



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
www.u3awelhat.org.uk

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NEWSLETTER Summer 2018 Issue 58

*The full colour version of the newsletter is on our website at
<http://www.u3awelhat.org.uk/newsletters.html>*



On Friday 16 February the committee hosted an afternoon tea party at WGC Bowls / Cricket Club for, as Chair Jean Mackie put it, “all the helpers who work to ensure that our U3A Wednesday mornings, and other events, run as efficiently as they do, each week, rain or shine, to thank them on behalf of the rest of the U3A community”. Our photograph, by Peter Fox, shows Jean and Vice-Chair Ann Davies seated in front, with the rest of the committee and the volunteers (names given on page 3).

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U3A Welwyn-Hatfield NEWSLETTER

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Helpers' tea party

Our front-page photograph shows the members who regularly help to make our U3A such a success: those who offer us administration support, deal with the catering, organise the buffet at the Christmas quiz, plan the Christmas lunch, serve on the coffee rota, work front of house, provide IT support, organise new members' meetings, compile the programme, act as receptionists at the Wednesday meetings, work the sound system, book the speakers and welcome new members. Over sixty people were invited; just under fifty attended.

Shown in the photograph, as well as committee members, are – David Banks, Eileen Bannister, John Brown, Marion Cleveland, Jean Cross, Mike Dorrington, Sue Dorrington, Bridget Durham, Dennis Edwards, Elaine Evans, Marjorie Gladwin, Ann Glover, John Green, Richard Griffiths, Graham Hart, Phil Hembrow, Birthe Hembrow, Cathy Holmes, Linda Kent Taylor, Sue King, Tony Lammiman, Joan Lammiman, Jill Longman, Hetty Martin, Thomas Mercer, Stan Mills, Carol Mills, Jenny Roden, Chris Savage, Alison Shirley, Bob Shirley, Marion Sklar, Joan Thomas and Sheila Wilder.

Unable to attend were –

Carol Bush, Joe Clare, Brenda Cook, David Dickenson, Ann Fox, Corrie Godfrey, Olivia Jarratt, Margaret Lewis, Janet Maisey, Helen McClean, Mary O'Donnell, John Partridge, Carol Payne, Sandy Pizzey, June Rogers, Cheryl Shevlane, Jean Sole, David Steed, Sandra Williams and John Winchester.

Many apologies for any names that have been missed off. Your contributions are always appreciated.

The guests were asked to contribute their ideas on what is working



well in Welwyn Hatfield U3A and to suggest ways in which it could be made even better. The session was very productive, with plenty of helpful feedback, and the afternoon tea, organised by Hazel Phillips, was appreciated by all.

The sterling work of Group Leaders is recognised annually at a lunch held in September.

Meet the Groups



Part of the Photography Group's display

At least 160 people came along to this annual event to see for themselves what happens at Group meetings and to find out what Groups do. Many visitors came for a look at what we do in order to decide whether to join or not. There were 19 groups displaying the results of their endeavours or showing what was on offer to their members.

All the photographs, the watercolours, greetings cards and craft work on display were a credit to our members. We had demonstrations of Line Dancing and Tai Chi. The former was lively and many people joined in when invited; the latter was calming, peaceful and mesmerising. People were chatting with group representatives all morning, and there was a really positive atmosphere.

I'd like to thank all the group leaders and members who came along early to set up, and also John Middleton for producing the incomparable floor plan. This event would not be a success without their help and cooperation.

Ann Davies



The Watercolour group in action



Ann Bunn and Hilda Wiggins with the Greeting Cards display



The Line Dancing display



Tai Chi demonstration

Photos by Peter Fox

Walking the London LOOP

Some years ago I was intrigued to read about a long-distance path of 150 miles, just inside the M25. It went on my increasingly long bucket list but, despite good intentions, dropped lower down as time went by. Imagine my delight, then, when I read in *TAM* that a fellow U3A member, Charles Morris, was organising a group to walk the LOOP (London Outer Orbital Path), beginning in March 2016. My husband, Clive, and I signed up immediately and were delighted to find that Susan Marsh and Robin Waters, also from Welhat U3A, had done the same. For the next 18 months, the first Thursday of every month was booked (we had a winter break).



