



Together again at the Garden Party



21 July 2021 was a momentous date in Welwyn Hatfield u3a's calendar as it was the first time members have been able to meet face to face since March 2020. We have been using Zoom for virtual meetings of all kinds, but oh how thrilling it was to see each other properly again!

Approximately sixty people came along to Breaks Manor Youth Club in Hatfield on an extremely hot muggy afternoon to attend our last meeting of the year, which is always the Garden Party. Usually we bring food to share and drinks are supplied, but this year it was altered to 'please bring your own picnic and drink'.

It began at 2pm with our Ukulele Group serenading us with a selection of music ranging from Johnny Cash to the Beatles via the Velvet Underground and returning to some well known folk songs. Everyone joined in with the final number, 'We'll meet again'!

After this our resident quiz master Tony Tutton did a 30-question quiz just to keep our brains ticking over.



The Ukulele Group in full swing

The quiz was extremely enjoyable. Tony sneaked in the odd ‘trick’ question, such as ‘how many bones does a shark have?’ ... It has to be said that no one kept too much of an eye on the score, and not many people disputed the answers!

Two of our members serenaded us with some accordion music after the quiz, while people were catching up. There was a lot of chat going on while we ate picnics and quenched thirst. There were loud bursts of laughter too – we have really missed the cut and thrust of general conversation and the bouncing around of ideas and tales of what we’ve been up to.

By popular request the Ukulele Group reprised a few items to round off the afternoon. People were encouraged to join in and sing along.

The whole afternoon was a great success: many thanks must go to Dave Charlwood and his Ukulele Group who started off the celebrations with a swing. They have been working very hard during lockdown to get this together. Tony Tutton is to be thanked as always for putting together the quiz and some music for us to listen to while we ate and relaxed.

What a perfect way to end our term! Now we are all looking forward to September when we plan to resume our normal programme of talks and meetings.

Text by Ann Davies; photos by Peter Fox

A Statement from the Committee

The Committee would like to welcome you all back to our live meetings. Having said this, we must continue to be careful. The guidance below is from The u3a Trust:

As we resume interest groups, sports, physical meetings and other activities it is advisable to remember to follow the key steps for managing transmission levels:

- check for Covid symptoms
- isolate if you have symptoms or suspect transmission
- get tested

We also have to follow the guidelines which are in place at the various venues.

Please use hand sanitiser which is provided.

We would like everyone to wear face masks while they are at the registration desk at Wednesday meetings.

Once we have had our refreshments we would recommend that we all wear face masks to help protect each other. Ideally we shall be opening windows on both sides of the hall to allow cross-ventilation as recommended by the Government.

We are looking forward to seeing you all once more.

CONTENTS	
Together again at the Garden Party	1
Statement from the Committee	3
Isobel Hospice Garden and W H u3a	4
Notes from the Chair	7
Public Relations – a new role in the Committee	8
Garden of the World – Springtime	10
GROUP NEWS	
Emergence from lockdown	12
Travel: <i>Isle of Wight</i> tour	14
<i>Profile</i> : Marie Scales	18
Wednesday Meetings	22

Isobel Hospice Garden and W H u3a – an enduring legacy

At my first Garden group meeting, on joining u3a in 2012, Brian Milburn and Peter Jenkins asked for volunteers to help maintain the garden at Isobel Hospice Day Care Centre, next to the Ludwick Family Centre. I volunteered. We still work there in teams of four or five, spending a couple of hours every four weeks from April to October doing general garden maintenance.

I often wondered why u3a were involved and here's what I've found out so far. In the early 1990s WelHat u3a member Peter Jenkins volunteered to design and build a garden on the overgrown waste land behind the Hospice Day Care building. The WGC Horticultural Society were probably approached and Peter volunteered there and coopted a working group through the u3a's gardening group. The Hospice probably paid for the work. The u3a's work began in 1991.

