

## The real Lawrence of Arabia

In May, in a change to the scheduled talk, Jeff Rozelaar bravely attempted to dissect the enigma that was T E Lawrence.



Born in North Wales in 1888 as the illegitimate son of Sir Thomas Chapman and the family governess, Thomas Edward adopted a family name of Lawrence. After many travels they moved to Oxford where Lawrence attended the High School. He was a bookish boy who was neither a joiner-in nor a sportsman. In fact, he could be said to be a slovenly slacker on the sidelines – always an oddball. Nonetheless, he had the stamina to cycle around the parish churches of Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties in pursuit of his brass-rubbing hobby – reputedly clocking up as much as 90 miles in one particular day.

He was bright enough to get into Jesus, Oxford's 'Welsh college', where he studied History. Working as an archaeologist in Syria, he again covered vast mileages and cultivated the persona of an English eccentric. He was a complex character who had never shown any interest in the opposite sex. However, he found a fellow traveller in Oxford graduate Gertrude Bell, an explorer who shared concerns about how the Middle East was being carved up, although he could be rather snippy about her level of knowledge of Arabic culture. Lawrence revelled in "the peerless solitude of the desert" and formed close ties with the locals. He befriended an Arab boy, Dahoum, who became his travelling companion and assistant, leading some to suspect the extent of their relationship.

At the start of the Great War, Lawrence joined the Army and was seconded to military intelligence in the fight against the Ottomans. Eventually based at Sheppard's Hotel in Cairo with other 'behind the lines' officers, he shunned social pursuits and continued to be a slovenly dresser, eventually adopting Arab garb but refusing to grow the customary beard. In support of the Arab Revolt, he led guerrilla strikes of dervishes on the Turkish lines and infamously blew up a troop train. When captured by the Ottoman forces, who seized on his pale skin, it is believed he was seriously assaulted and tortured. Following his role in taking the Turkish port of Aqaba, he returned to Cairo, where General Allenby backed a further push on to Damascus.

Lawrence returned to Britain at the age of 30 and, disillusioned with the ceding of Arab interests, refused his gallantry medals and a knighthood from the King. General Wingate had advocated a VC for Lawrence, but he was eventually made a Companion of the Order of the Bath. The now Colonel T E Lawrence incurred the wrath of his fellow officers by posing as an Arab at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Later, taking the name 'John Ross', Lawrence joined the RAF as an ordinary aircraftman, with the support of W E Johns, author of the *Biggles* books. He developed an interest in high-speed boats and air-sea rescue, and in later life speed still enthralled, as his collection of fast motor-cycles testifies. It was while riding one of these that he met his demise, aged just 46. He died following an accident when he supposedly swerved to avoid two boys cycling in a narrow Dorset lane. A life lived, if not to the full, then one which made an indelible mark on the history of the Middle East. (More on page 2.)

Painting of Lawrence, Augustus John, Bridgeman Art Library

### Inside this issue...

#### Bitter suite?



Final resting place of Haddenham's first film composer.

#### Oh, we do like to be beside the sea!



The Cycling Group exploring Kent's coastal routes.

#### Out and about in summer – not at all Grim...



The Local History Group time travels from the Iron Age to the Bloomsbury Set.

## T E Lawrence – a maverick

A mistaken case of insubordination occurred when Lawrence returned late from leave, with the excuse that he'd received a last-minute invitation to dine with some of the great and the good of the time. He was accused of lying, but in fact it was quite true.

Despite Lawrence's maverick reputation, Winston Churchill recognised his vast knowledge of the Arabs and their needs, and gave him a special appointment in the Colonial office. On his death, Churchill eulogised "I fear, whatever our need, we shall never see his like again."

There is no documentary evidence, but Somerset Maugham reckoned that Lawrence's death was a suicide in the face of a potential scandal about indecent behaviour. It could be that the story was suppressed by Lawrence's supporter in the RAF, Viscount Trenchard, who was Metropolitan Police Commissioner at the time.

Lawrence's public image resulted in part from the sensationalised reporting of the Arab revolt by American journalist

Lowell Thomas, as well as from Lawrence's autobiography *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and, more recently, by the iconic David Lean film, *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Although Lawrence was a good-looking man, Noel Coward was prompted to say to Peter O'Toole, who starred in the film, "If you'd been any prettier, it would have been Florence of Arabia".