Jean at Erith – the start of the LOOP

We followed *The London Loop guide*, by David Sharp and Colin Saunders, which divides the walk into 15 sections, with distances ranging from just under eight miles to the final, longest section of just under 14 miles. Our book was based on the principle that you can get to and from the start of each section by public transport, which was great – except when we tried to use Southern Rail to get to Croydon!

Our start was Erith, on the south bank of the Thames, within sight of the QE2 Bridge. It was a bright, brisk morning, sunny and clear with great views as we walked along the grassy river bank. We headed east and then turned south, by the Darent River sluice gate, one of the Thames flood barriers. The Darent, like other rivers we walked along, has a fascinating history – acting as a busy conduit for London's produce during previous centuries. Now, it is edged by more scrapyards than I ever thought existed! Not the prettiest sight, but absolutely fascinating. Recycling is clearly big business! We ended our first day in Bexley – a far cry from Erith and neighbouring scrapyards, with a beautiful old church and very much a village feel.



St Margaret's Church, Bexley with octagonal cap on spire

Every section offered us new panoramas and fascinating urban areas too. I don't know south London very well and was amazed at just how much green space, parks, lakes and woodland there is spread around the outskirts of London. At one point we had a wonderful view over to the North Downs – fantastic! There is also plenty of history to discover, such as old airfields, furnaces used in the armoury trade, Tudor lodges, monuments and mansion houses.

Of course, it being the U3A, we all talked nineteen to the dozen, so it was great to develop friendships as the months went by. Over 100 people signed up to start the walk and I think around 65/70 completed it so we got to know quite a few fellow walkers. I was thinking back to my favourite sections but it's difficult to choose just one. I did particularly enjoy, however, a beautiful summer's day when we walked from Hamsey green to Banstead Downs. We had lovely rolling hills taking us down into Happy Valley (no, not the one from the TV series!) and then a beautiful ridge down into Old Coulsdon where we found a delightful café and some welcome shade in which to enjoy our lunch. Clive, Susan and I had another magical day in December when the three of us joined forces to complete a section we'd missed in October, running from Hatton Cross to Uxbridge. You may remember Hatton Cross – the Brinks Matt robbery in 1983. Well, the place still looks pretty grim! We had a mile trek along a busy dual carriageway before turning off onto the actual LOOP path. The weather was very strange – our surroundings felt even more sombre



Signpost at West Wickham common

and dreary in the low cloud and mist. Although we were under Heathrow's flight path and could hear the planes coming in at not much more than roof height, the mist was so thick we couldn't see them at all. Our route took us into Cranford Park where we came across the most delightful church which just happened to be open. The warden welcomed us inside and we were amazed at the beautiful interior, with the 200-year-old pews, just enough for a congregation of about 40. Christmas decorations made the church look even more magical – so different from the outside weather. We continued along canal towpaths and eventually crossed the major Heathrow A408 spur road at Stockley. The description in the book talks of making a detour up to a mound to see 'the amazing 360 degree panoramic view' – we chuckled – hardly able to see the road beneath us, and marvelled at the enterprise or was it madness of the golfers trying to play a round!

Well, the 7 September 2017 arrived and it was our final and longest section of the loop. Weather was fair but we were all somewhat anxious about completing the 13.75 miles. However, the changing scenery from woodland to fields, river valleys, industrial parks, the huge recycling plant and nature reserve at Rainham before we finally reached the Thames, kept us going. A particularly poignant view was that of the concrete barges, abandoned on the edge of the Thames having played a key role in WWII as part of the Mulberry Harbour that supported the D-Day landings. They were subsequently used to shore up the estuary defences, but nobody wants them anymore so there they sit – in perpetuity, perhaps.



