



# Senior Moments



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

Issue 56

November 2017



Ladies in bonnets at Chawton

# Bookham and District U3A

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

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This Autumn's edition of Senior Moments contains articles on many topics that should make enjoyable reading as the dark evenings draw in.

You can read about the activities of several of our groups, including a visit to the Austen Museum in Chawton where some Bookham U3A ladies even wore bonnets to get into the spirit of Jane Austen's life and times. There was a visit to Brompton cemetery where a number of remarkable facts were revealed. The now annual trip to see bird ringing was again very popular with those who went along with John Dicker to see many different birds really close up. An outing to Stanley Spencer's Gallery at Cookham was, it seems, an enjoyable day. There is also a fascinating piece on the North South divide in England written from a quite new perspective involving Daniel Defoe, buttons and the craft Guild system—its well worth reading. Gillian Whitman has another of her poems that are thought provoking as well as enjoyable poetry. Judith Witter has explained how she set about opening her garden for the Bookham Open Gardens scheme and encouraged others to consider following her lead. The money raised was for the Old Barn Hall that our U3A uses so often for many meetings and activities. With all these activities and members' involvement it is worth remembering that some overall administration is still always necessary to keep our very active U3A running smoothly and efficiently. We have just had our AGM in October, so the committee is in place for another year but you can of course offer your help at any time and it will be most appreciated particularly by some of the long standing committee members who have been in place for several years and while next year is the 'big' change when we get a new Chairman it is good to start serving before the big change when there are so many more experienced people around to advise and help you settle in. It really is worth considering what help you can give to continue to make Bookham U3A a thriving and successful enterprise in this area of Surrey.  
Maurice Baker

Cover photo fallen leaves in Leatherhead car park by Maurice Baker



Alan Cleugh photo of visit to Cookham

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## NOTES FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

As I started to write I realised that by the time you read this the AGM will be long past and Christmas will be looming large on the horizon. The AGM marked the end of my first year of tenure as Chairman.

The membership process has been completed and (at the time of writing) we have 579 members and appear to have a steady stream of people interested in joining.

As there is no meeting in August there have been two speakers: in July Allen Chubb, a Turner enthusiast made a proposition that Turner was among the first impressionists and provided a wonderful presentation of painting to support his theory. Allen is a volunteer and Petworth House where there is a large collection of Turner paintings. In September we explored the Ritual Protection of the Home with Janet Pennington from horse shoes to shoes in the roof and chimney, carvings of the green man to hag stones and many more artefacts that were thought to keep our houses safe. Still to come is our AGM speaker Glenn Hearden from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. I always find visits to war graves very moving, both tranquil and disturbing as the sites are so beautifully kept and often in atmospheric places but as you read the names and dates the loss of so many young people it brings home the cost of war. Mike and I attend the 75th anniversary of the battle of Crete at the Souda Bay war cemetery last year. The following day we went to the Greek ceremony at Maleme airfield which is just opposite the German war cemetery which is on the hill, high above the village.

There have been a number of outings: Cookham and Stanley Spencer organised

by Viv Bignell, Brighton and Rochester organised by Anne Glyn with two more still to come – Edmund Morgan-Warren is taking a group to see the revamped Brooklands and Anne Eagle has a party visiting the Globe Theatre. My thanks to all of them for taking on the task and to Anne and her helpers for their administrative skills for ensuring the bookings work smoothly.

Jan Dicker organised a shuffleboard evening in October. Next October we are hoping to do something special and include as many groups as possible as it will be our 25th anniversary – so if you have any ideas please let us know.

Lots of our groups are very active and the new ones are up and running well. I'm off to visit Art Appreciation 1 in October and looking forward to it very much.

I really love meeting and chatting to as many of you as I can.

Thanks you all for making my first year so enjoyable.  
Best wishes,  
Lynn



## Book Group 3 Outing to the Jane Austen Museum Chawton on 18th July 2017

This is the first time that our Book Group has been on a literary jaunt, but was enjoyed by us so much, that it will not be the last! You can tell from the photos.



We fit a classic book now and then into our varied and enjoyable reading schedule. For my turn this month, I recklessly suggested that we read a Jane Austen. "Pride and Prejudice" was most popular. And how about a visit to see her home at Chawton? 2017 is the Bicentenary of the death of Jane Austen, with many celebrations of her work and her life, so our plan fell into place easily. We visited on the



actual day, and news teams from ITV and a Chinese news station were filming whilst we were there.

