

## Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies

Martin Lloyd spent 23 years in HM Immigration Service and is a writer of novels and travelogues – and an engaging teller of stories about the role of passports in history.

At October's General Meeting, Martin gave us a dramatic account of some historic events that led to changes in UK passports over the last 150 years. His tales began in mid-19th century Paris with the failed attempt on the life of Emperor Napoléon III and his wife. The would-be assassin, the Italian Count Felice Orsini, was travelling under a counterfeit English passport. The resulting diplomatic rift with England brought down Palmerston's government, and France withdrew the concession that allowed the English middle class their cross-Channel day trips to France without the need for a passport.



The second story involved a German spy in the First World War. Carl Hans Lody was equipped with a stolen American passport and sent to Edinburgh to report on the British fleet in the Rosyth dockyards. Poorly trained, he was soon spotted by the British Secret Service, arrested, tried and executed in the Tower of London. This incident led to a new style of passport which had to bear the holder's photo and description and be signed by them.

The third tale was the capture of William Joyce, alias Lord Haw-Haw, just after the Second World War ended in 1945. Tried in England for treason, he claimed English jurisdiction didn't apply, as he had an American passport as a citizen, an Irish passport via his parents, and was a naturalised German. However, he also held an English passport from the time he spent in England in the 1930s, when he became well known for his fascist views. It was this passport that gave the authorities the reason to convict and execute him, because in obtaining it he had given his allegiance to the King.



## The Thankful Villages of the First World War



In November we continued our wartime theme with an interesting and moving talk. The Great War impacted communities up and down the country, but only 50 or so were able to welcome home all the men who had gone to fight. These were the Thankful Villages, so named by Arthur Mee in his series of guide books *The King's England*. Our speaker Graham Horn, a professional tourist guide, explained that many of these villages

did not really appreciate the enormity of the losses or the long-term mental and physical scars of the war, and some suffered from survivor's guilt. However, many have since created memorials with plaques or stained-glass windows. Our nearest Thankful Villages are Stoke Hammond in Bucks and Puttenham, near Tring, Herts.

## Inside this issue...

### Wind in the sails



Technical Group pays a breezy visit to Quanton Windmill.

### Hot to trotter?



Our cyclists chose a more conventional mode of transport.

### A bear writes to Prince George...



...with fond memories of our late Queen.

You can see more members' tributes to Her Majesty on our [website](#).

**Diary Dates**

**General Meetings**

Haddenham Village Hall

Tuesday 13th December – 2.15 for 2.30 pm



**Christmas Extravaganza**

Jonathan Jones will give us *A Miscellany of Poetry and Prose* for the festive season, which will be followed by customary Christmas refreshments.

Tuesday 10th January – 2.15 for 2.30 pm

**Tooth, Claw and Mane**



Tom Way, a wildlife photographer, will show images taken on his recent journeys and talk about one of his most exciting assignments photographing tigers in India. His travels take in brown bears in Northern Europe, beautiful Camargue horses racing along Mediterranean beaches and rhinos, cheetahs and lions in Africa.

Tuesday 14th February – 2.15 for 2.30 pm

**Mr Garricks's Fireside**

Pete Allen, Director of The RC Sherriff Trust, will take us on a personal journey through the history of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane with tales of being the body double for the man who wrote *My Fair Lady*, and almost being shot by the Queen Mother's security detail – all because of Ken Dodd!



Tuesday 14th March – 2.15 for 2.30 pm

**Policing, Intelligence and Organised Crime**



Richard List QPM retired from Thames Valley Police in 2021 as a Detective Chief Superintendent after 30 years service. He was awarded a Queens Police Medal for distinguished service in Her Late Majesty's 2021 Birthday Honours List. Richard will explain the nature of organised crime and how the police tackle it through intelligence and

covert policing methods. He will also give us an insight into policing approaches and crimes which will be much less familiar to the public.

**A word from the chair**

It hardly seems any time since we and our gardens were wilting under the high summer temperatures and a hosepipe ban, and now Christmas is around the corner.

I was privileged to attend the annual **Remembrance Day** service at St. Mary's Church and lay a wreath on behalf of our u3a. I'm sure you will agree that it is so important to remember and say thank you to those who have given their lives to protect our freedom.