**Clive, Jean and Susan
at the end of the LOOP**

What a celebration when we finished – a great experience, much savoured. Did we get lost at all – no – although finding the route across golf courses often proved a challenge! Would we do it again? Well, Charles has kindly offered to organise a similar excursion around the Hertfordshire Way (195 miles), and so we start again in April 2018! Once more, a great example of the possibilities and wonders of belonging to the U3A!

Jean Mackie

Notes from the Chair



I am honoured, though somewhat daunted, to have been elected Chair of Welwyn Hatfield U3A. I would like to thank Jean so much for the incredible amount of work she has put in on our behalf; she is a very hard act to follow. Jean was always so knowledgeable, erudite and charming on Wednesday mornings, and the most impressive of chairmen at committee meetings, making it all look so easy! I will do my best to reach such a professional standard.

I would not be taking on this role without the amazing support of the committee. Particularly with the assistance of Ann Davies, Vice Chair who will be standing in for me on Wednesday mornings, which means Welwyn Hatfield U3A will be in good hands, when I will be away for two months during the Summer Term. We have welcomed Jill Longman onto the committee – she has already been busy distributing New Members Packs while Jill McKinnon is away. Bharati Chauhan, who leads the Speaker Bookings team, and David Cushen, who has been helping the Treasurer, both co-opted during the year, joined the committee formally at the AGM. Peter Fox has volunteered to become Membership Secretary, for which I am most grateful. Marion Sklar and Sandy Pizzey have both stepped down from the committee. However, Marion will continue to coordinate the teams of Wednesday morning Welcomers and New Members Coffee Mornings. Many thanks to Sandy who for many years lead the Speaker Bookings team with such calm efficiency.

I enjoyed my previous role of Membership Secretary, meeting so many new members who were often making their first tentative steps into a new experience of 'no work'. I hope in the future to get to know many more of you U3A stalwarts who have been members much longer than I have.

As a committee it seems we have a challenging year ahead with changes both with the Charity Commission and Data Protection, along with local venue hire. However, the most important part of Welwyn Hatfield U3A is its members, so I hope you all continue to enjoy the friendship and life-long learning that your U3A membership brings.

Suzanne Brown

A Week in the life of a U3A Enthusiast

It is so strange to look back to 2002 when I had just retired and was terrified of the empty future with no work and no colleagues for company.

I walked into that first U3A Wednesday meeting with trepidation—a room full of people who all appeared to know each other and there was I, the only one who knew nobody. So I put on my confident face while cringing inside and despite everyone's being very kind, I felt like the odd one out.

It is now 2018, and on Wednesdays I leap (that's a vast exaggeration) out of bed in my cottage in Kimpton and drive to the meeting with eagerness, knowing I will be seeing so many cheerful familiar faces and get the great sense of community which it seems we all need, while also hearing some interesting speakers on a wide range of subjects. Meanwhile I am so glad the committee now try to have "Greeters" at the door to welcome newcomers.

On two Mondays each month it is Architecture Group at Verulam Hall, in Welwyn Garden City. That is the first group I joined, and there, in the friendly atmosphere, I started relaxing, and later took over leadership of the group. I have enjoyed belonging to it ever since and have learnt so much about different styles and trends in architecture, thanks to Michael Nicolas, the architect who now heads the group.



The other two Monday mornings bring me Mahjong, again in Welwyn Garden City—a fascinating game using romantic “tiles” instead of cards. It’s a game of skill and chance, so in one session one may score bottom and in the next top. Highs and lows, but all in good company.

Then a quick lunch in Tesco’s humble café, where the cheese toasties are the best in the whole area, and I head for Monday afternoon’s World Affairs session, still in WGC. Here many members have such a handle on politics and current thinking that I try to absorb as much as my brain cells will allow – as we are told to do in the third age, knowing that many cells are ceasing to respond.

