

u3a Knole

learn laugh live



Bryan Rawlins - Lyme Regis in Dorset.

Chairman's message

I am writing this indoors in front of a fan trying to keep out of the blazing heat outside. I'm just very grateful that I have that choice and don't have to work in temperatures of well over 30 degrees!

Summer brings opportunities to socialise and do lots of lovely activities with family and friends, perhaps holidays, concerts, picnics, barbecues, days out. I'm having a really good summer this year and I hope you are too.

Looking towards the end of September we shall once again be holding our annual Open Afternoon and the planning for it has already begun. The aim for holding such an event is twofold; to attract new members and to give existing members the opportunity to see what else is available and perhaps join new groups. People often ask me why we need new members and the answer is simple, new members breathe new life into our u3a and keep it vibrant. They often bring enthusiasm and are willing to take on roles within our organisation. It is also a major principle of u3a to promote the value of belonging to u3a and to ensure that anyone wanting to join can do so. We are working hard to make sure that this Open Afternoon is our best yet. Perhaps you can begin to talk to your Group Contacts about what your groups can do at the Open Afternoon and how you can help. Could you help with publicising the event by distributing leaflets or putting up posters on notice boards? Do you have any ideas for forming new groups? The Open Afternoon will be on **Monday 28th September**, please come along and get involved. You could really help by bringing a friend or neighbour who you think would benefit from finding out more about u3a. Let's make it a really fun afternoon!

Debbie Magness

Chairman



London Walks 2

We enjoyed a walk around Blackheath on a day with beautiful weather. We heard about a surprising number of well-known people who had lived there. We saw many beautiful houses including The Paragon which is Grade 1 listed, on a par with places like the Houses of Parliament. We also heard a bit about

the history of the heath. It is thought that the name is a corruption of 'Bleak' heath. It was a dangerous place during the 17th and 18th centuries, haunted by highwaymen. Its proximity to Greenwich Palace, the Queen's House and Eltham Palace meant that many monarchs would have known it. We heard about the sport played on the heath, from golf, which was first played on the heath in 1608 to currently its use as a starting point for the London Marathon. Finally, we looked at 3 more interesting houses. First was a lovely house overlooking the heath where James Clark Ross lived. He was an 19th century polar explorer who has had many islands and polar regions named after him. The second house was The Pagoda, a house in the shape of a pagoda where George IV's estranged wife Caroline lived, and finally a house that is currently for sale for £11.5 million!

Rosemary Norburn



Gardening Group

We visited Nyman's Gardens on Friday 15 May with a free guided tour (11 am and 2 pm every day), which was very informative. We were shown some spectacular trees, particularly the



Davidia involucrata var. *Vilmoriniana* (Handkerchief Tree), which smelt divine and the Magnolia that smelt like germolene! The garden inside the house ruins showed an innovative use of space. If you are looking to go

in the summer the wild flowers in the Rose Garden will be spectacular.

Janet Rapicano

Gardening Group June outing:



The Garden Group had a fabulous visit to Beth Chatto's garden near Colchester. Beth's motto was 'right plant, right place'. Her dry garden was created on the old carpark and is never watered. The main garden includes a wood, ponds, damp, scree and dry shade areas. The nursery plants are grouped according to the growing conditions they need. Well worth a visit. Our next visit is to Merriments. Contact Julie if you wish to join us: garden@knoleu3a.org.uk

Golf – Wednesday every 3rd week of the month

After over 20 years of trying we have at last had our first HOLE IN ONE. Congratulations to Alison Wickham who holed out on the 17th at Chelsfield Lakes.

Alison is a regular golfer at Poulton Wood, and this is her first ACE. The group helped her to celebrate her success.



Ballroom Dance.

We have been approached by an experienced Ballroom Dance Couple who would like to set up a group for anyone interested in learning a few steps

I have sent them some more questions to ascertain what level would be expected, whether it's serious or for fun or just a way to keep fit.

Also I have asked what sort of Dance they would teach – The waltz etc, Latin, Modern or the good old jive.

As soon as I know more, I will let you know, but in the meantime let me know if you are interested and start a list of those interested.

Contact me Bryan Rawlins on groups@knoleu3a.org.uk

Mens Matter - meet every 4th Thursday - out and about or in a pub.



