross section 3cm square. Now I could start my unusual and, I thought, original project - to design and create a simple abstract chess set with straight lines only and based on the rules of the game. The pieces that I made are described below with the reasons for their design. All have the same 3cm cross section:

♦ **Pawns**, initially the simplest and weakest pieces, are simply cubes with faces 3cm square.

♦ **Rooks or castles** are rectangular blocks two pawns high and move vertically and horizontally on the board.

♦ **Bishops** are the same height as rooks and are cut diagonally from the top of one side to half-way down the opposite side to suggest their movement on the board.

♦ **Knights** move two squares in one direction and one square at a right angle to the former move. The pieces are the same height as rooks and bishops but lean at an angle of 16 degrees to suggest the uneven way they move without falling over!

♦ The **Queen** is a powerful piece combining the moves of a bishop and a rook and is therefore cut diagonally at the top (suggesting a bishop's move) and rectangularly at the base (like a rook). It is three pawns high.

♦ The **King** may only move one square at a time in any direction but is the most important piece because its loss means defeat in the game. It's a rectangular block and like the Queen, the largest piece in the set.

After painting one set of pieces black and polishing the other pieces, I probably had the only abstract chess set in the world to be made from rhododendron wood.

However, a chess set is not solely a decorative artefact but is designed for a game. So to put it to the test, I approached members of

the Dorking Chess Club who were used to playing with conventional sets. One member commented: "It is easier to play with than you first think and it is better than some we have seen." Praise indeed! The photo shows the complete set with the pieces turned round to show their shapes in profile and with a mask to symbolise the opponent.

There is a sequel to this story. A few years after making the set I read an article about the work of the Bauhaus, a German art school operational from 1919 to 1933 when it was closed by the Nazis. It combined crafts with the fine arts and its emphasis was a geometric abstract style with little sentiment or emotion and with no historical connections.

A Bauhaus chess set was designed in 1924 by Josef Hartwig, applying the principles that I used. The designs were more complex than mine although the pawns are simple cubes, like mine! Thus my idea was not as original as I first thought. "... *there is no new thing under the sun!*" (*Ecclesiastes*)

Robert Edmondson



WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE WAR?



Aged only two when WW2 started, I have many childhood memories of growing up in wartime Dorking. One day in March 1941, my father, an ARP warden, asked me to find my toy whistle: the ARP had asked for whistles for fire watchers because they were in short supply.

A pupil at St Paul's school, I carried my gas mask every day in case of a gas attack. Whenever the siren sounded, we retreated to the cold and dank shelters in the school field; they had been built half underground and were only lit by candles and oil lamps. Our teachers tried to teach and keep us occupied. The boys' shelters were at the top of the field, the girls' closer to the school. We were segregated because the only 'loo' was a bucket behind a curtain at the end of the shelter. When a bomb exploded in the Glory Field next to

the school, we all thought the crater was very exciting. As young children we did not understand the danger of war. Many evacuee children attended school and it was so sad when your new friends suddenly vanished as many mothers took their children back home as the war progressed.

My family owned stables in Orchard Road which had a direct hit from an incendiary bomb and were burnt out. Luckily there were no more horses at the time. Our metal front gate was taken in a nationwide drive for 'scrap iron' for the war effort.

Late in 1943, the Canadian army started to arrive in Dorking. They took over the Second Nower (beyond the Summer House). There they dug ammunition dumps into the hillside, built an assault course and 'damaged buildings' for training, and erected Nissan Huts. Later there were army tents in the Nower itself and Polish troops were stationed on Milton Heath where they practised trench warfare tactics.

During May and June 1944, the Mickleham bypass was filled with parked army vehicles under camouflage netting waiting for D-

day. When a convoy drove out of Dorking on its way to Portsmouth and the ships, a large crowd gathered at Dorking roundabout to watch and wave; it took 36 hours to pass by. When the army had left the Nower the Nissan huts were taken over by squatters who had been bombed out of their homes.

The first V1 doodlebug rocket to fly over Dorking was on 29 July 1944. We all thought it was a small aeroplane as it had wings and we were watching it when the engine cut out almost over our house. It safely overflowed Dorking and exploded in Norbury Park at Mickleham. Later a V1 exploded in a copse at Goodwyns House in

Horsham Road just 200yds from our house, we lost several windows as did many of our neighbours.

