

# u3a Knole

learn laugh live



## Chairman's message

Hello everyone and a very special hello to you if you are a new member and this is your first newsletter. We are very glad to welcome you to Knole and I hope you will come to realise that joining was an excellent move! We had a very successful open afternoon in September and we have gained 23 new members since then, our membership now stands at just over 500.

This morning I attended a talk organised by the Kent Network entitled 'AI for Everyone', given by a member of another u3a, Russell Whitworth. It was an excellent introduction to AI, how it is already integrated into our lives, how we can use it as individuals and how it could be used in our own u3a's. It was good to see some members of Knole on the Zoom meeting this morning. We have booked Russell to come and give a similar talk to all our members at the General meeting on the 23rd March next year so put the date in your diary, you won't want to miss it. I've just completed a four week course on AI run by the u3a AI team. It was an excellent course, I learned a lot and I am keen to share that knowledge, so there may be more coming up in the near future.

Last month I told you about the online talks and events put on by the Third Age Trust and I was delighted to see that not only did some of you attend one or two of the presentations but our own Dr Alan Heyes is giving a talk on the 9th December on The Importance of Fungi for the Environment and Humans, a subject I know he is passionate about and very knowledgeable. Do take a look at the online events on the main u3a website, they are free, varied and easy to join.

*Debbie Magness*

Chairman

## October Mystery Break

We left Sevenoaks with only the coach driver knowing our destination!

We stopped off at Reading for a river boat trip and the sun nearly came out for us and stayed dry.



The afternoon was spent at the Reading museum. Highlights include important archaeological finds from Roman Silchester and medieval Reading



Abbey. There is also a unique Victorian copy of the Bayeux Tapestry, contemporary Aldermaston Pottery



and the famous Huntley & Palmers biscuit tins.

Overnight at The Apollo Hotel 4\* on route for our next day spent in Winchester with an excellent guided tour of the Cathedral. Our last morning was a visit to The

Vyne NT House where the Sandys and Chute families made their home for over 500 years. They accumulated beautiful and important objects and made significant changes to the house during their lives. Jane Austen often visited with her father, as he was the local vicar.



Another excellent trip organised by Margaret Thorpe

### Book Group 3

We are a happy committed group of 9 who have interesting and lively discussions around the books we read. We choose the books in blocks of about 6 months usually based on personal recommendations and media book reviews, a very democratic process. Mostly our books are contemporary fiction but occasionally we read non fiction or memoir.

Over the last year our favourites have included, 'Unlawful Killings' by Wendy Joseph KC who is a retired Old Bailey judge writing about some of her most challenging murder cases.

The Seventh Son by Sebastian Faulks, this book focuses on ethical dilemmas raised in an engaging story about competing attitudes to human diversity, love and power.

For the majority of us, our favourite book of this year is 'There are Rivers in the Sky' by Elif Shafak.

An enchanting story of three characters living by two rivers and spanning an enormous time span of BCE600 to now. The story features the politics and preciousness of water with the poem of Gilgamesh as a backdrop. Several of us heard Elif Shafak earlier this year when Sevenoaks book shop arranged for her to speak to a packed audience at Sevenoaks school, a truly inspirational evening.

Fran Tulett



### London Walks 2

A walk along the Union Canal with a visit to Victoria Park, such an interesting morning out followed by a delightful lunch at the Blue Ivy Cafe, strangely its very pink inside. However the food was very good and we were given free cake! 24 Stoneway Walk E3 if you are in the area is well worth a visit.

Inside Victoria Park, the first public park to be built for the people, not only the first

one in London but also the world.

The Burdett-Coutts Drinking Fountain, a gift to the east end from Angela Burdett-Coutts, known as the richest heiress in England following her inheritance from her grandfather who originally formed the Coutts bank.

The bathing lakes were very popular. One morning 25,000 bathers were counted. So many more interesting facts are too numerous to mention here. Thank you Lyn for the great walk.