Peter O'Toole in David Lean's 'Lawrence of Arabia'

## Films fame from Haddenham

Our July speaker, local viola professional Mark Chivers, shared with us his research during lockdown into the life of a celebrated film composer born in Haddenham. Doreen Carwithen became the world's first full time female film composer. Granddaughter of a chairman of Haddenham parish council, she was born in 1922 in the largest house in the High Street, now the home of Paul Wilkinson Photography.

Doreen studied and taught piano in the village, studied cello, won the Aylesbury Music Scholarship and, in 1941, went on to study composition at the Royal Academy, commuting by train to war-torn London. She fell in love with her married tutor, William Alwyn, already a successful film composer, and there began a 16-year long secret affair known only to Alwyn's wife.

Doreen later changed her name to Mary Alwyn but William did not divorce until 1973.

In 1946 she became the first recipient of the J Arthur Rank Composer Award. At Denham film studios she wrote the score for over 30 classic British films, including the official documentary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth – completed in just three days!

A prolific composer in an all-male world, she dared to ask for equal pay, but gained only a small increase. Eventually the pressure of work, or of the secret affair, led to her stopping work, perhaps to look after



Doreen Carwithen

Alwyn. When he died in 1985, Doreen devoted her final 18 years to championing his work and setting up the Alwyn Foundation. They never married, but share a joint grave in rural Suffolk. Mark played some delightful extracts from her recorded music. He variously described them as beautiful, elegant, inspirational, lyrical and ceremonial.

Recordings of Doreen Carwithen's film and other music are now increasingly available to enjoy. A live BBC Radio 3 Proms concert of British film music on 2nd September will open with a Carwithen overture. Next year, to mark her centenary, the first Carwithen Festival is planned from 30th June to 3rd July, based in Haddenham St Mary's Church. (For details, see [carwithenmusicfestival.co.uk](http://carwithenmusicfestival.co.uk)). A blue plaque for Haddenham is also being considered – a fine tribute.

## Carbon neutral by 2030?

This month, at our first 'live' General Meeting since early 2020, Cllr David O'Hanlon gave us a talk on the Parish Council's plans to make Haddenham carbon neutral by 2030. Recent news of disruptive weather, extreme heatwaves and raging wildfires, with warnings issued by the UN, made this very topical. One of many alarming scenarios is that, should the Greenland icecap melt, the resulting 7-metre rise in sea level would totally submerge the 'other' Haddenham in the Fens, as well as the huge metropolis of Shanghai.

The initial focus in our own village will be initiatives to reduce food miles and food waste, establish electric car clubs, pilot new home energy approaches, and support the reLEAF project – planting more trees to act as a carbon sink. Member Brian Bowman is already working with landowners to establish a new woodland west of Pegasus Way. More information on local plans can be found at [haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk](http://haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk)

## Diary Dates

### General Meetings

All at 2.00 for 2.30pm in the Village Hall

Tuesday 14th September

#### Life as a butler on the Royal Yacht

William French's talk, postponed from last year, will detail his experiences, from trainee chef in the Navy to Leading Steward, via action in the Falklands War. He was subsequently appointed Royal Class Steward on the Royal Yacht Britannia until it was decommissioned.



William continued to serve the great and the good, at Ascot House and Kensington Palace. As 'breakfast butler' there, he was present at the Ritz Hotel in Paris on the night of Princess Diana's tragic demise.

Tuesday 12th October

#### Colin Pawson – The Tootler



Coaches & coach-horns, from their golden age to the present day, with musical demonstrations! Colin is a qualified light harness horse instructor and also works extensively with the driving section of the Riding for the Disabled Association. He became involved with four-in-hand coaching in 2000 after teaching himself to blow the coach-horn. He will share his enthusiasm for driving ponies and horses for over 30 years, both as a hobby and commercially, with horse-drawn funerals, weddings and film work.

Tuesday 9th November

#### Annual General Meeting & The Queen's Coins

Keith Westcott, who discovered the Broughton Castle Hoard, will talk about treasure trove law and ethics, his appearance at Oxford Crown Court, and the subsequent controversies that surrounded the provenance of the hoard.

Tuesday 7th December

Ellesborough Silver Band, Christmas refreshments

### A word from the chair

Are you all enjoying your new-found freedom? It was lovely to be able to meet up for our first live General Meeting this month. I hope those of you who attended enjoyed the delicious cakes to celebrate our first get-together, and that you found the proposals for Haddenham's response to the Climate Emergency interesting and helpful.

