

NEWSLETTER

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Thoughts from the Chair

Looking out into my garden it's lovely to see the first signs that spring may be approaching – and whichever side of the fence you're on, the end of the interminable Brexit saga also seems to be in sight.

You will all have received the recent update about the changes to our monthly meetings, which will take place from April 2020. I understand that some of you will find these changes problematic, while others have actually said they prefer Wednesdays. I feel sure that most will appreciate the many benefits, which are summarised on the back page.

Haddenham Community Fair on 29th February gives us a chance to speak about the benefits of U3A in order to attract new members. Up to 50 other village organisations will be represented. Why not come along to our stand in the Village hall from 2pm to 5pm, meet the Committee and help promote your U3A?

The first National U3A Day is being held on 3rd June and I will keep you posted on our plans to celebrate.

Best wishes to you all.

Sally

General Meetings – changes to day and venue from April 2020

Just one General meeting will be held each month, in the Conference Centre at Bradmoor Farm, usually the first Wednesday, but check the dates on the back page for exceptions.

Thank you for the music

Our U3A Christmas started in a traditional vein in the Village Hall where Waddesdon Manor Choir entertained more than 120 members with seasonal carols and songs from Rutter to Abba. The concert ended with a brilliant rendition of *Can U Feel the Love Tonight* from the Lion King and an appropriate encore – *Thank you for the Music*. This was an emotional afternoon for conductor Russell Scott and the Choir as, sadly, this was their last ever public appearance. We in turn thank them and wish Russell and all the singers well for the future.

January's General Meeting started the New Year on a local theme with a very informative presentation about *The Changing Wildlife of the Chilterns*. Illustrated with his own wonderful photographs, John Tyler took us from the Chilterns' origins 100 million years ago at the bottom of a shallow tropical sea. Via the fossil record and underlying geology, he traced the evolution of flora and fauna that has been driven by changing sea levels, ice ages, weathering and the more recent impact of man.



In February Jez Elkin explained how the Greatmoor *Energy from Waste* facility generates enough electricity to power 40,000 homes by incinerating 345,000 tonnes of general rubbish each year, with no additional measurable pollution. One third comes from Buckinghamshire and the rest from surrounding counties. Together with recycling and composting, the high-tech facility almost completely eliminates the need for landfill.

Details of future meetings are on page 2.

Theatre & Film

Theatre trip

Wednesday 25th March - 2.30pm

Riverdance - New Theatre, Oxford. We have good seats in stalls rows E & F. Travel under your own steam. Tickets cost £60.



Contact Margaret Ackroyd on 01844 292393 or theatre@haddenhamu3a.co.uk

Film Club (open to all U3A members)

First Monday of each month - HYCC

2nd March - 2.00pm

Yesterday - In an alternative world where the Fab Four never existed, a struggling musician discovers he is the only person on Earth who remembers The Beatles. Himesh Patel, Lily James, Sophia Di Martino.



6th April - 2.00pm

Miss Potter - The story of Beatrix Potter's struggle for love, happiness and success. Renée Zellweger, Ewan McGregor, Emily Watson.



4th May - 2.00pm

Murder on the Orient Express - Hercule Poirot solves a murder on a snow-bound Orient Express. Kenneth Branagh, Daisy Ridley.



Dates for your diary...

At our final meetings at the Youth Centre on **9th & 19th March**

Tony Eaton returns to investigate *The Duke of Windsor and the Nazis*. At a time of crisis, the Duke was seemingly pursuing agendas totally at odds with Britain's war objectives. Was this deliberate or was he being manipulated – a pawn caught up in a much wider game?



At our first single monthly meeting in our new venue at Bradmoor Farm on **Wednesday 8th April** Timothy Walker, conservationist, multiple medal winner at Chelsea Flower Show and former Director of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, will talk about *Plant Hunting in Eastern Anatolia*. In the form of a travelogue covering some 2,000 miles, we'll learn about the huge variety of flora in north-eastern Turkey, visiting the Pontic Mountains, the plain of Erzurum and the foothills of Mount Ararat among other places of outstanding beauty.



