



Chairman's Letter

I haven't made any Resolutions this New Year, as it's so depressing when the weather is awful on 5th January and you decide not to go on a nice healthy walk, but succumb to the temptation of that last mince pie. However, perhaps I should set myself some targets regarding u3a and resolve to achieve them.

I'll start with the easiest. I'm still on my quest to visit as many groups as possible, as seeing members engaging in activities with their groups is what the organisation is all about. Those that I visited last year were all so welcoming and interesting that I wanted to join every one of them! Please invite me along – you are such a fantastic showcase of people enjoying learning and laughing together.

Talking to members, particularly recent joiners, there is an interest in social activities where people can meet others and extend their acquaintanceships. This year the Committee hope to trial a couple of events, enabling everyone to enjoy the laughing part of our motto.

And to broaden our learning, we aspire to holding some Study Days, again open to all members, so that you can continue an interest or try something new, which I suppose summarises u3a as an organisation.

Oh dear, let's hope that this time next year these targets haven't gone the way of the mince pie. Perhaps I'd better go for that walk after all!

Membership Renewal for 2024 is now due

The fee will remain at £12 per annum

Please complete your renewal by 1-March

If you joined after 1-Dec 2023 you do not need to renew until 2025

Membership can be renewed easily [online](#)

For further details or if you prefer to renew by cash or cheque a membership renewal form is included with this Newsletter

In This Issue

- P.1 Chairman's Letter
- P.2 Committee List
General Meetings
Coffee Morning
- P.3 AGM Outcome
- PP.4-6 Group Reports
- P.6 Coach Trip to
Arundel
- P.7 Crossword Puzzle
Sudoku
- P.8 Noticeboard

**The last day for receipt of copy for Newsletter No 158 is Tuesday 19 March 2024
and for Bulletin No 4 is Tuesday 20 February 2024**

Please send your contributions to the News Editors

**For contact details of Committee Members and Group Leaders
Please login with your Username and Password**

www.u3aorpington.org.uk



Monthly General Meetings - Crofton Hall (2-4pm)



19 February - Chris O'Donoghue Behind the Scenes at the Chelsea Flower Show

Drawing on his experience of designing and building medal-winning gardens at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Chris gives an insight into how the show gardens are created.



18 March - Peter Wood - Behind the Scenes at the BBC

Peter will take a light-hearted look at life and work in the television industry with the hope that he can hold fast to the BBC's intention to "Inform, Educate and Entertain".

Peter worked at the BBC for 45 years. When he started they were still making some programmes in Black and White! In that time he progressed through the ranks, seeing TV change from Black and White to Colour, the introduction of Stereo Sound, the change to Widescreen, then Digital Television, and lastly the launch of High Definition, and ending as the most Senior Maker of Tea in the BBC! He also had experience in the production side of television, which is where some of his stories come from, and was responsible for the recruitment and training of technical people for the Corporation.

Doors open at 2pm for refreshments until the main meeting starts at 2:30pm

Monthly u3a Coffee Morning - BR6 Café

On the Tuesday following the General Meeting in Crofton Halls, we have our coffee morning in the BR6 Café, Orpington College, at 10.30am. Members are invited to join other members and group leaders over a cup of coffee or tea and a pastry for £3.50.



Annual General Meeting 2024

At the AGM on 15-January the following officers were elected to positions on the committee

Chairman - Sue
Vice-Chairman - Yvonne
Treasurer - Robert
Secretary - Neil

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to be a member of the Orpington u3a Committee



All those in favour please raise your hand

Move more in '24...

Following the AGM we had an inspiring talk by Ann Wilbourn of Mytime Active. We all joined in with her chair based exercises. Some got a bit too carried away with the 'keep the ball up in the air' game — we appear to have several members who could start a u3a Volley Ball Group!

The take home message from Ann was

"use it or lose it"

Can you make a cup of tea? Do you have a friendly smile?

We need help at the monthly General Meetings (3rd Monday of the Month) in Crofton Halls.



