



Senior

Moments

The Newsletter of the Bookham & District

University of the Third Age

Issue 73

February

2022

If you want to get involved in Zoom there are full step by step instructions from Chris Middleton on the website, here are the first two pages

1

zoom Installation Instructions

Before starting it is advisable to check that you have an Operating System version equal or later than shown opposite; go to 'Settings' from the bottom LHS Start Button, then 'System', then 'About'. No damage will be done by just looking into Settings.

Windows 10 users should have the latest version because of Microsoft's automatic monthly updating. Other Operating Systems may not be automatically updated.

System requirements

- An internet connection - broadband wired or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE)
- Speakers and a microphone - built-in or USB plug-in or wireless Bluetooth
- A webcam or HD webcam - built-in or USB plug-in
- Or, a HD cam or HD camcorder with video capture card

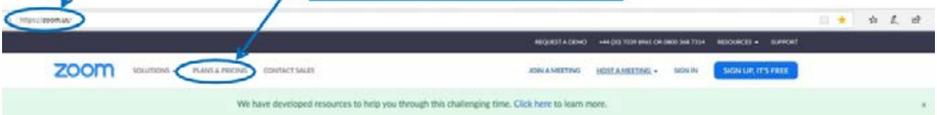
Supported operating systems

- macOS X with macOS 10.7 or later
- Windows 10
Note: For devices running Windows 10, they must run Windows 10 Home, Pro, or Enterprise. S Mode is not supported.
- Windows 8 or 8.1
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista with SP1 or later
- Windows XP with SP3 or later
- Ubuntu 12.04 or higher
- Mint 17.1 or higher
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6.4 or higher
- Oracle Linux 6.4 or higher
- CentOS 6.4 or higher
- Fedora 21 or higher

2

Use Google to find <https://zoom.us> and click on the Plans & Pricing tab.

This will take you to instruction 3.



In this together.
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Chris Middleton



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Senior Moments
Editor
Maurice Baker
372147

Editorial

The start of another year and the hope of a further easing of the pandemic restrictions we have been coping with for so long.

In this issue of Senior Moments there is plenty to read that you will be able to enjoy. We have the annual book report from Anne Eagle, and an interesting piece from Brian Williams on the Bank of England. Michelle Howes has written an article about the big freeze in the winter of 1947 and thankfully we have had nothing so bad since then. A cold January walk in Guildford lead by David Middleton was written up by Chris Middleton. A summer horse drawn barge trip by Chris Edwards sounds delightful and Derek Wisbey writes about the wild birds we can see and has some excellent photos. Myra Usher, an artist in the Painting Workshop Group that has produced our annual calendars shows a painting she has recently made and the photographs that inspired it.

There is a poem from David King about our new tennis star that is critical to start with but ends up supporting here in the last verse.

Maurice Baker



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On Line Meetings
Michelle Howes
372147

Book Group 2 didn't have the usual meal out in January because of Covid and for several months we met via Zoom until we could meet in gardens and eventually back in our homes. You can see how we voted out of 10 on the 12 books we read.

Book Title	Author	Style	Content	Good Read	Range
The Blue Afternoon (1993)	William Boyd	7.7	6.9	6.7	5-9
My Name is Why (2019) NF	Lemn Sissay	6.1	6.9	6.6	3-9
Lady in Waiting (2019) NF	Anne Glenconner	5.7	6.3	5.8	4-7
The Humans (2013)	Matt Haig	7.6	7.8	8.2	6-9
On Chapel Sands (2019) NF	Laura Cumming	4.8	5.4	4.4	0-8
Inheritance (2019)	Jenny Eclair	6.4	5.5	5.3	2-8
The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870)	Charles Dickens	7.5	7.7	6.8	5-10
Dark Fire (2004)	C.J. Sansom	8.6	8.9	9.4	8-10
The Noble Path (1992)	Peter May	7.1	6.6	6	3-10
Crow Lake (2002)	Mary Lawson	6.6	6.3	6.8	4-9
The Vanishing Half (2020)	Brit Bennett	6.6	6.5	6.1	3-8
The Nickel Boys (2019)	Colson Whitehead	8.4	8.3	7.8	6-9

