

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a forest floor. It is densely packed with green snowdrops, many of which are in full bloom, showing their characteristic white, bell-shaped flowers. The ground is also littered with numerous fallen logs and branches of various sizes, some of which are covered in moss. The overall scene is a lush, natural woodland setting.

Senior

U3A

Moments

The Newsletter of the Bookham & District  
University of the Third Age

Issue 61

February 2019



# Bookham and District U3A

Registered Charity No 103686 U3A Membership No 4/239/93

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Newsletter  
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372147



This winter edition of Senior Moments contains an article on Street Art from our chairman Roger who explains its origins and where in London it can best be found. Roger led the Colin Jackson walk to see some of the best art on a very wet Wednesday in Shoreditch. Some of the work is quite outstanding and most of it is produced with spray can paint.

Anita Laycock has submitted her regular gardening piece which includes a photograph of the stand on show at the Silver Jubilee exhibition in the Barn Hall.

Anne Eagle has once again presented her interesting report on her book reading group.

Secret Knowledge is about the very interesting approach to art that David Hockney has taken where he shows that many artists in the past used optical devices to help them produce more accurate paintings of people and the scenes before them.

The annual Phoenix Players production is reported where once again they sing their way through a plot specially written for the performance and this year they were again in very good voice.

Pam Hyde has written about her job as Membership Secretary and how we as members can help this administrative task to flow more smoothly.

David Middleton has once again contributed many of the photographs throughout the magazine and also the cover. A new innovation is the picture story of Frances Fancourt searching a beach with her metal detector and finding a very old coin. Several of his photographs are from the London walks he organises and they certainly get to some interesting places.

Maurice Baker



Looking towards the old Battersea Power station now undergoing an extensive make-over

The cover photo of snowdrops is by David Middleton

## Chairman's Report

I know it is a little late, but as I am writing this on 1 January it seems appropriate to wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Last year was very successful for our U3A and I was delighted to take over from Lynn as your Chairman in October. She led us with great style and it was a pleasure to work with her as Vice Chairman. No sooner had I taken over than we had the major event of the year, our Silver Anniversary Celebration. A great deal of work went into planning the day and my thanks go to Lynn and Mike Farrell, Jan Dicker and Gillian Arnold for everything they did to make the events so successful.

On the afternoon of the 24th October we held a Showcase in the Old Barn Hall and over 300 people came to see the displays from all our interest groups. What impressed me the most was the range of activities undertaken across the groups. From French and Italian conversation to gardening, wine tasting to military history and walking groups to bridge classes, there was something for everyone – and everybody I spoke to was enthusiastic about their groups and our U3A.

In the evening our Silver Anniversary Party was attended by 125 members and partners. We enjoyed some fine food and, on my Wine Appreciation Group table, some fine wines, as well as being entertained by Karl Stokes from Real Vintage. I know one or two of you found him a little too loud, but his choice of songs was perfect for our Silver Anniversary.

My plan to visit at least one interest group every month is proving to be great fun. So far, I have taken a Street Art tour for London Walks, attended the annual performance by Phoenix Entertainment and watched the film "Hidden Figures" with Book Reading Group 3. They have all been thoroughly enjoyable and you can read about the Phoenix Entertainment performance further on in this edition of Senior Moments.

Looking ahead for the rest of the year, we have a strong programme of speakers for our monthly meetings and will also be holding a number of events and arranging some external visits. Details will be announced at the monthly meetings and will also be covered on our website. As part of our technology development plans, we will be launching a renewed website during the first half of this year – with more content than the current one – so keep an eye out for announcements.