Peter drew up some plans – his hand-drawn plan is dated 1998, but work had begun much earlier. John Middleton later tidied up the plan (shown below). There was much earth-moving, digging and hard landscaping. Little by little a lovely garden was created.

The garden was maintained solely by volunteers from our u3a for many years. In 2001 our Newsletter reported:

[Peter] is responsible for getting us involved with the Hospice Day Care Centre garden which we have set up and maintained for many years. During the summer months we have a rota of active members who maintain the garden... If you are interested in gardening and would like to participate in the Hospice Garden Project please contact...





Laying the path



Installing the shed

But by 2004, in Peter's own words in the Newsletter:

... we have given up responsibility for the Isabel Hospice Garden. After eight years work many of us are less able to continue with it. We have been able to ensure that the Garden will still be maintained by Hospice Volunteers and some of our fitter members.

In the 2009 newsletter this appeared:

Any of us who have enjoyed the lovely garden at the Isabel Hospice day centre may not realise the great amount of time and loving care that went into creating it from an overgrown wasteland... This was the handiwork of a group of U3A volunteers. Work was begun in 1991 and gradually a carefully planned and designed garden was completed. In 2004 the team were feeling the effects of advancing years and passed the care of the garden to Hospice volunteers.

Peter is shown cutting turves in the photo below left, and in the centre of the celebratory photo overleaf top (wearing a blue shirt).

For many years we held our annual u3a garden party in the Hospice garden, in exchange for our members' work. The raffle takings were donated to the Hospice. As our numbers grew, though, we had to find bigger premises for the garden party, and we moved to Roe Hill House in Hatfield for the 2012 party, then to Breaks Manor in 2013.





Pictures below show (left) Joan Baron and Sue Kershaw at the party in the Hospice garden in 2011 (when there was a competition for the best hat; photo by Tony Lammiman), and (right) the garden still blooming in 2019 (Photo by Celia Bocacci).

Now Team 2 of the garden volunteers comprises Celia Bocacci, Merle Davey and me, all from WelHat, and Diane Rodgerson from Hertford u3a. Brian Milburn, who has been with the project almost from inception, is in Team 3.

Peter Jenkins sadly died in February this year. In 2019 he talked to the Garden Group about their work at the hospice, and luckily his photos were put into a presentation which John and Mary Middleton still have; some appear above. Peter didn't type his notes, so we don't have his exact words. Every time I work in the garden now I'll be thinking of him and what a wonderful legacy he has left behind.

If anyone has more information, please let me know.

This article is dedicated to Peter.

Ann Davies with much help (for which I'm very grateful) from John and Mary Middleton, Brian Milburn and Peter Reeves.



Notes from the Chair



Pamela Williams

Greetings! Back in another life – that of my teaching career – I unerringly began the September term by greeting colleagues (and some pupils) with the salutation, “Summer’s lease hath all too short a date” (Shakespeare). It was a kind of defence before I fully committed to the long uphill tasks of the Autumn Term. For the first week or two I would go home early after the end of the school day vowing to have a fuller life outside school. But this didn’t last long and soon I was working till practically evicted by the caretaker each evening busying myself in my office or studio and thoroughly engaged in my work. This year I guess many of us are looking forward to September and the coming months, crossing our fingers that we are over the worst of the Covid restrictions. It’s been a long time coming and we are already beginning to take advantage of the easing of restrictions. I wonder if, like me, you have developed a weird sense of time as so much has been both different from what we were used to and the same each week in terms of what we were able to do.

So the first big change for me, in U3A terms, was to take part in the Travel Group’s visit to the Isle of Wight in July. What a welcome break this was – to be in company face to face and able to visit places which were just beginning to open! I have written a review of this elsewhere [*see page 10*]. Then there was the event that usually closes our year but this time began our activities – the annual Garden Party at Breaks Manor. It was good to be back and fine enough to be able to enjoy the garden. It was a joyous occasion and is also written up elsewhere [*see front page*]. So let’s hope it’s now onward and upward!