For our AGM on **Wednesday 6th May** William French welcomes us to his *Life as a Butler on the Royal Yacht*. Joining the Royal Navy as a boy cadet, he saw action in the Falklands and became a Leading Steward before serving on the *Britannia*. William's career as a butler has taken him from Ascott House, near Wing, to Kensington Palace and Lord Rothermere's house on Eaton Square. As a subsequent freelance he can claim Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman among his clients.



Forthcoming outings

Longford Castle

A chance to visit this amazing 16th century country house 'castle' and its beautiful gardens on the banks of the Avon near Salisbury.



Not yet available to book – check first at haddenhamu3a.co.uk/events-and-outings

Wider U3A

3A Thames Valley Network Study Days

Wednesday 8th April - Cyber Crime "Protect your world"

King's Church, Raans Rd, Amersham HP6 6LX

Thursday 23rd April - Understanding Architecture

Village Hall, Sunnyside, Benson OX10 6LZ

Friday 29th May - Geology of the Thames Valley - why we don't have volcanoes

Village Hall, Sunnyside, Benson OX10 6LZ (Not yet available to book – check first at u3atvnetwork.org.uk)



Courtesy: iStock



Courtesy: Country Life

By popular demand, another chance to attend this study day:

Wednesday 17th June - History of the Thames

River and Rowing Museum, Mill Meadows, Henley RG9 1BF

Another chance to learn about the Thames and its boats, with an opportunity to look around the fascinating Museum during an extended lunch break. Provisional cost is £13 for members.

(Not yet available to book – check first at u3atvnetwork.org.uk)

Interest Group news

Earth Matters (open to all U3A members)

Wednesday 11th March - 2.30pm - Methodist Church, High Street, Haddenham

Thame U3A member, Norman Dutton will give a talk entitled *Drifting Continents – a theory that turned out to be both right and wrong*.

Wednesday 13th May - 2.30pm - Snakemoor Nature Reserve, Haddenham Station

After a quarter of a century, Robyn Thorogood is to retire as volunteer manager of Snakemoor this year. Before he hands over we will benefit from his extensive knowledge of the foundation and management of this local nature reserve.

Note: For those members who came to the BBOWT Aston Clinton Ragpits Reserve last year, the orchid count was the highest ever with 46,000 plants in flower through the season!

Members wishing to attend can contact Sue Oswell on 01844 290568 or sue@sueoswell.co.uk



Gardening Group

Monday 17th February - 2.30pm - Walter Rose Room, Haddenham Village Hall

A talk by Rob Jacobs on *Beatrix Havergal – her legacy and the history of Waterperry Horticultural College*
If you wish to attend, please contact Doreen Barker on 01844 290377 or twobarkers@btinternet.com

Spanish Conversation Group

Unfortunately, interest in this proposed group has been insufficient to make the launch of a class viable.

If you can persuade a few other members who are interested in spoken Spanish, please contact Linda Page on 01296 426777 groups@haddenhamu3a.co.uk

Out and about

Rocket Science

On one of the few fine days at the end of January, the Technical Interest Group visited the Westcott space cluster of companies developing, building and testing engines for spacecraft. Originally the Guided Projectile Establishment under post-war military control, the facility is

now a global supplier of rocket engines and thrusters for communications, science and military satellites, as well as interplanetary probes, working with NASA and the European Space Agency.



During an enlightening lecture and tour of the site, the group handed around a standard thrust engine worth £750,000 that is used to finally adjust the orbit of satellites, and even steer probes to asteroids and the planets – from Mercury to Jupiter. Another company at Westcott is collaborating with the developers of a hypersonic plane that will take off and travel at five times the speed of sound to deliver a satellite into low earth orbit, before landing again rather like an unmanned version of NASA’s space shuttle. The group was also shown a small rocket engine that had been 3D-printed from powdered metal, and another that can hover and manoeuvre a space vehicle away from rocks in the final seconds before landing. It really was rocket science...