We have a rota of volunteers to help with serving refreshments and greeting new members at the door — it's a great way to meet people.

For more information please contact

The Vice Chairman



*First signs
of spring
in Lilly's
Wood*

Lilly's Wood is an area of mixed broad-leaved ancient woodland located to the east of Chelsfield Lane, Orpington. Its an ideal place to go and get a bit of fresh air and exercise.

GROUP REPORTS

Town and Country Lunches

For our latest outing we visited Trafalgar Square to see the Christmas tree, walk around the market and coffee in St Martin's. Then on to wonderful Covent Garden for some mulled wine and more shopping. Then we went to Somerset House to watch the ice skating.



This was wonderful with more warming mulled wine. We then went to the Edgar Wallis pub in Essex Street for lunch. The icing on the cake was the old No.15 bus with a conductor that took us back to the station. A very enjoyable day.

Country Music — New Group

Once a month members will meet in a member's home and play songs according to a chosen theme from across the broad spectrum of country music through the decades.

This new group was advertised in last month's Newsletter and there has been a great response. So much so, we now have only two vacancies.

The current thought is to hold the meetings once a month, on the second Thursday (2-4pm) at a member's home – starting 8th February.

For more information contact the Group Leader



London Explorers

Visit to the Stationers' Hall, Ave Maria Lane, City of London. Friday 23rd February 2024 at 11am.

We'll catch the 9.44 am Cannon Street train from Petts Wood. The cost is £20.00 per person which includes a Guide and refreshments. Maximum 20 people.

For more information contact the Group Leader

*"The only source of
knowledge is experience"*

Albert Einstein



London Explorers

The next London walk with Kim, our Blue Badge Guide will be 'Beautiful Belgravia' on Wednesday 17th April. Cost £10. To book your place call the Group Leader



Philosophy

A flurry of snow didn't stop the Philosophy Group celebrating Christmas at Pauline's house.

We are now putting together a new programme for 2024.

If you would like more details about this group and the topics covered please contact the Group Leader



GROUP REPORTS

Science and Technology

We ended 2023 with a light-hearted Science Quiz:

How many bananas would you need to eat to become radioactive? Is it true that on Juno (the NASA space probe) the crew are all Lego characters?

This meeting gave us a chance to learn, laugh, and enjoy a few mince pies!

We started the New Year with a talk about some of the applications of Artificial Intelligence in Medicine and Healthcare.

AI is now an integral part of modern healthcare and medical research, and applications are steadily increasing.

For more information about the group, please take a look at [Science & Technology — In Focus](#) on page 6.

NEXT MEETING - Gravity - 13-February



Industrial Heritage - a new name...

...for a long established u3a group. Why the change? Industrial archaeology makes an important contribution to the discovery and preservation of Britain's unique industrial heritage, but it's not what we actually do. So, to avoid the impression that we enjoy spending our time excavating old bits of machinery with trowels, we're changing the name.

The monthly pattern of meetings and trips to places of interest that we have used for the last 17 years continues, but with a broader 'Heritage' perspective. Technologies of course; but also more focus on themes such as people and places, innovation and invention, causes and consequences.

Interested? As an 'open' group, all members of Orpington u3a are welcome to join in our activities as often (or seldom) as they like. There are no formal membership requirements. To be kept fully informed of what we are up to, just ask the Group Leader to add your email address to our group mailing list.

NEXT MEETING – Monday 26-February

A reminder that we'll be meeting at our usual venue – the Liberal Club Hall opposite Tesco – from 2:30 to 4:30 pm on the last Monday of February.

As previously announced, the topic will be 'The Pre-History of Heavier-Than-Air Powered Flight'. More information will be circulated at the beginning of February.



