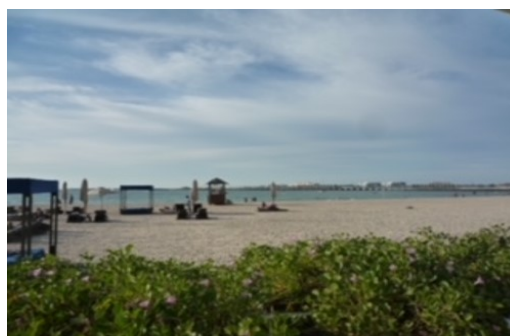


Issue No. 107



SUMMER 2023

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Hello Everyone

Well, we are now into May. The year seems to be passing very quickly. Our speakers at the monthly meetings are very interesting and I hope you enjoy their talks.

Last month I went to Portsmouth to see the Mary Rose located in the Historic Dockyards along with Lord Nelson's HMS Victory, HMS Warrior, The National Museum of the Royal Navy and much more. You could spend a week there! Your ticket can be reused for a whole year.

The Mary Rose is a wonderful museum to visit. The ship is fantastic with scenes of crew carrying out work they would have done in those days in the past. There are many treasures on display that were rescued from the sea including crews' clothes and belongings with explanations of why and how they worked. The guns are terrific and you can see just how big they are. The atmosphere inside the building is specially controlled and there are sound bites as you pass the various scenes. You can also feel the movement of the ship which could make one feel a bit seasick! Bobby and I spent about three and a half hours looking round.

One building is occupied by groups of enthusiasts who build boats; one group are rebuilding a fast torpedo boat that was from the first world war. The torpedoes are launched to the rear and they fire up as they hit the water and the boat has to steer out of its way! They were still being used at the start of World War II but changes were made quite quickly after that!

The trip was organised by Dan McGregor and, if you haven't been on one of his day trips, I recommend that you try one.

Our groups are thriving but there's always room for more. If you have an idea for a group contact Jane Trow, our Group Co-ordinator, and she will help you with setting up. The Sounds of the Sixties is a very popular group where its members make presentations of their favourite music which are very informative and everyone enjoys the music. As the weather gets warmer the outdoor bowlers will be "rolling up" again – if you fancy having a try beware as it is very addictive!

I hope you have a good summer and enjoy the good weather (hopefully!). I also hope you enjoy our monthly meetings – just a note to say that we do not have a meeting in August but there may be a surprise event being organised. Regards to you all.

*Chris Lowe, Chairman*

## MEMBERSHIP

At the time of submission, we have 414 members. Since the Spring Newsletter, we welcome 8 new members: Carole Stansfield, Susan Ratcliffe, Geoff Turner, Adrian McCourt, Sylvia Poole, Linda & Chris Gill and Lourain Green.

**Renewals** – We are going paperless! Renewals of membership for the year commencing 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024 will be 'paperless'. If the details of individual members have not changed since the last membership year, no forms are required; only payment either by bank transfer or cheque. All members will receive information regarding the process via email or post.

The NEW membership cards (for paid -up members) will be available for collection at the July/September General Meeting.

Welcome

Dot Toler

Membership Secretary

### Bucks Memory Support Service Memory Information Session 12th September 2023 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

This free session which will include lots of useful information will be held at The Aylesbury Library. We all suffer from the occasional memory loss. Unfortunately most people are ignorant about the possible causes and what to do to manage this. There can many different reasons. Hearing from an expert could help us all with tips and coping strategies which could help us maintain more independence and confidence. Also it may help when we have friends/family who suffer this whether it be mild or more severe. With the knowledge we gain from this session we might be of more help to ourselves and others. Places are limited and booking is required so please email [bucks.memorysupport@nhs.net](mailto:bucks.memorysupport@nhs.net) or phone 01296 718956 to book a place.

The next **Coffee morning** will be on Monday 15th May 2023 at 10.30 am—12 noon at The Bell, 29 Lower Road, Stoke Mandeville, HP22 5XA. There is plenty of free parking available. The cost will be £3 per person for as many cups of coffee or tea as you wish and biscuits.



## INVITATION FROM SHIRLEY

Since I moved in to new accommodation at Oscar Lodge the Churchill block, 6 months ago, as my garden in particular was getting too big for me to manage I have noticed that the English language is vanishing from officialdom to be replaced by an incomprehensible computerese. I was delighted to see similar confusion in the last issue of the national U3A magazine. My annoyance has been compounded by two things; firstly I don't speak the language, and secondly I have had to write to what seems to be dozens of official bodies informing them that I have moved house.

The top mark went to one which shall remain nameless (they know who they are) who sent my notification of a financial annual update with details of a website at which you could, they said, in a matter of minutes, change your address and other details – simple. So I clicked on that site only to find that from then on that it never mentioned changing your details. After a frustrating 15 minutes. I found another note to tell me that if I left a message explaining what my question was they would get back to me in to a couple of days and see if they could help.

Unfortunately I was not at home when they called and the message they left was that they didn't understand my query "How do I notify you of my change of address". I gave up. Enough of that! I am waiting for some of my U3A friends to drop in and see me. Visitors are welcome any time from 12.30 pm. My apartment is 25 Oscar Lodge right opposite the back entrance to M & S Food Hall in Cambridge Street, not a pretty site but very convenient – nor any residential neighbours so do come in for that cup of tea. Ring me to chat if you have no time and are too busy 01296 531485. Contact email: treveris9@btinternet.com

Hope all is flourishing in the U3A world.

*Shirley Stokes*

### Enter the u3a 2023 Short Story Competition

The u3a national short story competition is back for its fourth year, and the judges are looking forward to seeing what creative writing talents members have to offer. The theme for this year's competition is: '**Decision(s)**'.

