

Poetry, prose and seasonal singing

Our Christmas Extravaganza was well attended and enjoyed by all.

The seating was 'cabaret' style, with tables decorated in festive colours and a fun Christmas quiz to break the ice. The entertainment provided by Jonathan Jones was a miscellany of much-loved Christmas poetry and prose, including an amusing, alternative version of the *Twelve Days of Christmas* by John Julius Norwich.



The festive spirit was enhanced by cakes and Prosecco, communal singing of songs and carols and a rousing rendition of the more traditional *Twelve Days of Christmas*, the stars of which were definitely the 'Five Gold Rings' table! Many thanks to the Committee for such a lovely start to the festive season.

Tooth, Claw and Mane — life in the wild



The New Year kicked off with a totally immersive talk by professional wildlife photographer Tom Way, who took us round the world with his magical imagery.

From water voles, kingfishers, and puffins in flight in the UK to the big cats of Africa and penguins in the Falklands, to brown bears in Finland and the white horses of the Camargue, we were spellbound by Tom's stunning images. He spends more than half the year travelling, and can wait weeks, or even months, to get

the right shot on location. As with any nature photographer, Tom tries for the best possible natural light and aims to capture the very essence of his subjects in their natural habitat. His images range from breathtaking to unbelievably cute, and a few were taken at no small personal risk. Many members went home with cards and mounted photos from Tom's portfolio which are available to buy. You can see a selection on his [website](#), as well as learn about his photography workshops.

Mr Garrick's Fireside

At our February meeting Pete Allen, Director of arts charity The RC Sherriff Trust, took us on a personal journey through the history of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, the oldest theatre in the world still mounting continuous productions. It was one of two theatres granted the Royal Warrant by Charles II, who famously arranged assignments with Nell Gwynn via a tunnel to her tavern opposite (now the actors' pub Old Nell of Drury).

Designed by Robert Adam in the mid-18th century, the theatre was managed by the legendary David Garrick, whom a later manager, George Hoare, alleged sat drinking wine nearby while the theatre burnt down. In fact it was a subsequent owner, the Restoration playwright Sheridan, who said: "A man may surely be allowed to take a glass of wine by his own fireside."



Inside this issue...

Let's celebrate!



Your chance to win a prize for the best Coronation Cake.

The iconic Vulcan



From Cold War deterrent to The Falklands conflict.

Long Distance Walkers landmark



Journey's end — the Ridgeway at Ivinghoe Beacon.

Don't forget to renew your annual membership

Pete was initiated into his career at the theatre with a jape by his manager involving a supposed rehearsal for laying out the body on the buffet table at the wake of US songwriter Alan Jay Lerner — much to the amusement of staff watching ‘from the wings’. He can also claim to have received a Christmas kiss from Catherine Zeta-Jones, who gave him a lift home to Wales before she gained star recognition following a chance promotion from second understudy to the lead in *42nd Street*.

The Theatre Royal has always been in the block adjacent to Drury Lane, but has a history of fires and rebuilds. The current building faces Catherine Street, and has recently been purchased by Andrew Lloyd-Webber, who has invested £60m in refurbishing the auditorium and extending into adjacent premises to develop a corporate entertainment complex. Productions throughout the centuries include comedy, tragedy and the first modern pantomimes, in which the clown Joseph Grimaldi performed as a dame. Its more recent reputation has been built on blockbuster musicals, the latest being Disney’s *Frozen* — a world away from the likes of *A Chorus Line* and *Miss Saigon*.

Diary Dates

General Meetings

Haddenham Village Hall — 2.15 for 2.30 pm

Tuesday 14th March

Cartoonology

Cartoonist Robert Duncan will present his dubious way of making an occasionally successful living — from the sale of his first cartoon sixty years ago to founding a design agency, from greetings cards and games to writing plays.



While recounting his life Robert will draw instant cartoons on a flip chart, and talk about the work of cartoonists he has admired and who have occasionally inspired him to great things.

Tuesday 11th April

Indonesia – Sailing from Bali to Komodo



Zoologist Sara Frost will guide us through the Indonesian archipelago on her adventure among its sometimes weird and wonderful tropical wildlife.