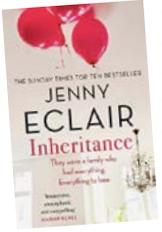
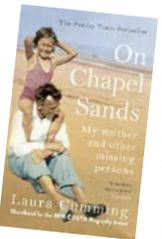
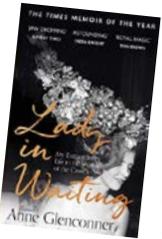
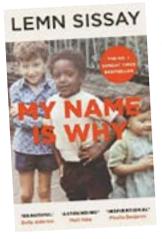
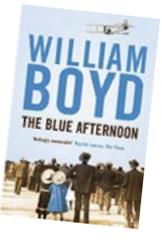
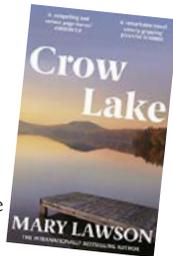
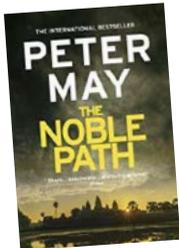
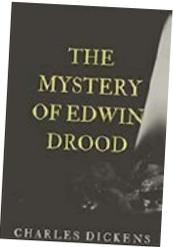
This was a wider variety of books than some years. Three were from previous centuries, including one classic. Three were non-fiction, including one memoir about a mother's childhood and two very different autobiographies about a black boy brought up in care, and Princess Margaret's Lady in Waiting.

The most popular book was Dark Fire, one of C.J. Sansom's historical crime novels set in 1540 Tudor England when Thomas Cromwell was falling out of favour with Henry VIII. Shardlake was persuaded to work on Cromwell's behalf to try to find the formula for Greek Fire to get him back in favour with the King, in return for granting a temporary reprieve to an 18 year old girl Shardlake was defending on a charge of killing her cousin. The main plot was very complicated with lots of twists and acts of violence. Some of us found that unconvincing but we all liked the social and political history and were interested in the details of Tudor life e.g. dissolved monasteries being turned into slum housing, dentures made from the teeth of dead people being fixed onto wood, or the barbaric punishment of being 'pressed' for torture or death.

The second most popular book, The Humans, by contrast was futuristic. It was told by an alien who had been sent to Earth to replace a Professor. The aliens thought humans weren't psychologically mature enough for the level of progress made by this mathematician. Gradually the logical alien understood that emotions weren't just a weakness and his desire to belong made him willing to relinquish his special powers. Despite some inconsistencies in the plot we all enjoyed the humour and the thought provoking views about what makes us human. Some people saw this book as an allegory of feeling alienated by depression, which Matt Haig has written about more openly in another book.

As you can see from the column headed Range, some of the other books provoked wide differences in opinion but we still enjoyed discussing our reactions and the issues raised.

Anne Eagle



The Bank Of England And Provincial Banking

Banking as we understand it has only been available in this country since the founding of the Bank of England, originally a private bank, in 1694 when the country needed finance to continue to pursue war with France.

However, coinage has been available in England as far back as 2nd Century BC through trade between this island's Celtic tribes and Gaul. Prior to that barter had been the main method of acquiring the necessities for life. And if that was unacceptable, stealing with force was always an option! But following Julius Caesar's invasion in 43AD Roman coinage started to spread across the land.

Throughout the Middle Ages wealth in the form of precious metal cups, plates and ornaments along with gold and silver coins would be held in strong boxes in the houses of the aristocracy and used as required to run their estates and fund their share of an army if required by the King.

It is almost a truism to write Monarchs were permanently short of cash and Henry VIII was no exception, but solved his financial problem with the abolition of the wealthy monasteries in the 1530s. Suddenly the country was awash with coinage struck from the melting of church plate and people had to find a safe haven to protect their new wealth. They had to look no further than Goldsmiths who since their Guild, founded in 1327, had been safely storing precious objects.

Paper money in Britain evolved from the receipts that goldsmiths gave their customers for the coinage and precious objects they had deposited with them for safekeeping. They held this money as 'running cash', (similar to a modern current account). They paid customers interest on the money they deposited, which they also lent out with interest.

When the Bank of England was founded, it gave 'notes' to its customers as receipts for their deposits. These gradually turned into modern banknotes. But to attract deposits when first founded with 17 clerks and two doorkeepers in the Mercers' Livery Company Hall in 1694 the

Bank offered 8.00% interest per annum. Needless to say, this proved highly attractive to the landed gentry. The Bank ledger recorded £1,200,000 deposited within the first 12 days of opening, including £10,000 from the King. At that time this huge sum would have been sufficient to purchase 223,048 horses or 288,461 cows! Needless to say, within months the Bank had to move to Grocers' Hall for more space where it remained until 1734.