We will once again be partnering with Bloomsbury for this competition, and are delighted that Bloomsbury will be supplying copies of the 2023 Writers' and Artists' Yearbook to the 12 top entries. The Yearbook is edited by Alysoun Owen, who returns as one of the judges selecting the overall winner from the entries.

The winner will also see their story published in Third Age Matters magazine, which reaches over 250,000 households, with a bespoke illustration to accompany it. The winner will receive a framed copy of their story as it appears in the magazine.

How it works:

- In summary, your story must be your own, individual, original work, in English, a maximum of 1500 words, and not submitted anywhere else.
- Your submission must be on the theme of: Decision(s).
- You must read the rules of the competition before entering. The link can be found on the u3a website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/short-story-competition-2023>.
- Any submission which does not meet these rules will not be considered.
- All submissions will be judged by group judging panels and the best story from each group will be compared to decide on an overall winner.

The form to upload your entry will be available on this webpage on Tuesday 2 May 2023. All entries will need to be submitted via the online form to be accepted. The deadline for submission is 12 noon on Monday 26 June 2023.

Happy writing!

## COACH TRIPS



	Place	Cost	Money Collected
5th June 2023	Berkeley Castle and Slimbridge	£47	May Meeting
6th July 2023	Mottisfont and Winchester Cathedral	£37 (+£17.50 non NT)	May Meeting
7th August 2023	Avebury Circle and Great Chalfield	£26 (+£12.50 non NT)	June Meeting
5th September 2023	Standen House and Wakehurst Place	£25 (+£14 +£11.95 non NT)	July Meeting
3rd October 2023	Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens	£38	July Meeting

### Coach Outings

#### Trip to Mottisfont NT and Winchester Cathedral

This is to inform you that the original outing for July has been cancelled due to lack of interest. The above outing has been substituted and details will be on our website very soon. Anyone wishing to go kindly contact me on "[outings@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:outings@avu3a.org.uk)". The price is very reasonable.

Also, I'm wanting to know how many of you would be interested in a day (11.00 am to 3.30 pm) at the British Museum on 1<sup>st</sup> November. There are several cafes as well as all the different displays on offer. Entry is free but a donation would be appreciated. I have had a very difficult time arranging places elsewhere to visit due to costs being prohibitive, so I've decided the British Museum would have to do allowing for interest. Kindly email me as above if you're interested.

Dan McGregor

## The Land of Ice and Fire

Steve and I recently took a wonderful 10 day trip to Iceland. We saw an advert for Jona Tours in the U3A Matters magazine and decided we liked the sound of them as they included flights, food, entrance fees etc. Jona runs several tours in Europe including two winter tours around the whole of Iceland in the hope of seeing the Northern Lights. We were lucky enough to see them 3 times on our trip.

Jona's mother was Icelandic and she sometimes leads the tours herself. The tours feel very personal and you get off the beaten track to meet local people. The main island is approximately the same size as Wales but only has a population of 375,000. The Icelandic people are very tough and resilient. Many were still living in unheated turf houses in the early 20th century. Tapping into geothermal energy made a huge difference to their living conditions and economy.

The scenery was stunning, with mountains, glaciers, volcanos, waterfalls, thermal swimming pools and geysers. The people were welcoming and we learnt a lot. Main industries – tourism, fishing and aluminium smelting. Their museums are incredibly well presented and everything is in English.

It was bitterly cold outside but we had the right clothes and only struggled with cold hands when trying to take photos!

Heather Edwards



## Possible trip to Ireland in 2024

Dan McGregor, on behalf of Janet Davis, is taking names of members who might be interested in a 5-day holiday in Ireland in early June 2024, entitled "Great Gardens of Ireland and Dublin". The possible places we would visit are Powerscourt Gardens, National Botanical Gardens in Dublin, Mount Usher Gardens and Kilruddery, Malahide Castle and Gardens and a Dublin Bay cruise. The gardens mentioned are mostly in County Wicklow, South of Dublin.

Anyone interested kindly contact Dan at "outings@avu3a.org.uk". At this stage there is no commitment as we are finding out numbers and whether this is a 'goer'. More information will be passed on to those who have already given us their names and anyone else as well as the Newsletter. Do some research!

Dan McGregor



### Contrail of tears v3

A spiders web of such detail  
can exist in a dying contrail,  
In a sky of monochrome madness  
a black and white web of kind and sadness.  
Morning embers are stoked and caught  
warms my day and warms your heart,  
somewhere near a baby cries  
somewhere near and someone dies.  
Madness is a comfort blanket  
in the chaos of a drunken banquet, your love  
once washed over me and saved me from  
insanity;

Copyright © Drew K Swindells

### Mannequin

Resurrect my mannequin  
make her bloom again  
in the tangled brushwood  
in the wilds where we had stood  
worship for my mannequin  
let her bloom then bloom again  
in her boudoir, she cried for love  
in her boudoir, she cried for her life  
a tragedy and distorted views  
TV bulletins, TV news  
the breakups and the makeups  
the broken heart that's just the start  
forgiveness and a disjointed story  
for the love, for the glory  
water cascades over me  
emotions cascading, none can see  
time cascades over me  
a life cascading, for all to see.

Drew K Swindells  
2023

## Free Online History Talks

Camden Council is running a series of free online adult learning history talks during May and June 2023. Sign up is available to all UK adult learners. To sign up use the link below and scroll through the list to find the talks you would like to join. <https://www.webenrol.com/camden/?page=list&catID=5&>

The following history talks are available; all take place on a Monday morning 11.00–12.30 with a comfort break in the middle.

15 May 2023, 11.00–12.30

Treasures of the Archives: discover some of the highlights from the collections of Camden Archives Centre including manuscripts, photographs, maps, newspapers, artworks, posters and objects

5 June 2023, 11.00–12.30

How Roman was Roman Britain? Explore the impact of the Roman imperial invasion in AD 43 on life in Iron Age Britain.

