



Issue No. 106

SPRING 2023

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Hello Everyone

Spring is almost with us. The year is moving on. It's time to visit the lovely places in the Chilterns and see how lucky we are to live in such an area with so many great places to enjoy. Coombe Hill near Wendover is a good place to start. There is ample parking and when you start walking you will soon see wonderful views such as Chequers – maybe the PM is there! The 180 degree (at least) view from the monument, if it is a clear day, over gorgeous countryside is amazing and extensive.

I can recommend a pleasant trip to have a look at Wendover Market on a Thursday in the centre of the village. The stalls offer an excellent range of products. The fruit and veg are outstanding as is the fresh fish, cheese, and there is a very high quality bread outlet. You will also find pet food, eggs and lots of other interesting stalls. Wendover has a range of excellent cafes and food premises plus a very interesting antique shop that has been on television several times.

Our U3A is getting back to pre-Covid levels of membership very quickly as new members are joining every month. This increase is thanks to the warm welcome you all give to new members and the number of interesting groups that we have. Don't forget, if you would like to start a group that you think we would be interested in, talk to the Group Coordinator, Jane Trow who will help you get going.

It's worth going on one of Dan's coach trips. They always go somewhere interesting and make good use of membership of the National Trust which makes them very cost effective. If you know of somewhere of interest that we may not have seen, let Dan know as he is always on the lookout for new places to visit. Thank you Dan for all your hard work organising these trips; it can be a difficult thing to do but you succeed in providing a very good range of destinations.

Enjoy yourselves and have a good Easter. I look forward to seeing you at the meetings - I am trying to provide a wide range of speakers. Again, if you know of someone who can give an interesting talk please let me know.

Chris Lowe-Chairman

avu3a Committee Post Holders

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We all wish John Wilford a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him back at SOTS and at our monthly meetings. Thanks to Phil Toler for taking over the "sound system" at our February meeting.

We also wish Derek Ayshford and his wife Pam a speedy recovery - Derek manages our website and u3a administration system (Beacon) and also deals with other IT matters.

u3a's Mid-Summer Rock'n'Roll Party

Featuring Live 50s & 60s Rock'n'Roll Band



Thursday 22nd June 2023 7.00 - 10.00 pm

Tickets: £10.00

Rivets Sports and Social Club.

Licensed Bar & Raffle

Enquiries about this event contact John Wilford. email: sound@avu3a.org.uk



MEMBERSHIP

At the time of submission we have 405 members. Since the Winter Newsletter, we welcome 9 new members:

Isobel Wilkinson, Linda Wallace, Andrew Swindells, Gill Robinson, Karen Mintern, Tina Doyle, Roger Speck, Margaret Mote-Thear, Collette Speck

Dot Toler Membership Secretary



The next Coffee morning will be on 20th March 2023 at 10.00 am—12 noon at the The Bell, 29 Lower Road, Stoke Mandeville, HP22 5XA. After that the next coffee morning will be on 15th May, same time, same place.

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.



That's 60's Television

For all you 60s fans out there, there is a new 60's television channel which started broadcasting on 6th January. You can find it on:

Freeview Channel 75 Sky channel 366 Freesat channel 506



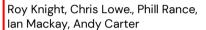
Tony Blackburn opened it with The Move's 'Flowers in the Rain', which is a nod to the first track he played on the opening of Radio 1 all those years ago.

John Wilford

avu3a Christmas Meeting 2022

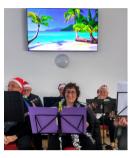
Lots of our members turned up wearing their Christmas jumpers, or other relevant adornments, for our Christmas meeting at Roman Park Hall. After a general welcome and introduction to the meeting by Chris Lowe, the group leaders gave their usual updates and information and then it was time for coffee/tea and mince pies or biscuits. The Ukulele Group, led by Andy Carter, then entertained us with both traditional Christmas music and songs and others from their repertoire. It was all very jolly and we were able to sing along as the words appeared on the screens on the walls at the front.







