

Rocking the Sixties for the Jubilee

Our Jubilee General Meeting in June hit the right notes, thanks to the talents of multi-instrumentalist Adrian Broadway and his Sounds of the Sixties.



Photo: Neil Dury

Adrian and his phonofiddle

Adrian took us back with songs and memories from his own teens when he progressed from piano to guitar to bass, performing in and around High Wycombe. Now part of the local *Boodlum Band*, he performed numbers that included the swanee whistle, harmonica, a watering can, tin whistle, nose flute and the amazing phonofiddle — a one-string violin with horn! His decade of songs ranged from *Daydream Believer* to *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*.

The entertainment was rounded off with celebratory cake and prosecco, followed by the judging of the Best Celebratory Hat competition! Congratulations to Mary Pritchard, who won a cream tea at

Haddenham Garden Centre, and well done to all the members who took time to create their entries (see picture on page 2).



Photo: Neil Dury

Mary Pritchard and her winning hat

Secrets, Sex and Scandal at the Royal Court

Wearing a 1720s court dress, Sarah Slater, guide and lecturer at Hampton Court Palace, kept us spellbound with salacious gossip from the period 1660-1830.

Sarah reminded us of the Royal Family trees and how each of the monarchs appeared to have skeletons in the cupboard. James I was very fond of his friend The Duke of Buckingham, and direct descendants of Charles II's illegitimate children include Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall and Princess Diana. The Restoration of Charles II saw a loosening of Cromwell's puritanical grip on the morals of the country — women were allowed on the stage and famous actresses like Nell Gwyn became royal mistresses.



Sarah Slater

Once an heir was secured, both parties in royal marriages turned a blind eye to infidelities, although George III was an exception, remaining faithful to his wife. However, his daughter Sophie had an illegitimate son (from whom it seems Boris Johnson might be descended) and his son George IV had a very extravagant lifestyle. Hogarth's *Rakes Progress* provides graphic illustrations of the sexual pastimes involving 'women of fashion', 'good natured girls' and 'kept mistresses'.

This was the age of well organised and controlled brothels to which every prostitute aspired in the hope of securing wealthy or royal patrons, and being safe from the law and venereal disease. Sarah's

clearly presented and amusing talk concluded with a woman ahead of her time — the courtesan Teresia Constantia Phillips, who set up shop in Covent Garden offering forms of contraception such as the rather unreliable linen sheath and the very expensive sheep's intestine sheath.



Nell Gwyn

Courtesy: Royal Museums Greenwich

Inside this issue...

Neil Dury's ride



Cycling 100 miles to raise £2,180 in aid of ovarian cancer

Thame's hidden gem...



...was once a thriving Cistercian Abbey

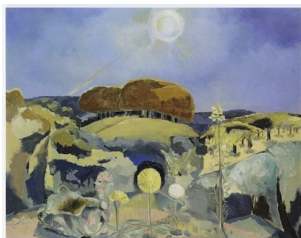
Theatre Group is back — with a 'spikey' show



All members are welcome to book — see page 5.

Paul Nash: Wittenham Clumps

Christopher Baines gave a detailed illustrated account of the life and works of the artist Paul Nash, renowned for his landscapes of the First World War. Some of his later surrealist works were influenced by visits to the Second World War aircraft scrapyard at Cowley.



Summer Solstice...

Nash also had a unique affinity for the two wooded hills in Oxfordshire called Wittenham Clumps, which he discovered as a young man. He was caught immediately by their atmospheric shapes and

mystical associations, referring to them as his 'pyramids in England'. They became a rich source of inspiration and one of his most frequently painted landscapes. After a varied career as a war artist, designer of theatre sets and costumes, illustrator of books and posters, and skilled photographer, he returned to the Oxfordshire countryside for his health. In these later years he painted many more pictures of Wittenham Clumps, the last one remaining unfinished when he died suddenly in 1946 at the age of 57.

Diary Dates

Thames Valley Network

Meetings via Zoom — [details at u3atvnetwork.org.uk](https://u3atvnetwork.org.uk)

From mid-August

40th anniversary quilt — Witney Blanket Museum.

Tuesday 6th September

The Wonderful World of Law — a talk by David Allen.

Friday 16th September

Autumn Quiz — questions set by Avis.

Wednesday 21st September

Botanical Art

Tuesday 4th October

The Battle of Agincourt — a talk by Patsy Thornton.