I have really enjoyed my first three months as your Chairman and look forward to seeing as many of you as I can at our meetings and in your interest groups in the months to come,

Roger Mendham





*London Walks photo by David Middleton*



*London Walks photo by David Middleton*



*Francis Fancourt finding an old coin at Rochester*



*Chelsea hospital chapel photo by David Middleton*



*Chelsea lunch photo by David Middleton*

## Secret Knowledge

**D**avid Hockney is not only an extremely well known artist in Britain and throughout the world, he is also an excellent art critique and well worth listening to whenever he speaks on any aspect of art, photography and images. He is not only a good artist in conventional painting



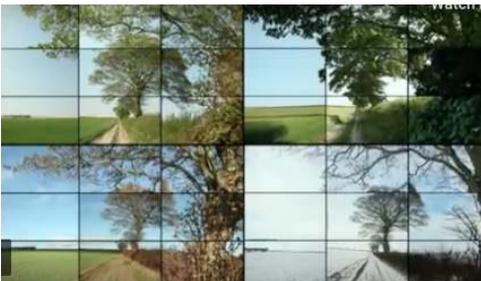
and drawing he also was one of the first to use an iPad as a sketch book and produced some fine work with it. Once, on interview it was pointed out that he was using technology to produce art works and he immediately said "yes I am also using technology every time I use a brush or a tube of paint." He has always had a great interest in images and how they are produced often using the camera to make his point. He has produced many fine photographs including what he calls joiners,



joiners



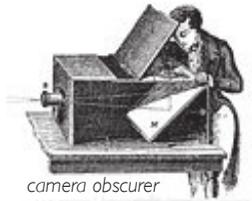
where he assembles a group of photos of a subject and places them next to each other to very great effect. More recently, at the time of his very large tree



9 cine cameras

pictures in East Yorkshire he had nine cine cameras attached to the front of a Land Rover and photographed the same stretch of lane through each of the seasons, including full snow over everything.

Some years ago he produced a book with the title *Secret Knowledge* (well worth reading) in which he explained that many artists in the past used optical instruments to produce pictures, particularly portraits. The main instrument was the camera obscurer that was invented in the 1430s and eventually became a camera as we know it only when the image produced by the lens could be fixed. This was when photography was invented in the late 1830s. The idea came to him while he was at an exhibition in London on the French artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique



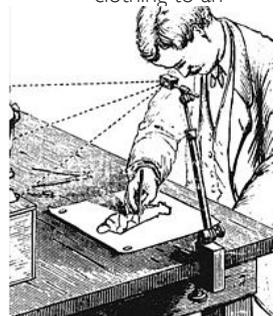
camera obscurer



Ingres portrait 1829 using camera lucida

Ingres (1780-1867) who drew and painted portraits. It became obvious to Hockney that the facial portraits were somewhat different from the rest of the figure. Now it was not unusual for artists to leave the clothing to an

assistant to paint but here many of the finished works showed quite different proportions between the face and the rest of the body. Hockney surmised that



Ingres had used a camera lucida which is basically a prism on a stick. If this is held correctly and the general lighting is favourable an image of the sitter can be projected onto the canvas or drawing board in front of the artist. Some art critics foolishly said Hockney was suggesting artists were "cheating" by doing this. As Hockney pointed out using a instrument such a camera lucida or a camera did not make the user into an artist but it did achieve a very important aspect of painting a facial likeness where it is essential to position the eyes, nose and mouth as near to the exact position and relationship to each other because otherwise a good likeness could not be achieved. (I bought a camera lucida a while ago but I have found it very difficult to use).



*Jan Van Eyck Arnolfini Portrait*

became much more lifelike after the late 1480s when the camera obscurer was first produced. Furthermore, he noticed that many more of the subjects in the paintings were left handed



*by Frans Hals—subjects all lefthanded*

compared with the actual proportion of left handed people in real life. All lens produced images are reversed and this helps to explain this fact. There was one picture he showed painted by Frans Hals(1582-1666) where the three characters in the picture are all left handed. (Frans Hals is most famous for his Painting of the Laughing Cavalier which can be seen in the Wallace Collection in London) Hockney shows other well know paintings where subjects are all holding their wine glasses in their left hand and suggests they look more natural when he reverses the image to become right handed. The whole "problem" of reversed images confronts us all every day when we look in a mirror and see our own image reversed and this may explain why so many people don't like the photographs of themselves because they don't see their image as others see them. In one very famous picture by Jan Van Eyck Arnolfini Portrait painted in 1434 (this painting is in the National Gallery in London) he draws attention to the chandelier that has no detailed underdrawing or corrections (and its the only object in the picture like that) it is shown head-on, not looking up from below as you would expect. This is the effect you would expect with a mirror lens, which must be level with the objects you wish to draw or paint.