12 June 2023, 11.00–12.30

The Thames through time: explore the archaeology of the Thames with archaeologists from Museum of London Archaeology and Thames Discovery Programme.

19 June 2023, 11.00–12.30

Daily life in ancient Egypt: discover how wall paintings and objects from ancient Egyptian tombs help us to understand everyday life in the past.

26 June 2023, 11.00–12.30

Animals at the British Library: an introduction to the British Library's physical and online resources and an in-depth look into the new 'Animals exhibition'.

Katharine Hoare  
Education Manager  
Learning & National Partnerships  
T (UK +44) 020 7323 8124  
[khoare@britishmuseum.org](mailto:khoare@britishmuseum.org)



## Africa in my blood – Part 3 December to New Year

My penultimate day at Blue Horizon Bay was a quiet affair spent at my favourite birding place on the island. I photographed 12 different species in two hours including the little Sparrowhawk that sat and posed for ages and the Eagle that flew over and showed a great wing pattern display. I needed to take it easy as I had a long journey of over 300 kilometres the following day. I checked into my new digs at Brenton near Knysna at about 5pm, after spending a couple of hours on the boardwalk walkways with the staff of Nature Valley's Trust who were very informative.



The Brenton on Sea accommodation was much smaller than the previous one, but large enough for a solo traveller or couple. The landlords, an elderly couple, had provided every kitchen requirement and were quick to get anything that needed replacing. They were very environmentally friendly people who feed the birds each morning. Amanda and Andre run once-a-week keep fit classes on the forecourt which I did once. On Saturday mornings they take part in the local 5k park run/walk. I did it for the first time in under an hour – 52 minutes to be precise. I also went on a strenuous dog walk with Andre most mornings – I must be mad, I'm supposed to be on holiday.



Garden birds here are brilliant. Amethyst Black Sunbirds and Cape Sugarbirds make the early morning call here and I made a little friend of a Fork Tailed Drongo that takes cheese from my hand. I am more than halfway through my stay here now. Yesterday I went out with the bird club into the "WILDERNESS" nature reserve and photographed the very shy/rare Narina

Trogon – the male is very showy. The female was with him and was unusually quite pretty. These birds were called alongside us by Robert imitating its call; they came in next to no time. This was a real bird highlight of my trip amongst many others, rounded off with a great group brai /barbecue.



As Christmas Day approaches, I reflect that this will be the first time that I will not be sitting around the dinner table sharing Christmas with my family. After several restaurants telling me they are full up for Christmas Day dinner, I have finally located one doing a carvery called the Pearl View. It has an unbelievable balcony table view from top of "THE HEAD'S" famous Knysna Landmark so I am looking forward to that.

Most of my host Amanda's keep fit group dispersed from 17th December for family Christmas get togethers. So Amanda organised a farewell champagne breakfast for the group to which I was invited provided I did the fitness session prior to it. A full English breakfast ensued, so the fitness session was a small price to pay.

The penultimate day in Knysna included a visit to the National Parks Board HQ to view Knysna sea horses which are a special species. Knysna Lagoon estuary is one of only two locations where this endangered species of sea horses breed. I then took a boat trip across the lagoon and I got a couple of photos of a sea horse and also an octopus around the pier. That was my last trip out except for my Christmas day carvery, which was excellent, except there were no Yorkshire puds. On 29th December I returned the hire car to Tortoise Car Hire at George Airport and boarded the flight back to Johannesburg to see the New Year in with my second family. I then took another plane on 1st January to Nelspruit for the final month up country, the final part 4 of my wonderful 3 months away. Am I sorry to have missed all the snow and minus temperatures? Not really! Great timing.



Chris Styles

## Visit to Chartwell House and RAF Biggin Hill Museum and Chapel

On Wednesday 1st March, Mary Singleton and I joined over thirty members of the Aylesbury U3A on one of their monthly coach trips. We set off early in the morning from Bedgrove to join the queue on the M25 on our way to Kent. As usual, the driver from Motts was lovely and despite the traffic we made good time to Chartwell.

Chartwell, a red-brick country mansion, was the family home and gardens of Sir Winston Churchill and is now run by the National Trust. As we had arrived before the house was due to open at 11.00 am, we headed straight to the Landemare Café which serves light lunches, cakes, scones and hot and cold drinks.



Winston and Clementine Churchill bought Chartwell in 1922 and it was their family home for the next forty years. It is very much a family home and the rooms in the tour include a sitting room, drawing room, a beautiful dining room, library, secretaries' office, Churchill's study and bedrooms. They all remain much as they were when they lived there with pictures, books and personal mementoes to be found throughout the house.

The gardens at the time of viewing were full of snowdrops and hellebores but, as it was still early in the year, we did not explore the gardens fully on this visit. But it looked as though there would be plenty to explore in the warmer weather including woodland walks, a rose garden and a walled garden as well as lakes and a swimming pool. We did however visit Churchill's studio in the grounds which houses the largest single collection of Winston Churchill's paintings. A knowledgeable guide was only too happy to pass on more information about them if you were interested. The paintings were mostly views of Chartwell and landscapes painted during Churchill's travels to countries such as Morocco, Italy and Madeira.

After Chartwell we drove onto Biggin Hill Museum but only after an interesting drive around the tiny Westerham Green on the advice of the coach sat-nav!

Although small the museum tells the mighty story of Britain's most famous fighter station through the personal experiences of those who served there. The museum is to be found on what was farmland but due to its high altitude and strategically important location between London and continental Europe, it was destined to become the most important airfield of the Battle of Britain. Objects in the museum are directly associated to the people who served at Biggin Hill and include uniforms, medals and personal documents. These were all brought to life by the very knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide who painted a picture about the men and planes which began over a hundred years ago.