Solutions to Cryptic Crossword No 91

Across: 1. Became, 4. Spectate, 10. Artlessness, 11. Bee, 12. Semitic, 14. Arrival, 15. Astronomically, 17. Overindulgence, 21. Retrieval, 22. Nascent, 23. Coq, 24. Assassinate, 26. Disperse, 27. Serene.
Down: 1. Bradshaw, 2. Cot, 3. Maestro, 5. Precariousness, 6. Caserta, 7. Ambivalence, 8. Evenly, 9. Psychoanalysis, 13. Motivations, 16. Aesthete, 18. Reigate, 19. Gas pipe, 20. Traced, 25. Ace.

GROUP REPORTS

Science & Technology – In Focus

This group is for anyone with an interest in science or technology

Some members are retired scientists or engineers, but most have no scientific background. However, we are all keen to broaden our horizons and learn more about new technologies, life, the universe and everything!

Our meetings usually consist of a PowerPoint presentation by a member or guest. Followed, after a coffee break, with 'Science News'.

We are an informal, friendly group and generally ask questions as they arise, resulting discussions may then lead to future topics.

Meetings are held at 2-4pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month, from September to June, with members being encouraged to contribute to the topics of discussion. For the two summer months we arrange a couple of outings.



S&T Recent Presentations:

- Gene Editing
- Quantum Computing
- Bats and Coronaviruses
- Slime Moulds
- Digital Camera Technology
- Climate Change
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Bees and Beekeeping
- Boston Dynamics Robots
- Space is BIG!
- Honey and Wax
- The Clifton Suspension Bridge
- How Neuroscience Began
- The Science of Botany
- Modern Technology in Shipping
- The Moon
- Fossils
- Carnivorous Plants
- Artificial Intelligence and Medicine

Painting

This is a small group, meeting twice a month to enjoy painting together. "There is no formal tuition, we learn from each other". There is a waiting list for the Painting Group at the moment. However, if you like arts and crafts we are hoping that a new group for Mixed Crafts will start soon. Contact the New Groups Liaison Officer to find out more.



Painting Group members concentrating on their beautiful artwork

Coach Trip to Arundel

If there is enough interest we hope to have a coach trip to Arundel for members on Thursday 18-April. The cost will be £15.00 and will leave from Spur Road at 9.30am returning about 6pm. Tickets will be on sale at the February and March General Meetings. Cash or debit/credit card preferable. To find out more please contact the Chairman

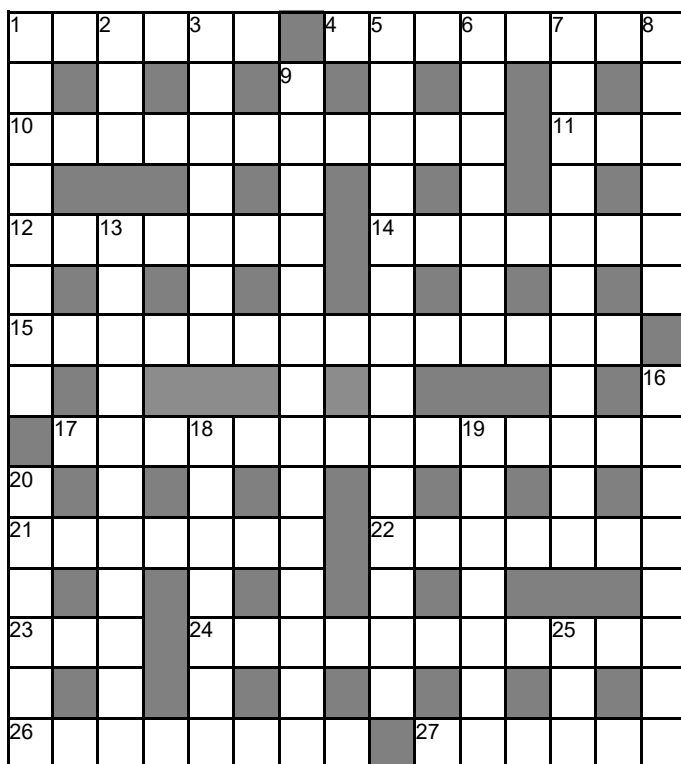
Your Group – In Focus

A recent idea is to have 'In Focus' articles from Interest Groups in the Newsletter or Bulletin with a detailed description of who they are, what they do, recent meetings, future meetings, accompanied by a couple of photos. This will be valuable information for members who are deciding which groups to join. If you are willing to write an 'In Focus' account about your group, please send your article to the News Editors.