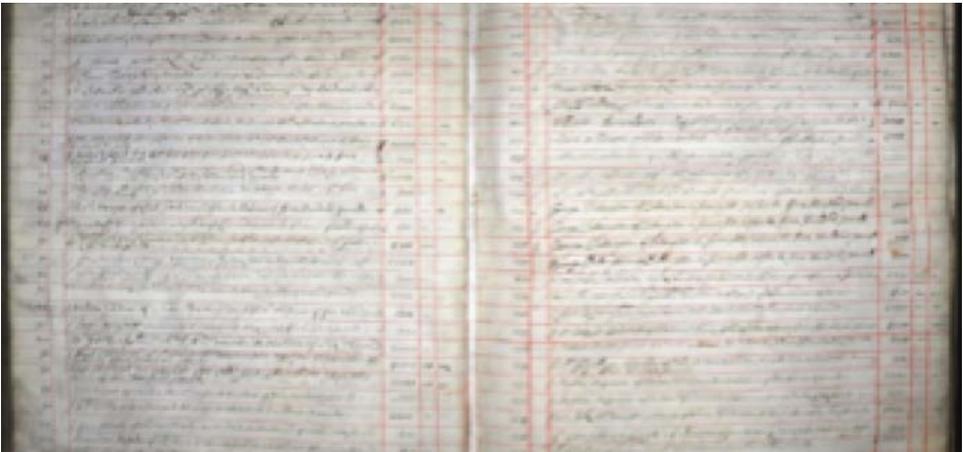
By 1780 country banks were opening across England and Wales and by 1810 there were over 800 licensed and unlicensed banks who both issued small notes and provided small workshops, mines, and other new industries with loans for working capital. Without these banks the Industrial Revolution would have likely been strangled by lack of funds before it could have begun! Darling was no exception with Darling Bank opening its doors in 1803 and by 1811 there were over 100 business trading in the town. So, a local bank had proved essential to facilitate trade. Initially Robert Piper, a butcher; George Dewdney, yeoman farmer and George Piper, Robert's son were the Bank's directors. But with Robert's death in 1804 Darling Bank was run by George and Thomas until 1825.

But just as today, rumours, speculation and seemingly unrelated events can cause a loss of confidence in the financial institutions and this happened in 1797 when France declared war (again) on Britain. When a small French force landed on mainland Britain, fears of invasion quickly spread. During this time, the public rushed to the Bank of England to convert their banknotes into gold, which was possible at the time. The amount of gold held by the Bank dropped from £16 million to just £2 million. To try to preserve the already depleted gold reserves, the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, placed a Privy Council Order on the Bank of England, ordering it to stop paying notes in gold. The gold standard was not re-introduced until 1821 with the intervening 24 years being known as the Restriction Period. With no gold coinage in circulation the Bank produced £1 and £2 notes which proved easy to forge. But forgery was a capital offence and during this time no fewer than 300 were hanged!

In 1825, following dubious and often fraudulent investments in South America, there was another run



on the banks with many provincial banks including Darling going bust.



Bank of England Ledger

With the collapse or takeover of many of these smaller provincial banks in the first half of the 19th Century a few came to dominate every high street with their easily recognised logos. But with the recent closure of many of their branches it is mimicking the closures of two hundred years ago. History repeating itself with reduced local banking facilities and a dispute with France!

Brian Williams



Social History 2 group met by Zoom in December

In previous years we've discussed various aspects of Christmas through the ages, giving a short presentation each as we shared home-made mince pies. This year, we cast the net wider to cover any social history aspect of winter...and what an interesting range of topics this produced!

First we heard about the extremely harsh winter of 1947, when a nation still reeling from the impact of the War and subject to rationing, was dealt a further cruel blow by prolonged fiercely cold weather, causing food shortages, power cuts and disruption to transport, industry and commerce. In February 1947 the temperature never rose above 5 degrees Celsius and it dropped as low as minus 20 degrees. Snow fell daily for 55 days from mid-January, killing livestock in the fields and preventing root vegetables from being dug up. The armed forces were called upon to clear roads and railways of snowdrifts that were up to seven metres deep in places. This provoked a discussion about today's climate crisis and weather events we now regard as extreme.

first time, whatever the weather. And we have gone from needing coats, hats and driving gloves (string-backed ones preferably to clear the fogged-up windscreen) to the luxury of individual climate control in each seat and even heated seats to keep us toasty-warm.