After a refreshing, complementary cup of tea in The Nightingale Café, we were given another informative talk by the Rector in the Memorial Chapel. The Chapel is a purpose built RAF Chapel of Remembrance. The names of those who had served and lost their lives are displayed on the wooden memorial boards. The beautiful stained glass windows represent the rising spirits of airmen killed in battle and the altar cross is in the form of an aircraft fuselage and wings. A Book of Remembrance holds the names of the 454 aircrew killed from the Biggin Hill Sector and the pages are turned daily to the current date. There is also a replica of the Infant Jesus

of Prague Statue which was presented in 2016. This Chapel is a beautiful and restful place and well worth a visit.



Thank you to Dan McGregor for organising such an interesting visit to two sites in Kent for us to view and enjoy and we look forward to joining you again very soon.

*Susan McCabe*



## Three Kings Called Charles

From Monarchy to Commonwealth in the reign of King Charles 1, then Republic under Oliver Cromwell, to Monarchy again in 1660 under Charles II to the Constitutional Monarchy we enjoy today. Many may think that monarchy is outmoded but we have a Head of State who, no matter what his or her political views are, cannot interfere in politics. Neither can he or she summon or dismiss Parliament on a whim, as could happen in the 17th century.

### King Charles I

Our first King Charles was born in Dunfermline, Scotland in 1600. He was the second son of James VI of Scotland, James I of England, and Anne of Denmark. James was the first king of the House of Stuart.

Charles's elder brother, Henry, a very popular Prince, died aged 18, probably of typhoid. Prince Charles, an undersized 12-year-old, was left to attend his brother's funeral alone as his parents were too devastated to attend.

Charles was, in some ways, the opposite of his brother. Henry had been tall and athletic; Charles was, even as an adult, very small at just under 5 feet tall. Also, Charles had a pronounced stammer. However, what he lacked in physical presence he made up for by his dignity. He is said to have been courteous and disgusted by the lasciviousness of his father's court. No evidence has been found that Charles was ever unfaithful to his wife, Henrietta Maria, while they were together, with either women or men. James, his father, is said to have had male as well as female lovers. The Duke of Buckingham was one.

It was with the Duke of Buckingham that Prince Charles set out for Spain to try to court the Infanta. This was a ridiculous enterprise. Firstly, whoever you were, you did not just turn up at the Spanish court and, secondly, the Spanish were Catholics. Charles and the Duke were lucky to be allowed to leave. Spain, a great power at the time, could well have held them hostage. One thing the visit did do was to reinforce Charles love of art. The Spanish monarch had a vast art collection. Both Charles's mother and brother Henry had collected art and Charles wanted to rival the Spanish with his own collection.

The Spanish Monarchy would only allow Charles to marry the Infanta if he became a Catholic which he could not do as English Monarchs are Supreme Governors of the Church of England. However, Charles did marry a Catholic – Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry of Navarre. Most people in England were afraid of Catholicism as they remembered the burnings of Protestants in the reign of Mary Tudor and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Henrietta Maria was allowed to bring her own priests and French entourage to England which did not endear her to the English and still less to the Scots.

Politically, Charles I was not a man for compromise and was extremely extravagant. He had many arguments with Parliament who often refused to grant him funds. Charles then resorted to forcing loans from individuals as well as other unpopular money-raising tactics.

Finally, in 1642, after being forced out of London, Charles raised his standard at Nottingham and the Civil War began which lasted in all parts of the Kingdom until 1651. In January 1649 Charles went on trial for making war on his people and was executed. The country first became a Commonwealth, then in 1653 a Republic under Oliver Cromwell.

### King Charles II

The man who would become Charles II was born on 29th May 1630. He was one of nine children of Charles I and Henrietta Maria. Two of his siblings died in infancy. Despite being brought up in different establishments from his siblings, he seems to have enjoyed time with them and his devotion to his sisters can be seen in letters he later wrote to them after they married.

The Parliament of Scotland proclaimed Charles II King on 5th February 1649. But England entered the period known as the English Interregnum or the English Commonwealth, when England was governed as a republic led by Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell defeated Charles II at the Battle of Worcester on 3 September 1651, and Charles fled to mainland Europe. Cromwell became Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland. Charles spent the next nine years in exile in France, the Dutch Republic and the Spanish Netherlands. The political crisis that followed Cromwell's death in 1658 resulted in the restoration of the monarchy, and Charles was invited to return to Britain.

Cont.....

On 29 May 1660, his 30th birthday, he was received in London to public acclaim. After 1660, all legal documents stating a regnal year did so as if he had succeeded his father as king in 1649. After the death of Cromwell and the failure of his son Richard to run the country, the second Charles Stuart was in the Netherlands when he got the summons to return to Britain as King in 1660.

He married Catherine of Braganza but had no legitimate offspring, though he is said to have sired twenty children with his many mistresses. All of whom were acknowledged and given titles. Perhaps the most famous of these is James Scott, Duke of Monmouth who tried, unsuccessfully, to take the throne when his father died.

In 1665 the Great Plague broke out in London. It killed many thousands of people in the capital and elsewhere in the country. Cries of "Bring out your dead" could be heard as the dead were collected and buried in pits. There was much argument as to what caused the bubonic plague at that time. The plague was endemic in 17th century cities and the rich left for their estates during outbreaks. However, the bubonic plague of 1665 and 66 was exceptionally virulent. Many people who had seen a comet in the sky in 1664 said it was the wrath of God.

On 2nd September 1666 the Great Fire of London broke out. Both the King and his brother James took part in pulling down houses to try to halt the fire. The fire was said to have started in a bakery in Pudding lane, the premises of Thomas Farriner. Others blamed foreigners in the capital, especially Catholics. The fire destroyed 13,200 houses and 87 churches even old St Paul's Cathedral. After the fire, Charles ordered the houses to be rebuilt of stone and brick and, of course, St. Paul's was rebuilt by architect, Sir Christopher Wren.