Our planned visit to Chislehurst Caves had to be postponed this month due to the extreme heat. We hope to try again next month, and we'd love to have more members join us. If you're interested in coming along, please contact Bryan Rawlins at groups@knoleu3a.org.uk.

Supporting TWAM – Tools With a Mission

This month our group collected and delivered a selection of old tools to TWAM (Tools With a Mission). TWAM is a UK charity that refurbishes unwanted tools and sends them to communities in Africa, helping people develop sustainable livelihoods. Find out more at www.twam.uk.

If you have any unwanted tools — from sewing machines to carpentry equipment — that you'd like to donate, we'd be delighted to receive them.

To arrange a donation, please contact Bryan Rawlins at groups@knoleu3a.org.uk.

The Men's Matter group meets up once a month to put the world to right and to visit interesting places. We chat about things that men find interesting and most women won't. If you would like to join us please let me know at the mensshed@knoleu3a.org

Knitting and Crafts for Charity

Sevenoaks is competing in RHS South and South East in Bloom 2026 this summer and the Town Council had sent out a request for any groups to knit or crochet butterflies and caterpillars to be used in decorating the floral displays that will be seen around the town.

This year marked David Attenborough's 100th birthday and Sevenoaks in Bloom will be celebrating his work.

The campaign will also highlight the importance of bugs, with planting focused on pollinator friendly flowers. Our group has been busy knitting caterpillars for the display.



Here is an example of items made by the group that were donated to the "Handmade with love" shop in Maidstone. This shop is one of 3 run by the Making Miracles charity, which raises funds to provide 6 free specialist counselling sessions to families who have experienced a birth trauma or baby bereavement together with a stand alone Face to Face support group.

In the recent donation we have a patchwork quilt, crochet blankets, knitted cardigans and squares, patchwork coasters and canvas pictures showing some of the variety of items we make.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday each month at Otford Parish Council and knit, crochet and sew items for charity, also enjoying a chat and a cup of tea! Any one wishing to join us please contact: Maggie Leighton at

knittingforcharity@knoleu3a.org.

"Walkers Needed" **Walking Group 4** has space for 4 people, it is a half day walking group, not too difficult 4-5 miles with a really friendly group, walks are always finished with a pub lunch which everyone can join on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Contact Brian Kyte at halfwalks4@knoleu3a.org.uk for more details.

A few drawings by **Painting group 1** - Peter Smith



STROLLERS

At the beginning of May we met at Hollybush and walked Knole. After a longer than usual walk around we went to the Hollybush Cafe for a late lunch.

June saw us back at the nature reserve but this time we had lunch at the Bull, Otford.

Our walk this month was to be from Coolings Lifestyle but was cancelled because of the heat although we did meet there for lunch.

Lesley Mitchinson strollers @knoleu3a.org

MOT3

On Friday 8th May we had lunch at The View, our last one before September because they have broken up for summer holidays. On 20th May we saw St Christopher at the Stag, 22nd May dinner at Never Say Never and The Master Builder at The Oast. On Tuesday 26th the TWODS production of Evita at The Assembly Hall Tunbridge Wells.

1st June we saw Funny Girl at The Stag very well acted by Sheridan Smith and Darius Campbell, 18th June a visit to St Clere Estate and tour by the Head Gardener who told us a lot about the history and the building itself. It was a fund raising event for Hospice in the Weald which happens annually together with other charity fund raising events held there. It is also a wedding venue.

June 23rd we saw The Brilliance in the Room at The Oast and on 26th we visited the Excel centre to see the immersive experience of Cleopatra which had lots of interesting information about her including the fact that she married her 10 year old brother so that she could become queen of Egypt.

On July 1st we saw Toy Story at the Stag and it is just as good as previous ones.

We have plans for a visit to Jonty's Little Feast restaurant, The Oast to see Gentleman Jack, Polesden Lacey and Pie and a Pint at The Kentish Rifleman for this month and future plans to visit Chevening House, Allington Castle, Godington and the next LAMPS production at the E M Forster theatre, so plenty to look forward to.