Tuesday 9th May

Coronation Tea Party and entertainment

To celebrate the King’s Coronation we will once again be indulging in Prosecco, cakes and other

Courtesy: kraftydesigns



refreshments with accompanying light entertainment. There will be an anonymous bring-and-share Coronation Cake competition with a prize for the best cake fit for a King. Email sallylansten@gmail.com

by 10th April at the latest if you would like to enter.

Tuesday 13th June

AGM & talk — Harold Macmillan: Reputation revised

Political historian Dr Martin Holmes will dissect the career of this consummate politician and brilliant election campaigner — and the darker side to Macmillan’s character. Hiding behind a carefully calculated image of Edwardian charm lay a man of relentless ambition who ruthlessly saw off his political rivals to reach 10 Downing Street.



Tuesday 11th July

Speak up and mind the furniture — An actor’s life for me

An experienced amateur actor for 50 years and a professional film extra for 5 years, Jeff Rozelaar’s has tales of mishaps on stage and off and those that take place behind the camera. He will describe his favourite plays and roles and what he considers to be great moments in drama. The talk will include a series of monologues as different characters.

Subscription renewal 2023–2024

The current u3a membership year will end on 31st March 2023. You will be pleased to know that the membership fee will remain unchanged at £16 per person. During March you will receive a personalised subscription letter, either by email or post. You can renew your subscription by Standing Order (our preferred method), BACS transfer, cheque or cash. Please renew your subscription as promptly as possible, and by 31st May at the latest.

If you pay income tax, please consider using the Gift Aid form from our web site or from the Membership Secretary, as this enables us to reclaim 25p in the £ from HMRC, helping to keep our subscription low.

If there are any changes in your personal details, please let the Membership Secretary, Elaine Parkes, know at membership@haddenhamu3a.co.uk

Interest Group News

Music Appreciation Group 2

This group meets monthly to enjoy music programmes devised by members, who have a wide range of interests and musical backgrounds. There is no need to be a musician to join. The group currently has vacancies and would welcome beginners who just want to enjoy music. They are a friendly bunch who want to share knowledge of the the music played, and provide an introduction to all types of sound. For more information call Bernard Warner 07889 331723.

Gardening Group

Sarah Darnell writes: At our November meeting we presented Doreen Barker with a gift to mark her sterling work running the group over the last 7 years. I am very pleased that the Group will carry on again this year, run by a committee of seven members: Howard Roberts, Lynne Roberts, Sally Lajalati, Joyce Riley, Barry Wood, Sue Wood and me. I will coordinate, but each monthly talk or outing will be organised by a different member and we hope to provide an interesting and varied calendar.

Our first talk in February was by Lee Stiles from Lea Valley Growers and the talk on 20th March will be by Roderick Floud on 'The Growth of Gardening in the Suburbs'. After that, with hopefully better weather, we intend to have six months of garden visits. Most of these are still being finalised, but we are organising a guided tour of the Oxford Botanic Garden in April and a coach trip to Friars Court, Clanfield, in June. Details of these garden visits are being circulated to members.

Long Distance Walking Group

Another excuse for celebration, as 16 LDW members have just completed the tenth and final stage of The Ridgeway, walking 90 miles from Avebury in Wiltshire to Ivinghoe Beacon. The stages of the walk were



16 stars at the Seven Stars, Dinton planned by Edgar Skipsey before the pandemic, but were not started until last April. Group leader Neil Dury thanked Edgar and all those in the group who have helped by leading the various sections. As their next project they are considering the possibility of walking 'Shakespeare's Way' — a trail which, unsurprisingly, runs from Stratford to London's Globe Theatre!

A word from the chair

At last, having endured the icy conditions of the winter, it is so lovely to see blue sky, sunshine and spring flowers beginning to appear. I hope the plants in your gardens have survived. On that topic, I am delighted that the Gardening Group has had its first meeting under the new committee (see opposite).

After many years Roger Rickard is stepping down from running the Film Group. We would like to thank him for running this group and for the many hours of enjoyment members have had watching the variety of films shown. If anyone is willing to take over the group, I know Roger will be happy to help with the handover.

