

**u3a**  
learn, laugh, live

**WELWYN HATFIELD**  
AUTUMN 2025 ISSUE 80



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Chair's Report	14	Fun Times
5	News	16	Deaf Awareness
6	AGM	18	Ukulele group
8	Volunteering	20	Writing for Pleasure
10	Puglia	22	Photography group
13	Architecture Group	24	Philosophy & Psychology
		26	Summer Term Speakers

Front page picture by Peter Fox, Photographic Group, taken during the annual walk of the Strollers group through Hitch wood near Hitchin to see and feel the golden leaves fall.

## From the editor

This is my third issue, and it was again a pleasure to produce.

I hope you like the photograph on the front cover, chosen from an excellent set submitted by the Photography Group, and the change in format to fill the whole space available..

The cartoon on page 25 was put together by AI, with my idea translated into art by Microsoft. Socrates really did say he was the wisest Athenian because he was the only one who knew that he knew nothing. I recommend a recent speech about him by

Clary Doyle "*Why It's Better to Doubt Than to Know*".

I hope you will find—as I did—much of interest in this issue. I enjoyed Beryl Whyatt's article on Deaf awareness, the last sentence of which made me laugh out loud.

Finally, as a new member I was educated by an interview with Eric Midwinter on the u3a page of YouTube. He was one of the founder members of u3a, and has just died aged 93. Clearly a remarkable man.



Geoffrey Hollis

## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Well, there it was – gone! Summer Term is over and it's time to enjoy the holiday (!?). Where did it go? I hear you ask. Well, it must have been all that Learning, Laughing and Living we've been doing!

Term began on St. George's Day with one of our excellent programme of talks, and then the following week it was time to re-live the swinging sixties with Tony and his group providing the music, and fish'n'chips organised by Marie.

The following week we departed for the much-anticipated Travel group's visit to **Puglia**, Italy (reported on pages 10–12).

Towards the end of May the Theatre group went to see the much-acclaimed and very raunchy, ***Cabaret*** at The Kit-Kat Club, formerly The Playhouse Theatre on the Embankment. We were invited to arrive early to enjoy the entertainment in the foyer bars and, after picking up our shots of schnapps, we proceeded to participate in what was on offer from the singers

and musicians – all very much in the style of a 1930's Berlin cabaret. The show, the performances, the singing and the staging were most impressive. As well as humour and poignancy, it had a sharp political edge with the threat of Nazism ever present. We thoroughly enjoyed it.



June began with an Architecture Group visit to **Eltham Palace** on a beautiful day. I had never been and was very keen to see both the gardens and the interior as well as the juxtaposition of the old Palace and the 1930's building. (*Reported on page 13*)

That week we were also interested to hear our editor's talk on the architecture of **Hatfield**. It was fascinating to learn about what was on our doorstep.

In mid-June, just before the heatwave began, the theatre group ventured into London again to see ***Just for One Day***, the musical about the Live





Aid Concert 40 years ago. This was very nostalgic as most of us could remember where we were “on that day” and there were plenty of “goosebump” moments. Once again, the singing was outstanding and the evening was universally enjoyed.

Later that week we had a very interesting meeting and video organised by Jean Mackie of the Arts Appreciation Group at the Focolare Centre in Welwyn Garden City. It was a very pleasant venue for this event exploring the painting *Las Meninas* by Velasquez.

On the following Wednesday meeting we had a session on The Importance of **Strength and Balance**, which required us to participate in some exercises (if possible). So that was different!

The next day (never a dull moment!) some of us visited the **Terranova Restaurant** at Stanborough Lakes for our Italian Lunch, organised by Tony Tutton. Once again, the food was excellent, the ambience convivial and the staff friendly and helpful. In addition the restaurant offers very good value for money for

these group events.

So we were into July! Another much-anticipated theatre visit – this time to the Barbican to see *Fiddler on the Roof* – a revival of the production from the Regents Park performance of last year. It’s such a pleasant experience to eat lunch in the sunshine outside on the terraces of the Barbican and by the water. The show too was excellent. Many of us have seen productions of this show before but this was exceptional in terms of staging and performances. And, needless to say, it has echoes of problems of migration in the present day.

The last week of term presented a clash as the Travel Group were going to be in the Peak District and would therefore miss the **Summer Garden Party** (page 14). I am told it went well, ably led by Dave Charlwood and Tony Tutton as Quizmaster. Entertainment was provided by The Ukes Group who have, I understand, clocked up many performances now and raised a considerable sum for charity. *See page 18.*

**T**he **Peak District trip** was pleasant and will be reported in the next issue. The weather was fine and the programme varied.