The Museum has a homely feel and a delightful cottage garden. It has a room of books by and about the author to browse, and a moving and

informative collection of Austen family belongings and Jane's writings. They include first editions of "Pride and Prejudice" owned by Lady Caroline Lamb, jewellery, and clothing embroidered and worn by Jane. The most cherished and talked about item there was her tiny writing table. Not prosperous, as her books earned her much

admiration, but little income in her lifetime, Jane and her family seemed to live here comfortably, but depending mainly on relatives for financial support.

Of course, our visit included coffee and lunch locally and lots of happy discussion and trying on bonnets. We held our book group meeting in the sunny garden, and had a lively discussion about the characters, plot and life in 18th



Century England compared with today, especially for women.

Viv Bignell

## U3A Summer School 19-22nd June 2017 at Chichester University

During the recent heatwave 156 members from 60 different U3A's from all over the UK attended the very well organised South East U3A Forum Summer School located at the University of

1935 to 1995" ably tutored by Gillian Pitt. We were all encouraged to participate recalling memories of yesteryear.

Entertainment was provided each evening, a table quiz, choice of visit to local Theatre or Film on campus, and finally a rousing Ukelele Concert held in the Chapel.

The food and accommodation on



The venue not far from the theatre



Kathy Grigson & Jill Barrett

Chichester:

We could choose from 11 different courses, running in parallel, which ran from

the campus was good and we had ample time to socialise – it all made for a very enjoyable atmosphere and loads of laughter:



Delegates from many U3As

Monday afternoon until after lunch on Thursday, with coffee and tea breaks. We attended 7 Seminars and all the Tutors are members of the U3A.

Together with six others the course I attended was "60 years of Changing Britain

Having attended twice before I was keen to return – and was not disappointed. I am sure there will be a course for you – how about keeping me company next year?

Jill Barrett

## U3A Vegetable Gardening

SM – VEGETABLE GARDENING – NOVEMBER 2017

Brian and Liz hosted our Summer Barbecue in their lovely garden on a warm July afternoon. The food was delicious, washed down with a glass of wine, beer or soft drink. They have vegetable and fruit beds and down the



right-hand side of their garden is a beautiful raised Mediterranean garden.

New member Nikki, invited us to her garden in Little Bookham Street for our August meeting. There are plenty of surprises – pottery, sculptures, water features, and even a sink at the bottom of



the garden containing plants. There is a productive vegetable patch containing a plum tree laden with fruit, compost bags containing courgette plants and several fruit trees with an abundance of apples and pears. After enjoying coffee and a delicious home-made Dorset Apple Cake she then kindly showed us her wonderful selection of hand-made pottery.

We visited The Walled Garden at The Grange which was open for Heritage Weekend in September. The garden



looked stunning – it was commented that this was its best year. There are areas with bigger beds to grow potatoes, leeks, onions and other fruit and vegetables along with smaller individual beds for clients. Wendy is a volunteer here on a Thursday and she explained how she helps them to pick and pack fruit and vegetables to sell at the



Country Market held at the Old Barn Hall every Friday morning. Gordon showed us the large composting area and the woodworking cabin. We then enjoyed our coffee and cake outside the conservatory in the early autumn sunshine.

A return visit to Polesden Lacey in October; a Question & Answer session in November and our Christmas Lunch in December will round off a very productive year.

Anita Laycock

## Brompton Cemetery

Cemeteries are interesting to family historians and those who like a pleasant stroll in quiet and peaceful surroundings. London walking Group 3 did just that, strolling through a quiet oasis full of wild life (the sweet peas were aromatic and colourful in June), quirky statuary, wild flowers and many large trees.

We discovered the grave of a most excellent wife; her husband was buried 46 years later alongside his widow. A grave of a WWI VC holder has the image of a zeppelin falling out of the sky;



John Wisden's grave has a picture of a Victorian cricketer. The best known person buried here is



Emmeline Pankhurst and flowers are still left on her grave.

Brompton Cemetery is one of the Magnificent Seven (See Footnote) all established in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Britain went from a state of almost perpetual war to unprecedented prosperity. London was the world's commercial centre and the population rose from 1 million to 2.6 million with a consequential rise



in demand for interments. An 1836 Act of Parliament enabled private cemeteries to be set up and the land for Brompton Cemetery was purchased in August 1839 from Lord Kensington (William Edwards) and opened for business in 1840. The land, previously including a market garden and



brickworks, was bordered on the west by a canal, replaced by a railway. It was described as "having no natural attraction whatever ... not a tree or scarcely a shrub adorn the place" (from Historic Times – 1840).