*Maurice Baker*

Considering portrait painters were employed to produce an accurate likeness any device that would help an artist achieve this would be very worth using in order to secure the fee for the work. Hockney's investigations went much further and he bought as many postcard size reproductions of paintings from as early as he could find right through to the present time. He stuck these pictures up on walls of his apartment in Los Angeles in chronological order and studied them. It became apparent to him that there was a distinct change in perspective and accuracy and the pictures

## London Walks – Shoreditch October 2018

It was a typical October day cool, overcast with intermittent rain showers as the London Walks group gathered for a Street Art tour of the Shoreditch area. The meeting point was the goat statue at Spitalfields Market - a good choice as it is 10 feet in the air and can be seen from a long distance – and after a short coffee break the group set off to explore the streets around Brick Lane to learn more about the area and the abundant street art on display.



Maurice Baker

The first stop was at the Ten Bells Pub on Commercial Road, famous for its association with Jack the Ripper; two of his victims were regulars in the pub. Another interesting point is that Jamie Oliver's great-great-grandfather was the publican there in the 1880s.

The tour was conducted by Roger Mendham, following up on his recent talk to the U3A, and was designed to show the different styles of

Street Art as well as showcasing several of the more famous artists involved in the genre.

The first work was quite a surprise. Walking down Fashion Street you could quite easily pass it without noticing it, tucked away on a side wall. The portrait of Tracey by Dreph is over 15 feet high and shows the sheer scale of some Street Art. It is one of a series of ten works by Dreph showcasing women from an



Roger Mendham



Maurice Baker

immigrant heritage who have achieved great things in their communities and society at large. Some of them are no longer visible, having been overpainted, but we did see his portrait of Mywanwy in Salt Yard.

Finding the street art can be a bit of a challenge and Roger visits the area several times a year and used his knowledge to show some really interesting works by artists such as Phlem (hidden away by a playpark in Heneage street) and Jimmy C (an Australian artist) who uses a unique drip-painting technique to create works such as Joe's Kid.



Roger Mendham

Brick Lane is a very historic area of London and during the tour we were told



Maurice Baker

about the Huguenot lace makers who worked in the area during the 18th century. You can still see the old weavers' lofts in Fournier Street and the Huguenot Church is now the Brick Lane Mosque.

These days Brick Lane is very cosmopolitan and a centre for the Bangladeshi community. As a result there are many excellent curry houses and it was in one of these that we had a very enjoyable (curry) lunch.



Maurice Baker

The tour demonstrated the difference between graffiti and street art, the variety of street art (it is not just about painting walls) and the ephemeral nature

of the art. Being open to the elements the art can deteriorate but also the public nature of the works mean they can be susceptible to being defaced by graffiti or even completely painted over. Developers are another risk and a couple of major works by Shok-I have disappeared after being painted over



Maurice Baker

by developers and replaced by bland paint and Health and Safety notices!

One of the highlights was seeing some original Banksy works in a courtyard off Rivington Street.

He is probably the most famous Street Artist but the Shoreditch area includes many outstanding artists and the walk showed the sheer variety and quality on display.



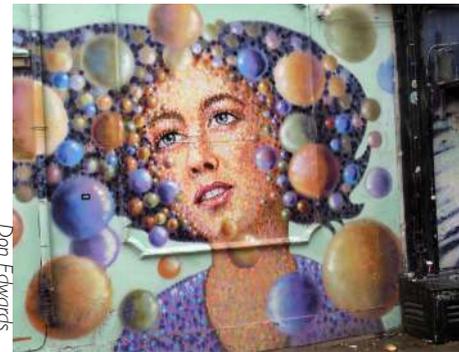
Maurice Baker

We ended at Old Street tube station after a thoroughly entertaining and educational tour of the Shoreditch Street art.

*(Our thanks go to Roger his guidance and good humour as well as sharing his knowledge with us.)*



Don Edwards



Don Edwards



Roger Merdham

## Vegetable Gardening

In October we paid our first visit to Liz's garden and her newly created vegetable, fruit and flower beds. Her garden is now much smaller after selling off part of her plot in Keswick Road but has still kept a large proportion for home-grown produce.