As you know, as a mark of respect for the passing of **HM The Queen**, we cancelled our September General Meeting. Now that we've all had time to reflect on her wonderful life of service, do take a look at the tribute on the back page, and at the selection of poems on our website penned by the Writers Group.

**The last meeting of the Gardening Group** took place in November and we took the opportunity to thank Doreen Barker for her many years of successful leadership. We are still looking for a new leader for this very popular group and it will be a great pity if it is not able to carry on. Doreen will be very happy to talk to anyone, or a team of two or three members, who might consider taking over from her.

**The new Movers Group**, a chair-based movement and exercise class, is now proving very popular, and as one of the participants I can confirm that it is great fun.

As usual we will be taking part in the **Christmas Tree Festival** at St Mary's Church, so I hope that members will be able to visit the church to see our u3a Christmas tree, as well as the many others that will be on display.

I also look forward to welcoming many of you to our **Christmas Extravaganza** on 13th December where we will hear more poetry and prose from our guest speaker, and enjoy our customary festive refreshments.

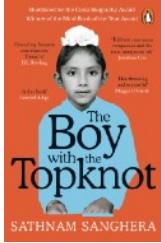
My very best wishes to you all for a very happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful 2023.

*Sally*

**Interest Group News**

**Book Group 2**

Rosanne Ward writes: In November, we read *The Boy with the Top Knot*, a 'Memoir of love, secrets and lies' by *Times* journalist and writer, Sathnam Sanghera, describing his early years in Wolverhampton.



Born into an entirely Punjabi environment of first-generation immigrants, he was unable to speak English when he started school. His schoolboy hair was tied up in the eponymous top knot, until he cut it off aged 14 in a gesture of teenage

rebellion. He did well at school, winning a scholarship to Wolverhampton Grammar School, and from there to Cambridge, where he read English Literature and took a First.

The author contrasts his warm early Punjabi life, dominated by his mother, with his later English life and the many differences and conflicts between them. He writes with touching honesty, especially when he struggles to deal with the serious mental illness of his father and sister. He describes his mother's overwhelming love and her desire that he marry a suitable girl, struggling to reconcile the differing aspects of his life and the situation of a second-generation immigrant. We were moved by this book, finding much to discuss and learn from.

**Other good reads**

Member Jackie Hawkins reports that *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell was a worthwhile read, if a little long-winded in places. A young woman is uprooted from her comfortable life in rural Hampshire in the 19th century. She has to overcome her prejudices and deal with the realities of living in a northern mill town, as well as losing her closest relations and searching for true love.

Carol Fryer says the group loved *The Fortnight in September*, a nostalgic, amusing, absorbing and very real tale from 90 years ago by R C Sherriff. A family goes through detailed preparations for an annual boarding house holiday in Bognor. Each member has a favourite seaside occupation, but also time to stand apart and reassess their lives and make plans. Everyone should read this simple, gentle and thought-provoking book, preferably at the seaside!

**Book Group 3**

Norma Moore would welcome more members to the group. She can be contacted at [n.moore2@sky.com](mailto:n.moore2@sky.com)

**Film Club**

Fourth Tuesdays at 2.00pm.  
Walter Rose Room

Film showings are open to all u3a members. A donation of £4 is requested.

Tuesday 24th January

*The Road Dance*



Kirsty is a young woman living in the Outer Hebrides in the years just before WW1. A road dance is held in honour of the young men leaving for war, and on that night Kirsty's life takes a dramatic and tragic turn. Stars Hermione Corfield, Will Fletcher, Mark Gatiss and Morven Christie.

**Digital Photography**

This group meets in Thame on the third Friday of the month, and Richard Allan would welcome new members. Contact him on [rpallan@gmail.com](mailto:rpallan@gmail.com)

**History Group**

Elaine Parkes writes: In October, 17 members paid an excellent visit to the Buckinghamshire Museum for a guided tour of its buildings. They lie within a pre-Roman hill fort, an area occupied since the Iron Age. Later, a religious fraternity linked to the Saxon church occupied the land which, for centuries, was a Christian burial ground. Renovation work in 2012 revealed five 7th-century burials of Aylesbury's first Christians. Over 600 years the buildings have been: a guildhall, which became a grand private house, a coach house, Georgian free grammar school and masters' houses,



Tudor 'blackwork' wall painting on plaster

Latin school, Victorian and Edwardian parish rooms, Registrar's office and doctor's surgery.