The importance of electricity generation and the impact of winter weather on its supply was our next topic. We are so dependent on power supply for every aspect of life – even life itself, in hospitals for example where emergency generators have to be well-maintained so that they can kick in without a break. Power outages do still occur and can cause major problems, especially in winter, as has been seen recently in the aftermath of Storm Arwen.



On a warmer note, our next member recalled the cars he had driven in 50 years of motoring, and reflected on the advances made in heating, both of the passengers and the engine. We all recalled cold winter mornings where judicious handling of the choke was essential from starting up to negotiating the first few sets of traffic lights without stalling, and even occasions where it was best to turn over the engine a few times with the starting handle before attempting to start the car. Now it generally starts



Another essential supply that can be drastically affected by poor weather is food, and one of our members had studied a weekly farming publication for the year of 1902, another extremely harsh winter when root vegetables froze in the ground and had to be excavated by pneumatic drills, livestock died, the potato crop was ruined, and conditions throughout the year remained appalling for all types of agriculture. Widespread flooding followed the thaw and there were unseasonal frosts

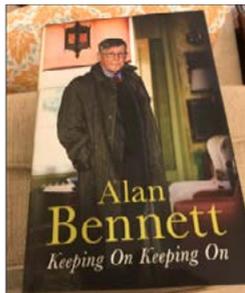
in the summer months. Heavy rain alternating with drought conditions meant that yields were vastly reduced, and Britain had to rely on grain imports to keep the food supply going.



Another food supply industry, fishing, was the topic of our next snippet, specifically the longshoreman's year at Southwold. We gained great respect for the skills of these fishermen using different techniques to catch the different species of fish that would be available in different seasons, all the time managing their boats and gear, and responding to the tides, wind and weather. In the lean winter months, they often sought alternative employment such as building up coastal defences while carrying out their own repairs and maintenance ready to re-start fishing in February.



We then read an extract from Alan Bennett's diary for 4th January 2006. He was unimpressed by a wet quarter of an inch of snow after repeated severe weather warnings, and concluded that weather forecasters like to over-dramatise the conditions and 'keep the nation in a state of disquiet'. He commented that "weather should not be exaggerated: an inch or two of snow is not a 'white-out'; having to drive at 50mph rather than 70 is not 'the nation ground to a halt.' It's just weather:"



Finally we examined the ice trade from the mid 19th to early 20th century, when Britain imported vast quantities of natural ice for preserving fresh food from production to consumption, for use in medicine, brewing, technical industries and fishing, as well as crystal ice to chill a glass of whisky or a bottle of champagne! Original imports from America suffered from a lot of wastage on the long Atlantic passage, making ice very expensive. Our closer neighbour, Norway, took the competitive advantage and was Britain's main supplier for many years – building on established trade links and shipping used for their other main export of timber. Artificial ice production eventually took over, precipitated by the hot British summer of 1898 when Norway was unable to meet increased demand, then the First World War and resultant supply issues.



The ice trade is well documented in the Canal Museum on Regent's Canal, and the group agreed that a group visit would make a welcome outing next year. We are looking forward to our next meeting on 3rd January, with a presentation on the composer Vaughan Williams, who grew up in Leith Hill Place – another venue we plan to visit as a group.

Michelle Howes



London Walks 4 in Guildford

What does a London Walking Group do on one of the coldest January mornings? They drive to Merrow and catch the Park & Ride into Guildford to follow the Historic Trail. Whilst travel in and around London lacked appeal during the height of Omicron infections, London Walks 4 kept up their group activity by venturing in a westward direction.

The customary coffee start to the walk was several floors up in House of Fraser where there were some excellent views across the townscape to surrounding hills from the comfort of the fairy tale inspired Tea Terrace. Then it was a case of wrapping up well and out into the cold. As we wandered (constructively) under the guidance of our leader for the day, David Middleton, we often commented on how many times we had been to Guildford but never seen anything but shop windows inside and out. Instead, we looked around corners, over walls, up at roofs and walked through arches into areas of tranquillity.