A Mini a minute!

The Technical Interest Group also recently paid a repeat visit to the Mini plant at Cowley. In a body shop the size of 14 football pitches they marvelled at the choreographed antics of 1000 robots welding together over 400 pieces of steel to build the ‘body-in-white’.

Real people fed and tended the robots.

In the assembly shop, teams of human operatives contribute to a brand new Mini driving off the conveyor every 67 seconds for worldwide delivery.

As each is made to order, the choices in the specifications mean there can be millions of variants! And in a sign of the times, of the 1000 cars made each day, around 100 are now fully electric.



History Group – D-Day landings

At the end of November, U3A member Mike Phillips gave a fascinating talk focusing particularly on the USA’s part in the D-Day Landings. He explained where the American Landing Sector was and also emphasised the importance of Ste Mère Eglise. This village stood right in the middle of the N13 road, which the Germans would undoubtedly have used in any significant counterattack on the troops landing on Utah and Omaha Beaches.

A well-known incident also occurred in the village when a paratrooper called John Steele landed on the spire of the town church. He hung limply from his parachute for two hours, pretending to be dead, before the Germans took him prisoner. Today a dummy hangs from the church spire, commemorating the story. Mike has promised to give another talk, Part 3, later this year.



Tutankhamun's treasures

At the end of January, 35 lucky members visited London's Saatchi Gallery to see the Tutankhamun Exhibition, which commemorates the centenary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter in November 1922. Some 150 artefacts are touring the world and this will be the last time they will be allowed to leave Egypt – in fact, 60 of them have never travelled outside Egypt before. On display were many of the Boy King's personal belongings which he would need on his journey to the afterlife, as well as things he would need once he arrived there – including figurines of his servants!

The wide range of objects are made from many different materials, from gold and silver to wood, ebony and ivory, as well as obsidian, glass and glazed ceramic. They were decorated with gold – lots and lots of it! But the craftsmen also used carnelian, lapis lazuli, turquoise, green feldspar, amethyst, red jasper – the list goes on and on. Most striking was the remarkable craftsmanship of every single item, regardless of its importance. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day, and there was even time for some retail therapy afterwards.



Genealogy and Horology

A member of the Genealogy Group has found that their family was involved in the making of watch movements and cases for much of the 19th century in both Clerkenwell and Coventry. Their signatures were regularly entered in the registers of Goldsmiths' Hall and a record of their assay marks is still available.

The research was helped by having an unusual surname, although the predilection for choosing a very limited range of Christian names made disentangling the family members very difficult. The earliest traceable person was born in 1768.

When the watch case-making business went into decline in the 1860s/70s owing to imports of cheaper, better Swiss watch movements, many of those who remained in UK often became general jewellers. Other men of the extended family went to parts of the then British Empire to start new enterprises – thus the unusual surname has spread from Canada to the USA, and to Australia and South Africa.



Who do you think YOU are?



Another member has discovered that their great-great-grandfather was one of the founder members of the International Vegetarian movement and travelled to America in the 1800s giving speeches in New York and Chicago. Google searches turned up a surprising photograph of him as an old man with Mahatma Gandhi, then a young student, when both attended a relevant meeting. A bigger surprise was to see that the picture has been reproduced in a recent edition of *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine.

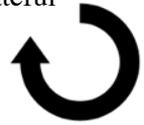
If you would like help and encouragement in researching your family, why not come along to this small group of dabblers and enthusiasts. Contact Sue Michell at susan.michell501@gmail.com

Points of order

Your membership subscription renewal – due 31st March

During March you will receive a personalised letter by email or post. You can renew your subscription by Standing Order (our preferred method), BACS transfer, cheque or cash. We would be very grateful if you could renew your subscription as promptly as possible, and **by 31st May at the latest**.