Another very sociable lunch was held at the **Misya Turkish Restaurant** in the week after the end of term.

I am looking forward to the visit of the Gardening Group to **Beth Chatto's Garden** but there are still other activities taking place

during the summer including a theatre visit to the Bridge Theatre to see a revival of A ***Midsummer Night's Dream***. So much to occupy us!

**T**o conclude I would like to thank all the members of the committee who do so much to provide and support all these activities and communicate with the membership.

See you in September!

**Pamela Williams**



The **Scrabble Group** has room for four new members. They meet on a **Thursday morning** at **Birchwood leisure centre**, Hatfield, in the Wellfield Trust room from 10-12. Don't worry if you haven't played for years, they just enjoy themselves! Plenty of parking, coffee bar.

**Contact Group Leader Ann Bolt on 01707 260938**

## News

**Kathleen Monk** joined the Italian lunch at the Terranova restaurant on Thursday 26th June where she celebrated her **95th birthday** with us !! She has been a member since January 2000, and regularly attends the Rummikub Group.



**Marion Cleveland** has found a good home for your unwanted tools and electrical appliances. Rather than scrap them, donate them to **Tools with a Mission**. This is a Christian charity that collects unwanted but usable tools, refurbishes them, and sends them to the developing world, particularly Africa, to help create livelihoods. They send around 20 containers filled with over 300 tonnes of tools each year.

Details of your nearest collection point are on their website.

Marion learned about this from **Cathy Limebear**, a new member.

### Travel Group dates for 2026

Beautiful Jersey 1st – 6th May Tailored Travel 'Welu262'.

Industrial heritage of the Black Country 6th – 10th July  
Tailored Travel 'Welu261'

Historic houses and heritage of Northumbria 7th – 11th September.

Are you are looking to book a holiday with **Riviera Travel**? If so, do remember to **book directly** with Riviera rather than via a travel agent and **mention u3a Welwyn Hatfield** at the time of booking. **They will donate 10% of the holiday cost to us.** This does not cost you anything; the amount that would normally go to a travel agent comes to us. It **does help you** though because it keeps your annual subscription lower than it would otherwise have been.

*Corrie Godfrey received this letter from Elizabeth Gowing, who talked to us on June 11th.*

Dear Corrie,

I hope you're well!

I am very glad I'm going to get to see you and your group again on 25 November next year, but in the meantime I wanted to write with an enormous thankyou for the support that was given after the talk I gave last month.

As I mentioned in my previous email, I waited to send this thankyou after I'd paid in the final part to the matched-funding opportunity that's being run today on [https://](https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/little-roma-ashkali-and-egyptian-bright-beginning/)

[www.globalgiving.org/projects/little-roma-ashkali-and-egyptian-bright-beginning/](https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/little-roma-ashkali-and-egyptian-bright-beginning/)

In total, including my fee for the talk, there was £396 donated (in cash and card payments) by your group: extraordinary generosity from your members! That amount of money can make a



real difference to the work we do – it's the transport costs until November to get volunteers out to our centre to teach the science clubs and Saturday extra-curricular support activities, or we might use some of it to cover the healthy snacks for the pre-schoolers who come each day to the kindergarten.

Either way, it is a lovely feeling of support across the continent, and please pass on to your members an enormous thank you from all of us in the Ideas Partnership team.

This week we organised a summer camp for 60 of the children from our centres. It was a joy to see them sitting on grass and playing among trees. I'm attaching a few photos from yesterday so you can see whom your members' money will be supporting!

With best wishes from Kosovo,

**Elizabeth**



## Volunteering

**D**o you remember the stern-eyed Lord Kitchener image from World War One? **Your country needs you!** was the message on the recruitment poster. It became iconic and has been used widely in various reincarnation ever since. But now, in place of Lord Kitchener, can you use your imagination and see Chris Savage who fills the coffee making rota for our Wednesday morning meetings, or Sue Dorrington who finalises the welcomers rota, or Colin Slade who runs the front of house rota come to that. They all need you.

Naturally if you want to take your time and consider all your options before getting involved in anything that is fine, please do take all the time you need, or if you decide for whatever reason that you can't volunteer at the moment, or ever, that is fine, you are still a very welcome member and important to the organisation too.

Our u3a does need people to volunteer though, otherwise it would not exist. There are all

sorts of jobs that need to be done to keep functioning, from boiling a kettle and filling cups at the weekly meetings, to getting more involved in, say, the running of a group, to being involved in the admin, the writing an article for the magazine, or perhaps the setup of the computer and audio equipment at the meeting is more for you. Whatever your skills are we would like to put them to good use.