The cemetery company took the gamble



of remembrance for scattering ashes. It is thought that Beatrix Potter, who lived within a mile, visited the cemetery regularly as a quiet place to walk; the names of the characters in her books may be found throughout the cemetery.

There is considerable restoration work going on, using Lottery and charitable money. The chapel is not open as a result. There are plans for a cafe and information centre and a guide book may be purchased from the Cemetery Office. We recommend the cafe "Anna" opposite the south entrance which serves a delicious Portuguese custard tart.

Footnote: This term was first used in 1981 by architectural historian Hugh Meller in reference to the London Victorian cemeteries. He and Brian Parsons are co-authors of the book

on investing heavily in expensive architecture and the layout of buildings resembles an open air Basilica with a broad central avenue passing through a 300 foot "great circle" leading to the cemetery chapel as a "high altar". Some of the grounds were left unconsecrated as space for non-conformists. There are catacombs along the western wall and under the great circle.

In 1850 the Metropolitan Interment Act was passed allowing the state to purchase private graveyards and the directors of Brompton Cemetery were quick to act to get rid of an expensive and loss making investment. The act was repealed in 1852 and Brompton Cemetery is unique amongst the London Cemeteries in passing into state ownership and it has become a Royal Park as a result. The state (as opposed to a local authority) is now responsible for its upkeep.

Burials still take place and there is a garden



"London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide & Gazetteer". They have recently published its fifth edition (2011).

Howard Hills

## Bird Ringing

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is an independent charitable research institute aimed at using evidence of

change in wildlife populations, particularly birds, to inform the public, opinion-formers and environmental policy and decision-makers. The



Chiffchaff

long-term monitoring data on the status of UK birds sets the standard worldwide for understanding the effects of environmental change on wildlife.

Over



Reed Warbler

40,000 volunteer birdwatchers, in partnership with professional research scientists, collect high quality monitoring data

on birds and other wildlife. The combination of professional ecologists, long-term datasets some in excess of 50 years, and volunteers participating all over the country gives the BTO a unique, impartial and knowledgeable voice in nature conservation.



Blackbird

For more than 20 years John Dicker has been taking U3A

groups to meet a group of BTO volunteers and to watch the process of netting, ringing and recording data on a wide variety of birds. A group of Bookham U3A members went along in August and were rewarded by seeing at first-hand how the nets were deployed, how the birds were carefully disentangled from the nets, identified, weighed, measured and finally ringed. We were



Goldcrest

then given the opportunity to very carefully hold the birds before finally releasing them.

The data collected by the BTO is uploaded to a large international database that enables the whereabouts of a bird to be reported if that



Garden Warbler

bird is subsequently recorded elsewhere. The

data collected allows the BTO to monitor populations, many in sharp decline, and to understand the migration patterns. What is difficult to fully appreciate is quite how light



Tree Creeper

many of the birds were, many weighing in at less than 10 grams.

The identification of the birds in most cases was fairly straightforward, particularly a blackbird and song thrush (both with attitude!), but some of the warblers

were more difficult, especially when the sex and age of the birds needed to be considered. This was my first visit and I was struck by how many of those caught were birds whose song is often heard but much less frequently seen. One figure that surprised me was the number of blackcaps ringed in one year – a staggering 988 from a relatively small area.

The birds ringed during our visit included tree creeper, garden warbler, willow warbler, reed warbler, blackcap, chiffchaff, blackbird, robin, song thrush, great tit, blue tit, goldfinch and greenfinch and last but not least the UK's smallest bird, a goldcrest.

All in all it was an interesting and enjoyable day.

Harold Reglar



Blackcap(f)



Blackcap(m)

## U3A Outing to Stanley Spencer Gallery Cookham July 14th 2017

Fifteen enthusiastic Bookham U3A members visited the Stanley Spencer Gallery in Cookham on a sunny day and took a tour of the Gallery and later the pretty riverside village. Set up in a small former Wesleyan Chapel shortly after his death in 1959, the Gallery was refurbished in recent years and a second floor installed to exhibit a large permanent collection of Spencer's paintings with two exhibitions each year.

"Paradise on Earth" was Sir Stanley Spencer's description of Cookham, where he was born, lived for most of his life and died. Scarcely formally educated, his artistic talent thrived at Technical College for one year, and then at the Slade. He served in the First World War in Macedonia as an orderly and then at the Front, and was commissioned as a war artist to paint the work later hung in the specially built Sandham Chapel in Berkshire.