Phil Bryant





COACH TRIPS



Date	Place	Cost	Money Collected
3rd April 2023	Paycocke's House (NT) and Colchester City	£26 (+ £8.50 non NT)	February Meeting
2nd May 2023	Mary Rose and Portsmouth Naval Museum	£54	March Meeting
5th June 2023	Berkeley Castle and Slimbridge	£47	May Meeting
6th July 2023	Houghton Lodge and Stockbridge	£54	May Meeting

My 2022 Highlights

I hope my story might inspire other U3A members to take a leap of faith and try new adventures and challenge their abilities to explore and have fun making new memories. I am not known for being an intrepid explorer, more a routine shopper at my local Tesco or to venture to Milton Keynes. But after losing my dear husband in 2020, the realisation came that my dream of returning to visit New York would come true. I would need to plan a trip of my own while I still could.

The drive to explore all the exciting places of interest overrode my fear of going alone. I planned my trip over two weeks and decided to go before I changed my mind or got cold feet. As a caveat, I have to mention I did suffer a brain tumour in 2000, and also had a stent fitted December 2021. So I consider myself part of the walking wounded. But the airlines are marvellous and strangers are so often helpful and assist you along the way.

I spent ten days in New York City having the most memorable experience and have no regrets at travelling alone. A trip of a lifetime. New York is an amazing place, as are the people.

To complete the year I climbed the Millenium Dome in London as a joint birthday present with one of my sons. The day he bought my ticket the roof was ripped off in a storm so I thought his email was a joke! I will be 70 next year (in case anyone is curious). But it was a fantastic experience and the view is well worth the climb..

Age is just a number—so fulfil your dreams if possible.





On top of the Empire State Building



Ground Zero



Times Square, New York

Calibre Audio offers Book Groups to Bucks residents who struggle to read print. National charity Calibre Audio is encouraging eligible local people to join its free audiobook service and offering the additional opportunity to take part in new book groups being set up specifically for its members in Bucks.

Based in Aylesbury, Calibre Audio supports adults and children across the UK with a wide range of different print disabilities including visual impairment and learning disabilities. Calibre Audio has a collection of more than 14,000 audiobooks ranging from the classics and the latest bestsellers to non-fiction and poetry. Audio books can be downloaded to or streamed on any device or listened to via USB memory stick.

We're keen to encourage U3A members who are not yet a Calibre member to join the service and register their interest in our book groups.

We currently have an in-person book group meeting at the Calibre Audio offices in Aylesbury which is the last Wednesday of every month from 11 until 12.30pm. We will also be offering telephone and online book groups for those who would prefer to join a book group from the comfort of their own home.

To find out more about Calibre Audio and sign up to join, please go to calibreaudio.org.uk. Anyone interested in joining a book group after becoming a member or existing members who would also like to take part, should email Calibre on enquiries@calibre.org.uk or call the membership team on 01296 432339

Summer Holiday Blues

Fleeing from the cold and rain
I packed my bags and caught a plane.
Off to the sunny climes I thought
12,000 miles, the ticket was bought.
The Summer there would be hot and dry
While 'Blighty's' Winter a far, far cry.
The thoughts of swimming in gentle waves
Sitting on the beach wearing bathers and shades.
The warmth of the sand under your feet
Oh what a wonderful, wonderful treat.
10 weeks of this bliss, yes I could take
Keeping in the shade in case I should bake.
Slapping on cream to get a suntan
All in my mind. That was the plan.

What I actually got was different you see
Not only did the rain follow me
First cyclone Hale and then the storm
This really isn't Summer, not the norm.
Strong winds, the gales and then the flood
Turning the sea to a murky mud.
As trees came down and blocked the way
Weather warnings are given, "Indoors to stay"
First amber alert which was changed to red
Would we sleep if we go to bed?
A state of emergency was then put in place
What to expect? What were we to face?

I hope the end of this is in sight Still in New Zealand and my homeward flight It's another 3 weeks before I catch the plane And return to England with the cold and the rain.

Beverley Harris

If there are any old Aylesburians out there, they may be interested in some old
archive films found by Stewkley Film Archive and submitted to YouTube to view.
You can find it on youtube.com/watch- Changing Aylesbury

Pat Baker

South Africa in my Blood Part 2, November 2022. Blue Horizon Bay – Eastern Cape Christopher Styles

The Blue Horizon bay area where I am lodging is half way between Port Elizabeth (PE) and Jeffreys bay. The name suggests a peaceful restful place and that is just what it is. There is a shop for groceries and, more importantly, beers and wine, a little café and not much else. If peace and tranquility are your thing, then this is just the place! I have a beautiful view from my balcony out over the ocean. Those with good eyesight and good binoculars are able to see whales passing across the bay; unfortunately not close enough for me to see as yet.