It's good to see that many Interest Groups are beginning to meet again in person, cautiously and safely, of course. Thanks to all our Group Leaders for keeping things going during this difficult time. I would like to say a sincere thank you to several Group Leaders who are stepping down: Margaret Ackroyd, who has organised the theatre trips which so many of us enjoyed – she is happy to help with the handover to anyone willing to take on this group; Pat Woodward and Pam Harding, who have been jointly running Out with Friends, which I am now going to take over; David Gregory, who has led the Writers Group for eight years and is passing the baton to Kevin Cheeseman; and finally, many thanks to Mike Moore for helping to keep members healthy and fit with the Tai Chi group. Are there any other members with the requisite skills to restart this group?

We still need a new Leader for our Earth Matters group. Sue Oswald will be happy to help anyone interested in taking over leadership. If you'd like to take on one of these roles or are interested in starting a new group (see the back page!), please contact Linda Page, our Group Coordinator.

Member participation is vital to the success of our u3a, fulfilling our guiding principle: 'to promote lifelong learning through self-help interest groups'. I would like to finish by thanking the Committee, the Group Leaders and volunteers for their hard work and commitment, which keeps our u3a vibrant and running smoothly.

My very best wishes to you all.

*Sally*

Sally presents Elaine Parkes with a bouquet and gift voucher in recognition of her work arranging and hosting many Zoom meetings during lockdown





## More diary dates

### Thames Valley Network study days

All events are bookable at [u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://u3atvnetwork.org.uk) and members should check the website regularly for further details.

#### Wednesday 8th September

Oceans in a changing climate – Simon Boxall

#### Monday 13th September

Wildlife around the world – Tom Way

#### Friday 24th September

American Presidents (part 2) – Mark Lovett

#### Thursday 7th October

Harvest Flowers. A demonstration by Katherine Kear

#### Tuesday 12th October

Ashmolean 'Blue' Items – Jude Barrett

#### Thursday 21st October

Little Men in Red Hats – David Marsh

#### Thursday 28th October

The Music of Carol King – Clive Aronson

## Interest Group News

### Every picture tells a story...

**The Genealogy Group** has been delving into the histories behind family photographs. Member Heather Barback has focused on her maternal grandfather, Joseph Southam, who was born in 1889 at Turweston near Brackley, where the family had lived for two centuries. Joseph can just be seen here holding his young son Bill outside his hairdresser's shop in Scunthorpe. Having served an apprenticeship in Boston, where he met his future wife Harriet (with whom he eloped to Barnsley), Joseph opened the shop in 1910. Although he started as a barber, Joseph branched out into ladies' hairdressing. He treated split ends by rolling the hair, then singeing it with a lighted taper! He also sold beauty and hair preparations, and cigarettes. Bay rum was much favoured as a treatment for strengthening hair, making beards thicker and preventing dandruff. Sometimes Harriett was called into the shop as the men preferred her to shave them!



Joseph's plans to expand the business by taking on an apprentice were scuppered by the outbreak of war. In 1915 he was called up to the 7th battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment. He is second on the left in the photograph, at Brocton Camp in Staffordshire. The cap badge is of note. For its services in the campaign against Napoleon in Egypt, the Lincolnshire Regiment was granted the honour of wearing the Sphinx as a distinguished mark of the King's 'Royal Approbation' on their headgear and Regimental Colours.



Joseph was killed in action on 23rd April 1917 at the 2nd Battle of the Scarpe. Harriett received a widow's war gratuity of £3-10s on 19th December 1919. Two years after Joseph's death, Harriett, who had four children, married Jack Lings. Jack had been a friend of Joseph's, who asked him to look after Harriett should anything happen to him.

### Writers Group

*David Gregory writes:* We have produced a book of bedtime stories for children of all ages, from 3 to 93, and we hope to have this available at the next General Meeting. It will be free of charge, with a voluntary contribution to go to the Pupils' Fund at Haddenham Community Junior School.