**O**f course, all training and support will be given. When you joined our u3a you were probably given a skills sheet to complete, asking if you would like to be more involved. I personally don't really remember mine and it wasn't that long ago that I completed it, but times change and what we can, or can't do does too.

**T**here is much to be gained by volunteering. You become more involved in your organisation, you increase your circle with stronger social connections,



you give back to an organisation that gives to you and you gain a greater sense of purpose outside of your home and family. If volunteering can be classed as an act of generosity it can also trigger the release of "feel good" hormones like endorphins and oxytocin, which I am told have stress-reducing and mood boosting effects which can also lead to lower blood pressure, a stronger immune system, and a longer lifespan. Now I am not saying volunteer at the u3a and

you will live longer, but it is worth a try, don't you think?

There is more information about the opportunities in our groups on the website and if you look under the Noticeboard section you will see vacant roles. Failing that speak to a member of the committee to point you in the right direction. As Lord Kitchener said all those years ago YOUR u3a NEEDS YOU!

**Rosy Holt**

07711 361 368

[rosy@rosyholt.com](mailto:rosy@rosyholt.com)



**Study into the health and wellbeing of adults who grew up in foster or residential care**

Researchers are holding focus groups to understand the health and wellbeing concerns of people who spent all or part of their childhood in foster or residential care.

If you spent time in care in England as a child and are now aged fifty or above, and would like to find out more, please contact Jono Taylor by:

- Email: [Jonathan.Taylor@ndph.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Taylor@ndph.ox.ac.uk)
- Telephone: +44 (0)1865 617912

## PUGLIA & THE BEAUTIFUL HEEL OF ITALY 8-15 MAY

Our Travel Group of 45 flew from Stansted to Brindisi and then by coach to the **Hotel la Sorgente** which was well-situated on the coast in the quiet resort of **Savelletri**. We liked the hotel and our rooms, overlooking the sea or with balconies.

**Day 1** was a highlight: a trip to the picturesque **Alberobello** famous for its white-washed trulli houses

with conical roofs. It was founded in the 15th century; its houses had been preserved with mostly original features – earth floors (very cold

and damp in winter) and tiny windows. One of our two guides had lived in one of these houses and now had one of his own.

In the afternoon we visited **Locorotondo**, perched on a steep hill. Some of our party found the hills challenging but well worth the views overlooking olive groves and vineyards. The Church of Santa Ma-

ria della Greca was interesting with its many statues of saints.

**Day 2:** We travelled a short distance, on mostly coastal roads, to another picturesque hilltop town, **Ostuni**. It took some navigating and stamina but again had stunning views, including beaches.

Then onto **Martina Franca**, with impressive Baroque buildings and maze of winding alleys. The town centre was most attractive, and a good place to stop for an excellent pizza in the sunshine.



**Day 3:** to **Lecce** required further travel, south along some coast road.

This quite large town known as the 'pink city' has dazzling architecture. We were fortunate to see the re-

cently restored Basilica da Sante Croce as well as the Duomo and Campanile in the centre of town. The tour was extensive and concluded with the roman amphitheatre under renovation. This town was the furthest south on our itinerary but well worth the visit.

**Day 4:** we headed north along the coast to **Trani**, by the beautiful blue

waters of the Adriatic. It was a glorious day and the magnificent Cathedral of San Nicola Pellegrino and the castle opposite contrasted stunningly with the white walls and the blues of the sea and sky. We spent some time exploring the cathedral, famous for its large crypt, walking around the bay and simply enjoying the views.

In the afternoon we went inland to the World Heritage site of **Castel del Monte** built in the 13th century as a monument to Frederick II. It has an unusual octagonal layout with eight octagonal towers and makes a very impressive sight with spectacular views all round.

**Day 5:** was our day at leisure; many stayed by the pool as it was a lovely warm day even if the pool was chilly! Some of our more intrepid members headed off to the nearby town of Fasano to watch the Giro d' Italia go past. I spent the morning walking into town and having coffee in "the best bar in town". We certainly enjoyed a lazy day after the busy previous days.

**Day 6:** a quite long journey across country to **Matera**, famous for its cave dwellings carved out of stone reputed to be the best in the Mediterranean. Unfortunately, access to the cave dwellings was by steep steps with no handrails

so the group split into two depending on bravery and/or fitness. I was a little disappointed that the less able group did not get to see the cave dwellings except from a distance. However, at the end those of us who wanted saw an example of the cave dwellings near where our tour ended. This, at least, gave a good impression of the life of the cave dwellers.

Our last evening was spent very pleasantly. The hotel staff made a huge "Arriverderci" gâteau for our dessert which was delicious. During our stay we had three courses each evening, the first being pasta, but overall food was a little bland for Italy. But the staff were pleasant and there were choices.