Canada sent milk chocolate cocoa powder to England for the school children; one day we had to take a jam jar with a lid to school for it be filled for us to take home but most of us had eaten half on the way home - it was such a treat!!

I also remember my first banana. It sounds strange but the dispensing chemist in Falkland Road somehow acquired a box of them and he sold them to the local children - strictly only one each!!!

Hilda Burden

Local History Group Leader

CURIOUS MATHS!

The following puzzle submitted by Rosemary Harbridge came from a Third Age Trust online event, Maths Games and Activities. Complete the grid below with the solutions to the clues so that the completed grid forms a 3-way pattern. What is the pattern?

- Number of bits in a byte
- Number of dots on a full Braille cell
- Number of sides on 50p coin
- Number of lines in a limerick
- Number of sides on nonagon
- Number of faces on tetrahedron
- Number of leaves on Irish flag
- Cost of the first stamp
- Even prime number

Check your answers on page 24.

Charles George Robertson VC MM -

Dorking's Victoria Cross Holder



Introduced in January 1856 by Queen Victoria, the Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest award for *'the most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy'*. It has been awarded 1,358 times to 1,354 men and since 1902, awarded posthumously 295 times.

One recipient was Charles George Robertson (1879-1954) who in 1885 at the age of five, moved to Dorking from Great Bentham in Yorkshire, studied at Dorking High School and then joined the Railway in Boxhill as a clerk in 1893. He sung in the delightful Lutyens church, St Mary's, in Pixham living close by and presented the church with a bible in later life.

After moving to Ware, Hertfordshire, in 1900 to work as a clerk with the railway, he joined The Imperial Yeomanry to fight in the Second Boer War. In September 1915 he joined the 10th (Stockbroker's) Battalion Royal Fusiliers. He fought in one of the last battles of The Somme in November 1916 at Beaumont and the Battle of Arras in April 1917 where, at Monchy le Preux, he was seriously wounded, spending ten weeks in hospital in England.

He returned in time to participate in the Battle of Passchendaele and in August took part in a trench raid for which he was awarded a Military Medal.

Before the Americans could fully participate in the war, in a final push - *der Kaiserschlacht* -, the Germans attempted to take high ground to the east of Ypres at the destroyed Polderhoek Chateau on the 8/9 March 1918. It was here that Lance Corporal Robertson exhibited *'most conspicuous gallantry'* and was awarded the Victoria Cross. Almost single handedly he held the Germans at bay with a Lewis gun when all members of his platoon

had been killed. His VC citation offers insight to his action:

His severe wounds were treated in England and due to his condition he was honourably discharged and entitled to a Silver War Badge.

He worked with Great Eastern Railway until retirement in August 1939 just a month after marrying Doreen Gascoigne. He served as a sergeant in the Home Guard in the Second World War. Retirement was spent contentedly watching local sports teams, supporting The British Legion, and enjoying walking over

Boxhill. He died in 1954 choosing not to have a military funeral. He lies with Doreen in Dorking Cemetery and is remembered at High Bentham, his birthplace, on a memorial near Blackwall Station and on a VC paving stone.



*Barrie Friend
Military History Group Leader*

WHO ARE 'THE WHITE ROSE'?

You may have seen this name used recently and I thought it might be a good opportunity to refresh faded memories of where the name comes from.

It was used by a group of students in Munich and elsewhere in 1942 and 1943 to bring the crimes of the Nazi government to the attention of the ordinary citizens. Amongst its leaders were a brother and sister, Hans and Sophie Scholl. Having seen the atrocities committed by the Nazis on the Eastern Front, Hans decided to issue pamphlets telling the truth about Nazi crimes and pointing out how the Nazis lied about the war. Hans and Sophie and others surreptitiously distributed the pamphlets around Munich.

In doing this work, they knew they were risking their lives. Not surprisingly the Nazis took revenge. Members of the group, including Sophie and Hans, were imprisoned, tortured and guillotined. But their work lived on, picked up abroad and circulated by the Allies, from the air and on the air.