Thursday 13th October

Life in the Stone Age — a talk by Jill Eyers.

General Meetings

All at 2.15 for 2.30pm in the Village Hall

Tuesday 13th September

Speak Up and Mind the Furniture

Postponed from earlier this year, veteran amateur actor Jeff Rozelaar, will give us some choice anecdotes about the mishaps on stage and off and, as a professional film extra for 5 years, those that he's seen occur behind the camera. Together with a series of monologue extracts as different characters, Jeff will describe his favourite plays and roles, and what he considers to be great moments in drama.

Tuesday 11th October

Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies

Martin Lloyd's 23 years in HM Immigration Service gave him many insights into the checkered history of the British passport — from early French identity cards to our familiar blue passport, and the secrets of today's machine readable version. We will hear how a group of assassins influenced passport regulations, the design changes resulting from the unmasking of a spy, and how, for one man, the passport itself turned into a killer.



Tuesday 8th November

The Thankful Villages of the Great War

Professional guide Graham Horn will show us that, although the First World War impacted all communities up and down the country, only a very few were able to welcome home all their fighting men. How did these 'Thankful Villages' respond to their fortune, and what are they like today? We'll hear about villages from Cornwall to Northumberland, from West Wales to Norfolk, and learn some of their stories.

Interest Group visits (see page 5)

Monday 3rd October — Technical Group

British Motor Museum

Wednesday 26th October — Theatre Group

Spike at the Waterside Theatre



Jubilee Spirit

There could be only one winner (Mary Pritchard, 3rd from left), but congratulations to all our Best Celebratory Hat entrants, including Janet Mills (5th from left) — one of several Committee members who entered into the spirit of the occasion.

Interest Group News

Book Group 2

Elaine Parkes writes: In May we had all read either or both of poet and author Anne Brontë's two novels. We had an animated discussion on the author, her family and the books she published under the male pseudonym of Acton Bell, before her death from TB in 1849. The youngest of the Brontë children, Anne based these stories on her own unhappy experiences



and acute observations as a governess to two families. An immediate success when published in 1847, *Agnes Grey* highlights the precarious position and daily verbal abuse of a governess to a dysfunctional and unruly family, who was granted little authority, and whose attempts at social life were undermined.

Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, is based on her observations of the Robinson family. It is shocking, complex and even darker, describing sexual abuse, alcoholism and debauchery. Married to the dissolute Arthur Huntingdon, Helen is forced to endure his behaviour and that of his friends to protect her son Arthur. When young Arthur is in danger of corruption she escapes to Wildfell Hall. The strong moral messages of profligacy, cruelty, the challenge to social conventions, the rights of women and domestic violence caused an uproar. Perhaps the first feminist novel, it was an instant success.

Our July book was *Where the Shadows Lie* by Michael Ridpath. A crime novel set in Iceland, this will appeal to those who enjoy the *Vera* and *Shetland* stories by



Ann Cleeves. Magnus Jonson is an Icelandic raised in the USA, where he became a homicide detective. Seconded to the Icelandic police, he immediately becomes

involved in investigating the murder of a professor of Icelandic literature and the links to a potentially highly valuable lost saga. The importance of medieval sagas to the identity of Icelanders shines through, and the descriptions of landscape evoke images of an often hostile environment that accounts for the resilience of its inhabitants.

A word from the chair

Well, what a summer it's been so far! I hope you all managed to keep cool when the temperature was hitting the high 30s.

Our June meeting was a great success, when we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. I'd like to thank the Committee for the lovely job they made of decorating the Village Hall and helping to round things off suitably with cake and prosecco. Congratulations to Mary Pritchard, who won the Best Celebratory Hat competition, and well done to those of you who entered into the spirit of the occasion with a wide range of creative hats.

The Gardening Group is still looking for a new leader to take over from Doreen Barker, who will be very happy to talk to anyone, or a team of two or three, who could continue the very successful programme of visits and talks that appeals to so many of its members.

A new group called Movers is starting in October. You can see more details on page 4. Linda Page will lead this chair-based movement and exercise class, which will be perfect for those of us with mobility issues! October also sees the return of the much missed **Theatre Group** visits (page 5).