**Day 7:** after checking out, we had time at the coastal town of **Polignano a Mare**, a busy picturesque place. Then back to Brindisi for our flight home.

Overall, this was a great holiday in ideal weather. Many thanks to **Jean Davis and Tony Bristow** for their wonderful organisation and support.

**Pamela Williams**

*See overleaf for pictures taken by Pamela. There are more pictures on the Travel Group page on the website.*

TRANI



MATERA



ALBEROBELLO



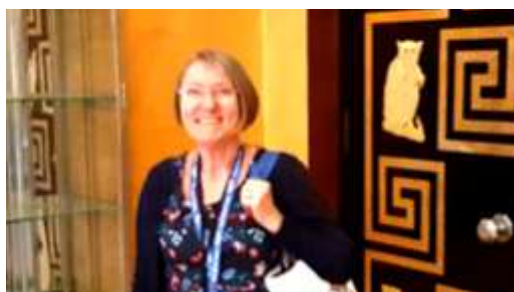


## Architecture Group

**T**he Group enjoyed a very successful visit to **Eltham Palace**, near Greenwich, on Monday 2nd June. Many thanks to **Corrie Godfrey** for organising the trip, which unfortunately she and Tony were unable to attend; taking over at the last minute I was very grateful to **Beryl Whyatt**, our Treasurer, for helping the visit go so smoothly.

Eltham Palace is an unusual place – a Tudor great hall, with 1930s Art Deco additions, and beautiful gardens. Our lecturer, **Mike Nicolas**, has recently covered the Art Deco period, and it was great to see examples of the architecture and furnishings.

We were free to wander around at our own pace using audio-guides, with time to visit the café



and shop. The room guides were very knowledgeable, which added to the experience, and the wonderful sunny weather was definitely a bonus.

Our return journey on the coach took us past the Olympic Park, which made a change from the M25!

If you are are interested in joining the Group, which meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday mornings at the Cricket Club in Knightsfield, Welwyn Garden City, please contact me on 07956 518073.

**Joan Scales**, Group Leader



## Fun Times

The motto of the u3a movement in the UK is '*Learn, laugh, live*'. Welhat u3a certainly does all of these things. I think I'd like to add 'dance' and 'sing'.

On Saturday May 3rd at the Ludwick family centre in WGC we held the latest **Supper Dance**. As usual we were entertained by our very own member **Tony Tutton's** superb group Simply Sixties. There were around 120 members there and the dance floor really shook under the pressure of so much bobbing, twisting and jiving! People who couldn't join in the action were all singing along to those oh so familiar tunes—egged on by Tony (looking resplendent in yet another sparkly jacket although Mike Dorrington

tried to outdo Tony by wearing his own sparkly gold one!).

The fish and chip supper was served on time and enjoyed by all and after that break

there was another session of dancing/jigging to work it off!

The atmosphere was wonderful, there was so much chat and laughter. I wish there was a way of capturing it all.

If you've never been to one of these 'do's I recommend you get a ticket for the next one. Last year we experimented with trying an afternoon dance in the winter. It went down well so there will be another afternoon one on **November 8th**. We've decided to do fish and chips this time as the trial with sandwiches/



scones turned out to be fiddly and labour intensive. Tickets will be on sale at the start of the term in September. Don't miss getting yours!

At 2pm on Wednesday July 16th at Breaks Manor we held our last meeting of the year which was our **Garden Party**. We suggested there could be a red white blue theme as this year marks the eightieth anniversary of the end of WWII. Around 100 of us turned up, suitably attired and carrying chairs and picnics. For-



tunately the broiling weather we'd suffered recently had abated so it was a comfortable afternoon. The 'learn' (and laugh) bit came with Tony Tutton's quiz. The first round was to do with the war memories and the second was more general. It was great fun.



Then came the 'sing' bit as the Ukes group entertained us with a set of music that included some well known forties songs eg - 'Bless 'em all', 'Chattanooga Choo Choo', and prefaced by a trigger warning for content (cue some laughter), 'When I'm cleaning Windows'. Picnics were consumed as and when, a birthday was celebrated by cup cakes being handed out to everyone and all was very convivial.

The audience was augmented at the Ukes performance by the nursery children who were outside playing. They joined in by clapping and dancing and laughing—really heart-warming..

This was a really successful fun afternoon which finished off our term perfectly.

**Ann Davies**

Photographs by **Peter Fox**.

## Deaf Awareness

A chat with the editor at the New Members' meeting, made me start to think about deafness. He had suggested a piece about the weekly British Sign Language class (BSL) we have at U3A. Instead I will try to highlight 'Deaf Awareness' and 'Deaf culture'.