A monthly Tuesday meeting of the Book Club is another joy, where we have great discussions and disagreements on the book we have just read. This brings new insights into ways of seeing life.

Thursday comes, another stimulating day with interest and companionship. Play Reading in WGC in the morning—a different play each week, and I’m more interested in drama as a result. Then, still in WGC, on to British History – a group I have enjoyed for years and which has given me a greater understanding of our nation’s history than I ever learned at school, thanks to Myrtle Pit-Keathly and her grasp of all things historical.

Since Roger Swaine and I took on the running of Exploring London Group (1), my knowledge of our capital has expanded through our trips there. This new challenge is fun, and makes me even more appreciative of the Art Appreciation Group, whose trips I have also taken advantage of.

Friday morning arrives: no U3A for me that day, but after a fulfilling week I’m happy to submit to my other life, and will flick a duster over my house, and respond when my garden bullies me with “if I don’t get any attention I’ll show you what chaos I can create, then you’ll be sorry,” knowing that the U3A will be there again on Monday.

Thank you, U3A!

Elaine Evans

Group News

Creative Writing

When the monthly theme chosen for the group's writing homework was "Airport", Sue Ould produced this story.

(Feel Free To Take Me With You!)

– and if you have another book you've finished, why not leave it in my place?

So read the words on the card on a small table in the busy airport departure lounge. A single paperback crime novel lay by the card.

“An interesting invitation”, mused the traveller. “I could do with some more holiday reading, and the book I've brought with me isn't as good as I anticipated. Furthermore, this 'new' one is among the Val McDermid novels I've been wanting to read. Right, a straight swap, I think!”

The traveller flicked through the book. On the inside of the back cover four columns gave names, dates and airports where each reader had found the novel, and left it after they had read it. These included Bangkok, Singapore, Rome and Nairobi, to name but a few.

When nobody was looking, the book gave a small, secret, self-satisfied smirk, as if to say – “See how well-travelled I am!”

Exploring London Group 3

Our first outing in 2018 was to the **Churchill War Rooms**.

This is a fascinating attraction to visit. The entry price included a hand-held audio guide which was very informative as we progressed through the many and varied rooms that make up the basement of a large office block in King Charles Street, Whitehall. Many of the rooms have been restored to show how they functioned during the war; we especially enjoyed Churchill's bedroom, the map rooms and the communication equipment. There is also a large museum with many displays of life at that time. Too much to absorb in one visit! There is also a good café and the inevitable gift shop.



From there we made our way to the Banqueting House in Whitehall, which houses the only remaining part of the Palace of Whitehall. This has a first floor dining hall with a magnificent Rubens decorated ceiling: we were encouraged to lie back on large bean bags to admire the painting. It wasn't quite so easy to get up again! This building has a wealth of history to explore, not least of which is where Charles I was led to his execution in 1649.

In March we ventured to the **Royal Albert Hall**.

We were escorted through the circular corridors with the guide pointing out the many photographs of various stars who had appeared there since its opening in 1871. We also learnt about the building's history and the different seating arrangements available to accommodate anything from a boxing match to a Japanese sumo wrestling contest, a circus and the annual Proms concert, as well as pop and classical concerts almost on a daily basis. We learned that the organ is the original installation, was the largest in Europe and has 999

pipes, one of which is some 40 ft high. We also marvelled at the royal box and the adjoining room furnished by Buckingham Palace, and were told that one of the nearby boxes changed hands recently for £2.3 million – and you can hire the premises for a mere £23,000 an evening, complete with staff.

We then went to the Victoria and Albert Museum, for lunch in the main café which was able to accommodate our group with ease. This is another magnificent building, with over 2 million exhibits on permanent display over several floors and a central garden with outside seating. We took advantage of the various (free) guided tours and learnt about the building and its fascinating contents. It would take many visits to appreciate this wonderful museum in its entirety.