Meanwhile we have been sustained by an excellent range of speakers on Wednesday mornings with alternate coffee and chat mornings, both on Zoom. All the speakers were experts in their wide range of fields and were incredibly informative and interesting. I particularly enjoyed the Clement Attlee talk as I knew too little about him. The Space Shuttle talk had an amazing selection of film clips and images, which reflected the Speaker’s evident knowledge. Hampton

Court secrets were revealed by the historian, Siobhan Clarke. The delightful Amber Tallon gave a splendid presentation and virtual tour of Oxford, enhanced by her knowledge of the City as a student there. Finally, owing to the postponement of the lifting of Covid restrictions, Jill Longman managed to slot in an extra speaker on the similarities and differences of the Nordic countries – another talk with fascinating insights. Needless to say all this would not be possible without the superb efforts and expertise of Jill and Ann Davies.

It only remains for me to heartily thank all the committee for their contributions to sustaining the work of our u3a this year. We could not survive without the commitment of Marie Scales (Secretary), Sue Talbot (Treasurer), Peter Fox (Membership Secretary), Joan Scales (Groups Coordinator), Roger Swaine (Webmaster) and Hazel Bell (Newsletter Editor). ALL the Committee have made their contribution but I would like to mention the work on Health and Safety conducted by Colin Slade and the efforts on publicity and promotion undertaken by Steve Hall, which led to an article in the local paper and the advertising posters and bunting. And of course our own Minister of Fun, Tony Tutton.

So here's hoping September will see the return to some near-normal activities with the reinstatement of Wednesday meetings. I look forward to seeing members again soon.

Pamela Williams

Public Relations – a new role in the Committee

I joined WelHat u3a in March 2019 and after responding to a request for help with 'front of house' also found myself volunteering for the committee, to which I was duly elected just before lockdown. As a result of lockdown I did not expect to have much to do in the immediate future. However, in 2020 the Third Age Trust (TAT) revealed their future plans in response to falling numbers in many u3as. A recruitment drive was called for, with activities to increase the visibility of the u3a and update its image. At great expense a 'new,



Steve Hall

page 8

u3a W-H Newsletter No. 68, Autumn 2021

more modern' logo was designed, changing from U3A to u3a! As I had revealed a background in Sales and Marketing, it was suggested that I would be the right person to take responsibility for any marketing and recruitment we might wish to pursue, which I agreed to do. However, with over 800 current members the committee agreed that we didn't need to actively recruit, but that we should improve our exposure to ensure that we raised awareness and kept our numbers stable.

To help with marketing activity TAT revealed that they had employed a marketing agency to supply our needs. The committee decided that we should



have some new brochures which could be used to publicise WelHat u3a and which could also be given to new members. Fellow committee member Peter Fox took the material available from the marketing agency and used his creative skills to customise it to better meet our needs. As a result we now have a personalised brochure for WelHat u3a using our own images and text which can be placed where appropriate to help raise awareness. Other material available to us from the marketing agency included a set of three roller banners, which we thought would be useful at functions. Thinking these to be rather expensive I checked with local suppliers and was able to source them at considerably less than



those offered centrally, but of equal quality. Those of you who attended the garden party would have seen these and the new u3a bunting in use for the first time.

The other task I took on was to gain exposure for our u3a in the local press. Hopefully many of you would have seen our first article in the *Welwyn Hatfield Times* for some years (on 9 June), giving coverage both in the newspaper and online, following the recent u3a Day. The journalist I spoke to was not aware of our existence, but I think gave us some excellent coverage in this first article. As he appeared quite interested in our organisation I am hopeful that further articles will follow highlighting our various activities. So watch this space!

Steve Hall

Garden of the World – Springtime

Tuesday 4 May 2021 saw the Grande Finale of the Covid-postponed but Zoom-rescued Welwyn Garden City centenary celebrations, in music, poetry and dance, hosted by Kadam Dance and Welwyn-Hatfield Interfaith Group.