My own journey started ten years ago when I had a phone call from my sister-in-law. I could barely recognise who it was as she sounded like a chipmunk. I complained to my husband that his sister had clearly bought a cheap phone. The next person who rang had also bought a cheap phone. I had contracted a virus that stealthily started to demolish the hearing in one ear. It was a total coincidence that this was a week after I had started volunteering with a charity, The Phoenix Group for Deaf Children, based in Stevenage. I was soon to get a (very) small insight into what it is like to be deaf.

Because deafness is a hidden disability, interaction with the

hearing world is often difficult. We know that deaf teenagers have emerged from Macdonalds with something they just accepted because they weren't able to make it clear what they actually wanted. A deaf parent arriving at A&E with a sick child faces an uphill battle to be understood and to understand.

We have run Deaf Awareness courses for everyone from driving instructors and firefighters to receptionists at local hotels. But we only reach the tiny, willing to learn, minority.

There are some social mores which are important to note. Deaf people are not being rude- all these things are quite acceptable:

Maintaining **eye contact**.

Being **blunt and direct**, whether in description or opinion.

Waving, tapping the shoulder, stamping on the floor, banging on the table, and even turning the lights on and off to **get**





someone's attention.

**Touching** during conversations.

**Hugging** when greeting or leaving.

At Phoenix we encounter a whole range of issues that deaf families face. One of the latest was an unusual request to help a hearing 4 year old who was about to start school. Both her parents are deaf so the family communication language is BSL. She has hardly any verbal vocabulary so we are working with her interpreting from BSL to English! As you can imagine with a lively 4-year old, she is picking everything up really quickly.

I studied Level 1 BSL when I first joined Phoenix but, as with any language, unless you use it you soon 'lose it', so I was delighted to find U3A had a Sign Language group, run by **Jeff Palmer** (a legend!) and have enjoyed brushing up on my limited vocabulary and acquiring many new signs. These include one for Donald Trump which is to hold your hand flat on your head, fingers facing forward, and then just flap your hand up and down a few times.

**Beryl Whyatt**

***Beryl also writes:***

Our VE Day themed Garden Party took me back to the **50th anniversary on 8th May 1995**. I was on holiday with a group of girlfriends in Minorca. We had taken red, white and blue clothes and a Union Flag with us to mark the occasion. We were discussing this by the pool when the chap on the next-door lounge asked if we were 'serious'. Yes, of course we were. He was a member of the British Legion and offered to recite the poem '*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn*'. We put notices in the lifts, inviting any one who wanted to celebrate '50 years of peace' in Europe (out of respect for other nationalities) to join us on the pool terraces. We hoped a few Brits might join us. At the appointed hour we made our way to the terrace and the whole hotel streamed out behind us. They had closed the restaurant and the kids' disco. Guests and all the hotel staff observed our minute's silence and then the dedication.: 'We will remember them'. I have rarely been so moved.

## Ukulele Group

**U**ndaunted, the group have just completed their **100th performance**.

They have come a long way since Autumn 2018 when Ann Davies asked "Does any one play the ukulele?" and new member Dave Charlwood was persuaded to start a new group, meeting fortnightly. Even when half a dozen players were absorbed in 'Ukulele for Beginners' there were hopes that the band would one day perform. Soon singers arrived and the group moved to meet weekly at the WGC Bowls club.

The first performance of half a dozen beginners was to 'Meet the Groups' in Spring 2019. There were no microphones, no speak-

ers and the ukuleles were difficult to hear. So microphones and an S-Z8 mixer amplifier were introduced.



A memorable date was in early 2022: a benefit concert for the nurses and volunteers who manned the Covid vaccination venues, held at Breaks Manor with guest of honour Angela Rippon. The ukuleles swung into their first song and smoke began slowly to rise up between the players and the audience. One of the amps had caught fire! Was there panic? Of course not. It was unplugged and everyone carried on! The group self-financed new kit in time to be used at Lady Salisbury's Coffee Morning at Hatfield House.



Known as the “u3a WelHat Ukes” the group started to perform at local Care Homes and Day Centres. There was a lively visit to Digswell when everyone not only joined in the singing but started to dance. Rock and Roll anthems were added to the set lists. The group perform for dementia cafes, sheltered housing, and church fetes.

At one venue the songs sparked deep memories. A lady after the show explained that her husband, who had not talked for six months, had started to sing along with some of the songs being played and she was delighted with what had been awakened in his memory.

Every summer, the group practise in members’ gardens. Once a neighbour knocked on the door in the middle of a garden rehearsal, and we feared it was to complain about the noise. In fact she asked for a performance in her garden. In 2023 the group were honoured to open “Jazz on the Island” an annual charity concert in a Lemsford riverside garden.