Sue McLellen and Tony Dodd



Organ and auditorium at the Royal Albert Hall

Exploring London (4)

Our latest trip, on 24 March, planned and led by Sonja Park with all her usual care and enthusiasm, took in the splendours of our royal heritage, early examples of wealthy families building in London, and some of the oldest businesses that flourished as the city grew.

Starting very much in the modern day, we emerged from the underground into the recently redeveloped Victoria area. We stopped briefly to admire some of the artworks currently on display there – mixed media pieces by Saad Qureshi, looking like elaborate sand-sculptures of imagined and remembered landscapes – but our first priorities for the day were, of course, coffee and toilets.

Refreshed, we headed for the Royal Mews, which is a working stable in daily use as well as being home to the royal collection of historic coaches and carriages. Most well-known of these is the Gold State Coach; used at every coronation since George IV's in 1821, it is huge and quite dazzlingly golden! The newest in the collection is the Diamond Jubilee State Coach, which is smaller but glitteringly impressive, and incorporates in its construction elements of an enormous range of events, figures and objects significant in British history, such as timber from *HMS Victory*, the *Mary Rose* and the *Mayflower*, handrails from the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, a counterweight from Big Ben, and countless other fascinating commemorative touches.

We saw a few of the horses that are kept at the Mews – Windsor Greys and Cleveland Bays – and learned of the daily routines there, and the hard work that goes into maintaining the ceremonial tack. The Royal Mews is responsible for all road travel arrangements for the Queen and members of the Royal Family, so we also saw an example of the cars used for more everyday occasions.

By now we were ready for lunch, after which we reconvened to walk along to Buckingham Palace, where we imagined ourselves as some of the great and good entering to be honoured, but in fact we just posed outside for a group photo.

In St James' Park, Sonja pointed out some of the huge and impressive "town houses" built by such noble families as the Spencers and Marlboroughs; then we moved on past St James' Palace, built by Henry VIII and still an important centre of formal and ceremonial occasions.



Having glimpsed the homes of both royalty and nobility, we now turned our attention to trade, walking up St James's Street where we saw the wine merchants, Berry Bros. & Rudd, little changed since its opening in 1698. A little further up we were able to go inside the compact premises of Lock & Co., hatters. The little shop oozed character, with photos, letters and signed head-shapes of customers past and present, from Nelson, Oscar Wilde and Churchill to David Walliams, Stella McCartney and the cast of Peaky Blinders.

Taking in en route some delightful, tucked-away areas such as Pickering Place and Blue Ball Yard, we arrived at Christie's, the fine art auction house, where we popped in to view some of the works of Picasso, Hockney, Freud and Escher, among others. We completed our window-shopping browsing through Piccadilly Arcade before beginning to make our way homewards at varying speeds, depending on the calls of our real lives (as opposed to the imagined ones we had been living!). We look forward to broadening our horizons again on our next trip.

Jill Longman

Photography

These photographs were on the group's boards displayed at "Meet the Groups" on 28 March:

Snowy Road at Ayot St Peter's by Eileen Pegrum;

Heron Stanborough by Michael Nicolas

Burano Reflections by Michael Nicolas (on page 20)





Burano reflections by Michael Nicolas

Travel

The art and history of Liverpool — The Beatles, Cilla Black, The Mersey, Aintree Racecourse, Willy Russell, The Everyman Theatre, The Mersey Sound Poets, Gerry and the Pacemakers, Everton and Liverpool Football Clubs.