This is the third time I have reviewed these Zoom presentations, the first two of poetry readings by the Welhat u3a and invited guests: both sessions to be found on YouTube and well worth the searching. I am in danger of running out of superlatives – but not quite yet.

“Grande” in every sense. We had the familiar group of seven readers (now entitled Viva Voce) but this time joined by four professional musicians and dancers.

Sanjeevini Dutta opened proceedings with a welcome and an introduction to the theme: “Spring Festivals around the World”. She set the scene for Hazel Bell’s as always simple but perfect reading of an excerpt from Tennyson’s *Locksley Hall* – “In the spring a young man’s fancy ...”



This was followed by the first of the professionals, the wondrously named and gloriously voiced Fiona Hymns with “A Lover and his Lass”: when did we ever not know this song? And then an incredible reading from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* – spoken so easily and naturally by Sam Segar that we could hear the voices of country folk from Norfolk, Cumbria, the Welsh Hills and indeed from wherever the people still live close to the land as once we all did.

Maryam Rodway whizzed us over to an Indian Spring, reciting (in English) Kalidas from *Ritusamhara*. Was it my imagination or did I really hear the ripple of sitar strings? Elena Catalano, our second professional, then danced for us a modern version of an ancient classic, redolent of the figures we see adorning Hindu temples; such serenity and grace yet complete control from shoulder to fingertip, from hip to toe, from stillness to flow. Truly a silent art form speaking volumes.

David Steed brought us back to earth with Philip Larkin’s “Trees”, each ring of the tree trunk recording its death and rebirth. Such tenderness from the austere Larkin, and then too when Jill Longman read Gerard Manley Hopkins’ poem “Spring” with the wonderful reference to “the juice and joy of (the Garden of) Eden”.

May Robertson, our third professional, took up the theme of faith with a beautifully played Violin Sonata from 16th century Biber’s Mystery Sonatas, based on the Rosary. Biber did not name the sonatas but sketched a little picture for each – the one May played for us had a picture of an angel holding a little child by the hand.

The opening lines from T S Eliot’s *Wasteland* read by Pamela Williams reminded us that “April is the cruellest month.... And it is true that Spring’s new life is only made possible by Winter’s death.”

Then into the dance to a piano composition by Peeti Pantal, the fourth professional, Kali Chandrasegaram, echoing that truth, in an exuberant and powerful performance of the dance “Kali” – the Hindu goddess of death, fertility and creativity. And back to the more comfortable Housman, Diana Holt reading from *A Shropshire Lad*, her words repeated in song form by David Steed. Finally a song from Fiona Hymns, “Clear or Cloudy” by Dowland and written in 1597 – and have you known a spring that was not sunshine and showers?

Valerie Skottowe from the Welhat Interfaith Group gave heartfelt thanks to all who had taken part and paid tribute to the cooperation with Sanjeevini and Kadam Dance which had enabled these celebrations.

I too add my thanks. The virtuoso performances were not totally free from occasional technical blips. And the informality of the professionals, leaning forward to switch on their music or clearing a space in their living rooms to dance, all added to the feeling of being part of a community rejoicing in the life and light of spring, relaxing after the field has been ploughed and the seed has been sown. All of that added to the overall joyousness of doing it together, the satisfaction of completion.

The performance is now available on YouTube at –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIZZisE3-ms>

Jo Roscoe

Group News



Joan Scales

As the country starts to open up again, Welwyn Hatfield u3a group leaders have been considering how they will proceed. Thank you to all group leaders for your efforts over the years, especially in the particularly trying times we have all experienced since March 2020! Some groups will need new venues; others may be able to run from home, or a combination of physical meetings and Zoom. Over the past few months, several different venues have been visited and rental agreements made, as we are

no longer able to use the Council-owned premises attached to elderly people's complexes. A full list of Study Groups, their venues and leaders, will appear in the programme of speakers, and on the website. Some venues are still being finalised.

Inevitably, some leaders feel it is now time for them to step down from the role. This means that unless someone comes forward to take on the task some groups will have to close.