Spencer painted commissioned portraits, family and friends and local scenes, many with a spiritual meaning. Biblical scenes and especially the Resurrection often feature scenes from Cookham and the riverside and characters from the village. Also commissioned as a war artist in the Second World War, he became most famous for his series of paintings of shipbuilders on the Clyde. He was a member of the Royal Academy and received a knighthood. Characters in his art are honestly, and sometimes comically depicted, with great detail of textures and patterns and unusual proportions.



Ferry Inn for lunch Alan Cleugh photo

The current exhibition shows his own and George and Daphne Charlton's work linked by their Artistic Affair in the 1930s.

*"Spencer painted commissioned portraits, family and friends and local scenes, many with a spiritual meaning"*

The vast painting called "Christ Preaching at Cookham Regatta" on the longest gallery wall was incomplete at the end of Spencer's life. This work provoked much interest and



Stanley Spencer's house

discussion among the U3A group and our tour guide. We could see how he prepared and coped with such a large canvas and the order he painted the figures and background. He worked one section then rolled it up to work on the next. A photograph showed him painting the work, sitting on a tall stool, perched on top of a table!

After a sociable and delicious local lunch, we took a guided tour of the village to see many sites that Sir Stanley painted. We came away from the visit with ideas for future visits such as to Sandham Chapel.  
Viv Bignell July 2017

## North South Divide

The industrial revolution that started around 1765 and continued for over a century is generally accepted to have been a 'good thing'. It increased production of goods, and small reduced prices, it created more jobs, a bigger middle class and a move from subsistence farm labouring to a factory and business way of life.

However, all social changes result in winners and losers, victors and victims. There was a distinct North-South divide, with all the financial winners being in the north. This did not go unremarked and was recorded in Benjamin Disraeli's "Sybil or the Two Nations" and "North and South" by Elizabeth Gaskell. I looked at three "victim" towns in adjacent West Country counties.

Frome, Somerset is on the River Frome and the manufacture of woollen cloth was established as its principal industry in the 15th century. Frome remained the only Somerset town in which this staple industry flourished. Families of clothiers gradually came to be the principal landowners in the town. From 1665 to 1725 major expansion occurred. In the 1720s Daniel Defoe remarked that the town had grown in the previous few decades so that it was "likely to be one of the greatest and wealthiest inland towns in England". It was confidently expected to outshine nearby Bath.

Bradford Upon Avon, Wiltshire is on the river Avon, which provided power for the wool mills that gave the town its wealth. In the early 18th century Daniel Defoe reported: "They told me at Bradford on Avon that it was no extra-ordinary thing to have clothiers in that county worth £10,000 to £40,000 per man". That is equivalent to around £1.3m today.

With improving mechanisation in textile manufacture during the Industrial Revolution, the wool weaving industry moved from cottages to purpose-built woollen mills adjacent to the river; where they used water and steam to power the looms. Around thirty such mills were built in Bradford on Avon alone, and these prospered until the English woollen industry shifted its centre of power to Yorkshire. The decline of the wool industry in the mid-18th century, increased industrialisation, and rising food prices led to poverty and some unrest amongst the inhabitants and there were

riots during the century. By 1791, it was described in less flattering terms than those Defoe had used 70 years earlier.

What made the West Country lose and the West Riding win the battle for wool?

One factor is that southern woollen and cloth trades were governed by the strict and restrictive rules of their Guilds.

Practices had been passed from Masters to Apprentices for centuries. In medieval cities and towns, craftsmen had formed associations based on their trades; confraternities of skilled artisans, each of whom controlled secrets of traditionally imparted technology, the "arts" or "mysteries" of their crafts, but these local guilds tended to limit innovation.

The continental system of guilds and merchants had arrived in England after the Norman Conquest, with incorporated societies of merchants in each town or city holding exclusive rights of doing business there.

They were called "guilds" due to the gold deposited in their common funds and were denounced by Catholic clergy for their "conjurations", the binding oaths sworn among the members to support one another in adversity and back one another in business ventures. They were mostly in the South because that was where the majority of the population lived and this is reflected in the representations to Parliament. Shaftesbury alone had two MPs for the 17th century and in 1790 the town boasted only 30 electors! The Reform Act of 1832 reduced the town to one seat.