Day 1, 10 September:

Liverpool is a rich seam in our cultural capital and this trip aimed to mine it to the full. Setting out on a Sunday morning with an ominous weather forecast for the week, we made steady progress north to our first destination en route which was the National Trust's Sudbury Hall in Derbyshire. This was a grand 17th-century family home with a notable

staircase with woodcarving by Grinling Gibbons. In a service wing of the house was the National Trust Museum of Childhood. This was fascinating because of the unique and unusual manner of displaying some of the exhibits; from the walls, from the ceilings. The museum even housed a mock-up of the chimney system of a Victorian house, so that young visitors could explore and, possibly, imagine the work of young chimney sweeps of that era. After this welcome break in our journey, we headed for our hotel, the Mercure Atlantic Tower, situated right next to the Liver building and affording great views across the Mersey.

Day 2: After picking up our guide, we embarked on a tour of Liverpool. The weather was particularly unpromising but we set off to Crosby Beach to see the sculptor **Anthony Gormley's "Another Place"**. Feeling intrepid, we disembarked from the coach to cross the road. The wind was so strong it was almost difficult to stand but we descended to the beach to get a closer look. These sculptures of the artist looking out to sea and beyond were stunning and thought-

provoking. There are 100 of them stretching almost 1km out to sea. In retrospect, this was, for me, the highlight of the visit. Well, that brushed the cobwebs away and onward and upward we ventured to Liverpool Cathedral.

Our considerate coach driver drove as close as he could to the cathedral entrance as, by now, the rain and wind were lashing down. He even used the coach as a windbreak to allow us to exit the coach without getting too wet! Designed by Sir Giles Scott, the cathedral is an impressive 20th-century structure, the largest in Britain. Moving on from here, we visited the “other” great



cathedral in the city, the modern, circular Roman Catholic Cathedral with its glorious multi-coloured windows. I particularly liked the light and space in this building and found it to be on a more human scale. The day wasn't over yet, and next we headed for the Walker Art Gallery. This was indeed a treasure trove of delights housing art from the medieval period to the present day and, after the guided tour, some time to track down favourites.

Day 3: This was a much brighter day with sunshine and a little warmth. We headed for the Albert Dock, which was very close, and our guided tour of Tate Liverpool. The gallery is housed in a beautiful converted warehouse and is home of the National Collection of Modern Art in the North. I had anticipated spending more time here but some of the plain black canvasses left me cold. So we all headed off for an afternoon at leisure. There was much to see here including several museums, such as the Museum of Slavery, Museum of Liverpool and the Merseyside Maritime Museum. Quite a number of our party took “the ferry across the Mersey” to the accompaniment of Gerry and the Pacemakers! We were also quite close to the large Liverpool 1 shopping centre, which had its own attractions!



Day 4 : Our destination on this day was Port Sunlight Village, a 19th-century garden village consisting of over 900 Grade II Listed buildings. This was built in 1888 by William Hesketh Lever for his soap factory workers. It contained examples of housing for all levels of workers but they were all most attractive set in landscaped areas and providing all amenities for the workers. I found this a very fine example of Victorian philanthropy and well worth the visit. After a tour around, we visited the Lady Lever Art Gallery, set in the midst of the village and housing an impressive collection of art.

The works were collected by Hesketh Lever throughout his life and housed in the gallery dedicated to the memory of his wife. There was a particularly extensive collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. In the afternoon we were due to visit Speke Hall, one of the country's most famous timbered houses. Unfortunately, the recent bad weather had rendered the park and grounds unsafe for visitors with the threat of falling trees. So, our guide had to improvise and treated us to a tour of some of the city's sights and locations associated with the Beatles.

We visited Sefton Park and its beautiful **Palm House** (quite a few photo opportunities here) then, another substitute, Sudley House, a Victorian house, now an art gallery. Again, there were many examples of fine paintings but the most curious feature was an exhibition of cross-dressing or, more precisely, men in women's clothes. Well, that was quite unexpected and sparked a response!

Day 5 : We departed our hotel and headed towards Manchester for an en route visit to Salford Quays and The Lowry gallery. The Lowry houses around 350 works by L. S. Lowry and was very comprehensive.

After this we had some free time to explore the magnificent waterside location or the nearby Imperial War Museum North. Then, after lunch, it was time to head for home.