There have been many changes both externally and internally. The guildhall is a remarkable medieval survival. Originally timber framed and jettied, it became a private house in the 16th century, and splendid painted plaster wall decorations have survived in one room.

In the 1750s the building was 'Georgianised': encased in bricks and a symmetrical arrangement of windows installed. The buildings went through many changes, including the establishment of a Free Grammar School in 1720. When that moved in 1907 the Bucks Archaeological Society bought the building for use as a public museum. The rest, as they say, is history.

## Tech Group gets the wind up...

In September, Michael Ayers led 17 ladies and gentlemen of the Technical Group on a visit to Quainton Windmill — one of the oldest tower mills in the country which was the pinnacle of technology, as well as commanding an elevated position below Quainton hill to catch the wind. An informative talk covered a brief history of mills for grinding grain, from the first vertical axis Persian mills, which channeled the prevailing wind, to post mills like the one



at Brill, which can be rotated by hand or horse to face the wind. Later smock mills and tower mills both have rotating caps carrying the sails, and are self-steered into wind by a fantail. We learnt several old milling terms, including 'three sheets to the wind', when the sails are partially rigged, causing them to be out of balance. We also examined the 'chattering damsel' — a device that vibrates the shoe delivering the grain from the hopper to the eye of the grindstone. This gadget also rings a bell ('a damsel in distress') should the grain in the hopper run out, which would cause the grindstones to meet and potentially spark a fire in the dust-laden atmosphere.

Quainton Windmill has been owned by the Anstiss family for 140 years, who have contributed substantially to the recent restoration to its fully operational condition. Most members climbed the 70 steep steps to the fourth floor to view the headgear and the milling floor below, and were rewarded by the sight of the sails catching the breeze at close to maximum speed — together with fine views from the balcony over the beautiful village of Quainton and beyond to Aylesbury Vale.

The trip culminated in a very convivial meal at The George & Dragon.

### ... the motorway to Gaydon

In October Kevin Nash organised a visit to the British Motor Museum at Gaydon in Warwickshire, attended by 14 members. This stunning collection of British cars from veteran to modern included unseen prototypes, the first or last of many production runs, and numerous vehicles that stirred memories of the past — some fond and some regretted, owing to the chequered history of British design and manufacture. An excellent guide took us around the comprehensive display of Jaguars through the years, from the company's origins as Swallow Sidecars to the exotic

sports cars that never made it into full production — plus several James Bond cars. Other film vehicles included a reproduction of the DeLorean from *Back to the Future* and FAB 1, Lady Penelope's pink 6-wheeled limousine from the iconic *Thunderbirds*.



### How the motorways were built

Later that month, Malcolm White gave the group an extremely interesting slide show recording some of the projects in his career as a highways engineer, which demonstrated the complexities of planning and building major road arteries in the local area.

## Out and about Cycling in the Rhine Valley

Marie Woodrow writes: At last we made it! Having been delayed for two years by Covid, a late route



Ingrid Holmes in Lampertheim

change by the tour operator and rail strikes on the days we were travelling there and back, we boarded our river boat near Strasbourg and were relieved to find there was actually some water in the Rhine. While the boat sailed down river we cycled along superb designated cycle paths with not a pothole

to be seen, riding through productive farmland, forests and industrial areas. The countryside was pleasant rather than outstandingly beautiful, with welcome stops for coffee, pastries and ice cream and some interesting and historic towns to explore each day, notably Speyer, Heidleberg, Worms and Mainz. There was much deliberation while pouring over the less than adequate maps provided, which led to some unplanned diversions, but we usually managed to muster enough German to get directions from passing locals, or met other cyclists from the boat, and between us we found the way.



An odd sight in Schwetzingen

The boat was excellent and we enjoyed the company of other passengers and crew from all over the world. Best of all was the camaraderie of our own group, comparing notes each evening over dinner and setting the world to rights with much hilarity.