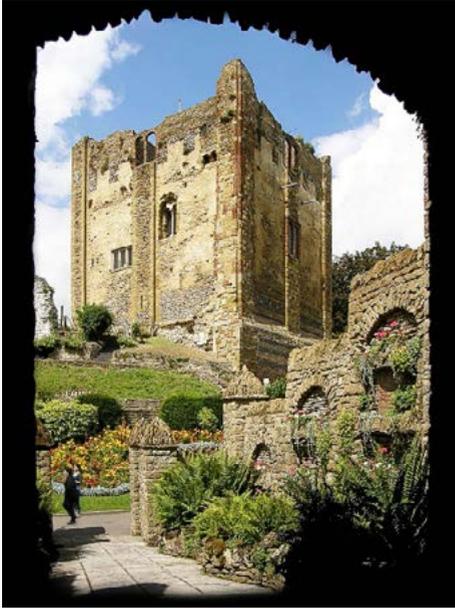


So it was that we almost stumbled onto an old Quaker burial ground in North Street and saw how Guildford's first fire station had evolved into today's public convenience. We admired the tidy flower beds in the Allen House gardens atop the quarry, which had been a very large air raid shelter in the 1940s. The robust brick stacks nearby remain as evidence of life in that dark period.

We were caught up in a lesson change in the Royal Grammar School, as smartly dressed students crossed the main road between buildings and entered the original 1553 building when Edward VI re-endowed the school. A plaque over the entrance commemorates the charter that was bestowed on the school by the boy king.

A walk down the High Street on the granite setts took us first to the imposing red bricked Holy Trinity Church but on the opposite side

of the road through some cast iron gates and a small arch revealed Abbot's Hospital. The Hospital of the Blessed Trinity, as it is also known, was founded in 1619 by George Abbot when he was Archbishop of Canterbury. This Grade I listed Jacobean building are almshouses for the benefit of single elderly Guildfordians. We noted that at least 2 of the apartments were vacant but could see no way of passing off as Guildfordians to take advantage of the obvious peace yet convenience of a Sainsbury's some 50 yds down the street!



Further down the High Street and with a sharp left turn took us through the Doric columns of Tunsgate Arch which in 1818 had been the portico for the Corn Exchange. Today it remains a market centre, but on this day with a swift cold wind blasting through. So we did not stay long to admire the Guildhall and its clock dating from 1683, but instead put heads down and made for the Castle Bowling Green. In the 1880s this area was laid out as Victorian pleasure gardens to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1888. It remains to be seen how Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee will be remembered. Through a

tunnel and down some steps brought us to Guildford Castle which saw almost no military activity. Instead, it was for some time the main prison for Surrey and Sussex.

A short left took us to The Chestnuts, a house occupied by Lewis Carroll for 30 years from 1868. It was here that he wrote much of *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. Going a bit further down we entered the Guildford Museum for some edification (and warmth). We could have spent longer in this very informative place, but stomachs were rumbling so it was time to find The Britannia (pub) on the other side of the River Wey.

There was little interest in more cold weather strolling after a very welcome meal. Instead, we went over the Town Bridge which is the site of an ancient river crossing that originally gave the town its name of Gyldeforda or Golden Ford. Then onwards to the Park & Ride bus back to Merrow to complete a fulfilling day in the company of like-minded friends.

Photos from David Middleton's walk at Painshill



Local wild birds

February is a good month for bird watching, the trees are bare and the birds are easy to see.

There is a shortage of food at this time of the year so birds are constantly hunting high and low for a decent meal. Garden bird feeders get a lot of



Meadow Pipit

use now and farmer's animal feeders attract flocks of birds.

On Bookham Common Buzzards will hunt for



Cormorant

worms in the grass. Small birds in the cold and snow such as Skylarks, chaffinches and other finches, all types of Tits, Lessor Redpolls and Siskinds will fly



Chaffinch

around and roost in groups to beat the weather and keep warm. Large flocks of Redwings and other Thrushes from Scandinavia can be seen



Goldfinch

marching through the fields at Polesden Lacey.

Grey Heronson the Common,

breed early and start nesting in February. Last year

Little Egrets were seen there as well and might come this year and nest with the Herons, although they do lay their eggs much later. There are lots of Kingfishers



Buzzard



Robin

on the nearby River Mole and they often come to the ponds on the Common.

They can be found any weather as can Cormorants,

ducks, swans and geese.