A bust of Sophie can be found in Walhalla near Regensburg in Bavaria, where she is honoured alongside other famous German speakers, Goethe, Einstein and Beethoven amongst them.

Virginia Wheeler

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

DOES AUTUMN FALL BETWEEN BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA?



The word autumn is enhanced by beauty and poetry, but in 1545 an English scholar listed our seasons as

'spring tyme, somer, faul of the leaf and winter' and later our local diarist John Evelyn described oak trees as 'becoming yellow at the fall'. The word autumn was favoured by Chaucer however, when he wrote 'autumn comes again, heavy of apples'. Shakespeare mentioned autumn in his plays, and John Donne wrote 'no spring nor summer beauty hath such grace, as I have seen in one autumnal face'. When

the first English colonists settled in North America they spoke of autumn, but in 1755 Dr Johnson included *fall* in his dictionary of the English language. By mid-1800, both *fall* and *autumn* were used in American English, then *fall* took precedence.

Come the 20th century, Fowler lamented in *The King's English* the passing of *fall* - '*Fall is better on the merits than autumn, in every way: it is short, Saxon (like the other three season names), picturesque; it reveals its derivation to everyone who uses it, not to the scholar only, like autumn.*'

One benefit is that it is easier to recall clock changes in March and October – **spring forward, fall back**. Don't forget!

Rosemary Harbridge

FOOD FOR THOUGHT?

With Christmas feasting on many people's mind, the Words, Words, Words group was tasked with finding food expressions with animal words in the title, i.e. hot dog. How many can you find?

You'll find suggestions on page 24.



Yum !!



Study and Interest Groups

- ◆ At the time of publication details of groups are as accurate as possible. Although at present some groups are not meeting, members may wish to keep in touch, enquire about future events or ask for information about any online activities being organised. All the information is also on the Dorking & District u3a website.
- ◆ You may also ring the contact number or send an email for further details as appropriate. If you wish to make a general enquiry, please get in touch with **Groups Coordinator** Gareth Balle: dorkingu3agroups@gmail.com ; 07734 045180 or
Members Contact Hilda Burden: hildaburden@gmail.com ; 01737 842516

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Architecture

Roger Stones: 01306 886754
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Art Appreciation 1

TBA

Art Appreciation 2: Ways of Seeing Art

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Astronomy

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Bowls - indoor group (Oct-April)

non-beginners only
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ann.watney@btinternet.com

Bowls - outdoor group (May-Sept)

David Pettman: 01306 883043
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Bridge (Beginners to more advanced)

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Wine Appreciation

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Words, words, words (NEW)

Rosemary Harbridge: 01306 881520
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PROPOSED NEW GROUPS:

- ♦ Walking cricket (SE Network)
- ♦ Mahjong

Please also suggest ideas for workshops that you might be interested in, i.e. flower arranging; card making; carpentry or DIY solutions; bird watching; natural world.

WE WANT TO
HEAR FROM YOU



We **NEED** contributions for the **SPRING** Newsletter to reach the Editor by **END FEBRUARY 2022**. These can include poems, articles and photos about your groups or activities. Without contributions the Newsletter will not survive. Thank you.

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EXERCISE FOR HEALTH - START UP



This friendly group will reconvene on **18th January 2022** at The Reading Room, Westcott; it will meet every Tuesday 10.15 - 11.15am .

There is a charge of £36 per quarter, payable in advance.

Regular physical activity improves muscle strength and boosts endurance and energy. Sessions start with a 'warm up' followed by a 'stretch'. The low impact aerobic phase is based on cardio-vascular work. No floor work is involved. We follow this with squats and an optional weighted routine.

For more information or to sign up contact **Elizabeth Crook 01306 881156**.

REALLY USEFUL GROUP - RUG

We need help with a number of small jobs such as welcoming members and setting up chairs at our monthly meetings. If you can spare a couple of hours in a month (and not every month) we would be pleased to hear from you.

As we start rolling out our Days Out programme in 2022, we will also need help with organising some of the trips. You can get involved with just one trip or more. We will also be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the u3a movement and we are hoping to organise small teams to work on a project such as tree planting. Contact **Tony Parker on 01306 884050** or email bacdocs7@gmail.com.