The new entrepreneurs in the north were unrestricted by Guilds and could simply innovate in ways they felt best. Technological advancements enabled the mechanisation of processes in what had been successful cottage industries for centuries. Innovations in carding and spinning, enabled by advances in cast iron technology, resulted in the creation of larger machinery housed in water-powered mills on waterways. The need for more power stimulated the production of steam-powered beam engines, and rotating mill engines transmitting the power to line shafts on each floor of the mill. Surplus power

capacity encouraged the construction of more sophisticated power looms working in weaving sheds. The technology was used in woollen and worsted mills in the West Riding of Yorkshire and elsewhere.

The city at the forefront of a cloth-making industrial revolution was Leeds, which is said to have been built on wool and it is still asserted that "all roads roam to Leeds". The industry began in the 16th century and continued into the 19th. The construction of various transportation routes like the Leeds - Liverpool canal and later the railway system connecting Leeds with the coast, provided outlets to export the finished products all over the world.

The mighty, mechanised Leeds mills, the largest the world had seen, required increasing amounts of raw materials and the ever-expanding British Empire would help to feed the savage beast, with wool being shipped in from as far away as Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to the restrictive practices of the Guilds, the social structures of the West Country were more conservative than those of the North of England. Master clothiers in the West Country had tried to modernise their production but in 1795 the resistance, exacerbated by two poor harvests, local food riots, and the destruction of two machines had reached such a peak by August that the Wiltshire authorities were unable to control the unrest. They asked the War Office in London for troops to restore law and order and dragoons were sent in support of the local yeomanry. This did the trick, but afterwards the clothiers were very circumspect about introducing new machinery. Certainly, the resistance and reluctance to change lasted far longer in the Southern wool industry and it paid the price when its work migrated North.

In 1700 the population of Somerset was 214,000 and Lancashire 238,000. By 1800 they were 282,000 and 694,000 respectively. Somerset shows a 30% increase while Lancashire's population almost trebled.

Shaftesbury, Dorset once had a thriving button-making cottage industry. Around 1600, men's upper-body clothing was beginning its transition from the snug-fitting doublet to the coat. Buttons became larger, more prominent and became a specialist item made by button-makers, rather than tailors.

When fighting in Europe, Abraham Case had

seen how soldiers replaced buttons on their uniforms by twisting a piece of fabric over a form and fastening it with thread. Demobbed, he settled in Shaftesbury in 1662. Dorset was a sheep farming area so had a ready supply of wool and sheep products. Case started making buttons by wrapping fabric around a sequin shaped disc of horn from the Dorset Horn sheep that roamed the Downs, so he was basically gaining value from the waste products of slaughterhouses.



*Dorset Knob buttons*



*High top button*

*a Singleton*

This is very much a brass from muck story as a cartload of horn, with the attendant maggots and flies, stinks to high heaven and must be boiled, and stirred, for hours before the revolting stew is poured away and the horn is clean enough to use. It was, however, well worthwhile. Case's business was successful from the outset and his buttons very quickly became popular in fashionable London.

At least one of the three waistcoats that King Charles 1st wore to his execution in January 1649 was fastened with Case's buttons. We were all taught at school that the King wrapped up extra warmly so that he wouldn't shiver, in case it was interpreted as fear. This British Museum picture shows the stained waistcoat to be more like a modern-day vest, which may explain the modern American use of that



1 of 3 waistcoats worn by Charles I to his execution word.

The doublet was fastened by a single central row of small, closely spaced buttons. These were made tall, to avoid the small buttons slipping out of the stiff fabric. As the button line of fashion moved outwards and the garment became more flexible, a wider and lower button was needed. Dome shaped buttons named Dorset Knobs were developed.

You may be more familiar with the name Dorset Knob through the hard biscuit of similar shape developed later and still made today in Dorset.

Button making provided a supplementary income to agricultural wages but it is difficult to say how many people were employed in the industry. The Universal British Directory 1793-8 gives a figure of 1,200, mostly women and children as their fingers were smaller, nimbler and they were cheaper to employ. Alternatively, the Victoria History of Dorset states that in 1793 there were 4,000 buttoners in Shaftesbury and its surrounding countryside. The work brought summertime conflict with local farmers when the children were too busy to scare crows from the fields or help with the harvest. Buttoning was seen as easier work.

The first cloth and thread button machine was invented in 1825. It was closely followed by others and amongst the many industrial machines on display at the Great Exhibition of 1851 was a button-making press. This could

manufacture buttons far more quickly and cheaply than hand work. Birmingham, with its canal system and access to coal and metals would soon become a major centre for this type of costume jewellery and small presswork. Button manufacture from the new thin metal sheet also had the advantage of looking fashionably modern, its buttons were all identical and produced at a fraction of the cost. Metal button manufacture was boosted by the American Civil War of 1861-5 when both sides needed buttons for uniforms as well as



metal buttons

the British army, then deployed throughout the Empire.