And yet again two ladies showing their great taste in clothes.

LD



### MOT3

Our outing to Ramsgate Tunnels and Wetherspoons on 29th September was a lovely day out. The weather was beautiful and we sat on the Garden Terrace overlooking the beach and sea eating our lunch then walked to the tunnels for a very interesting guided tour.

In October we had lunch at The View, two visits to The Churchill Theatre - the first to see an Inspector Morse thriller and the second to see Sandi Toksvig, very funny.

In November we have plans to go to The Pamoja Hall for The Sing Off charity raiser, The Oast to see Quartet, to the Kentish Rifleman for Pie and a Pint night, another visit to The View and The National Theatre performance of The Fifth Step at The Stag.

In December we are having Christmas lunch at The View and have booked tickets for Crash into Christmas at The Pamoja Hall and Jazz Carols at St Margaret's church Halstead and who knows what other events might arise.

Marian O'Boyle [mot3@knoleu3a.org.uk](mailto:mot3@knoleu3a.org.uk)

### Garden Group

Members of the Garden Group visited Merriments Gardens in September, much of which is being restored. Garden rooms feature ferns, sharp leaved plants, acers, summer and autumn borders. Excellent lunch in the cafe too. To be revisited!



In October we visited Wakehurst Place. Lovely autumn colours with plenty more to come. The borders were looking great, lovely atmosphere and of course, we enjoy each other's company. Planning meeting for 2026 and lunch in November. Contact Julie Stevens: [garden@knoleu3a.org.uk](mailto:garden@knoleu3a.org.uk) for details.



## London Studies Group 8



We had a very good day at Syon Park House and Gardens last month. The house was originally a monastery which was dissolved in the reign of Henry VIII. It became the home of the Percy family who became Dukes of Northumberland and it is still owned by the current Duke. It has a fascinating history and the rooms certainly reflect the power and wealth of the family. The photo above shows the conservatory. Well worth a visit.



At the beginning of November we visited the London Docklands Museum and had a brilliant tour with

an extremely informative guide. There was so much to see that some of the group are keen to return to explore more at leisure.

Pat Lowe

## Knitting and Crafts for Charity



The charity Making Miracles held its Annual Big Knit at Rochester Cathedral on 11th October. More than 2,000 6-inch squares were donated! These squares would be made into blankets for sale in the charity shop 'Handmade with Love' in Maidstone. Our group donated knitted squares as well as other handcrafted articles.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at the Offord Parish Council Office. We welcome new members.



Maggie Leighton [knittingforcharity@knoleu3a.org.uk](mailto:knittingforcharity@knoleu3a.org.uk)

## London Studies 1

Visited the Museum of the Home (formerly the Geffrye Museum) housed in former almshouses, built in 1714. The Museum depicts four centuries of home life and the evolution of real London dwellings. In the Rooms through Time, we explored a dining hall in 1630 to a converted flat in 2049 with numerous other homes through the centuries. There are several galleries looking at how various aspects of social life affects our home life.



A living room in a terraced house in 1978.

“The MacMillan family have gathered around the television to watch Empire Road “ curated with Michael MacMillan  
The previous main entrance to the Almshouses, with Sir Robert Geffrye above



Brenda Johnson

## Birdwatching Group



Our first outing of the season was to Dungeness on an overcast but mild day. Chris spotted a Buzzard in the long grass as we drove in, and we were greeted in

the car park by a fly past of a flock of golden plovers, and were then delighted to discover

the visitor centre had unexpectedly reopened. Altogether 8 of us made the trip, and as we walked round the reserve were rewarded with many very good sightings. We recorded 28 different species and witnessed some wonderful behaviours rarely seen. We first heard but couldn't see

the Chiff chaffs, but then came upon a whole group of them flitting about the branches of one particular bush, and later on a second similar bush right next to the hide we stopped at, enabling us to get a really close look without disturbing them.