Once again, this was a really varied and interesting trip. Many thanks to Jean Davis and Kathy Dugan for all their efforts in organising the visits and us!



Palm House, Sefton Park

*Pamela Williams
Photos by Pamela Williams*

*The nineteenth in our series of profiles of distinguished
Welwyn Hatfield U3A members features ...*

Richard Griffiths

A true son of Hatfield, Richard was born in Crawford Road, attended Green Lanes School, St Audrey's and Burleigh, and has lived in Welwyn-Hatfield all his life.

He has ventured outside the district, though. It was on a visit to his grandparents in the Welsh mountains that he helped his uncle in work for the Ordnance Survey. He loved this work in the open air, and the solitude, and determined on a similar career for himself. Fortunately, when he told his headmaster of his choice, the headmaster was able to tell Richard of a vacancy for a surveyor currently



advertised for Herts County Council. Richard secured the position.

He worked at first on the overall mapping of large areas. He took courses, qualified as a Chartered Surveyor in 1965, and became a building surveyor working for several Local Authorities on building and maintenance, installing temporary classrooms and new housing schemes. He married Glenda, a Welwyn- Garden-City girl; they now have four children. Then he worked for six years for a London firm of surveyors – still commuting from Hatfield. At the age of 37 he became self-employed, working as an independent surveyor on residential properties. But in 1990 came the property crash, and the family house was repossessed – and after the following financial crash, Richard was declared bankrupt. He had kept some professional contacts, and has carried on working as a surveyor since, now semi-retired.

Always having felt an interest in art and language, when Richard learnt of the language groups within U3A, he joined, and became a member of one of the French groups. Always a keen Bowls player, he started a U3A Bowling group, playing at Hatfield Bowls Club, but this folded after two years. He belongs also to the Watercolours group, and now takes responsibility for the Public Address system on many Wednesday mornings.

Whether or not he is on Sound duty, Richard attends every Wednesday meeting. Thoroughly enjoying his U3A membership, he declares Wednesday mornings “something to look forward to”.

Hazel Bell

Book Review

Rock Around The Block: Half a century of popular music associated with Hatfield by Jon Brindle: Hatfield Local History Society, 2014, £5.00 + p&p.

Listening to, playing and performing music has been a big part of my life since the late 1950s, so I welcome this book, covering the history of popular music associated with Hatfield from the 1940s to the 1990s.

The book starts in the war years considering the dance bands and local bandleaders that were performing at venues such as the de Havilland works canteen (now Hatfield police station), The Cherry Tree pub (now Waitrose) and many others.



In the 1950s Radio Luxembourg was discovered and started being used by all music fans. In spite of the very poor reception, it brought us a whole range of musical styles – pop, rock, blues and jazz.

A jazz club was started within the Cranbourne Rooms at The Red Lion public house in Hatfield (which continued for over 28 years). Breaks Manor Youth Club opened in the 1950s, and with the growing popularity of the new invention, television, shows like *65 Special* in 1957 followed by *Skiffle Club*, brought popular music to the masses.

Breaks Manor became a popular venue for many well-known 1960s bands – Brian

Poole and the Tremeloes, Johnny Kidd and the pirates.

The book also reminds us of the wonderful Dansette portable record player that we took to parties and on which we played our 78 and latterly 45 rpm records.

In 1960 local boy Donovan Leach (then 14 years old) started his career in music and in 1965 wrote and recorded “Catch the Wind” which became a big hit for him. Another local Hatfield boy, Colin Blunstone, started a band in St Albans called The Zombies (they thought up the name at The Blacksmiths Arms Pub) who also played at Breaks Manor. [*Where indeed my band, The Beaucrees, will be performing for our U3A summer dance on 9 June this year.– TT.*]

Jon Brindle also tells us about another band on the scene called The Juniors, which was not very well known – but one of their members did become very well known: he was Hatfield boy Mick Taylor who went on to join The Rolling Stones, replacing Brian Jones (who had recently died). His first gig with them was in 1969 in Hyde Park and he played on many of their hits. He remained with them for six years and still makes guest appearances with them to this day.