My main focus, birdwatching, has gone well with three successful field trips with various bird club members. They are a really friendly group of around 30. I've had some great sightings. I noticed a Long Crested Eagle as I drove from my digs to the shop. I returned on foot and got within 20 metres - he sat there and posed for ages. Well "you don't look a gift Eagle in the beak" so to speak, do you? The photo was one of my best.

Day 12 of 30 - until today we've had wall to wall sunshine but this morning it is dull and drizzly and it's going to get very windy in the afternoon. Not much to do but get some provisions in at the nearest shopping mall about 30 minutes away toward PE.

The next day was a chill out day. I think of an Otis Redding song of the 60's "I'm just sitting with a flock (Terns) on the bay, wasting time".

The next day I visited a game park called Kragga Kamma. It was only half an hour from where I am staying and only 120 rand (about £6) to get in. Mini Kruger in size, it took me about 4 hours, with stops, to navigate one of the many circular bumpy dirt track road routes. You could easily spend 4 days in Kruger which is the size of Wales. The stops were to photograph some of the animals of which there are 28 shown on a nice handout leaflet, with a stop for coffee and a scone at the bush cafe at half time. Three of what the South African's call the big 5 are roaming wild here - Lion, semi wild, Buffalo and Rhino. No Leopard or Elephants. Addo Elephant park is only an hour further on and they have all of the big 5 there. Here at Kragga Kamma there are 11 species of antelope and I managed to photograph 6. Other animals photographed were Giraffe,

Zebra, Buffalo, Cheetah, a massive Bush Pig, Warthog

and Ostriches.

I followed it up a couple of days later with a visit to Addo Elephant park. There are pretty much the same animals there as at Kragga Kamma but there are lots and lots of Elephants. I also took some great bird photos there. The one of the Knysna Lourie was, as requested, as close as anyone could get; the bull

Elephant too was pretty close - no more than 10 to 15 metre's away. Both were taken from hides.

Towards the end of the stay, I was recommended a restaurant which looked out over the bay, as being not only good for the food, but also for Whale and Dolphin watching. That was good advice. My first Whale and a very large pod of Dolphins, which I managed to get some photos of, passed by. Clearly visible in my shots, but a little too distant to use for this article.



On my penultimate day at this location, I decided to go horse racing at Fairview race track which was only half an hour's drive away. It was a beautiful sunny day out enhanced by 5 winners in the 8 races and a small profit. A very low key track, no Ascot this, small amounts bet and small amount won. I was accepted



into the trainers' lounge and visited the winners enclosure with one of the trainer's wives and met jockeys, etc. It was great to do something a little different. I started packing in the evening for tomorrow, as it's my last day here, and it's a long drive to Knysna, my favourite place in RSA, where I will spend my second month. Blue Horizon Bay was a great choice: Great birding, great views, great hosts and lots of friends made.

TIMELY DEBUT NOVEL

Chris Hammonds has been a member of Aylesbury Vale u3a for more than ten years, attending Chess, Ukulele and Creative Writing groups in that time. Way back in 1983 he had a short story broadcast on the BBC, but subsequent family and work commitments meant that writing was on the back burner, until retirement in 2008 provided the time and opportunity to resume writing for pleasure. Chris has written dozens of short stories in recent years, but 'Dodgson's Dodo' is his first published novel (Sept 2022). If you are someone who cares about our planet and its future this is a book to give you food for thought. But if that sounds very serious, this is fiction and there's plenty of adventure and fun to keep you entertained.

It's the story of six characters, all birds, but this is not a children's story. It's definitely for grown-ups! What begins as a quirky woodland tale evolves into a challenge to the mismanagement of the environment by humans, and their abuse of power over all other species. There's banter between the birds, information about the natural world; there's serious debate and there's satire. It's a story that takes the birds on an unlikely but intriguing journey from woodland to Westminster.