If there are any changes in your personal details, it would also be very helpful if you could let our Membership Secretary, Elaine Parkes, know at membership@haddenhamu3a.co.uk



Cutting our waste

The talk at our February General Meeting focused on reducing waste, and the Committee remains concerned about the resources used in printing and distributing our newsletters: paper, ink, time and the carbon (or actual) footprint of distribution. The vast majority of our members are happy with email copies, and a recent survey by the Third Age Trust has found that 95% of members nationally use the internet, while 97% are email users.

A number of households are sent an electronic copy, but then also receive a printed copy. Others are clearly known to be email users but get a printed newsletter. In these cases **we will no longer provide printed copies**. We recognise and respect that a very few members have no email access, so they will continue to receive printed copies. For those with internet access, past and present newsletters are always available on our new website.



Social prescribing

Led by member David Gregory, Haddenham U3A commenced a dialogue with GPs and the Patient Participation Group at the Haddenham Medical Centre (HMC) which resulted in the doctors having information sheets and other resources identifying the benefits that U3A membership could offer to help address patients' loneliness and social isolation. The Third Age Trust has centrally supported these initiatives.



A further development is that the local Primary Care Network, of which HMC is a part, has now appointed Nina Scott as the Social Prescribing Link Worker. She will be partly based in the Haddenham practice. This is good news for patients and potentially good news for U3A membership. We should support Nina and continue to extend our warm welcome to any newcomers we meet at our general and interest group meetings.

Be a better driver

Members sometimes admit that they feel far less confident on our roads than they used to. The County Council can offer some help through their mature driver assessment programme.

A one hour assessment drive in your own car looks at physical changes in a positive light and offers support and guidance to help older, more experienced drivers adapt their driving accordingly.

Your editor recommends it, having found it enjoyable and constructively helpful. The fee is £37 and you can find more details at buckscc.gov.uk/beabetterdriver



Our new monthly venue at Bradmoor Farm

As you should now be aware, **from April** we are changing from our long established General Meetings at the Youth and Community Centre on the second Monday and third Thursday of each month, to Bradmoor Farm – usually on the first **Wednesday** of each month, but with a few exceptions which you can **see below**. We have previously used their Conference Room for our AGM and there are many advantages to the move:



- We can accommodate all members likely to attend in one meeting space, which means we won't need two meetings each month, simplifying organisation, chairing and having to pay our guest speaker twice.
- As our membership grows, HYCC is increasingly crowded at the Monday meetings, especially in the tea-serving area, and we would potentially have to turn people away as we reach capacity for the room.
- The Conference Room at Bradmoor has raised staging and a higher-level screen, which will improve visibility of speakers and their visual presentations, together with a high quality sound system.
- We will no longer need to rely on a dwindling number of willing volunteers to set out chairs and serve teas (which Bradmoor staff will do), although we will still need help from our receptionists and 'techies'.
- There will be ample parking for all who need to drive, although we encourage members to walk where they can, as we should all be keeping our bodies fit as well as our minds!
- The general ambience is more appropriate to our needs, with more space, particularly in the entrance area and tea bar, together with better cloakrooms and toilet facilities.
- The normal hire cost has been reduced because the room will already be set up for another group the day before – their bookings mean that the date moves from the first week in April and September this year.

A very small number of members are already committed to do other things on a Wednesday – however, we sincerely hope that the majority will adapt to the new times and continue to support our General Meetings.

Dates for General Meetings – April to December

<i>Wednesday 8th April</i>	Wednesday 1 st July	Wednesday 7 th October
Wednesday 6 th May (AGM)	Wednesday 5 th August	Wednesday 4 th November
Wednesday 3 rd June	<i>Wednesday 9th September</i>	Wednesday 2 nd December



Contributions for the Newsletter, including visit reports, are welcomed from members and group leaders. The copy deadline for the next issue is Friday 8th May 2020.