It is some while since we introduced the ICE (in case of emergency) card, so I would like to remind all members that it is vital that you always carry this with you at U3A events. Not only does it give your emergency contact information but also details of any medical conditions, medication and allergies, especially important if you are attended by paramedics. If you have mislaid yours then please ensure that you pick one up at the next General Meeting on 14th March or from your Interest Group Leader.

Your Committee has been very busy reviewing the following policies: Privacy, Data Protection, Equality and Safeguarding. These are now on our website along with the new Accessibility Policy. We have also updated our advertising posters and leaflets, so do look out for them around the village.

I hope by now that you will all have heard about our 9th May General Meeting at which we will be celebrating the coronation of King Charles III with light entertainment and another opportunity to have cake and Prosecco! We are giving you plenty of advance notice of our exciting Coronation Competition, so you can put on your creative bakers' hats and make a Coronation Cake fit for a King or, in this case, fit for our u3a members.

The cakes will be displayed anonymously for members to 'vote' on, with a prize for the winning baker, and the cakes will then be cut up and added to our celebratory refreshments. If you would like to enter, please let me know by 10th April.

I look forward to tasting some very delicious creations!

Sally

Tech Group takes to the air...

Surfing the sierra

Before Christmas, member Andrew Reid gave the group a second talk based on his 50 years of gliding, this time on the extremes of altitude and distance. The altitude record for a standard glider is around



50,000 feet, achieved by soaring on the rising air of standing waves that can form in the lee of mountain ranges such as the Sierra Nevada. Specialist craft are being developed with the aim of beating the 90,000 feet ceiling of military aircraft such as the USAF Blackbird. Such attempts are made in the polar region where the jet stream contributes to a stratospheric wave which can extend to 100,000 feet.

Andrew also described in an epic distance flight recently undertaken by a pilot gliding from Snowdonia to the Scottish borders and back via Lincolnshire, and used an excellent animated 3-D map to show the deviations and gyrations necessary to cover such a distance. Unfortunately, the pilot had to resort to using small on-board engine to complete the last 20 miles, but nonetheless an impressive flight of over 450 miles was achieved in one day.

Victorious Vulcan

In January, retired RAF Wing Cdr Roger Hannaford gave the group a very detailed view of the on-board systems of the Avro Vulcan from his time as an



electronics officer on the aircraft in the 1960s. He covered the history of its success in being chosen over rival Handley Page Victor and Vickers Valiant as the carrier of Britain's nuclear deterrent. As a

heavy bomber it could carry 10,000lb at close to the speed of sound. The control surfaces were also specially designed for the delta wing, and there were various measures to avoid the aircraft becoming uncontrollable as it approached the sound barrier.

The Vulcan's primary capability was overtaken by the submarine-borne Trident deterrent during its final decade of service in the 1980s when the Vulcan was deployed from Ascension Island to the Falklands to bomb Port Stanley Airport — ironically, a feat only made possible with in-air refuelling from Victor tankers.

The roar of the greasepaint

A backstage visit to the Waterside Theatre

In February, 24 Technical Group members toured behind the scenes at Aylesbury Waterside Theatre. From the soaring foyer to the rear loading dock, and from the 'Gods' and



Royal Circle to the stage itself, the knowledgeable guide provided a detailed view of the Waterside's role as a 'receiving theatre' — that is, one which doesn't mount its own productions, but effectively rents out the facility to touring productions. Opening in 2010, the Waterside cost £47m and seats 1200. The auditorium has state-of-the-art tuneable acoustics, which are unaffected by the size of the audience. This is achieved with sound-absorbent 'woodland'

fretwork design on the underside of the raised unoccupied seats.



The Chiltern woodland theme is part of the theatre's design philosophy. This is evident throughout the public areas, which contain wall panels made

from 100,000 slabs of four different kinds of wood. The theatre can also be configured for gigs by virtue of stalls seats which can be removed, stowed, or sunk hydraulically together with the floor beneath a constructed false floor — an operation that is not undertaken lightly. The tour included the extensive dressing rooms where costumes are stored, fitted, and even laundered — usually daily, but a vodka-based anti-bacterial freshener can also be used between matinées and evening performances!

Your next Newsletter will be in July. 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