In November 2023, u3a helped

the group by buying an XR18 mixer, five PMA48 microphones and two Tx310 Active Loudspeakers. This year they bought a recording unit + 7 radio kits. The group are really grateful for these generous gifts.

The band has expanded to 21, including singers, accordion players, mouth organ, kazoo, melodica, a drummer and various blowing and shaking instruments, plus Julie playing on the spoons!

All this has required a lot of practice, discussion, technical knowhow, organising and travelling, but given much satisfaction.

Sometimes players are squashed into a tiny corner of a room; other times they have a wide stage, with the audience in the distance. As soon as the audience begin to smile and join in the singing the performances become life-affirming and joyful for everyone.

A Hundred performances are certainly worth shouting about, and baking a cake (back cover).

**Tessa Abberley**

*Picture by Tony Dodd, taken at the Galleria last Christmas.*

## Writing for Pleasure

Our group meet monthly to share an enjoyment of writing, be it fact, fiction, poetry or musings on everyday life. Currently we are full and have a waiting list of members wishing to join.

Each month, we agree a subject for homework and aim to write between 500 – 1000 words relating to that topic. We enjoy our meetings, often marvelling at the various approaches to our set theme. I hope you enjoy this story from one of our members.

**Janet Nicolas**

### Fly boy

Cyril loved the garden. He was a 'plantsman', not a designer; what did he care whether there was structure in the planting? As far as he was concerned, the more plants the merrier and Sweet Williams were his favourite. He couldn't get enough of them.

In fact, he spent all day in the garden, wandering among his favourite flowers, almost perfectly content. But only almost. He hated – no, that's not quite right – he was positively frightened of birds

and the garden had lots of them. He couldn't understand it; they had never done anything to him, but he simply froze whenever they flew by.

It puzzled him and he was irritated at himself for letting this irrational fear spoil his enjoyment of his little paradise. He didn't like heights and thought he must suffer from vertigo (if only he knew what it really meant). Maybe that's why he didn't like birds, they flew so confoundingly high. He determined to conquer his fear.

The garden was surrounded by a high brick wall and Cyril reckoned that if he could screw up his courage and walk along the top of it, he'd be cured of the fear and of his dislike of what ought to be feathered friends. The first problem was getting there. He didn't have a ladder and he would have to climb. Fortunately, he was a good climber and while he had his nose close to the wall, he felt fine. Looking down was a mistake, though. Cyril had many moments of panic, when all he could do was hang on until he had recovered his nerve. However, the wall was old,



warm, weathered brick and afforded plenty of footholds and it wasn't long before Cyril was balancing precariously on top.

He felt worse than ever and hung on as tightly as he could while he raised his head and cautiously looked about him. Suddenly, with a flutter and a whoosh of air, a starling landed right next to him and regarded him with a bright, enquiring, predatory eye. Startled, Cyril promptly fell off, landing awkwardly on the gravel path below. He scrabbled to get away, all his fears returning with redoubled force. And, of course, being a starling, the dam' thing wasn't alone. Starlings are the Hell's Angels of the bird world and a whole clattering, chattering crowd of them surrounded him. Cyril cowered behind a bush until they had gone away.

"I'm just a coward," he raged. "What's the matter with me?"

Bruised, battered and deeply ashamed, even his beloved Sweet Williams failed to comfort him. In fact, he didn't feel at all well. Not only was he still afraid of birds, but he felt an odd compulsion to attempt to

climb walls again and all the time his digestion was really upset. He began to think that if he could fly like a bird, he would no longer be afraid of heights, but birds still filled him with revulsion.

But, butterflies now. The way they fluttered effortlessly about, enjoying the sunshine and perfectly carefree; that he could relate to. Not for him, though, he thought. He might as well accept his earthbound body and cleave safely to the ground. Come to think of it, he was feeling pretty tired. He just had enough energy to climb the warm wall to a little overhang and tuck in sleepily under it.

Without surprise, he found his nose sticking to the brickwork. His legs lost all feeling as they retreated into his body, which was hardening and thickening in the strangest way. Almost his last thought before the chrysalis allowed his body to deliquesce into his next metamorphosis was:

"Flying was a dam' stupid idea, anyhow."

©Jon Westoby



## Photography Group

We meet on the 4th Monday of the month during the U3A "term". Occasionally we also meet on the 2nd Monday of the month, sometimes going to local towns to photograph subjects which take our fancy. These can be colourful flowers, interesting buildings or rusty gates; the latter are often called "photographers' photographs" which means you can get away with pretty well anything. We discuss the results at our 4th Monday meetings .