On his death bed Charles is said to have converted to Catholicism. If true, he had been clever enough to keep his beliefs secret whilst king. His brother James, who took the throne when Charles died in 1685, was not so clever. His insistence on being a Catholic led to his being deposed by his daughter Mary and her husband William, both staunch Protestants.

### King Charles III



King Charles III was born Charles Philip Arthur George on November 14, 1948, in London. The son of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Charles ascended the royal hierarchy at an early age. His mother became queen when he was only three after the death of his grandfather King George VI in 1952. As Elizabeth's oldest child, Charles became the heir apparent to the British throne and received the title of Duke of Cornwall. Charles was also destined to become Great Britain's oldest heir apparent, with his mother remaining queen for seven decades. His younger siblings are Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward.

In 1956, Charles went to the Hill House School in London before heading off to boarding school at the Cheam School the following year. In addition to his education, he had increased responsibilities as he was made the Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester at the age of nine. In 1962 Charles changed schools again to go to Gordonstoun in Scotland. He did not enjoy these early school years. Later in the decade he also studied in Melbourne, Australia as an exchange student. In February 1966 Charles went to Timberlake School in Australia. There he made headlines when he and some other boys tried to order Cherry Brandy in a pub!

Charles studied archaeology, anthropology and history at Trinity College, part of the University of Cambridge, from 1967 to 1970. In addition to his studies, he was active in campus life, involving himself in several activities such as polo. After receiving his degree in 1970, the first royal heir apparent to do so, Charles embarked on a career in the military.

While he was at Cambridge Charles met Lucia Santa Cruz and they were often seen together. They could never have married as she was a Catholic. In summer 1972 he was introduced to Camilla Shand by Santa Cruz. In December of that year Charles, then a naval officer, was sent on a Caribbean posting. In 1973 Camilla wrote to him saying she was going to marry Andrew Parker Bowles.

Cont...

Under public scrutiny his entire life, he married Diana Spencer in the summer of 1981 to huge media fanfare, though the couple would eventually divorce in 1996 after years of gossip and scandal. He is the father of Princes William and Harry and is also a grandfather.

Many children look up to athletic stars or fictional heroes as role models, but for Prince Charles, there was no need. His hero was Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma, his father's uncle, the last Viceroy of India and first Sea Lord of the British Navy. "Uncle Dickie" provided indispensable wisdom in matters of state and romance to the impressionable young heir to the British throne. Charles was devastated by Lord Mountbatten's assassination by the IRA in the summer of 1979. Charles eventually recovered from the great loss, in part by following through on the tasks his great-uncle left on his plate. One such responsibility was the stewardship of the United World Colleges, its presidency having passed from Mountbatten to Charles in 1978, and the prince fulfilled one of his predecessor's wishes by launching a branch in the United States in 1982.

He shared interests with his father, who set up the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Prince Charles set up the Prince's Trust. Together they raised £100,000,000 annually to support charitable work both here and abroad.

After six months of aviation training with the Royal Air Force, Charles joined the Royal Navy in 1971, going on to serve on the HMS Norfolk and receiving a promotion in 1973 to acting lieutenant.

During the mid-1970s, Charles joined the Royal Naval Air Station to receive helicopter training, and later served as a helicopter pilot for the 845 Naval Air Squadron, based on the HMS Hermes. His time with the Hermes included a tour of the Caribbean and Canadian waters before he took up additional course work at the Royal Naval College in Greenwich. In 1976, Charles ended his military service as commander of the HMS Bronington, the same year that he established the Prince's Trust, a charitable organisation dedicated to helping improve the lives of disadvantaged youth.

Towards the close of the decade, Charles further expanded his military skill set with parachute training, having already taken the reins at times as the pilot for the Queen's Flight, the monarchy's official aircraft. He was eventually promoted to Group Captain for the Royal Air Force in 1995, and in the new millennium was again promoted to the rank of Air Chief Marshal.

After years of quietly maintaining their relationship, Charles married Camilla Parker Bowles on 9th April 2005. She then became the Duchess of Cornwall and now often accompanies her husband on many of his official visits. Besides his royal duties, Charles has become a leading philanthropist. In addition to his trust, he has backed a huge array of charitable organizations, supporting efforts to improve educational services, fund arts initiatives, support sustainable business endeavours, provide employment opportunities to older citizens and help the environment.

In 2007, Charles launched the Prince's Rainforest Project, a global initiative with corporate and celebrity backing to curtail tropical deforestation and thus aid the quest to staunch climate change. And in a nod to religious diversity and the multicultural nature of modern England, Charles had also promised to have a multi-faith coronation.

In addition to his philanthropic work, Charles is also an avid watercolourist and has published several books, including the 1980 children's story *The Old Man of Lochnagar*, 2010's *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World*, and 2012's *The Prince's Speech: On the Future of Food*.

In spring 2019, Charles announced that he had opened a new bed and breakfast in Caithness, Scotland, called *The Granary Lodge*. The B&B is located in the grounds of *The Castle of Mey*, the former retreat of Charles' grandmother, Queen Elizabeth.

In many respects the King has not had an easy life, but with the woman he loves as his Queen by his side, he and the nation are beginning a new chapter.

*Val Edwards and Mary Singleton*

## **National Allotments Week 2023 will be 7th–13th August 2023**

The National Allotment Society (NAS) is the leading national organisation upholding the interests and rights of the allotment community across the UK. We work with government at national and local levels, other organisations and landlords to provide, promote and preserve allotments for all. We offer support, guidance and advice to our members and those with an interest in allotment gardening.

In 2011, His Royal Highness the King Charles III kindly agreed to become the Patron of the Society. The King is an avid gardener himself and advocate of green issues; he is also keen to promote and protect the UK's enduring traditions.