## Tuesday Walking Group

Angela Wenham and Marie Woodrow led a select band of nine on a pretty September walk through wooded paths and fine views of classic Chiltern landscape and architecture in the region around Penn, near Beaconsfield. The walk in fine autumn weather centred on The Royal Standard of England, a pub in Forty Green which claims to be the oldest in the country. The quirky interior features stuffed animals, carvings and skeletons, which failed to put the walkers off their fantastic lunch afterwards.



Still waiting for a drink

## Longer Distance Walking Group



The group has just two more stages of an 85-mile West-East Ridgeway series of walks to complete. Although this group is full at present, leader

Neil Dury will review membership and future projects in the new year. Contact [neil.dury@btinternet.com](mailto:neil.dury@btinternet.com)

## Garden Group

On a hot humid August afternoon the group visited *Red Kites* at Bledlow Ridge, a superb hillside garden,

with cascading terraces looking out over the Chiltern Hills. Its 1½ acres are planted for year-round interest and feature lawns with generous mixed borders and a pretty pond, as well as a wildflower orchard, woodland area and a lovely hidden garden. The owners have lovingly created and maintained this beautiful garden over many decades, and were perfect hosts – naming specimen plants and offering splendid tea and cakes afterwards.



**Note: This group will not continue unless an individual or two or three members are prepared to lead it. Doreen Barker is stepping down this month, and the u3a owes her a debt of gratitude for the pleasure her organised visits and talks have given to so many members over the years.**

## Square Dance Group celebrates 10 years



Caller Alan Covacic cuts the cake

## Tour of the D-Day Landing Beaches

Between 21st and 24th September, 2023 Mike Phillips, who many of you know through his talks on the Normandy Landings, will be leading a party of 40 for a four-day, three-night visit to the prime sites of the D-Day Landings in June 1944. The trip starts from Haddenham and is open to all u3a members, and there are still a few places left. The provisional cost for the coach, ferry, 3 nights B&B in a 3-star Bayeux hotel, and 3 lunches in Normandy is likely to be around £750 per couple and £500 for singles. Please contact Mike at [michael.phillips4975@gmail.com](mailto:michael.phillips4975@gmail.com) if you are interested or have any questions. Please note that non-members will not be able to take part as they would not be covered by u3a's insurance. A prospectus will be available shortly, and an overview and sign-up sheet will be posted at our General Meeting 13th December.



## Macmillan Coffee Morning

Member Mary White once again raised a record sum of £1,200 at the local Macmillan Coffee Morning in September. Congratulations, Mary – and thanks to all who supported her by baking cakes and making donations at the event.

32 Windsor Gardens  
Paddington  
London

Dear Prince George

As you know, I am an orphan bear from Peru, living in London with the Browns, my new family.

Peru was not part of your Great Grandmother's family, so imagine how excited I was when your GanGan, the Queen, invited me to tea to celebrate her diamond jubilee. I was so nervous that I spilt the tea and squashed the lovely cake. The Queen didn't mind at all. She was so kind, tolerant, polite to everyone and, most of all, so very wise.

'Be kind and polite and the world will be alright,' she said.

I believe that too.

At the tea-party, the Queen told me that she loved marmalade sandwiches and always kept one handy, in case she felt hungry. So do I. Mine is in my hat. The Queen kept hers in her handbag. Isn't that amazing?

She was our GanGan too – thank you for sharing her with us.

We are all so sad that she has gone but happy that she is with your Great Grandfather Philip again.

Many years from now your GanGan will be there to hold your hand as she shows you the path to follow to be a great King.

I wish you a successful journey Your Highness.

Thank you.

*Paddington*

P.S. Sorry about the marmalade stains.



David Gregory of the Writers Group penned this affectionate letter. Illustration by Gloria Newington.

More tributes to the passing of our Queen can be found in poetic form on our [website](#).

Your next Newsletter will be in April. Please continue to send in your contributions, in particular readings, listenings, tastings, discussions, or other experiences you've had that might appeal to our general readership.

Editorial team Fiona Chester | Jerry Michell | Janet Mills