Thanks to Roger Rickard's technical assistance, we've been able to carry on our monthly meetings, but held our first face-to-face meeting this month, followed by our summer garden party, hosted by Roger and Anne Rickard. However, I am now stepping down after eight years. New members are welcome and should contact our new leader Kevin Cheeseman on 07557 372236 or [kevin.cheeseman@me.com](mailto:kevin.cheeseman@me.com)

### Yoga Group

The Yoga Group is now meeting in person. Sessions will be held at Fairford Leys Centre, HP19 7HT on Wednesdays at 11.30am. There are spaces in the group and new members are very welcome. There is also a Zoom class on Thursdays at 9.45am. For further details contact Jan Baker on 07969 779222 or at [janbakeryoga@gmail.com](mailto:janbakeryoga@gmail.com)

## Music Appreciation 2

Following the departure of Hugh Stradling, group member Bernard Warner has kindly offered to take over as group leader and discussions are underway ahead of a probable resumption of monthly house meetings in September.



## Square Dancing

Some members are keen to restart group activities, and Linda Page is hoping to do this in September. Linda can be contacted on 01844 617214 or at [groups@haddenhamu3a.co.uk](mailto:groups@haddenhamu3a.co.uk)

## Table Tennis

Steph Everitt has led a group of keen members for the last five years. However, the loss of access to the Youth & Community Centre has been a major setback. Steph proposes to seek out a new venue and table tennis tables but, before taking this on, she needs to gauge the level of demand. New members, including complete beginners, are always welcome to join this group of socially minded people. Steph can be contacted on 07885 149477 or at [everwade@aol.com](mailto:everwade@aol.com)

## Discussion Group 2

The group plan to meet face to face again in September. Spaces are available for new members so, if you would like to join the group, please contact Acting Leader David Gregory on 01296 747528 or at [davidgregory@aol.com](mailto:davidgregory@aol.com)

## Golf Group

This group is open to all golfers in Haddenham u3a who would like to play a round together once a month on different courses. There are spaces for new members so, if you would like to join, please contact Chris Vernon on 01844 291783 or at [janandchrisvernon@gmail.com](mailto:janandchrisvernon@gmail.com)

## Wine Tasting

The Wine Tasting group would also has spaces for new members. If you would like to join them, please contact Richard Moore on 01844 290972 or at [richard.p.moore@btinternet.com](mailto:richard.p.moore@btinternet.com)

## Lunch Groups

Annette Marsden plans to restart the Friday and Sunday lunch groups shortly, and there are currently spaces for more members to join either group. Call 01844 291022 or email [annette.marsden@yahoo.com](mailto:annette.marsden@yahoo.com)

### Friday bookings:

Seven Stars, Dinton, 20th August

Bottle and Glass, Gibraltar, 22nd October

### Sunday bookings:

Peacock, Henton, 19th September

Dinton Hermit, Ford, 28th November.

All dates are dependent on future COVID rules and restrictions, as well as the wishes of the groups.



*"This Slavery Experience had better include a cream tea at the end".*

## New Group Leaders required

If you think you can help, please contact Linda Page at [groups@haddenhamu3a.co.uk](mailto:groups@haddenhamu3a.co.uk) or those named below:

- Earth Matters: [sue@sueoswell.co.uk](mailto:sue@sueoswell.co.uk)
- Theatre Group: (Margaret) [ackroyd\\_m@hotmail.com](mailto:ackroyd_m@hotmail.com)
- Tai Chi



Star of the Haddenham Scarecrow Festival — u3a's Lilly unlocks for her holidays



## Out and about

### Gardening Group

In July the gardening group visited the Manor House at Dorchester-on-Thames. *Doreen Barker writes:* On one of the hottest days of the year we enjoyed a stroll around its beautiful two-acre garden. From the

Georgian house there was a wonderful view of the lily pond and terrace, with a rose- and vine-covered pergola and spacious lawn with colourful herbaceous borders.



This led to a riverside copse of towering poplars with fine views of Dorchester Abbey. We were told that the River Thames often floods the garden in winter. After a delicious afternoon tea (*with refills and seconds of cake – Ed*) some of us visited the Abbey, which was wonderfully cool inside.

### Cycling Group

*Marie Woodrow writes:* Heat waves? Pandemics? No problem for the Cycling Group. Our trip to Canterbury, first planned in 2018, has finally happened. We had



some excellent cycle rides along Kentish lanes, through pretty villages with their oast houses, cherry orchards and golden wheat fields. The Crab and Winkle Way from Canterbury

and along the coast from Whitstable to Margate was traffic free, with a cooling sea breeze and the sound of waves breaking gently on pebble beaches. On a sizzling day we went on the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway to desolate Dungeness, and followed another good cycle path along the coast to Rye. Here, we enjoyed looking round the town before collapsing gratefully in the shade of the churchyard to eat our sandwiches. Happily the roads from there across Romney Marsh were completely flat! As always, the support of everyone for other group members, together with fun, friendship and laughter, made it a hugely enjoyable holiday.