PUZZLES

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD no 91

Submitted by Cryptic Crosswords 1



Across

1. Suited 11ac taking raincoat back (6)
4. Look on as Pete's cat changes (8)
10. Maybe pictures head holding not as much naivety (11)
11. Live English insect? (7)
12. Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic! Such language?
14. Act of reaching destination revealed by unlimited car rivals (7)
15. Related to cooking and food, no good to a partner of great size, relatively speaking (14)
17. Would being on cloud nine verge on having too much of a good thing? (14)
21. May occur when the jury cannot agree about hearing (7)
22. Developing initially no animal's fragrance (7)
23. Frequently associated with Bill (3)
24. Worried following a pair of animals home to slaughter (11)
26. Disseminate when pressed about the capital of India (8)
27. Sing in the open air without notice and become calm (6)

Down

1. British Rail notices his accurate words initially keeping travellers on the right lines (8)
2. Northerner lost his head in bed? (3)
3. Take Miss West to sort out the conductor (7)
5. Repercussion's a sort of instability (14)
6. Scare at reformed Italian Provincial capital (7)
7. Came shortly with enviable changes for contradictory ideas (11)
8. Perhaps how energy is displayed in 27ac (6)
9. Detailed examination after seeing Hitchcock thriller finds a system of theory and therapy (14)
13. Encouragements needed to visit Oman reconstruction (11)
16. He has taste and energy to be an appreciator of art (8)
18. Distressed tie gear in Surrey (7)
19. Gape, taking in small and very good fuel supplier (3,4)
20. Carted about? (6)
25. Unbeatable service (3)

SUDOKU

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8		6	7					9
	1		6				5	
					3	9		8
4	5				7			
				9				
3					6	1		2
1			3	8	4			6
6								5

Solution on page 5



This Newsletter contains personal data

Please do not leave a printed copy in a public place and dispose of it responsibly, preferably by shredding all contact details
Thank you

Parking at Crofton Halls

As our Monthly General Meetings are very popular and may coincide with other events at Crofton Halls, the carpark is usually very busy

If you are able, please come without your car. Try public transport, or car share
Thank you

Do you have an email address?

For those who are able to view the newsletter on a PC or tablet, but still receive a paper copy in the post, **PLEASE** consider receiving it only by email in the future.

Making this change is very easy, just click **HERE** and fill in the form on our website.

Or select 'Register for Newsletters by Email' in the 'Members' Area' on the website:

www.u3aOrpington.org.uk

**IT'S TIME TO
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**



**We have updated
our website**

Please check for Interest Group information, recent Newsletters and news about future events

Don't have a PC at home?

You can get free access to a computer in Orpington Library
The staff are very helpful

www.u3aorpington.org.uk

Trading Standards Alert: QR Codes - Are they real?

Be wary of fake QR codes - These can be stickered over real ones or sent in writing or by email

The warning follows a specific scam involving a fake letter which appears to be sent by Thames Water. The letter contains a QR code which directs residents to a fraudulent website offering help with paying their bills. This website then asks for personal information such as date of birth, address, and passport number.

Thames Water are assuring their customers that they will never ask for their personal or financial details or access to their online account. Like many other scams, the risk in this example is giving fraudsters your personal and financial details through a bogus link.

These are just two examples:

- [Thames Water have been made aware of a scam letter sent to some customers claiming they are eligible for a reduced bill or free water](#)
- [BBC news have published a story about a QR code at a railway station](#)

Protect yourself:

- If there is a QR code on a sign, check for any indication of tampering.
- If in any doubt, don't proceed. Contact the genuine business directly to pay another way if you need to.

If you get taken to a website, check the URL (website address). Is it secure?

The [Get Safe Online website](#) has a [check a website tool](#)