The Gardening Group now has a new team of leaders, as does the **Arts Appreciation Group**, so their workload will be shared.

These are the groups which are in need of a new leader:

History in the Making – thank you to Betty Guinery, who now feels it is time to retire as she is an honorary member of the u3a! This is the group's description from the website:

We read a mixture of Biographies, British and world-wide history, and the occasional well-researched historical novel. Membership is limited by the number of books that we can borrow from the library.

If you think this is something that would interest you, and you could join and support the remaining members, please contact the Groups Coordinator.

The **Discussion** group, previously led by Helen Verdier –

We discuss current affairs and local issues, in fact any topic suggested by a member of the group.

– is also in need of a new leader:

Thank you to Barbara Bursford for leading the **Keep Fit** group until the pandemic. Any keen new members willing to restart that group?

Latin – thank you to Rosalie Lomas and Maryam Rodway for running this group up until the pandemic.

Tai Chi will no longer be run as a u3a group. Many thanks to Don Busolini for his contribution to the u3a through previous years. His evening Inner Peace Group is also closing for the time being.

We have until now had two Italian groups, but the **Italian 2** Group is closing. Thanks to Jean Davis for running this.

Thank you to Geoff Dodding, who will be leading a merged **Bridge** group, as Rosemary Mitchell has moved out of the area.

Several other Groups have had a change of leader since we were last able to meet up. I look forward to meeting Group Leaders in due course.

We have one new group, thanks to Mary Perren, who has set up a group where members can meet to discuss their memories of World War II and the postwar period. This has proved so popular that there are two groups, each meeting twice a month.

If anyone else has a particular interest which they think would make a good Welwyn Hatfield u3a Group, then please email groups@u3awelhat.org.uk, and we will invite members to join.

We will be holding a **Meet the Groups** session on Wednesday 10 November, which is a good opportunity to learn more about various

subjects which may be of interest to members, both old and new. In the meantime, if you would like to find out about any of our Study Groups, please refer to the relevant section of the website and make contact with the Group Leader. Some groups which had been full may now have vacancies, so it is worth asking!

Joan Scales, Groups Coordinator

Travel Group

Isle of Wight tour – July 2021

When the invoice for the final payment for this trip cropped up I was somewhat surprised and my first reaction was that I didn't feel quite ready for a holiday after this long period of lockdown and fears of travelling far from home. But soon my reaction switched to, "Hell, Yes!" This was just what was needed. The prospect of a little holiday by the sea was an exciting one and seemed to press a switch in my brain to look forward to brighter times ahead and to seeing familiar faces lately glimpsed only on Zoom.

My anticipation was further enhanced by a communication from Hazel Bell informing me of the Dimbola Lodge gallery and Tennyson connections. I purchased the book she recommended, *Tennyson's Gift* and was delighted with the insights it gave into Victorian literary and artistic life. It opened a new dimension to the island for me, which I had previously viewed as a place where some happy childhood holidays had been spent. I had always been fond of Tennyson's poetry although he has been in and out of fashion over the years. But all that Arthurian legend and medievalism accorded well with my youthful enthusiasm for the Pre-Raphaelites. The book mocked Tennyson humorously, as well as Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) and G.F Watts, the most popular Victorian painter, and Ellen Terry and Julia Margaret Cameron, the photographer. It was interesting to discover this place was such a focus for so many eminent Victorians.

Unfortunately, the weather prospects didn't look good but we were fortunate in that, although it was not very sunny, it stayed mostly dry and mild with any rain occurring at night. The journey was an easy one and en route we visited the National Trust property, The Vyne, a former Tudor powerhouse turned 17th-century family home set in acres of gardens, woodland and wetlands (*photo opposite*). As we were to discover in other properties we visited, only the ground floor



was open to visitors, following Covid restrictions. So our visit was somewhat curtailed but it was a pleasant house; the gardens extensive and the café furnished our needs with plenty of outdoor seating. I particularly liked the red brick exterior, the classic portico and, inside, the Wedgwood Blue hall and oak-panelled gallery. Henry VIII had stayed here on several occasions and Elizabeth I and Walter Raleigh had also visited. The delight of this visit was to be able to go inside and enjoy the treasures of the place. It was also a delight to be among friends again over a coffee or lunch and just to chat.