The title refers to the fact that Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) immortalised the otherwise extinct dodo in 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'. The dodo was yesterday's bird, but what will be the fate of tomorrow's birds, of tomorrow's humans and of our fragile, suffering planet?

The hero of 'Dodgson's Dodo' is a feisty rook, Rachel, who plays a smart role in this fascinating and imaginative story. All the birds are real characters, and everyone reading it will be both entertained and better informed. It's witty and memorable, but above all it's topical and relevant. Its message is urgent.

Chris has lived and worked in several different countries, but has been settled in Buckinghamshire since retirement. He has three children and eight grandchildren, and 'Dodgson's Dodo' is dedicated to his grandchildren and to all the other grandchildren of the world. After all, the planet we inhabit will belong to them, and it's our responsibility as adults to change the way we operate if the planet they inherit is to be the worthy and beautiful place it should be.

For anyone with an interest in nature, environmental issues, society, language, the big wide world – this could be your way into several hours of pleasurable and worthwhile reading. ('Dodgson's Dodo' by Christopher Hammonds is available from Amazon in hardback, paperback and for Kindle.)





MEMORIES OF A TRIP TO NORTHERN SPAIN

Many years ago some of you may remember that I took a party to Valladolid in Northern Spain as a finale to my stint as outings organiser. Before we left, Guillermo Corral, a young friend, gave us an introductory talk about the region of Castille we were about to visit and en route from the ferry in Santander his parents hosted us to tea at their home. One evening the younger members of the family took us on a walking trip to see the interesting places in Valladolid that were illuminated, all of which added to our enjoyment of the trip.

I thought you might like to know that young Guillermo, who was here to improve his English, is now just forty, and has recently been appointed as Spain's Ambassador to Estonia after an interesting international career.

I still have my Spanish contacts and keep up my Spanish as a member of the wonderful Spanish group run by Sheila Page. I know from the recent Anniversary tea that there are still one or two who came on the trip who may share my memories, even though 'Time Flies' is something of an understatement in this case.

Barbara Whitaker

Chinese Banquet at the China Brasserie in March

Chinese Banquet at The China Brasserie in Fairford Leys will take place on Friday 5th May at 12:30 pm. Cost is £24 including tip.

Address is 2 Pine Street, Fairford Leys, HP19 7HS. There is a free car park nearby in the centre.

Please email your interest to social@avu3a.org.uk.

You can pay online: Lloyds Bank

Sort Code: 30 90 38 Account Number 03115723

University of the Third Age Aylesbury Vale Business Account

Use your surname as the Reference

Alternatively you can pay me at the next monthly meeting on Wednesday 8th March by cash or cheque made payable to: University of the Third Age Aylesbury Vale

Sheila Satterthwaite



Cycling Adventures in Belgium in 1964

In early 1964 I was wondering where to go in the summer for a cycle racing break. France would have been nice but difficult so Belgium was a no brainer and Ghent the place to go.

I found a place to stay and booked a ticket on a ferry. On arrival I found that the roads were a shock to the system because they were cobbled! And, 'boy', were they rough! You had to ride on cycle paths which were sometimes no better but at least motorists did not bother you.

In order to find where the day's racing was taking place, I had to buy Het Volk newspaper and look for the list of amateur races for that day. Using a map and listening to advice from my landlady I would pick a race and then cycle to the host village. HQ was always in a local cafe where the organisers would direct you to a local house where you could get changed. Then the big moment came for the start of the race. It was both exhilarating and frightening as you may be able to imagine – 25mph over cobbles riding within a bunch of 130 riders you rode on pavements and over grass verges all in the big group. The laps went by and I found myself in the back group and stopped when I passed the house where I had changed earlier. I handed my number back and commiserations were offered along with a glass of beer. I watched the finish and went home to a nice steak dinner. This was the pattern for the next two weeks – no finishes but each day I got nearer the last lap. It was a steep learning curve that showed me that changes had to be made in my training programme when I went home. Belgium in the 1960's was a country still recovering from WW11 but the people were lovely.