Kingfisher

Wrap up warm and go out and see what you can find.

Derek Wisbey



Horse Drawn Canal Boat Trip.

On a sunny September afternoon we set out on a trip from Godalming towards Guildford on the River

Wey. Our transport was a horse drawn canal boat. The boat was decorated with traditional flower paintings and pots which had been hand painted. It was a peaceful trip and we saw swans, with their clear

reflections, as they swam in the still water of the river as well as ducks as we travelled along.

After a while we came to a lock, and just beyond it there was a road crossing the river. The water gradually lifted the boat as the lock filled up so that we could continue our journey.

Meanwhile the horse and rope had been separated from the boat and the horse was walked along the tow path



and over the road to meet us on the other side. The



horse then continued to pull the boat. All was quiet and we saw birds, ducks and wild flowers along our route as we ate the cream tea provided on the boat. Then we came to a wider area where the river went over a weir and it was time to turn round and head back again.

We passed Farncombe boat yard, a crane that lifted boats, needing painting or repairs,





out of the water. Arches where with sun shining under them made unusual reflections in the water. A few people were out rowing and others taking a walk along the towpath enjoying the peace and quiet.



A lovely way to pass a sunny afternoon.

Chris Edwards



Battle of Britain Aircraft

Following an excellent talk on Zoom to the Armada Probus Group about The Battle of Britain, I thought that members might be interested in some lesser-known facts about Spitfires in World War II. The Battle of Britain was, of course, fought by Spitfires and Hurricanes



flown by RAF and FAA pilots from land-based airfields, but, later, there was another version of the Spitfire called the Seafire. By implication, this was a modified version of the Spitfire which, together with the Sea Hurricane, brought these two aircraft to the Royal Navy where they were based on Aircraft Carriers. Their size enabled them to be stored below deck, other aircraft were too big. The principal modifications to enable them to land and take off from aircraft carriers were strengthened undercarriage and fitted arresting hooks. Taking off from the deck of the carrier was relatively easy, depending on sea conditions, as a headwind of 5 mph provided enough lift. Landing was more difficult as they had to make a three-point landing. The arresting wires had to be at a critical tension as too loose could put the plane into the crash barrier; too tight and it might tilt hitting the deck with its propeller.

The need to concentrate production of Spitfires for the Battle of Britain meant the first batch of Seafires, the Mk 1b, didn't reach the Royal Navy until late 1941. Subsequently fitted with extra fuel tanks, which reduced their performance a little, they were used to cover troop landings, being engaged in Operation Torch, the landings in North Africa in 1942, and subsequently, the invasion of Sicily and the invasion of Italy. In 1944, they provided aerial support to Allied ground forces during the Normandy landings.

The Spitfire was an all-metal construction, welded together, but, interestingly, the Hawker Hurricane was constructed with a basic steel frame, mechanically fastened together, with a secondary wooden frame giving the necessary rounded shape which was then covered with a

doped linen cloth. This was an advantage over the Spitfire as damaged parts could be accessed and replaced more easily. More importantly, machine gun bullets were designed to explode on impact but, as the Hurricane was covered with linen cloth, the bullets could pass through without exploding.

Why my interest in the Seafire? Near Padstow in Cornwall, before the war, there was a small civil aerodrome at a place called Treginegar. The Admiralty surveyed the site, acquired the adjoining land and built the St Merryn Naval Air Station. This was commissioned in mid-1940 as HMS Vulture and was used for fighter and air gunner training. In 1942, it developed into the School of Air Combat, training Seafire pilots who would arrive direct from their carriers. The aircrews needed somewhere to relax and so set up their first wardroom of RNAS St Merryn at a hostelry called The Cornish Arms, St Merryn, near Padstow. The wardroom is commemorated by an honours board on which the Commanding Officers are listed.



Hurricane



Spitfire

In the Churchyard, on the opposite side of the road to The Cornish Arms, there are 31 War Graves, 2 from World War I, 6 of the men lost on HMS Warwick and 2 from HMCS Regina, both of which were sunk off Trevoze Head in 1944, the remainder to commemorate those who died while serving at, or attached to, HMS Vulture. HMS Vulture, later renamed HMS Curlew, was closed down in January 1956. The Cornish Arms is on the coast road out of Padstow towards Newquay and is now owned by Rick Stein. Therein, after enjoying a good meal, you may find a Booklet detailing the history of RNAS St Merryn. It is an interesting read. If you should be interested, I can let you have a scanned copy, by email, or maybe a printed copy, depending on demand.