The greenhouse was full of tomatoes – Sun Grape (long ones), Sungold (orange cherry),



Sakura (we tasted) and Gardener's Delight. Liz planted the sideshoots which produced even more tomatoes!

Like Brian, Liz had covered many of her vegetables with microfleece which kept out the dreaded pests. She had a wonderful crop of vegetables especially beetroot, carrots (Flyaway – in the seed catalogue described as Early with



some resistance to pests) and leeks. 'Arctic King' is a good overwintering lettuce and we discussed how we could try growing some in the greenhouse and some under fleece outdoors.

We then enjoyed delicious refreshments in the warm indoors as the rain was now pouring down. We also tasted slices of Howgarth

Wonder apples – delicious eaten raw or stewed in an apple crumble. Jan suggested using it also as a baked apple.

Our Gardening Group display at the 25th Silver Anniversary Celebrations was extremely well received and a huge vote of thanks to Penny for bringing flowers, fruit and vegetables along with foliage to decorate the stall. Also to Jan who manned the stall while I had a cup of



tea and to our group members who visited.

We visited Jan's garden in Woodlands Road for our November meeting. The biggest difference after our last visit a few years ago is that she has had the large tree pruned at the end of the garden. This has made her garden feel much more open and sunnier. She grows her vegetables in raised beds and is harvesting kale and celery over the winter. We loved the home-made wheelbarrow which a neighbour



had made.

Jan had baked two delicious courgette cakes from a recipe in The Telegraph and several cheese scones from a recipe in the National



Trust magazine.

We again enjoyed our Christmas Lunch at The Anchor pub in Lower Road. We had excellent food and brilliant company. We are looking forward to our next meeting in February when we will watch a DVD

Anita Laycock



## Phoenix Entertainment and Beware the SATNAV!

On the 9th of November Phoenix Entertainment presented their latest production, Beware of the SATNAV. They are a unique group within our U3A and under the leadership of Ina Hawes put on their 2018 production in the Leatherhead Institute in front of a thoroughly entertained audience.

This year's performance was set in a farm where 6 ladies had become stranded, successfully lost due to problems with their Satnav, and the farmer's wife (Ina Hawes) was not exactly sympathetic. Kate, Rae-Ann, Elizabeth, Jenny, Amanda and Marilyn were word perfect and ably supported by Janet Meyer on the piano.



Ina is not only the leader of the group, she is scriptwriter, director, scenery builder and takes on many other roles leading up to the actual performance. From an early planning session in February the group meets regularly as they learn the script and songs as well as consuming lots of tea and cake!

They worked their way through an extensive repertoire of songs, and where else but in a U3A group will you hear a group of ladies enthusiastically singing such a diverse range, from Credence Clearwater Revival to The Wurzels via Louis Armstrong! One of the highlights was a track from Abba, and all we needed was Piers Brosnan to appear and we would have had the perfect audition for Mamma Mia 3 The Musical.

It was a great performance, thoroughly enjoyed by the audience and the perfect antidote to the indifferent November weather outside. Congratulations go to everyone involved and we look forward with anticipation to the next production.

*Roger Mendham (also took the photos)*



## SOME THOUGHTS ON BEING YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Once a year the renewals start to roll in and my work as Membership Secretary moves into top gear. It is a time of many challenges and here are some thoughts about how you can really help me at this time.

We have nearly 600 members and the renewals process is theoretically easy but in practice can be quite complicated. I have to update our records, monitor and process payments, respond to queries, emails and telephone calls not just from existing members but also from any new members that apply at this time. I really appreciate your cooperation.

*“We have nearly 600 members and the renewals process is theoretically easy but in practice can be quite complicated”.*

The renewal forms changed this year due to data privacy requirements and thank you to everyone who completed the forms correctly and submitted them on time. There will always be a number of queries; slight mistakes and omissions on the forms, and these are not a problem but do take time to answer and remedy. The occasional mistake also occurs during my processing so please be understanding as I try to correct my own errors!