2023 marks the 21st year of National Allotments Week. For the past two decades, The National Allotment Society and their members have used this period to engage the public in the world of allotments and publicise the benefit of allotment gardening for communities, individuals, and the planet.

This year, National Allotments Week will run from 7th–13th August with the theme of Soil Health. Good soil health is widely accepted as way to improve yield when growing edibles but also contributes positively to biodiversity and the environment as the world faces more climate challenges. The NAS hope that this National Allotments Week will inform and educate gardeners old and new about the benefit of caring for the soil and the creatures that inhabit it.

Gardening is good for you and allotment gardening offers additional benefits that help to ameliorate loneliness and enable citizens to contribute to society, especially beyond retirement. Hundreds of allotment holders volunteer on their association committee and give up precious time, helping to manage and maintain sites. Even on a site with no allotment association plot-holders are part of a community of like-minded people, many of whom are eager to share their knowledge and spare produce. The social contact offered by gardening in an allotment environment helps to combat the lack of social capital embodied by loneliness, which has the equivalent risk to health as consuming 15 cigarettes daily and is twice as harmful as obesity.

If managed properly, an allotment can produce enough food to supplement a family's weekly shop, with fresh fruit and vegetables over the year. Allotment gardeners can choose to garden organically and avoid ingesting chemicals that are likely to be present on shop bought fruit and vegetables.

In a survey of National Allotment Society members nearly every person said their love of allotment gardening comes from the fresh air, home grown produce, healthy lifestyle and like-minded people this activity offers.

As many new plot-holders discover, growing vegetables requires acquiring new knowledge and skills and the satisfaction gained from eating their first home grown tomato or new potato makes them taste even more delicious!

Find more information at <https://www.nsalg.org.uk>.

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS



### SOUNDS OF THE SIXTIES

We are a friendly group of around 50–60 members who meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month to listen to and watch video presentations from the sixties presented by our members. Open to any U3A member.

Each month is a different theme or genre. Previous subjects have included rock, pop, soul, Motown, blues, folk, member's memories from their youth, as well as specific artistes and novelty themes. Despite the name, we also include music from the 50s and 70s to broaden our musical interest.

Tea, coffee and biscuits are served in the interval.

Entrance is £1 to cover the hall hire and refreshments. Open 1.30 for a 2.00 pm start

23rd May	Jean Ashton Peter Ashton	Watch your Language It Happened in Manchester
27th June	Brian Little Phill Rance	Heroes and Villains Beatles—Please let it be
25th July	John Wilford Terry Bloxham	British Rock Bands of the 60s Southern Rock Bands
22nd August	Val Sheppard Ann Dwyer	Music Memories Part 3 Rocks Greatest Practitioner
26th September	Norma Davies Phil Davies	Bits and Pieces The Allman Brothers Band

For more information email John Wilford at: [sixties@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:sixties@avu3a.org.uk)

Tickets are still available for our U3A Mid-Summer Rock'n'Roll Party  
At Rivets Sports and Social Club on Thursday 22nd June.  
Featuring Live 50s–60s Rock'n'Roll Band 'THE BLUE MOONS'  
Includes Licenced bar and Raffle. Tickets £10.00

For more information and how to buy tickets please email: John Wilford:





## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

I have recently taken over leadership of the Photography Group and so far we have had two sessions. In April we had a practical session in Wendover Woods. The weather was not brilliant but it did not stop us finding a selection of interesting topics. Here are a few of our photos. You can see more on our website [avu3a.org.uk](http://avu3a.org.uk).

Our meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at the Scout Hall in Oakfield Road, HP20 1LL from 10.00 am to 12 noon

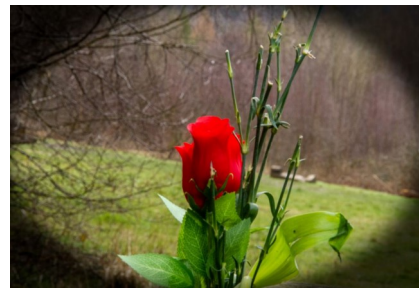
21st June Meeting session at Scout Hall

19th July Shooting session – venue and subject(s) to be discussed and agreed.

16th August Meeting session at Scout Hall.

If you would like to make the best use of your camera, whatever type/model, why not get in touch at [photo@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:photo@avu3a.org.uk) to find out more?

*Wolfe Maldar*



Photos taken by Jeremy Dibble, Andrew Mills and Wolfe Maldar

### Summer's finally landed – Kim Hicks June 2021

Summer's finally landed, we've waited long enough  
we've descended on the beaches, we're looking pretty rough  
We've piled on the calories, been starved of vitamin D  
squeezing into cozzies, too small for you or me

That pale white skin is burning, to a funny shade of pink  
we've all been starved of sun rays and been knocking back the drink  
Stampeding to the beaches as the mercury finally rises  
inhibitions disappearing in all our shapes and sizes

We do it every year, this year's no exception  
we binge bathe all day in the sun to darken our complexion  
We'll show off all our white bits as though a badge of honour  
then watch it peel and disappear.....and wonder why we bother?

Sent in by Ron Adams

## ART and CULTURE GROUP

Hello AVU3A members!

This is a notice of our new group – Art and Culture. We meet at The King's Head in Aylesbury on the third or fourth Sunday of the month at 12 noon – date dependent on our schedules and Bank Holidays.

We got off to a fantastic start last month with members doing 10-minute chats on various aspects of our chosen theme 'Sculpture'. We featured artists and their works and themes ranging from the Renaissance to the 19th century – throwing in a bit of the Third Reich!

This month we were treated to a talk by one of our members of the artist Pieter Brueghel the Elder and we will all contribute by bringing to the discussion our favourite Brueghel painting.



In May we will feature 10-minute chats on 'Artists We Don't Like'. What a great idea! I knew mine right away. This is an opportunity for us to look more closely into art we think we don't like and to be informed by the other members of why we should actually like that art.