Thence we headed to Portsmouth to catch our ferry to Fishbourne and then on to Ryde, where our hotel was situated on Union Street running down to the harbour. If I craned my neck I could see the sea from my window!

Day 2 – After a stormy night, our destination was *Carisbrooke Castle*, a medieval motte and bailey fortress built on top of the Norman foundations (*photo overleaf*). The castle is an impressive structure and the day was grey and overcast when we arrived, which seemed to suit the surroundings. Some of our more intrepid members climbed up to the ramparts to walk the walls, from where it was possible to gain impressive views as the Castle is set on a hill in the centre of the island. As for me, I wimped out as it was very windy and the walls were high. Instead I visited Princess Beatrice’s garden. Queen Victoria’s youngest daughter lived here. I also visited the chapel dedicated to Charles I, who had been held prisoner here before



his execution. The visit seemed to come to an end all too soon as I hadn't been able to get into the museum because of queues of socially-distanced people. However, on we went to *Newport*, the County town of the island. I'm afraid this was somewhat disappointing as it was like many other run-down high streets at the moment. Looking for a lunch spot, some of us, attracted by the ice-cream colours, ventured into a Crepe Café and sampled the indulgent delights of the place. If we had been more resourceful, or better informed, we might have made our way to the quay. After this visit we had time to spend in *Ryde*, where some people walked the pier or simply strolled along by the sea and sat on benches watching the tide come in. Great!

Day 3 – Today our Blue Badge Guide took us to *Godshill*, a very pretty village, with a church mentioned in the Domesday book. It is known as the Lily Church because of a fresco in the interior. This was quite a challenge for a large coach; much manoeuvring was required on the part of our excellent driver, and we had to trek up the steep hill to the church. After Godshill we made our way to *Shanklin* to explore and take lunch. If anyone mentions crab sandwiches to me, that's usually where I'm heading and they were delicious!

The next item on our itinerary was a ride on the Isle of Wight's restored steam railway in Victorian and Edwardian carriages. The smell of the steam and the sound of the engine and the carriages brought back many memories to all. This was a very relaxing and enjoyable excursion.

Day 4 – This morning was to take us over to the south side of the island with a very different aspect, fertile plains and spectacular views of the sea. We made our way to the Needles at the western extremity of the island, once linked to the Old Harry Rocks in Dorset in prehistoric times. There was a large visitor centre here and plenty of space to park the coach. The lack of such space prevented us from visiting Dimbola Lodge, the photographic gallery of Julia Margaret Cameron, and nearby Farringford House, home of the poet, Tennyson, whose memorial is also in Freshwater Bay, but we passed them on the road.

We were glad of our early start when we passed long queues of traffic coming the other way on our return. We then made our way to the National Heritage Osborne House, summer home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (*photo below*). It wasn't difficult to see why Victoria loved this place with its gardens and aspect and access to the private beach. The decoration of the rooms was colourful and it was easy to picture the place full of family life.

Day 5 – Well, of course we woke to glorious sunshine on the day of



our return, so we took our leave of the Island and after the short hop on the ferry we made our way to *Petworth House*, set in a beautiful park landscaped by “Capability” Brown. Many of the group took the walk round the lake, but the biggest attraction for me was the collection of paintings – the National Trust’s finest and largest collection of pictures including works by Turner, Van Dyck, Reynolds and Blake. I was so absorbed I found myself a little late for the coach as the walk back was further than I remembered. Suddenly I heard the coach start up



and could just see it – but unfortunately I had taken a wrong path and found myself on the wrong side of a five-bar gate. I started to climb the gate, something I would not have done normally as balance and large feet are a hazard. Luckily, I spotted Roger Swaine on the right path on the other side, so I called for rescue! Ever the gentleman, Roger came to my aid to the embarrassment of both of us! I was relieved to realise we were just out of view of the paparazzi on the coach, otherwise the incident might have been captured for posterity! What a way to spend the last five minutes of our visit. Certainly set us up for the journey back on the M25 on a Friday afternoon. But the driver still managed to meet the estimated arrival time – no mean feat on the M25.