Half Day Walking Group 1



The first Thursday in the month half day walking group went on a fabulous circular walk starting at Dry Hill Nature Reserve, walking through part of the Montreal Estate and Sundridge Manor Farm with stunning views and passing the beautiful



St.Mary's Church, Sundridge, a Grade 1 listed Anglican church. There was plenty of shade so a good walk as it gets hotter again! The path took us past Coblands Nursery, where we had coffee and cake in their cafe (worth a visit if you haven't been). Janet Rapicano

London Studies 8

At the beginning of July a group from LS8 visited The Charterhouse in the Barbican area of London.



On a beautiful day, we were met by an extremely efficient and knowledgeable guide, who introduced us to this fascinating piece of history in London. The building was a former monastery built in 1371, which is now home to an almshouse, chapel and a very interesting museum. Following his tour, we were transferred to one of his colleagues, who then took us around the gardens. Again, a very knowledgeable lady, familiar with the many different types of plants and trees.

A thoroughly recommended venue for a London Studies group.

Sue Holt

MOT2

At the beginning of May we went to the View, West Kent College, for lunch. If you haven't been I highly recommend a visit. The food is excellent and a three course meal will cost you under £20.

Also in May a small group of us went to the Ramases Exhibition at Battersea Power Station, it was super as was our lunch.

On a wet, blustery day in June we went to Little Budds Peony Farm near Thurnham. Unfortunately the flowers had suffered from the early heat wave and the torrential rain the day before. I have seen photographs of the farm at its best and it is really lovely. We consoled ourselves with some retail therapy and lunch at Newnham Court Shopping Village.

Lesley Mitchinson mot2@knoleu3a.org



London Studies 1 Visit to the Fitzrovia Chapel

In May our group visited the spectacular Fitzrovia Chapel near Goodge Street. The Chapel was originally part of the Middlesex Hospital and used as a place for quiet and reflection by medical and other staff. Our guide covered the Chapel's history, its recent refurbishment and explained the significance of the magnificent mosaics. The ceiling alone has 1.1million 24 karat gold leaf tesserae. The marble entrance is lined with memorial plaques for benefactors, former staff and friends of the Middlesex Hospital. King Charles III used the Chapel for his first Christmas address. After leaving the Chapel we made a quick visit to Fitzroy Square to admire the architecture and learn of its history and famous past and present residents before heading to the Wellcome Collection for lunch.

Sue Hurst

Membership Renewal

Thank you to all who have already renewed their membership.

For others, please renew as soon as possible, details can be found on the website at knoleu3a.org.uk

All renewals are due by 30th September.

Historic Buildings

Strawberry Hill House & Garden, created by Horace Walpole in the 18th century, has been open to visitors for over 250 years. The Historic Group booked a tour guide and Tricia was very knowledgeable on the history, stories about the paintings and architecture making our visit extra special. This extraordinary building is internationally famous as Britain's finest example of Georgian Gothic revival architecture and home to an increasingly important collection of paintings and objects. Well worth a visit.
Janet Rapicano



Riviera Travel

Just a reminder that if you are booking a holiday with Riviera, please let them know at time of booking that you are a u3a member. At no cost to you, they will donate 10% of the cost of your holiday to Knole u3a. It is a really valuable way of boosting our funds.

General Meetings

Bat and Ball Community Centre, Crampton's Road, Sevenoaks TN14 5DN
between 2.00 and 4.00pm.

List of Speakers for 2026.

July 27th: Jim Solomon a Knole u3a member - The Cutty Sark Past and Present. Jim's talk covers the Cutty Sark's history as a legendary tea clipper, his role in the recent refurbishment and conservation project and the improvements made to this visitor attraction to enhance public engagement and preserve the ship for future generations.

August: No meeting

September 24: Open Meeting.

October 26 Health & Wellbeing and details of the Health and Wellbeing roadshow.

Sally Salter, a Health & Wellbeing Coach will be talking to Knole U3A in October 2026 on health, wellbeing and ageing well.

The Next Newsletter

Copy Date: 10 September 2026 newsletter@knoleu3a.org.uk

Copy for the Newsletter need not just be from the group contacts, anyone is welcome to contribute, copy date for the next issue is always mentioned at the end of each issue.

It's the 10th of the alternate months e.g. 10 November, 10 January 2027 etc.