During this time, I receive many telephone calls and with messages left when I am not available. I will always try to respond quickly but as you will appreciate, in common with all of us, I do have family and other commitments and sometimes they must come first. If as a result, my response to you is a little delayed, I am sure you will understand.

One topic that needs addressing is late renewals. Our U3A has an agreed policy that everyone is given a month's grace for payments - but it is far more helpful if everyone keeps to the renewal date. Late renewals do incur quite a lot of extra work and last summer we had 150 people who needed reminders. That is 25% of

our members needing emails or telephone calls to ensure their membership renewal is processed in a timely manner and it would help enormously if we could reduce this level of late submissions.

Whilst we are always sorry to lose members we appreciate it occasionally happens and for a variety of reasons. My one request is, if you are not going to renew your membership, please let me know. I don't need to know why but just knowing someone will not be renewing saves time during the busy renewal period.

The future for membership and renewals is currently moving onto a new system that will allow people to renew their membership and make their payment on line. We will continue to accept renewals with cheques or cash as usual, but if you are comfortable with completing the process electronically, you will be able to do so.

Over time we hope that more members will use the new electronic facility and this will help to cut down the workload for myself and the Treasurer.

Being Membership Secretary is a very rewarding and sometimes frustrating job. I hope the thoughts in this short note will help guide you in what you can do to help me during the busy renewal period. I really appreciate all the kind messages I receive, the chats at the front door and the pleasure in putting faces to names. If you would like to discuss any of the points I raise, please come and have a chat at any of the monthly meetings.



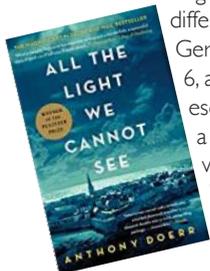
Pam Hyde

## U3A Book Group 2 Average Voting Scores 2018

Book Title	Author	Style	Content	Good Read	Range
Fools and Mortals (2017)	Bernard Cornwell	6.3	6.6	6.9	5-8
All the Light We Cannot See(2014)	Anthony Doerr	8.6	9.4	9	3-10
The Red Queen (2010)	Philippa Gregory	6.1	6.4	6.1	2-9
Exposure (2016)	Helen Dunmore	6.3	5.6	5.9	1-8
The Penguin Lessons-a true story (2015)	Tom Michell	6.1	6.6	5.8	5-8
Instructions for a Heatwave (2013)	Maggie O'Farrell	7.9	7	7.4	5-9
Purple Hibiscus (2004)	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	8.7	8.6	8.6	8-9
And the Mountains Echoed (2013)	Khaled Hosseini	6.2	6.6	6.5	2-8
The Last Runaway (2013)	Tracey Chevalier	5.4	5.5	5.3	2-7
Head of State (2014)	Andrew Marr	5.1	6	5.5	0-8
Restless (2006)	William Boyd	7.3	7	7	3-8

All the books we read this year were written this century, all but two this decade. Only one was non-fiction.

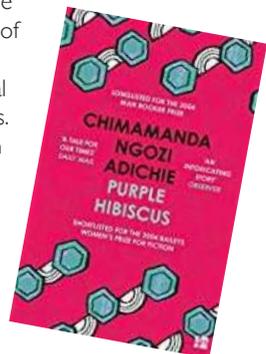
The 2 favourites scored well above the rest: All the Light We Cannot See scored 9 as a Good Read with the only vote of 10, while Purple Hibiscus scored 8.6 with the most consistent votes, all either 8 or 9.



All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr was set in World War II. What made it different from so many other novels about that era was that it was set in France and Germany, telling parallel stories of Marie-Laure, a Parisian girl blind since the age of 6, and Werner, a German orphan whose skill with radios gave him the chance to escape working in the mines by going to a Nazi school. Marie-Laure and her father, a locksmith at a museum, escaped from Paris to her great-uncle's home in St. Malo, where her father made models of the streets to help her find her way around.