This is a group in progress. It is very much as we, the members, want it to take shape so we are flexible in what we do every month.

We are also planning on visits to galleries and museums.

There is space for more members so do please get in touch the usual way.

Terry Bloxham

## CRAFT GROUP

Workshops were again held in February with members producing decorative gift boxes, some of the results can be seen here.



Jane Hobson has also made these lovely crochet tulips



Jill Gray

## ELW ends up in Court

The unusual spectacle of Exploring London Walkers taking off their coats, emptying their pockets, unbuckling their belts and having penknives confiscated were to be seen on the March walk around Westminster. The walk started on a bitterly cold day with the temperature around 3 degrees but feeling like -2 degrees. The visit to Westminster included Tate Britain and St John's Smith Square, institutions for art and music. A change from the usual protocol of not stopping for coffee on the walk was rescinded. We all needed a hot drink to sustain us in the cold weather, so went into the 'Footstall' café in the crypt of St John Smith Square. The café named after the story that Queen Anne was asked how she wanted the church designed. Apparently, she flipped over her footstall and said 'like that'.

A quick tour of one of the Royal Park's smallest parks, followed during a spell of welcome sunshine. We then continued along Lord North Street where we found painted on a house an old sign referring to the Blitz. Amazing that it had survived as the nearby church of St John Smith Square had been destroyed by incendiary bombs around the same time.

The walk continued through Dean's Yard and then to Westminster Abbey. Nearby was the Methodist Central Hall where it had been planned to have lunch in the basement restaurant. Unfortunately, it was closed on the day of the walk so it was decided to head off toward the South Bank for lunch. Soon after starting our search for a lunch venue, we saw that the Supreme Court had a café, and decided to eat sooner rather than later. Hence, as we entered the Supreme Court, we were shocked to find that we were required to have an 'airport-type' search, as described at the beginning of the article, before being allowed down to the café. The cafe was situated on the lower ground floor which also included a most informative exhibition of the role and history of the Supreme Court. The café was in an area where defendants would be held whilst awaiting trial when it was a Crown Court. Thankfully, the café worker was able to rustle up soup and sandwiches for us although we were led to believe that 'His Grace' (President of the Court) might not have soup on Monday!

'Public Shelters in vaults under this Street'



Members of the group looking at the wall inscription regarding shelter



The Presidents' ceremonial robe



In the café looking up from where the cells once were

Peter Harding

## Creative Writing Group

In April 2022 we were recovering from lockdown and congratulating ourselves on having kept our group running throughout those difficult times. We idly discussed the possibility of creating an anthology of our work and trying to publish it. No sooner had that little seed been sown, than a tragedy struck. One of group members, Jackie Rickard, our dear, dear friend, died suddenly and unexpectedly. We were utterly shocked, desperately sad and we miss her so much.

When we first met after this dreadful news, we thought that the book we had discussed vaguely might be a fitting memorial to our wonderful friend. It would be an anthology dedicated to her memory. Once we had this in mind, it energised our actions, and we spent the Summer reading, revising, editing and selecting our favourite pieces. This was no mean feat as our group has been together for five years and we had produced a lot of work. Finally, we agreed on 19 short stories, including three of Jackie's and, during the Autumn, we set to work proofreading and preparing the texts for a potential publisher.

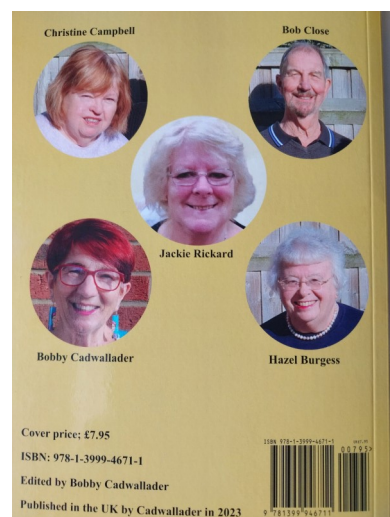
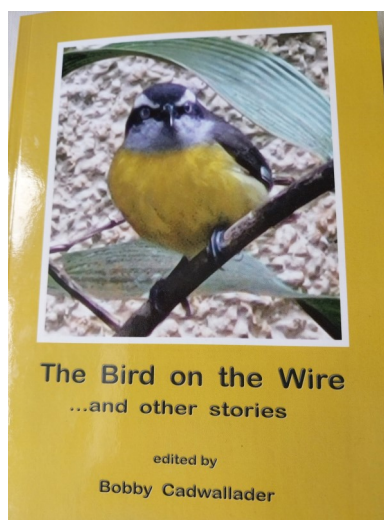
In January 2023 I was lucky enough to get in touch with Alan Corkish, a member of a U3A group in Liverpool. Alan heads up a small publishing firm. He was more than encouraging and agreed to help us with our project. Alan was an absolute star. He gave unstintingly of his time, proffered excellent advice, and was always speedy in his responses. The result of his amazing efficiency and knowledge was that we received our consignment of books on 27th February, less than 6 weeks after my first contact with him.

Our excitement and delight at holding those books in our hands was palpable. Our enthusiasm meant that we had sold well over half the books before Easter and we sold more at the meeting in April. There are only a few books left now so please get in touch if you would like to purchase a copy.

We are delighted that we have raised over £300 which will be donated to the Florence Nightingale Hospice, a local charity which Jackie held dear to her heart.

It has been a brilliant experience for us all from start to finish and I still pinch myself when I look at my copy of "The Bird on the Wire" on my book shelf.

*Bobby Cadwallader* Group Leader – Creative Writing





## LOCAL WALKS

Monday 13th March 2023

On a dry but windy morning 18 members of the Local Walks Group set off on a 4-mile circular walk from Ivinghoe to Ivinghoe Aston returning to our starting point.