For example, on Monday 10th March we took a photography walk around Letchworth. I'm a geek so beforehand will use a map and Google street view to find areas of interest. However, my wife thinks I should do a pre-walk and physically look for all the good view points. So, as usual, we did a pre-walk on Saturday the 8th to see what we could find.

It was a warm and sunny day so we walked for a long time and identified many useful subjects for photographs. We wandered down Broadway, where we saw some interesting buildings and then arrived at the

fountain. Standing on the western side, it was possible to see the fountain shooting 10 feet into the air

with the sun shining through it. This was a wonderful place from which to take a "*contre jour*" photograph, i.e. shooting into the sun. Anyone with a tripod could take a slow exposure (1 - 2 second) photograph and have a blurred, "milky" image of the fountain against a normal, sharp, background of the trees behind.

We then found other interesting structures glinting in the sun reflecting off them, and importantly a pleasant café, The Executive, serving good coffee and cake - an essential part of any group outing! Job done and a successful result for the physical pre-walk method ... or so I thought.

Monday arrived and all I could see were rain clouds. I'm quite happy to take photographs in the wet but it's a different type of photograph from the ones I had planned on Saturday in the sun. So ... seven, hardy, well wrapped, waterproof photographers





met on Monday to repeat the route my wife and I had checked on Saturday. When we got to the fountain we found that it was suffering from the cold. It was a little spurt of water about one foot high at its best. Very disappointing. No sun to back light it, was even more disappointing.

We struggled on taking pictures of Art Deco buildings and interesting sculptures, but were getting colder. We were about to freeze solid when we finally arrived at the Executive Cafe. It had lots of tables but only one large enough for all seven of us, however there was a single person sitting at it – another disappoint-

ment. Happily the lone person stood up and offered us the table – result! After we had warmed up we sat and chatted; we decided that it could have been a better day photographically but the cafe was a definite hit.

If you find this fiasco amusing and feel you would like to join us with your photographic device (camera or phone), and see if the next walk is even more disastrous, then contact me via the contact details on the U3A Photography Group Web site.

**Henry Brzeski**

(who also took the photograph )

# Philosophy & Psychology

Proud the group – it will not stop  
Having learned our jolly way  
In what we read and what we say  
Loving it e'en not so chivalrous  
O nward 'long its winding path  
Sometimes straight, then not so  
O bvious. But then we shall  
P ersevere, keep on the ground  
H app'ly still the new findings  
Y et rev'ling in our yesterday

**P**hilosophy is as dry as dust isn't it. Well that all depends. The tomes written by academic philosophers do use lots of long and unfamiliar words, but

we try to avoid these.

Modern writers on Philosophy for a broader audience include Ralph Blumenau

whose years of lecturing to U3A groups has led to a magnificently clear and comprehensive volume. It covers the history from the earliest Greek writings on the subject up to the weird Structuralism and Post-Structuralism of the latter half of the 20th Century. We've taken its 630 pages in chunks and found it useful on our



bookshelves to go back to when mystified by other writers.

Our other favourite author is the American

Michael Sandel whose "Justice" course and book has been widely recognized in political circles world-wide. We find his writing accessible and





congenial to our own generally similar political views, and are now on a third title of his.

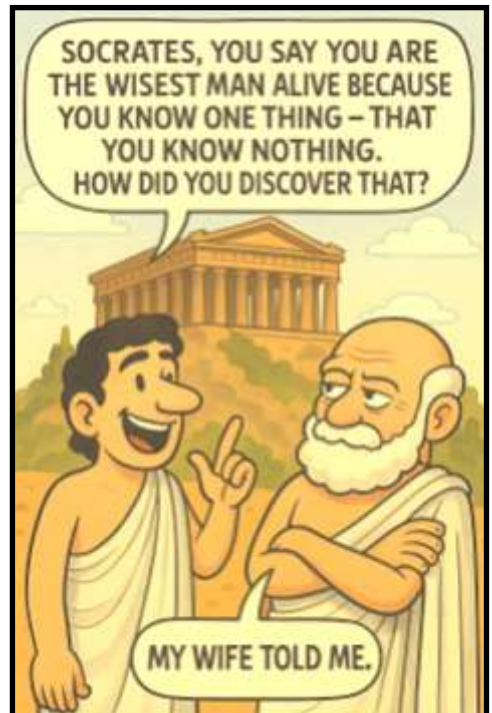
We study each book from cover to cover (unless we find we can't stick it), reading it aloud in rotation, but breaking in with questions and comments quite freely. These discussions are often wide ranging and often as interesting as the book. We generally alternate each Philosophy book with one on Psychology.