I welcomed Janet Mills to the Committee in the May Newsletter, and I'd like to thank her for taking on the role of Deputy Chair. We also welcomed Fiona Chester onto the Committee. Fiona and Janet will now be responsible for Publicity and Communications, which includes this Newsletter. Elaine Parkes has joined Neil Dury in standing down from our Newsletter Editorial Team and I'm grateful to them both for the service they have given. Doreen Barker will now be our Activities Coordinator, handing over her Welfare role to Linda Page. Mary Paterson has agreed to support the refreshments team at our General Meetings.

As always, a reminder that while you are all enjoying the things that your u3a does for you, please do consider volunteering to set up chairs, serve refreshments or provide technical support at our General Meetings. Perhaps you could help to run an Interest Group, which doesn't need to be as daunting as it sounds, as the organisation of individual events can be rotated among group members.

My very best wishes to you all for a happy summer.

Sally

History Group

On a pleasant evening in June, 20 members were lucky enough to visit the gardens of Thame Park. Roderick Floud introduced us to its history from the time it was the Cistercian Thame Abbey. The abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII and the estate acquired by Sir John Williams, later Lord Williams of Thame. The south wing of the present house was the Abbot's lodgings. Together with the kitchen wing, which has some early medieval features, this and the chapel are all that is left of the original abbey.



The Abbot's lodgings at Thame Park

Sophia, Baroness Wenman rebuilt the chapel, but she was afraid of being buried alive, so her coffin, complete with a breathing hole, lay inside it for many decades after her death!

It seems the 6th Viscount Wenman was responsible for remodelling the gardens. In 1758–9 a payment of £300 was made to Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, a large part of which would most likely have been for building its beautiful lake. Lakes, often designed to look like rivers, were a signature feature of Brown's landscaping, and probably linked together the original medieval fish ponds at Thame Park.

The Head Gardener gave a comprehensive tour of the lake, chapel exterior and stunning rose garden, which the present owners have lavishly commissioned, to include wrought iron arches and slate paths, colour coordinated with some rare blue roses.

Wine Tasting Group

The group recently visited the Chafor vineyard in Gawcott near Buckingham, where the first vines were planted on the 23-acre estate in 2003. The proprietor Tim Chafor and his team grow classic Champagne varieties to Protected Designation of Origin quality standard. In addition to the traditional Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, more delicate and aromatic varieties are grown, such as Madeleine Angevine and Bacchus — which is widely becoming recognised as England's signature grape. If you are interested, please contact leader Norma Moore at n.moore2@sky.com or on 07920 887699.



Tim Chafor

Discussion Group 2 — new members needed

Fiona Chester writes: We would still welcome two or three new members to join our discussions on any topics of their choosing. Our meetings are very informal, with everyone able to speak if they wish to. We meet on the first Monday of the month at St Mary's Centre, from 2.00 to 4.00pm. There is a charge of £5 per head to cover the costs of hiring the hall and refreshments. If you would like to join, please email me at fiona@fionachester.co.uk or call 01844 299482.

Film Club

Tuesday 23rd August 2pm — Walter Rose Room

Spencer is the story of the lead up to the failure of the marriage of Princess Diana and Prince Charles. Starring Kristen Stewart, Jack Farthing and Timothy Spall.



Square Dancing celebrates 10 years

Linda Page writes: In November we will celebrate, together with our fantastic caller Alan, 10 years of healthy exercise and fun! Square dancing is a very social activity — excellent for the exercise of those little grey cells, as well as a great way to keep fit without stress or strain. Good humour permeates the group, and we enjoy a lot of wonderful laughs.

Do join us when we begin again in September, as this is our 'working in' month for newcomers, after which we close for new inexperienced members so that the whole group can progress at the same rate. If you are interested, contact me at pinnypage@gmail.com or on 07919 993397.

Movers — a new exercise group

A group is starting in October for those of us who are less mobile and would initially enjoy the security of a chair in order to work on fitness and posture. During a one-hour session you will learn not only simple and effective routines, but most importantly how to execute them using body imagery as a tool. Accompanied by light and varied music and bringing an element of creativity into each session, we will get fitter while having a lot of fun! If you are interested, please contact Linda Page as above.

Digital Photography

Carol Mason will no longer be the liaison with this Greater Thame group, so in future members should contact leader Richard Allen at rpallen@gmail.com or on 01844 355295.