We took a footpath leading to Ivinghoe Aston. Trees were full of blossom and there were excellent views of Ivinghoe Beacon. The walk was easy with the wind behind us. At the end of the footpath, we turned towards Ivinghoe Aston. It was a pleasant walk through the village passing a variety of older buildings including a very small and pretty Victorian school and school house. The building is now a residential property. How times have changed!



Photo courtesy Sheila Page

Once through Ivinghoe Aston we turned onto a footpath leading us back towards Ivinghoe. What became very clear at this point was the strength of the wind against us. On the way we noticed at a distance some very strange looking structures located near to the Grand Union canal. These turned out to be a film set, for a movie called Wicked.



Battling on against the wind we took shelter in a small barn and enjoyed a short coffee and biscuit break before our final leg back to Ivinghoe. As we approached the village we were blessed with another early sight of spring with many young lambs and their mothers enjoying the late morning sun.



Photo courtesy of Dr Eric Rose

We lunched at the Half Moon pub in Wilstone which was, for most of us, on our return journey back to Aylesbury. As always the food was of excellent quality and extremely good value. The beer was good too.

Roger Fox

Ron Adams took this photo in Malcesine, Lake Garda.





## Local Walk – Phoenix Trail – Monday 17th April 2023

On a dry and pleasant morning 17 members of the Local Walks Group set off on a 4-mile circular walk from the start point of the Phoenix Trail near Longwick heading for Pitch green, Skittle Green and Forty Green, returning to our starting point along the Phoenix Trail.

The Phoenix Trail is a disused railway between Princes Risborough and Thame, converted for cyclists and walkers. The Phoenix Trail is 7.5 miles long, flat, well-surfaced and traffic-free with magnificent views of the nearby Chiltern Hills. We walked the first section of the Phoenix Trail for approximately 0.75 miles to a road junction where we turned left on to a quiet road heading towards Pitch Green. At this junction we took a little time to admire the existing Victorian, Bledlow railway station and platform and noted the railway lines that still exist crossing the road surface. The walk along the road to Pitch Green was pleasant with spring flowers in abundance. After Pitch Green the walk to Skittle Green and Forty Green was via public footpaths across local fields. There were pleasant views in all directions including the Chiltern Hills. Most of the route was easy without too much mud. However, things changed when we reached Forty Green where the mud was inescapable but we all survived to live another day.

After taking a well-earned coffee break at Forty green, we returned to our starting point along a 1.5-mile section of the Phoenix Trail, passing the old Bledlow railway station. After the walk we drove a short distance to the Lions of Bledlow for a pleasant after-walk lunch.

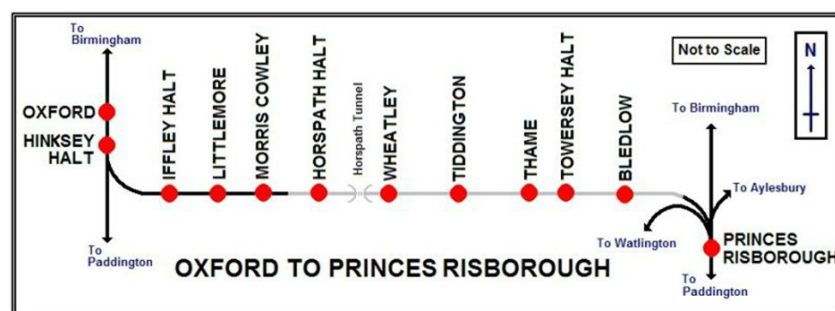
Roger Fox



Photos courtesy of Sheila Page

The Railway from Princes Risborough to Oxford was Authorised in 1861 and Construction of the Broad Gauge Line was started by the Wycombe Railway immediately. The Line reached Thame the following year and a direct Service from Thame to Paddington via High Wycombe & Maidenhead was started immediately. Trains took nearly 3hrs, calling at all Stations on Route, including the new Station at Bledlow and (by Request) the Halt at Towersey. Construction onwards to Oxford took more time, not least because a 520-yard tunnel had to be constructed at Horspath. The tunnel is single-track with a double curve in it, the centre being out of sight of both Entrances. Nevertheless, the Line to Oxford was completed in October 1864, with new Stations at Tiddington, Wheatley, Morris Cowley and Littlemore before reaching the GWR Main Line, South of Oxford at Kennington Junction.

The Bledlow Station Building survives and had been extended as a B&B run by the granddaughter of Percy Smith, Bledlow's 3rd Stationmaster who worked at the Station between 1918 and 1950. The Signal Box has been demolished and the track bed is now part of the Phoenix Trail, a long-distance Footpath & Cycleway.



## Speakers at forthcoming Monthly Meetings

Please note that these and future meetings will be held at the **Roman Park Hall at Berryfields** (next to Aylesbury Park Railway Station) at 10.30 am (doors open at 10.00 am)

Wednesday 14th June 2023

Izaak Walton—A Fishy Tale

Colin Oakes



Wednesday 12th July 2023

Unexplained Mysteries and Cover-ups

Andy Thomas

Wednesday 13th September 2023

An Actor's Life

Jeff Roselar

There is plenty of parking available in the railway station car park which is free of charge on the day of our monthly meetings.

### Answers to Spring Quiz

1. IMF—International Monetary Fund
2. NATO—North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
3. CEO—Chief Executive Officer
4. AFK— Away from Keyboard
5. TBH—To be honest
6. GMT—Greenwich Mean Time

### These towns are capitals of which American States

1. Juneau
2. Dover
3. Boise
4. Albany
5. Pierre
6. Olympia
7. Cheyenne

Last date for copy for the Autumn 2023 Newsletter will be 1st August 2023 so please send any items you may like to share with us to [newsletter@avu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@avu3a.org.uk).

If you do not use internet/email then please send your contribution, either typed or handwritten, by post to Mary Singleton, 6 Redwing, Aylesbury HP19 0WB.