**Psychology** is a much more recent field of study and especially dynamic as technologies like MRI scanning reveal amazing details of what is going on in the brain. The enormous variety of studies of how people behave is equally fascinating, especially those studies that reveal how we deceive ourselves by believing we are driven by simple reason. We haven't found such stand-out favourite authors in this field as our Philosophy ones, and too often a book classed as

"Psychology" is primarily an "author-centric" "self-help" polemic rather than one that engages us with interesting new ideas. Individual members of the group have more tendency to disagree on the merits of any particular book, most often reflecting friendly but different views on human spirituality.

### Martin King

*Philosophy and Psychology are listed separately on the u3a website but meet as one Group.*



# AUTUMN TERM SPEAKERS

**T**erm starts 10th September. Doors open at 9.45; refreshments from 10–10.30 (bring your own cup for free tea or coffee). 10.30 start.

To watch from home on zoom, contact: [zoom@u3awelhat.org](mailto:zoom@u3awelhat.org).

To receive links to recordings contact: [video@u3awelhat.org](mailto:video@u3awelhat.org).

## **10 Sep WGC Dr Peter Altman – “Aliens: What are the Chances?”**

Alien life is no longer Science Fiction, but now accepted in mainstream science. What are the chances that it exists – and that we could discover it? Retired biochemist Dr Altman attempts to answer these questions, and discusses, among other things, UFOs and reported alien encounters. Fun Facts about Peter: 1) He is a past Guinness World Record holder for the fastest journey round the London Underground, and also held the same record for the Moscow Metro; 2) He was the first member of the public to travel on Eurostar; 3) He is a Member of the Magic Circle.

## **17 Sep HAT Neil Hanson – “The Ghostwriter”**

Neil has led an extraordinary life in his own right, some of which we heard about last year, but as a professional ghostwriter of over 70 published books, he has also worked with a remarkably diverse collection of the most interesting people around, including household names. We are promised privileged glimpses into the hidden worlds of Neil’s ghosting clients in a talk that is revelatory, insightful and very, very funny.

## **24 Sep WGC Adam Smith – “The Birth of the Skyscraper”**

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries increased wealth and architectural innovation led to the creation of some of the first skyscrapers. This talk looks at Chicago's role in this story.

## **1 Oct HAT MEET THE GROUPS – Open meeting with displays from various groups**

## **8 Oct WGC Jim Stebbings – “Lusitania – a Story of Loss, Deception and Conspiracy”**

Jim tells of the unprovoked attack on Cunard's RMS Lusitania by a German U-boat in May 1915. He reveals facts that are generally not known and looks into the lives of some of those on board.

## **15 Oct HAT Tony Eaton – “Failed to Return”**

Tony re-constructs the fatal last flights of 2 British war time icons, aviatrix Amy Johnson and film star Leslie Howard.

**22 Oct WGC Rupert Dickens – “A Dutch Leonardo: the extraordinary career of Jan Van Der Heyden”** Though not as well-known as Leonardo da Vinci, van der Heyden in the 16th C was a brilliant painter, draughtsman, inventor, entrepreneur, administrator and marketing genius.

**29 Oct HAT Joanna Bogle – “The Nun who saved Jews in WWII”**  
The Hambroughs were well-known on the Isle of Wight, building Steephill Castle at Ventnor. One of them became a quiet heroine in wartime Italy, sheltering Jewish people in a convent in Rome. Riccarda Hambrough’s story deserves to be better known.

**5 Nov WGC Colin Sutton – “The Real Manhunter – Live”**  
After his TV series, Colin will talk about how policing has changed and the two big investigations that he led – Levi Bellfield and Delroy Grant.

**12 Nov HAT Su Murley – “Shirley Murley and Me”**  
Su says “Now I’m an Author anything you say or do may be used in a story! I will be talking about how I wrote and got my first children’s book published.”

**19 Nov WGC Martin Attridge – “The Great Fire of London”**  
The tale features Samuel Pepys, Thomas Farriner, Mayor Bludworth, King Charles II, the Duke of York, Sir Christopher Wren, Robert Hubert, and all the poor people of the City.

**26 Nov HAT Paul Barwick – “WPC Yvonne Fletcher and the Libyan Embassy Siege”** After 34 years in the police, working on national security and counter terrorism, Paul recalls the tragic tale of Yvonne, a young Police Constable who was killed by agents of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi as she stood on duty outside the Libyan Peoples Bureau in April 1984.

**3 Dec WGC CHRISTMAS PARTY & ENTERTAINMENT**

**10 Dec CHRISTMAS LUNCH at Homestead Court Hotel, WGC.**  
Tickets on sale from September

*Welwyn Hatfield U3A does not endorse any products or services offered by speakers*

*See page 18*



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