Reculver Towers

### Walking Group 1

The group broke out of lockdown with a couple of popular walks on hot summer days. A return visit to a familiar part of the Chilterns in June was relieved by a shady pause in the churchyard at Turville, followed by a great al fresco lunch at The Frog at Skirmett.

In July, an amble around the reservoirs at Wilstone and Tringford offered only a brief respite



Wilstone Reservoir — The Canal & River Trust

under the trees, but more importantly a fine lunch afterwards in The Half Moon pub.

### Local History Group

The Annual Local History Walk led by Brian Bowman is always much anticipated and this year lived up to expectations. *Cynthia Floud writes:* We walked a pleasingly flat route (ideal for some of us) from Cholesbury Windmill to Grim's Ditch and returned by a drovers' track for lunch at The Full Moon pub. However, Brian's commentary was by no means 'flat', as he guided us from the Pleistocene Puddingstones to prehistoric Grim's Ditch. We speculated whether this huge earthwork was just a boundary or maybe a defence against Hertfordshire guerrillas?



Cholesbury church: fireman or soldier?

Onwards to the Iron Age hill fort at Cholesbury, raising further questions: was it defensive, a status symbol or simply an animal pen? These features perhaps reflect the drovers' lifestyle and watering holes for animals and men on their many routes into London. Brian's tour de force concluded by comparing the rise of Cholesbury from the position of poorest village



Cholesbury: gravestone of a sailor who fought at Trafalgar

in the country in the 19th century. In the first half of the 20th century it became a favourite haunt of the literary and artistic progressives of the Bloomsbury Group, and is now a relatively affluent community.

## Long Distance Walking Group

This group did not venture out together until very recently, but their first outing avoided using the minibus by taking the train to Saunderton and returning from High Wycombe. The 9-mile walk featured splendid views over Bradenham Manor and West Wycombe Park, negotiating cornfields and woodland en route to Hughenden Manor and delightful parkland. The group hopes to resume completion of the last two sections of the 68-mile Oxfordshire Way over the next two monthly walks.

### Scanner Appeal total

Carol Mason would like to thank the many members, and others, who have contributed a total of more than £2000 to the *Scannappeal* charity, following her request for donations in our May Newsletter. Husband Peter is well on the road to recovery from his cardiac arrest last year, and is once again an enthusiastic long distance walker (centre of back row, right).



LDW members looking fit for anything at the Mausoleum overlooking West Wycombe Park

## Sea shanty anyone?

### A chance to help set up a new group



This enterprising Scarecrow Festival entry, called *Haddenham-on-Sea*, inspired u3a member Garry May to come up with what he calls "a mad idea".

*He writes:* COVID completely torpedoed any chance for choirs, choruses and congregations to carry on singing indoors. Choristers up and down the country have been silenced for 17 months, save for those obsessive souls who try bravely to Zoom in tune. But what if a group got together to sing sea shanties **outdoors in Haddenham**, like the famous *Fisherman's Friends* chorus do at Padstow harbour in Cornwall? Haddenham hasn't got a harbour, but shanties could be sung in the King's Head car park, next to the wall of the village hall, or in a school playground – anywhere with favourable acoustics. Shanties are simple songs, usually sung in unison with occasional lines of harmony. Songbooks can be found on the internet and a simple pitch-pipe, as used by barbershop choruses, can sound a keynote to start off any song.

*Come all you no hoppers, you jokers and rogues,  
We're on the road to nowhere let's find out where it goes.  
It might be a ladder to the stars, who knows.  
Come all you no hoppers, you jokers, a-and rogues.*



Andre Pallat - Artfinder

But first of all, we would need a piper, a local musician or choirmaster, preferably someone who has experience of shanty singing, to lead the way. Male or female, no problem. Slimmed-down choirs, spaced out and somewhat nervous, will perhaps try singing indoors again in the autumn, but should you bet on it? Yet outdoor singing could start up tomorrow.

If you are interested, either as a choir leader or as a singer who would like to try a shanty or two, please contact Garry at [garrymay@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:garrymay@mypostoffice.co.uk) or text 07444 412996.