It was a disaster for the small-scale enterprises of the rural Dorset manual button making cottage industry that could not compete with centralised factories using steam power and with access to venture capital.

The buttoners market had quickly collapsed by 1860. Near starvation hit most families, especially those with widowed breadwinners who had depended totally on their earnings from button making. Many families were forced to emigrate, whilst for others, especially the elderly, it was the workhouse. It was a sad end to the lives these women who had known better days in the button-making industry.

Against the historic run of population growth during the 19th century (England's inhabitants rose from 7¼m in 1801 to 30m in 1901), without buttons to sustain jobs the number of Shaftesbury residents fell from 3,054 in 1871 to 2,658 in 1891.

Bob Kelley

(from a talk given to the Social History Group)



metal button made in Birmingham for the Confederacy in the American Civil War



## Any Suggestions?

(One verse longer than a sonnet)

Any suggestions? Any suggestions?

Any advice on what I should do?

There is a decision that has to be made

And as usual the fact is I haven't a clue

This is the question, the fortnightly question

What can I possibly write that is new

I've emptied my brain of all its ideas

And a landscape that's empty is what I now view

My thoughts daily suffer acute indigestion

Divine inspiration has disappeared too

Creativity waved me a final farewell

And I'm totally lost for the words I once knew

I'm caught in the worst kind of traffic congestion

The signs are all telling me "you're in a queue"

I'm stuck and I can't move in any direction

I think I will scream, and then have a boo hoo

Have you any suggestion to relieve all this tension

And avoid the suspension that I'm going through?

Gillian Whitman



## AGM Bookham U3A October 2017 Report

The 24th AGM of Bookham and District U3A was held on Tuesday 3rd October in front of a packed Old Barn Hall. The Chairman, Lynn Farrell, opened the proceedings. After welcoming everyone and signing last year's minutes, she asked the Treasurer, Chris Pullan, to present the Accounts. These had been previously examined by Irene Gawne and were adopted from the floor, and the examiner re-appointed for the coming year. Members were asked to vote on a mandate to allow the committee to increase subs as it finds necessary by up to a maximum of £3. This motion was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Lynn gave the Chairman's report in which she thanked the committee members for their hard work, and she also thanked those who held positions not on the committee, but who made such a difference to the smooth running of the monthly meetings. She also thanked all the Group Leaders for their contribution to our U3A. Lynn had enjoyed her first year in office immensely, particularly as it gave her the opportunity to visit groups and meet so many members. The membership at present stands at 581, and with no waiting list it continues to increase monthly. One of the large tasks is to organise the membership renewals and Lynn thanked Pam Hyde for all her hard work in sorting this. Two very successful social events were held last year, with thanks to Jan Dicker for organising these. Maurice Baker had continued to edit Senior Moments and had been pleased with the variety of articles being provided by the membership. He had also produced excellent calendars showcasing the talent of the artists in the U3A.

Lynn highlighted the excellent work that Harold Reglar has done in looking after the website, membership database, and sending out a monthly e-newsletter. Harold has been looking at various different systems to bring our U3A forward into the 21st Century, however he has decided that it is now time for someone else with IT experience to take on the task. He is willing to support anyone who is computer literate and feels able to take on the role. Lynn went on to say that her one regret this year has been the lack of members willing to take on responsibilities, either by serving on the committee or by organising outings for members. In particular, a new webmaster is urgently required and also someone willing to take over from Jan to organise social events. Lynn said that volunteers were needed from the membership in order to keep our U3A growing and continuing to be a vibrant organisation.

This was followed by the Election of Officers and Committee.

Chairman Lynn Farrell	Vice-Chairman Roger Mendham
Secretary Gillian Arnold	Treasurer Chris Pullan
Minutes Sec. Peter Clarke	Membership Sec. Pam Hyde
Groups Co-ord. Mike Farrell	Speakers Sec. Frank Cross
Assistant Groups Co-ord. David Hyde	
Vacant Website administrator	
Co-opted Social Sec. Jan Dicker	Newsletter Maurice Baker

Another vote was taken regarding a change of name from "Senior Moments" to "SWIFT". There was a unanimous vote to retain the existing name.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 2.53pm

## The new arrangements for organising outings in Bookham U3A

Anne Glyn is now the coordinator for Bookham U3A outings. This means individual members are now expected to come forward to arrange "one off" trips. Anne can assist them with details of the most appropriate coach companies to consider etc. There is no need to think of only 52 seater coaches, but individual members will book the transport and venue. Once this is done they will inform Anne of the date of the outing and she will announce it at the monthly meeting, hand out booking forms, collect the money, issue receipts and make up the list for the outing. Any other assistance or advice they need will be provided.