As we moved into the 70s the local live music scene gave way to disco, and in the mid-1970s progressive music took hold; however, this did not last very long and was, in my opinion, a niche market.

In 1974 another local boy, Paul Griggs, answered an advert in *The Melody Maker* and joined a band called Guys and Dolls. They had a hit which got to number two in the charts.

Shortly after this, Punk arrived – then we move into the 80s and 90s and further development by local bands. The local music scene in 2018 is still very vibrant with some extremely talented people.

In all this is a very interesting and detailed book and for those of you who are particularly interested in the local history of popular music it is a fascinating read and I would recommend it.

Tony Tutton

Summer Term 2018 - Wednesday Meetings

APRIL

18, Breaks Manor, Hatfield

Graham Laurie: “Roald Dahl’s War”

Graham is an Historian and a former RAF pilot. The talk will cover the writer’s life in the RAF and his subsequent rise to literary stardom.

25, Ludwick Family Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Chris Truran: “Dabs & DNA Detect Criminals”

Chris joined the Met in 1975 and trained as a Scene of Crimes Officer (SOCO). During his time he examined over 25,000 crime scenes ranging from shop-lifting to murder.

MAY

2, Hatfield

John Hutchinson: “My Life Flying Concorde and After”

John Hutchinson started his flying career in the RAF. He served from 1955–63 and was a corporate pilot for three years before joining BOAC in 1966. He was successfully a 707 & 747 co-pilot and then a captain on the VC10 before being selected to be a Concorde Captain.

9, WGC

Val Fowler: “The History of John Lewis”

The Welwyn Department Stores were built in 1939 and in 1983 The John Lewis Partnership acquired the store. Welwyn Garden City John Lewis is singly the largest store in the Town Centre.

16, Hatfield

Graham Harrison: “Poisons for Medicine, Victorian Pharmacists and Quack Doctors”

Graham Harrison is a partner in Sun Jester’s family business which has worked in the field of education and training for over 25 years. Regular clients include English Heritage, National Trust, The Royal College of GPs and the NHS.

23, WGC

Glen Owen/Nick Atkinson: “The Planning & Management of New Roads”

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is a professional membership body. Its members deliver large infrastructure projects, i.e. new roads, railways, airports, tall buildings and bridges, all around UK and the rest of the world.

30, Hatfield

Duncan Campbell-Smith: “History of The Royal Mail”

Duncan Campbell-Smith has written, *History of The Royal Mail* and *History of British Overseas Banking*, and is working on a history of Jet Engines.

JUNE

6, WGC

Dr Tony Maisey: “Spare Part Surgery”

Dr Tony Maisey is a retired GP, always interested in health education, but says one must have a sense of humour.

13, Hatfield

Jenny Gibbs: “The Turkish Shirley Valentine”

Jenny’s tales of rural life in her Turkish village are full of humour and packed with unusual and surprising stories of a culture so different

from her own.

20, *WGC*

Steve and Carol Robson: “More Stories with Folk Music and Song”

‘Fools Gold’ duo are a husband and wife from County Durham, who play a wide variety of musical instruments. This is a musical presentation of folk songs with the story, history and characters that created the songs.

27, *Hatfield*

William French: “Welcome to My World (Royal Family and Film Stars)”

Look forward to the fascinating life!

JULY

4, *WGC*

Jeff Rozelaar: “Bagels & Bacon”

Bagels and Bacon was published by The History Press in 2011 and gives a vivid account of growing up, told with passion and humour. The captivating anecdotes within, both poignant and entertaining, are immersed in the sights, sounds and smells of the East End in the post-war era.

11 **Garden Party**, 2.00-4.00pm, Breaks Manor, Hatfield

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