So ended a most enjoyable short break. Our most grateful thanks are due to the organisers whose efforts ensure that all runs smoothly. There is much administration involved in planning and running these trips and we are very grateful to Kathy Dugan, Jean Davis and Tony Bristow for their planning and organisation. Jean is shown in the photo above, seated between Kay Lorimer and Pat Abel outside The Vyne.

I thought I'd end with a bit of Tennyson, unrelated but just beautiful.

A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

Text and photos by Pamela Williams

The thirtieth in our series of profiles of distinguished Welwyn Hatfield u3a members features ...

Marie Scales



Marie Hart was born in 1946 in St Albans and christened at the Abbey. Six years later her family moved to a poultry and pig-farm in Essendon where Marie earned pocket money by weighing the eggs to determine their size: small, medium or large.

Marie attended secondary school at Hampden House in Buckinghamshire. The House had been owned by John Hampden. The internal doors leading from the hall had a large lock-and-key mechanism which had been made by his cousin Oliver Cromwell. The school had no upper sixth form; while in the lower sixth Marie passed O-level in Human Biology and Hygiene, which meant she would not have to do the exam after 12 weeks at the beginning of nurse training.

Marie left school aged 17 and went to the Youth Employment Agency to see what work she could do for a year. She wanted to work with children or elderly people, but was told that as she was under 18 she was too young. However, at 17 she could work with disabled children – she has never seen the logic of this law! So she worked at Elmfield School as a carer for children with a moderate learning disability and a physical disability. She says the time spent there showed her the importance of maintaining a programme such as physiotherapy; she often saw children regress without the daily exercise program they would not receive during school holidays.

Marie started her general nursing career in 1964 at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Welwyn Garden City, in the first year of student nurses there. She qualified as a State Registered Nurse in November 1967. She started a Midwifery Course, but decided that midwifery was not for her, and returned to a general surgical ward as a Staff Nurse. She married in March 1969, moved to north London, and started a new post as a Staff Nurse at Royal National ENT Hospital. She then became a junior Sister on a surgical ward at Hillingdon Hospital. They moved back to WGC; Marie went back to the QEII for a few months;

then left to have her first child, Kirsty, in 1970. She returned to the QEII part-time as a Staff Nurse on night duty in the newly staffed “Casualty” (later to become A&E) when her daughter was a year old. This type of nursing became her love of the profession.

In 1973 her son Richard was born. He was severely ill when he was eight weeks old; he survived but was left with extensive brain damage. Nevertheless, he was the happiest person, and lived his life to the full despite his disability.

Over the years Marie did further training at Hertfordshire University as an Emergency Nurse Practitioner, and as an A&E specialist nurse, progressing from part-time Staff Nurse to a Senior Sister running the department.

Marie started helping at her daughter's schools, Springmead and Templewood, being involved in the PTA. She became a School Governor at Ena Daniells School Cell Barnes Hospital, where young children were still being admitted into long-stay hospitals rather than raised within families.

Volunteering has continued throughout her adult life, because she wished to see improvements in the life of those with a learning disability. She was a carer representative on Various groups at County level involving health and social care associated with Learning Disabilities.

When Marie began to think about retirement she volunteered for Social Services and the Health service, dealing with Learning Disability and health-related issues. On retiring from QEII twelve years ago, she was amazed by her colleagues giving her a surprise leaving party which included “This is your Life”.

Having retired, Marie joined the hospital bank and worked as a nurse practitioner at QEII, Lister and Cheshunt. She finally retired three years ago, having worked for the NHS for fifty-two years. When the vaccine programme started she volunteered to give the injections – but was informed that she was too old! Her volunteering role has continued, although it is currently all online: she says, “I am definitely suffering from square-eyed syndrome!”