### U3A SURREY NETWORK STUDY DAYS

November 17th Friday Military History Through the Ages presented by U3A members – Mike Fox, Pete Starling, June Davey & David Williams.

## U3A Tuesday Monthly Meetings

Tuesday 11th November Riding it Out - World trip on a Bicycle Pam Goodall

### Bookham U3A Current Affairs Group meeting

Should Organ Donation be Compulsory Unless One Agrees to Opt Out?  
The subject of organ donation is indeed a complex one, and the use of organs from deceased persons is governed by the Human Tissue Act. The general position at present is that in England and Northern Ireland, organs are only taken for transplant if a person specifically "opts in", stating that they wish their organs to be available. In Wales, since 2015, there is presumed consent unless a person specifically "opts out", denying permission for their organs to be used. Scotland is also considering this approach. In all cases, however, families are consulted. Laws on organ donation are confused. A dead body has no owner: it is nobody's property and we cannot bequeath it to anybody (although we can express the wish for it to be used for medical purposes), in the way that we can leave our property to whom we wish. This situation is largely historic in that a dead body was of little value before the advent of transplant surgery, but questions are now being asked as to whether the law should include our body as property.

The matter of presumed consent to organ

donation is controversial. Those favouring it cite the shortage of donations and the "wastage" of resources arising from the need to obtain consent in advance of death or to seek families' consent. Others object to presumed consent on the grounds that it is an infringement of personal choice, or even that it may lead to a disinclination of medics to treat a person if they think their organs could be of use for transplant. There has been a case in Wales of a person who had formerly registered as a donor withdrawing their consent when Welsh law changed, because he felt he was being subjected to quasi compulsion. There appears to be some doubt as to whether the Welsh move is having the desired effect.

Most religious groups, perhaps surprisingly, favour organ donation (although not necessarily presumed consent) as an act of altruism to save lives, although there are some exceptions.

Following a very interesting and good-humoured discussion, the group was divided on the issue, with a small majority in favour of the English status quo, wishing to retain personal control over their decision on this sensitive issue.

Edmund Morgan-Warren

## Bookham Open Gardens

In March 2017 I saw an advertisement asking for volunteers to open their garden for Bookham Open Gardens. The money raised helps fund the Old Barn Hall through the Bookham Community Association. Once we had been visited to see if our garden would be of interest as an Open Garden we began to think about how we would maximize the plant display for the big day.

I had often considered buying plant supports but now felt I 'must' have them. Our first purchase was a rusty crown and two rusty 'peony supports'. The antique dealer seemed



taken back that we wanted all three items and our negotiations over price were complicated by this. As soon as we arrived home I installed the two peony supports in pots where I had planted Salvia Amistad and Lonicera Strawberries and Cream. The crown went in a pot of Galtonia candicans. I then decided I needed more of these supports for my pots of Agapanthus. Supports for these were an internet and phone purchase as I had to get the saleswoman to check with staff in the factory that their 'peony supports' would fit in my pots. This would be the first time my Agapanthus did not fall forwards.

By now I had decided that all sorts of plant supports were the way forward for a good

display of the plants in our garden. Deliveries arrived in varying odd shaped parcels containing rusty half round supports of differing heights, round supports with cross pieces and tall hydrangea supports.

My critical eye was cast around the garden to decide what would improve every border. I read gardening magazines and plant catalogues and visited other gardens to gain ideas of good plant combinations. New plants were ordered. Then deliveries of boxes of plug plants, small plants and shrubs arrived. All of these needed urgent attention and planting.

When we volunteered we had no idea what the weather would be like in the weeks of preparing the garden for opening. We had a lack of rain, which resulted in regular two hour watering sessions in the garden. In April we had a late air frost which caught our acers resulting in burnt leaves but we did not attempt to cut these off. Fortunately, nothing else was damaged because the plant supports came in useful for pegging newspaper around vulnerable plants as frost protection. I ran out of the clothes pegs doing this, which meant no clothes went out on the washing line for a few days. For a while the garden looked more like a rather

odd reading room there was so much newspaper out there.