Technical Group — British Motor Museum

Monday 3rd October — leaving Village Hall 9.15am

Kevin Nash is organising a visit to this museum at Gaydon in Warwickshire at a cost of £10 per head, plus around £5 for a tour of the Collections Centre. The trip will be a car share, and is less than an hour up the M40. It is suggested that passengers pay drivers £10 each towards the fuel cost. This trip is open to all u3a members, and it is hoped that the level of support, and willingness of others to lead future visits, will enable the group to continue. If you would like to go, contact kevinpnash@yahoo.co.uk by 31st August at the latest, or call him on 07519 509370, and let him know if you are able to take up to 3 others.

Theatre Group is back!

Waterside Theatre — Wednesday 26th October 2pm

New group leader Joy Dyson has organised a visit to see the new play by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman at Aylesbury's Waterside Theatre.

Spike is an absurd comedy that delves into the mind of one of the 20th century's most unique and brilliantly irreverent comedians. To reserve your place, please contact joydyson@btinternet.com



Out and about

Walking Group 1

Tony Barker writes: In May, 11 members of the Tuesday Walking Group enjoyed a circular walk in glorious weather at Waddesdon, led by Mike Chester. Starting from The Lion pub, where we later had lunch, we skirted the school sports fields and were fascinated to watch a remote-controlled vehicle painting the white lines of the running track. From Wormstone Farm we followed the route of the Waddesdon Greenway, which runs from Aylesbury Vale Parkway to Waddesdon Manor. This combined foot and cycle path was completed in 2018 and follows the course of the Roman road, Akeman Street. The group then walked along part of Swan's Way, climbing up Waddesdon Hill and returning through the extensive grounds of the Waddesdon Manor Estate to the village.



a larger space, as the boundaries merge cleverly with neighbouring gardens. The 17th-century bowling green is still detectable, and a pretty rill runs down to a formal fish pond and gazebo. Mowed paths through the orchard and spring garden provide attractive vistas, surrounded by meadow grass and wild flowers, including elusive orchids that perhaps had been cropped by the muntjac deer seen bounding freely through the property! They might not have paid for entry, but they didn't have the tea and delicious cake enjoyed by the group in the sunshine that finally broke through the unpredictable May showers.



In June the group visited Lords Wood near Marlow Common, a property that has been described as "an outpost of Old Bloomsbury in Marlow Woods". Regular visitors during the inter-war period included Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Dora Carrington and Lytton Strachey, whose library is now stored in the grounds. In wonderful weather, the group of 28 members explored the 5-acre garden, which features modern sculptures, water features, extensive mature borders, flower and herb gardens, and woodland walks with spectacular Chiltern views. Tea and cakes on the sun-drenched lawns in front of the house, plus jars of homemade jams and pickles for sale by the hostess, helped to make this one of the most impressive garden visits of recent years.



Gardening Group

Chesham Bois House was the first visit of the season, Doreen Barker led 24 members around the 3-acre gardens, which were originally the site of a 13th-century manor house close to St Leonard's Church. The house passed from William du Bois to the Cheyne family, and the Duke of Bedford subsequently bought the land, but let the house fall into disrepair. The current house dates from 1820 and is surrounded by a mixture of formal garden and open woodland. The lawns, herbaceous borders, mature specimen trees and early-season flowering shrubs occupy what feels like

Points of order

Meet your new Editor

Fiona Chester has recently joined the u3a Committee to take on the Publicity and Communications role, which includes heading up the editorial team for this Newsletter. After a career in the armed services — and more recently in teaching — Fiona and her husband Mike have thrown themselves into local community activities, and our u3a in particular. Fiona will be the contact person for all Newsletter contributions and will be continuing and developing the programme of regular articles from Interest Group leaders, with the objective of sharing more of their enjoyment and expertise with other members.



Neil's Charity ride

Our outgoing (in both senses of the word) Editor Neil Dury took part in the *London 100* cycle ride earlier this summer. He reports his survival, surprising himself by averaging 16.6 mph to complete the 100 miles in a little over 6 hours. Neil wishes to thank the many kind u3a members who helped him raise £2,180 for Target Ovarian Cancer, in memory of his late wife Jenny, and you can still make a gift at justgiving.com/Neil-Dury22.



You can expect our next Newsletter in November. As ever, all contributions will be gratefully received, particularly from Interest Groups that can tell us what other members could perhaps participate in or benefit from.

Editorial Team Fiona Chester | Jerry Michell | Janet Mills