Werner stifled his doubts about the Nazi system by concentrating on working out the location of radio transmitters used by the Resistance, but the shooting dead of an Austrian child who reminded him of his sister eventually made him question it. Some of us thought it felt too contrived that Werner rescued Marie-Laure just in time from a German officer looking for her father's diamond, but it wasn't an unrealistic happy ending as Werner died stepping on a land mine. You would have to read the book to appreciate the use of language, the visual descriptions, the way the tension was raised and the subplots about relationships, coping with blindness, the Resistance and beliefs about the power of diamonds. Although there was one low vote for this book almost everyone liked the way we cared equally about the two main characters in the parallel stories even though they were on opposing sides in the war.

Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was rated highly by the whole group. Set in Nigeria in the 1960s, it was told from the viewpoint of 15 year old Kambili who admired her charismatic Catholic father, Eugene, a benevolent pillar of the church and community, and wanted his approval but also feared him because of his high demands and violent punishments. He loved his wife and children but believed he was protecting them from evil by punishing them. Kambili and her brother Jaja realised how unusual their lives were when they visited their aunt. The purple hibiscus of the title was an experimental plant they brought from her home which represented the freedom to do things differently. Eventually Eugene was gradually poisoned by his wife, who had suffered miscarriages as a result



of 'punishments' and who wanted to protect her children as they started to defy their father. Jaja protected her by claiming he did it and was imprisoned for the offence. Again there were so many interesting strands in this book, including the impact of colonial mission schools, military coups, strikes and corruption. Although some of the group would have liked more about the political context, we all loved the mixture of interesting details about Nigerian life, combined with a perceptive view of differences between two branches of a family, and a more universal story of religious fanaticism and the effect on a family of hidden domestic abuse. The main characters were complex with even Eugene having some good qualities. This disturbing book provoked a long discussion about abusive, charismatic figures in our own society, controlling relationships and the role of religion in violence.

We decided this year that when people give up on a book because they dislike it they should give it a low score, at least in the Good Read column, as some books were scoring higher than they should if several readers gave up but didn't vote at all. We haven't always followed this policy but when we have it has led to some wide ranges of scores.

In October we contributed to the Book Groups' display stall for Bookham U3A's 25th Anniversary with information about some of the books we have read and a photo of most of the group.

*Anne Eagle*



# Out & About with Bookham U3A

OUTINGS & THEATRE VISITS

## The new arrangements for organising outings in Bookham U3A

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Individual members are now expected to come forward to arrange "one off" trips and a number of members have arranged some very good outings.

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### U3A SURREY NETWORK STUDY DAYS

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Fri Feb 15th | Philosophy in a Day!<br>Presented by Marianne Talbot, Oxford University  |
| Fri Mar 15th | The Bayeux Tapestry & Life in England before the Battle of Hastings<br>Presented by Imogen Corrigan, Arts Society Lecturer                             |
| Fri Apr 12th | The Aztec - The Eagle Warriors of the Sun<br>Presented by Professor Maria Chester, U3A Subject Advisor on American Archaeology & Arts Society Lecturer |
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### Do you have a smoke alarm?

**A**nyone with faulty or indeed no smoke alarms can contact Surrey Fire Service and have them fitted at no cost. The firemen will advise where they should be fitted and there is no drilling involved.

Tel: 03456 009 009 or email: [sfcontactqueries@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:sfcontactqueries@surreycc.gov.uk)

To avoid people listening to the usual stream of messages when getting through, on the telephone it's option 6.

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## U3A Tuesday Monthly Meetings

- |         |  |                |
|---------|--|----------------|
| Feb 5   | Exciting Wildlife from around the world  | Tom Way        |
| March 5 | Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace         | Lucy Simisters |
| April 2 | David Devant England's Greatest Magician | Ia Keable      |

## Gardens Wanted for Bookham Open Gardens 2019

Plans are already underway for this annual event which will take place on Sunday 16th June. We are always on the lookout for new gardens to open. If you feel you have, or can suggest, a garden in the village that might be of interest—small, large, colourful or interesting in any way—we would love to hear from you.

Contacting us will not commit you but we would love to come and see your garden and talk it through. Please contact: Tina Hutton on 01372 457598, email [tina.hutton@btinternet.com](mailto:tina.hutton@btinternet.com)



Pinned in the corner Chelsea Hospital museum  
photo by David Middleton



After Halloween Cheyne Walk  
photo by David Middleton



Carlyle's house photo by David Middleton