CHRISTMAS BOOK TREE



Every year, Polesden Lacey puts on a royal festival of decorations and trees, some traditional, some less so! The Newsletter cover shows a tree constructed from books. How many books went to make up the tree?

- (a) more than 100;
- (b) more than 200;
- (c) more than 300.

THIRD AGE TRUST

The Bayeux Tapestry and Its Hidden Meanings

Every month speakers from the Third Age Trust offer online national events to enlighten and enthral u3a members nationally. Events include presentations in collaboration with the National Gallery, the British Library and others. They also offer free workshops and interactive sessions by members for members, which can be booked through Eventbrite. While we try to publicise some of these through our monthly email, members are encouraged to log on every month to see what is available. I'm a fan, having attended a course on Egyptology, a presentation on illuminated manuscripts and an amusing talk on Curious Maths.

In August, we were treated to an entertaining zoom talk on 'The Hidden Meanings of the Bayeux Tapestry,' presented by Newcastle

u3a Chair Catherine Stevenson.

Although referred to as a 'tapestry,' the designs on the Bayeux Tapestry are in fact embroidered. It was created in France in about 1077 a few years after the Battle of Hastings in 1066. It took 2 years to produce and, running to over 70 metres in length, it consists of some seventy scenes.

The tapestry's central section covers most of the action, often overflowing into the borders for dramatic effect, such as Edward's death scene. The long series of scenes displaying the main action are interspersed by stylised trees. The tituli or captions on the top border help identify the main protagonists. Some scenes are mostly decorative, depicting birds, beasts, fish and farming and hunting tableaux. A harrow, a newly invented implement, is shown in scene 10 and there is a picture of Halley's Comet in the upper border of scene 32, the first known picture of this comet. Some scenes show corpses from battle but some are of a more ribald nature. There are various mechanisms used in the tapestry to emphasise political, military and religious meanings. Of note is the



panel depicting 'The Oath' made between William (Duke of Normandy) and Harold (Earl of Wessex). Harold was taken prisoner by William on landing in Normandy. Before Harold could leave, he had to pay homage to William. Yet on the panel he is seen making his oath to William by placing his hands on two holy caskets (see below) but only touches one casket with one finger and his left hand only hovers above the other casket. So, is the oath 'false'? Two men point up to the tituli in the margin and the word 'sacramento', meaning an oath before God and the holy caskets.

There is further suggestion that William was justified in invading England. We see William holding the Pope's banner in gold and green. Had William become the embodiment of the Pope and the Roman Catholic faith? Was William turning the war into a Holy War?

The final scenes show that Harold is dead. The Anglo-Saxons lose heart and turn to run towards the Anglo-Saxon King's Forest. However, the forest was no longer Anglo-Saxon - it belonged to the Normans. The Anglo-Saxons were taken prisoner and led away in tethers on their wrists and ankles. One prisoner is shown taking an arrow from his head (eye?). In the

final scene there is a hidden message showing 'dragons' in the lower and upper margins which can be interpreted as a symbol of Anglo-Saxon Wessex and a homage to Harold.

Although the Bayeux tapestry is nearly 1000 years old, it continues to present us with evidence of one of the crucial moments in history but it's not all straightforward. It tells of deceit and honour, betrayals and courage with mysteries and allegories for us to decipher. The Bayeux Museum in Normandy is to be refurbished between 2022 and 2024 and the plan is to lend the tapestry to England during that time. As part of the deal with France, the two countries will produce a full English translation of the tapestry and will explore the use of technology in making the tapestry accessible to future generations.

[u3a - Online Learning Events](#)



John Sinclair

DAY OUT - WEST HORSLEY PLACE



It may have been a cold November day but our 32 intrepid u3a visitors took in the sights of this beautiful Grade I listed house, now managed by Roxburghe Trust.

The brick façade conceals a 15th century building full of history, such as the visit of Elizabeth I in August 1559. The façade was added in the 1640s by Sir Walter Raleigh's son, Carew. When Sir Walter was executed in 1618, his mother had his head embalmed and carried it in a red-leather bag which is still in the house. It is said to still be in the house somewhere although it is more likely that to be buried in the nearby graveyard.

Unlike many country houses West Horsley Place is not linked to any one family – originally a Saxon manor, it was given to a Norman baron, Walter FitzOtha and handed down from family to family through the female line. Many of its owners suffered a number of reversals.