Cycle racing was and still is the number one sport in my opinion. The food was basic but good and cycling kit was inexpensive but of good quality. Many Brits went there to spend a season to try and make it as a professional but only a few managed to do so. It is a very hard career and, at that time, it was difficult for them to gain acceptance in European teams. Nowadays there are many British riders in continental teams. In the following years I went back to Belgium and Holland, never doing well but learning a great deal each visit. However my ability improved and, whilst 'not setting the world on fire', I enjoyed my racing. As the time went by I started organising races for professionals and amateurs. It was a great time and I shall always remember my international days.

Chris Lowe



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS



SOUNDS OF THE SIXTIES

We have a regular attendance of around 50-60 people who listen to and watch videos from the 1960s. Despite the name, we also include music from the 50s and 70s to expand our musical interest.

There are two presentations of 50 minutes each with a tea/coffee and biscuit break in the interval.

Entrance fee is £1 to cover the hall hire and refreshments.

The following presentations coming up are:-

28 February Ann Dwyer – Million Dollar Quartet / Richard Clark – The 27 Club
28 March Brian Little – Reasons / Andy Carter – Harmonies and Harmonicas
25 April Beverley Harris – Standing on the corner / Ralph Rickus – 60s-70s Mix
23 May Jean Ashton – Watch your language / Peter Ashton – It happened in

Manchester

27 June Richard Clark - Friars Club / Phill Rance - Beatles, Please let it be

New members are welcome, just show your u3a membership card to register For more information email John Wilford at: sixties@avu3a.org.uk



Grease

Photos courtesy of Peter Ashton



Car Wash

CRAFT GROUP

"Chris Rosentall made Christmas Table Decorations in fabric and card. It took her some time to make but was well worth it."





Jill Gray

EXPLORING LONDON

Possible future dates for the Exploring London Walks are 10th March, 14th April, 12th May, 16th June, 15th September, 13th October, 10th November. The April and May dates may change due to Easter Holidays and the King's Coronation.

For any new members the following may be helpful: We normally take the first off-peak train (and buy a Travelcard that includes London Underground zones 1-6) that starts at Aylesbury Vale Parkway at around 9.18 (9.15 in Autumn because of leaves on the track), but you can also join at any other station on the route to London - Aylesbury 9.23; Stoke Mandeville 9.27; Wendover 9.31 etc. The tradition is that we all try and sit in the front carriage and which makes it easier for me to give out any details of the walk, and check on numbers. On arrival at Marylebone, we congregate by the 'Bicester Village' information building just in front of the 'Ladies'.

Contact Peter Harding at www.https//pharg20960@aol.com

MILITARY HISTORY GROUP

The Military History Group consists of like-minded people who are interested in all aspects of military history throughout the world and throughout time. Members have been entertained with recounts of history's lesser talked about battles, incidences and subterfuges by outside speakers and our own members, as our current programme shows.

We meet on the first Wednesday in the month in the Tennis Club on Wendover Rd, Aylesbury from 10.00 am to 12 noon. We are a friendly group who welcome all who would like to join us. And as is the ethos of the U3A we all learn by our research and listening.

1st March	Dave Knowles*	Rm's
5th April	TBC	
3rd May	Francis Laferton	Battle of Midway
7th June	Chris Lowe	Subject to be confirmed
5th July	Francis Hanford*	Subject to be confirmed
2nd August	No Meeting	
6th September	Possible Outing	
4th October	Ian Binnie*	Gallipolli
1st November	Chris Lowe	Subject to be confirmed
6th December	Ken S	Little Big Ships

Avu3a Military History Group Calendar for 2023

Ken Satterthwaite



Picture of icy road between Whitchurch and Cublington taken by Richard Stevenson

LOCAL WALKS

On 19th December the Local Walks Group participated in a walk around part of the Ashridge Estate starting at the Bridgewater Arms in Little Gaddesden. We started off in mist and midway round the rain started but luckily it stopped again. It was not a day for lingering to enjoy the lovely views.

There were 14 walking and another 3, who did not wish to risk the slippery terrain, joined us for a very tasty lunch. The pub did a great job despite coping with staff shortages.

Heather & Steve Edwards & Roger Fox.