Some of the above information was gleaned from that booklet, and some, including the pictures, online. Type "Planes – Seafires" on the internet where there is much more information to be had.

Don Edwards



Emma's Honour



*What did you say? Tell me again.
What you said sounds quite insane.
Are you really telling me
They've made Raducanu an MBE.
I know Emma won a tennis cup
And her reputation's on the up;
Solely through her dedication
She's become a mild sensation,
But does that deserve an honoured gong?
It seems to me that something's wrong.*

*It really does seem quite perverse,
Like a rather sickly joke,
When every doctor, every nurse
Gives a lifetime's work for other folk
In a career of service and of care.
But the only service Emma knows
Is to hit a ball tossed in the air!
What do others think do you suppose?
To me that seems not very fair.*

*Surely this goes to demonstrate
There are some servants of the state
Whose judgement really is so poor,
They should be shown the exit door.
But Emma herself is not to blame
And I wish her luck in her chosen game.*



David King (Dec. 2021)

When we all joined the U3A, we made a commitment to uphold the guiding principles of the U3A movement, one of which is to recognise that we are a self-help group in which volunteering is essential for the organisation to function.

We now have a need for new volunteers to support the committee in running our activities. A number of the current committee are retiring soon, having served for several years. So we need some new committee members to continue offering the range of activities you all enjoy and potentially to contribute new ideas.

Could you make a bigger contribution to our U3A? If so, please let any member of the committee know. Alternatively, do you know another member who you think could do a good job on the committee?

We have potential vacancies across a variety of roles on the committee and some positions are more urgent than others. So please talk to any member of the committee to find out more as we try and match your interests and skills with the roles. Role descriptions are on our website.

If you are concerned about the level of commitment required, please talk to any committee member so that they can describe their experience.

Our contact details are on the website and in this Senior Moments.

From your Management Committee

Sarracenias at Wisley

In the late summer of 2020 I was stopped in my tracks by this exotic looking display of pitcher plants at the foot of the rock bank at Wisley. I had thought that these insectivorous plants were only suitable for growing in protected conditions indoors.

However, here they are obviously thriving and their flowers are extremely long lasting, some indeed hanging on late into winter. I am seriously considering the possibility of some for my own garden, but in the meantime have used them as inspiration for my latest watercolour:



October 2020



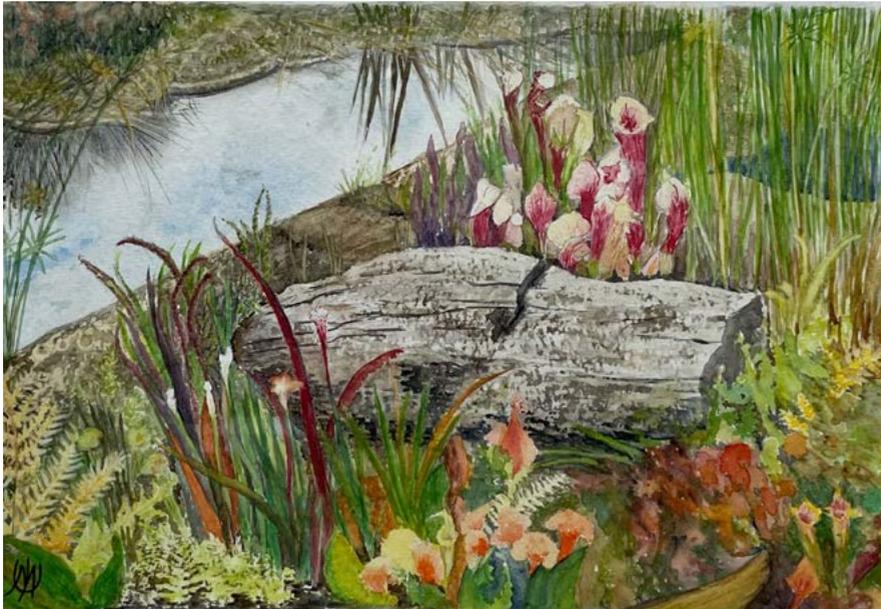
October 2021



January 2022



Myra Usher



My watercolour painting January 2022