In May my irises came into flower, too early for garden open day. This was the first time they had flowered in my garden. I chose them in 2015 when I



walked the Suffolk iris fields and they were delivered in August 2015 as bare root plants. The first to flower were Iris 'Rosalie Figge' with its beautiful deep purple flowers. Some white iris appeared supplied by mistake, which we decided we would remove. Then came the very deep purple black of Iris 'Black Tie'. In order to replace the white iris I contacted a specialist iris grower who could supply me with some spare Iris 'Ghost Train' that would not be ready for her Iris stand at the Chelsea Flower Show. A car journey to Sissinghurst in hot weather made a very interesting outing to collect these plants and see the wonderful stock of irises she had in her growing tent. One of the organisers of the Open Gardens hoped I might be able to hold back these new irises until open day but the hot weather made this impossible and all were over. Photographs were all that could be seen by our visitors.

*"I do hope those of you interested in gardening will consider doing this worthwhile activity. You will meet lots of interesting people and learn a great deal in the process."*

The nearer Open Day came the more critical we became of our garden pots. Our eighty pots were arranged and rearranged until we decided we had the best positions for them. Watering, more watering, weeding and dead heading were daily activities. It became very windy and extra supports were quickly purchased to stop our many Digitalis from falling over. Then the temperatures started to rise.

Opening Day came with the temperature around 30 degrees. Our great friends Anita and Lee and our daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons joined us. We put up the signs, hung out the balloons, and arranged the greetings tables with the extra tickets and the book to record the number of visitors. The minibus stop was just outside and around 10.15 am our first visitors arrived. From that moment on the stream of visitors was continuous until we closed at 5.00 pm.

Then the garden sprinkler was turned on and our two grandsons were immediately dashing in and out of the water with shouts of delight as they cooled down from the heat. It was a great temptation for the adults to also dash about in the water as we were all so hot. None of us succumbed. Within an hour we all sat down and ate a meal together and talked about our many happy experiences of the day. It is certainly a day we will remember.

We had had 316 visitors who had walked and talked and discussed and sat and looked. We had supplied jug after jug of water to fill the many cups of water drunk. Lots of questions had been asked and we had done our best to answer them. Visitors had sat at our table leafing through my file of photographs of the garden and reading through my files of plants. Our visitors made wonderful comments and we much appreciated all of this. We now have a well-planted garden but nothing in gardening stays still. So we continue to change things and consider ideas for the future.

Will we open again? We will have to wait and see. Will you open your garden for Open Day? I do hope those of you interested in gardening will consider doing this worthwhile activity. You will meet lots of interesting people and learn a great deal in the process.

Judith Witter

## Military History Group

The Military History Group's annual excursion proved to be a great success. Ably organised by Margaret and Tom Adam the 24-strong group was transported to Tangmere 'Airfield' on the South Coast via an unusual scenic route (courtesy of Ian the coach driver's sat nav) which took us through some of the prettiest villages West Sussex can offer:



On arrival, the group was split into two and while one group recharged their batteries over a cappuccino, Americano, latte or whatever



David Williams and the Museum Director

(what happened to just a cup of coffee?) the other group was given an

introductory talk about the Museum by Museum Volunteers and vice versa.

Tangmere Airfield was formed towards the end of WWI and used by the USA to retrain its airmen to fly Handley Page bombers. During WWII, it played a significant part in the Battle of Britain, numerous day-time operations that preceded D-Day and night operations

into occupied France that included those carried out by the SOE (Special Operations Executive). In 1941, a Wing of three Spitfire squadrons were formed with Douglas Bader as its first Wing Commander.

Today, only Tangmere Cottage, the Museum, the Commemorative Stone in the village and the graves of the fallen in St Andrews churchyard remain to remind us of the vital part RAF Tangmere has played

in British military aviation history. Today, the airfield has reverted to farmer's crops.

The museum, a smaller version of RAF Hendon managed to keep the group occupied for most of the day, interspersed with a lunchtime visit to the excellent Gribble Inn in nearby Oving village. Here, we

were refreshed by a set meal of cottage pie, followed by apple crumble and helped down with, in my case, a glass or two of Shiraz. (Man heaven).

On our return from lunch David Williams presented a WWII aviation American Bubble Sextant to the Museum which was gratefully received by a Volunteer guide on behalf of Tangmere Museum.

To round off the day we had a final look at the many early aircraft and wartime memorabilia interspersed with informative short films showing various wartime aces such as Douglas Bader and Baron von Richthofen. The day ended with a pleasant journey home in time for tea

Roy Mellick