The plan for the local walk on 16th January was to walk a 4-mile circular route via Astrope to Puttenham returning to Wilstone village for lunch at the Half Moon pub. Given the recent spell of heavy rain we decided to avoid taking footpaths across muddy fields and walk via country lanes.

The weather on the day was dry but cold. After walking through Wilstone village we took a footpath that led to the tow path of the Aylesbury Arm Canal and proceeded towards Wilstone bridge. There has been recent development of some very desirable properties along this section of canal. At the bridge we left the tow path, crossed over the canal and proceeded to walk to Astrope via Watery Lane. Watery Lane proved to be quiet and void of traffic with a small stream running parallel to the road.

At Astrope we left Watery Lane and proceeded towards Puttenham along Cheddington Lane. Although not a busy road, we had to be wary of approaching traffic and carried on safely to the village. At Puttenham we walked to The Church of St Mary and took a short break.

Puttenham is known as a 'Thankful Village'. All the men from the village who served in the armed forces in the First World War thankfully returned safely home. I have entered relevant information from Wikipedia below.

"Thankful Villages (also known as Blessed Villages; Welsh: Pentrefi Diolchgar) are settlements in England and Wales from which all their members of the armed forces survived World War I. The term Thankful Village was popularised by the writer Arthur Mee in the 1930s; in Enchanted Land (1936), the introductory volume to The King's England series of guides, he wrote that a Thankful Village was one which had lost no men in the war because all those who left to serve came home again. His initial list identified 32 villages. There are tens of thousands of villages and towns in the United Kingdom."

Cont....

After leaving the church grounds, we proceeded further along Cheddington Lane to a bridge crossing the canal. We left the road and proceeded onto the canal tow path returning to Wilstone village.

After the walk 19 Members enjoyed a well-deserved lunch and beverage at the Half Moon pub. I have received favourable comments from members as to the value and quality of the food and service at the pub. The pub is cosy and dog friendly, the beer is good too, which ticks all the boxes for me.

Roger Fox







Photos taken by Phil Toler

The Local Walks Group met at the car park of The Lion pub in Wendover on Monday 13th February. The heavy morning mist lifted and we then walked into Wendover woods in lovely Spring sunshine. We were removing scarves, gloves and jackets on the climb uphill! There were magnificent views across to Tring reservoir and beyond from the top. As it was half term there were lots of families with children and dogs playing in the woods. After a break at the café we then took a different route down which was rather steep and returned to The Lion where most of the group enjoyed lunch. Many thanks to Heather and Steve Edwards for arranging this very pleasant walk.

Mary Singleton

Photo courtesy Sheila Page

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 8th March 2023 Bletchley Park Gillian Cane

Wednesday 12th April 2023 My Career as an Airline Steward Alan Brewer

Wednesday 10th May 2023 Love and Laughter Andy Smith

Wednesday 14th June 2023 Isaac Walton—A Fishy Tale Colin Oakes

Wednesday 12th July 2023 Unexplained Mysteries and Cover-ups Andy Thomas

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

NOTICE BOARD AT MONTHLY MEETINGS

There is no dedicated u3a notice board in our new monthly meeting venue at Roman Park, Berryfields. However, there will be a portable notice board available for us to use.

Any notices for groups, outings, or other events can be fixed to this board on a temporary basis. But must be removed after each meeting. The notices can only be fixed using Velcro sticky pads. NO DRAWING PINS will be allowed as they will damage the board. These are the house rules.

Velcro sticky pads are easily purchased in any DIY store at a reasonable price. If there are lists to sign or fill in, you can do that on a nearby table.

Many thanks for your co-operation.

John Wilford, Hall Manager-sound@avu3a.org.uk

Answers to Winter Quiz

- 1. Catch 22—Joseph Heller
- 2. Angels and Demons—Dan Brown
- 3. Midnight's Children-Salmond Rushdie
- 4. To Kill a Mocking Bird—Harper Lee
- A Short History of Tractors in Ukraine— Marina Lewycka
- 6. Smileys People-John Le Carre

What abbreviations do these mean?

- 1. IMF
- 2. NATO
- 3. CEO
- 4. AFK
- 5. TBH
- 6. GMT

Last date for copy for the Summer 2023 Newsletter will be 1st May 2023 so please send any items you may like to share with us to 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 OWB.