Sir James de Berners was beheaded in 1388 for betraying his king and friend Richard II; Sir John Bouchier, great grandson of Edward III, lost his eldest son Humphrey at the Battle of Barnet in 1471; Humphrey's young son was brought up at Court and was a close friend of Henry VIII; the latter gave West Horsley Place to his younger cousin Henry Courtenay but not only did he lose his head in 1538 but also the manor which then became the property of Sir Anthony Browne in 1547. Sir Anthony's son, Viscount Montague, was suspected of being involved in the Gunpowder Plot but released from the Tower for lack of evidence.

Carew Raleigh owned West Horsley Place for over 20 years but sold it to Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State to Charles I and Charles II. The house remained with the Nicholas family for two generations before being passed to the Westons in 1749 and the Crewe family in 1931. Since then the house has been allowed to lose its allure but under the care of the Roxburghe Trust, the previously private house is now being refurbished as a cultural venue for operatic and other events. The 18th century stables will become

a Craft Centre and the barn will host exhibitions as well as a History Centre.

Currently open to visitors are the Stone Hall with four Doric columns where Henry VIII would have dined and the Drawing Room with its large sash windows which flood the room with light; the walls are hung with 17th and 18th century red silk. Next to this, the Geraldine Room contains the remains of a Tudor ceiling decorated with low reliefs. The Stone Kitchen also dates from the Tudor period although lacks the cooking range. Upstairs, two

bedrooms and a pink bathroom give an insight into the comfort and intimacy enjoyed by the Crewe family in later years.

However the real glory of WHP are the formal and informal gardens which hark back to Tudor times. They serve as a backdrop to the sumptuous operatic productions that take place there.

For those who did not manage to visit this time round, we hope to organise another group visit next year.

(photographs by John Sinclair)



**BROOKLANDS MUSEUM VISIT -
END MARCH 2022 (TBC)**

Brooklands Museum, birthplace of British Motor Sport, aviation and home of Concorde houses the legends of flight, speed and adventure, as well as the London Bus Museum with the world's largest collection of working historic London buses.

MONTHLY MEETING

A Royal Christmas, 8 December 2021

Siobhan Clarke



Photograph by Robert Edmondson

You might think that modern Christmas traditions only date back to the Victorians but many actually hark back to the Tudors and beyond. Our December monthly talk presented by author Siobhan Clarke was so inciteful and beautifully illustrated that it seems appropriate to cover some of its highlights.

For 5000 years, Christmas has been a time of merrymaking to combat winter blues and celebrate a time of hope. Over the years, the Church subsumed pagan celebrations; the 40 days of advent was a time of penance and atonement.



'Yule,' from the European word '*jul*' for 'solstice,' marked the death of the old year and the birth of

the new but was also associated with the legendary Green Man figure or 'Ing'.

The 12 days of Christmas paralleled the 12 days of the Magi's journey and in many cultures the new year and Epiphany represent the climax of celebrations. Twelfth night was a time of riotous behaviour or 'misrule' during which a king or queen would be chosen to direct merrymaking. At the Elizabethan court theatricals were performed – in 1600 Queen Bess commissioned the play from Shakespeare.

A large Yule log burned in the hearth throughout the period and even ordinary folk would enjoy a time of rest, as decreed by King Alfred – in a mostly agricultural economy the winter was less work intensive.

Despite the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII still upheld some of the Catholic traditions and seasonal spending was lavish, particularly at court. Contrary to expectations, many traditions such as eating mince pies, singing carols and kissing under the mistletoe

date back to the Tudors. They enjoyed feasting and inviting family and friends to share in their bounty. Wild boar replaced the then popular turkey and is still served at Queen's College, Oxford. Presents were only exchanged on New Year's day.

The tradition of kissing under the mistletoe dates to ancient Greece, to the festival of Saturnalia and marriage ceremonies, because of the plant's association with fertility although during medieval times, a kissing-bough or wreath made of greenery and decorated with seasonal fruit was often hung from the ceiling.