We also witnessed a Kestrel being mobbed by 2 crows attempting to make it drop its prey. They weren't successful! We later repaired to the End of the Line Cafe for lunch, which is the terminus for the Romney Hythe and Dymchurch light railway trains, one of which duly arrived much to our delight! Gill and Jim took the photos above and Stewart kindly recorded the bird sightings.

Our next trip on November 14th is to Cliffe Pools, and we hope the Sevenoaks reserve will be open again by December 12th as we shall be having our group's Christmas lunch in Otford after that outing.

If you are interested in joining us please contact me.

Ann Windiate [birdwatching@knoleu3a.org.uk](mailto:birdwatching@knoleu3a.org.uk)

### **News from the groups**

Following on from our lively open afternoon we have set up some central lists to keep all members up to date with new ideas, members on waiting lists and existing groups looking for more members.

Setting up new Interest Groups are vital to keeping Knole u3a fresh and exciting and to this end I have been asked to see if I can get enough interest in the following:

**Paddle Ball** – is a hybrid of tennis and squash, played on an enclosed court. It is easy to learn, social and fun and suitable for all ages and abilities. It is normally played in doubles so it is a very social game.

**Pickleball** - is a racket game, like tennis played with a paddle and a perforated hollow ball over a 34 inch net. Basic Rules – One bounce on each side, serve underhand from the baseline, score to 11, 15 or 21 and the winner needs to win by 2 points.

**London Studies** - This is a very popular interest group, and we are looking to start up yet another group. This group had an initial meeting and plan to meet up on the 24 th November at 11.00am to plan outings for next year. There are 7 on the list so far but they need a few more to make it even better.

**Gentle Aerobics** – I have been asked if I can set up a suitable group for this, but I need to know if there is an interest in such a group and what you would like it to do like doing a 30 min gentle work out using a You Tube programme

**Pétanque** - Yet another outdoor activity with the extra attraction of it being held in a Pub.



If you are interested in any of these or have any ideas for new groups, please email me on [groups@knoleu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@knoleu3a.org.uk)

### **Existing Groups that need more members**

**Gardening** - Group members share a love of beautiful gardens and visit various gardens or nurseries in the area. They are small in numbers and would like to find more members to share tips and advice. Visits to local gardens usually involve lunch.

**Historical Buildings** – This was a new group formed from a waiting list and have established their own programme of interesting buildings to visit. While they do have a core number of members they are looking to make the group grow.

**Sailing** - The sailing group members are volunteers that meet every week to help disabled people to get out on the water. The group are looking for volunteers to help on the shore and/or with the disabled whilst out on the water.

**9 Holes Golf** - group for new golfers or who find doing 18 holes a struggle. They have a regular group of 4 or 5, who play on local 9-hole courses and would love more beginners to join them.

**Members out together** – There may be room for 1 or 2 in the existing groups but feel that there may be enough interest for a new group. MOT members arrange visits to a wide range of places and days out, from the theatre, concerts and visits to places of interest.

**Men's Shed** - The name of the group is a misnomer as we cannot yet find a shed to meet in. Meanwhile we meet up once a month for a pint to put the world to right, discuss topical events or people or anything that men find interesting. In addition, we are planning on a few outings to interesting places like Museums, Steam Fairs, Country or Air Shows and even a day out at the Races. We need more like-minded men.



If you are interested in any of the above groups, please let me know so that I can head you in the right direction. Contact me on [groups@knoleu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@knoleu3a.org.uk)

### **Waiting Lists**

If you are on a waiting list and need help to set up a new group contact me on [groups@knoleu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@knoleu3a.org.uk)

## **Next General Meeting**

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

**24th Nov:**

Aden Lane - Biggin Hill and the Battle of Britain: RAF Biggin Hill Museum & Chapel remembers the many people who flew from the airfield, worked on it or who lived in the community especially during the second world war and the Battle of Britain. The talk tells the story of the B of B from their perspectives including many personal accounts of those mementos days.

## **The Newsletter 100th issue**

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