It was only when Edward VI came to the throne that certain traditions and symbolic displays were abandoned, and Parliament did not encourage Christmas festivities and church going. This changed under Victoria, when the emphasis was on family celebrations and Albert introduced German traditions such as the Christmas tree. Electric lights did

not come in until 1890 so cheaper natural decorations and small gifts were hung on the tree. The first artificial Christmas tree was made from green brush bristles by Addis in 1930.

With time, a rise in consumer spending has changed the way we celebrate but with the recorded Christmas messages, first introduced by George V and perpetuated by King George VI and our present Queen, the emphasis remains on family celebration.

Siobhan's new book **A TUDOR CHRISTMAS**, co-written with historian Alison Weir and illustrated throughout, explores other Christmas traditions in more detail and includes the poem that follows.

Beryl Sinclair



MONTHLY MEETINGS - NEW VENUE

For a trial period starting in January D&D u3a monthly meetings will be held in St Joseph's church hall at 2 Falkland Grove, Dorking RH4 3DL.

The venue is close to the heart of town and offers advantages in its technical, parking and catering facilities. The Townfield Court bus stop serving all routes into Dorking is nearby, and there is parking next to the hall. We hope to see many of you on **12 January 2022** for Geoff Saunder's talk on the Haida Nation.

IN PRAISE OF CHRISTMAS

This English carol which I found in Siobhan Clarke's book dates back to Tudor times and describes festivities which occurred during the Twelve Days of Christmas, including wassailing, feasting, and theatre performances.

All hail to the days that merit more
praise
Than all the rest of the year,
And welcome the nights that double
delights,
As well for the poor as the peer!
Good fortune attend each merry
man's friend,
That doth but the best that he may;
Forgetting old wrongs, with carols
and songs,
To drive the cold winter away.
This time of the year is spent in good
cheer,
And neighbours together do meet,
To sit by the fire, with friendly desire,
Each other in love do greet;
Old grudges forgot, are put in the
pot,
All sorrows aside they lay,
The old and the young doth carol his
song,
To drive the cold winter away.
To mask and to mum kind
neighbours will come
With wassails of nut-brown ale,
To drink and carouse to all in the
house,
As merry as bucks in the dale;

Where cake, bread and cheese is
brought for your fees,
To make you the longer stay;
At the fire to warm will do you no
harm,
To drive the cold winter away.
When Christmastide comes in like a
bride,
With holly and ivy clad,
Twelve days in the year, much mirth
and good cheer,
In every household is had;
The country guise is then to devise
Some gambols of Christmas play,
Whereat the young men do best that
they can,
To drive the cold winter away.
When white-bearded frost hath
threatened his worst,
And fallen from branch and brier,
Then time away calls, from husbandry
halls
And from the good countryman's fire,
Together to go to plough and to
sow,
To get us both food and array;
And thus with content the time we
have spent
To drive the cold winter away.

RESIDENTIAL TRIP

THE HISTORIC HOUSES & HERITAGE OF THE PEAK DISTRICT

15 - 19 MAY 2022

**5 days from £659 + £28 insurance
(£99 single room supplement)**

What is included in the price?

Travel by executive coach; four nights in 4* hotel - half board accommodation; all excursion travel & guided tours; entrance to National Trust properties free to NT members.

What will we see?

Day 1: Visit to Baddesley Clinton, home of the Ferrers family and sanctuary to persecuted priests during 1590s.

Day 2: Blue Badge guide accompanies group to Bakewell, home of puddings and to Chatsworth, home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire set in the heart of the Peak District National Park.

Day 3: Visit to Renishaw Hall, home of the Sitwell family for almost 400 years; then to the Elizabethan NT property Hardwick Hall, designed by Bess of Hardwick to showcase the formality of 16th century courtly life.

Day 4: Leisurely stroll in Buxton followed by a visit to Haddon Hall, a 12th century fortified manor house, surrounded by terraced Elizabethan gardens.

Day 5: Homeward bound, members will visit the Crich Tramway Village, overlooking the Derwent Valley and home of the Tramway Museum.

How do I book?

Contact Group Organiser Ianthe Cox - email ianthecox72@gmail.com or telephone 01737 843105. Check out the website [Peak District trip \(dorkingu3a.org.uk\)](http://Peak District trip (dorkingu3a.org.uk)) for further details.



RENISHAW HALL



HARDWICK HALL

SURREY REGIONAL STUDY DAYS

SURREY REGIONAL STUDY DAYS are back at the Menuhin Hall from September. Full details and application forms can be accessed on the D&D u3a website or on the Surrey u3a Network website.

The Menuhin Hall is operating a COVID-secure limit of 50% normal capacity so places are limited and attendees must observe regulations. Members may also apply to view the presentations remotely.

Booking fees are £10 for u3a members, £12 for non-members and £5 for Zoom attendance. For help to download or print out forms please contact John Sinclair on 01306 711542.

18 FEBRUARY - A PASSION FOR DRAWING by COLIN WIGGINS

Is art for God or Man? This talk looks at how iconic works of art originated from rough drawings and how artists like Rubens, Holbein and van Gogh chronicled life through their sketches and portraits.

18 MARCH - ART AND OBJECTS OF THE MUGHAL EMPERORS by DR URSULA WEEKES

Art historian and expert Dr Ursula Weekes examines 16th and 17th century Mughal court life and culture through the art of items such as jewellery, weapons, cups and illustrated manuscripts.

15 APRIL - ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD by IMOGEN CORRIGAN

The talk will look at what beautifully illustrated medieval manuscripts can tell us about the history, culture and philosophy of the time.

19 MAY - TALKS ON SCIENCE by ANDREW HANSON & KATHRYN HARKUP

Andrew Hanson will present some of the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) projects he has been involved with and the importance of colour and numbers on human perception and behaviour.

17 JUNE - UNDERSTANDING TURNER by PROFESSOR MARIA CHESTER

Professor Chester will recount Turner's troubled life and explain how the painter developed new approaches and techniques to landscape painting.



Calendar of Events: January - December 2022

January	12	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Haida Nation, speaker Geoff Saunders
February	9	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Toy Train to the Clouds, speaker Paul Whittle
	18	<i>Study Day</i>	The Art of Drawing, speaker Colin Wiggins
March	9	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Doctor at Sea, speaker Bob Cruthers
	18	<i>Study Day</i>	The Art and Objects of the Mughal Emperors, speaker Ursula Weekes
April	13	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Life as a Chelsea Pensioner, speaker Brian Cumming
	22	<i>Study Day</i>	Illuminated Manuscripts of the Medieval Period, speaker Imogen Corrigan
May	11	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Behind the Scenes at Wimbledon, speaker Alan Chalmers
	20	<i>Study Day</i>	Scientific Basis of Colour & Electronic Sound, speaker Andrew Hanson, National Physical Laboratory
June	4	<i>D&D event</i>	Barn Dance (TBC)
	8	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Royal Jubilees, speaker Graeme Payne
	17	<i>Study Day</i>	Understanding Turner: The Man, His Life & His Work, speaker Professor Maria Chester, Subject Adviser on American Archaeology & AIUTA Secretary General
July	13	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Brides, Booty and Battles, speaker Helen Poole
October	12	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Dining with History, speaker Jessica Thurtle
November	9	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	Cinque Ports, speaker James Dickinson
December	14	<i>Monthly Meeting</i>	A Christmas Cracker, speaker Jonathan Jones

Dorking & District u3a publishes a **Newsletter** and **What's On** four times a year in March/April (Spring), June/July (Summer), 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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FOOD FOR THOUGHT - SUGGESTED ANSWERS

Toad in the hole; hair of the dog; Welsh rabbit (rarebit); rocky mountain oysters; duck sauce; ants on a log; prairie oyster; Moscow mule (cocktail); grasshopper pie; bear claw; Bombay duck; cat's tongues (biscuits); lion's hair; monkey blood; butterfly cakes; caterpillar cakes; lambs lettuce; pigs ears.

CURIOUS MATHS - ANSWERS

All lines across, up/down, diagonal, add up to 15

8	1	6
3	5	7
4	9	2



**QI GONG GROUP
GO THROUGH
THEIR PACES!**

**PATCHWORKING
WITH PHYLLIS
O'SHEA**



**WALKING ON RANMORE
WITH JANE & MICHAEL**

WEST HORSLEY PLACE VISIT



SITTING ROOM (photographs John Sinclair)



DRAWING ROOM



SITTING ROOM