Marie joined Welwyn Hatfield u3a in 2010 and initially attended only Wednesday Meetings. At the first one she attended she was amazed to see so many people that she already knew, from QEII, baby-sitting group, and old neighbours.

Because of caring responsibilities Marie stopped attending u3a for a couple of years; when she returned the first group she joined was the Sunday Solo Lunch Group for those living alone (Marie was divorced in 1992). [I can aver, she most efficiently took charge of payment of the lunch bills, and organised transport for those finding it difficult. – *Ed.*] Now she is leader of that group. She also joined the Gardening and Canasta groups.

After Richard's death in 2014 Marie was no longer The Carers representative but was asked to continue as she was now "a person with lived experience". She still volunteers with six groups which include LeDeR, Learning Disability Co production board and The Purple Strategy, working alongside professionals to improve the quality of life and to reduce premature deaths for those with a learning disability.

Her daughter too has worked as a social worker with those who have a severe mental health issue within Social Services and the NHS. She is now commencing training as a physiotherapist.

Marie believes that she should help with any group she gains benefit from, so she joined our u3a Committee in 2017, and agreed to take on the role of Secretary. At first this role was relatively quiet, but this changed when the Committee had to write various policies: Equality & Diversity; Financial; General Data Protection Regulation; Privacy; and Photography Policies. Then Covid came along. The Committee hasn't met physically through the Covid year, but has been holding regular meetings via Zoom, and Marie has distributed the various documents sent from the u3a Trust, East of England Regional Forum, and Herts Network.

Marie says, "u3a is my 'me time'! My computer skills have improved because of joining meetings on Zoom. The virtual coffee-morning sessions have meant that besides seeing member-friends of our u3a I have been chatting with many I might not have spoken to at our Wednesday meetings. I look forward to meeting them all once again at the groups and Wednesday meetings."

Looking at Marie's career, we can be certain that we have the right person currently at the u3a Secretarial helm!

Hazel Bell

Autumn Term 2021 – Wednesday Meetings

Doors open at 9.45 am. Tea and coffee are served from 10.00 am to 10.30am. The meetings start at 10.30 am with notices, followed by the talk.s.

SEPTEMBER

8 Breaks Manor, Hatfield

Tony Tutton – “My Life in Music – Coronation to Corona”

Our own Minister of Fun, Tony Tutton invites you to take a trip through his life and love of music from 1950s to present day, covering his early musical influences, his various bands, celebrities, great music and original songs along the way up to the present day.

15 Ludwick Family Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Len Little – “The Training and Use of Police Dogs”

Len was a frontline Police Dog Handler in Hertfordshire for 17 years, a Home Office approved Police Dog Trainer for 12 years and finally a Winston Churchill Fellow in 1987. He worked in the then West Germany with the German Police and Customs Service specialising in Specialist Search Dogs Training.

22 Hatfield

Simon Gilbert – “Another Opening, Another Show”

Simon was the subject of a 3-page article in February’s *TAM* magazine. He sang opposite big stars at the Edinburgh Festival and in Drury Lane Theatre and was the singing voice for Peter O’Toole singing “Impossible Dream” in the film “Man of La Mancha”. With this song he reached the finals of the TV programme, “Britain’s Got Talent”.

29 Welwyn Garden City

Ian Keable – “The Art of Trickery”

Ian will show us how magicians have appeared in art throughout the centuries, from early artists using the magician to symbolise the mysterious and the unknown, associating them with astrology and Tarot cards, through to cartoonists and satirists delighting in linking politicians with skulduggery with images of them featuring the Three-Card Trick, Vanishing illusions or pulling a Rabbit out of the Hat.

OCTOBER

6 Hatfield

Chris Truran – “Digital Forensics – Who’s Watching You?”

Chris joined the MET in 1975 and trained as a Scene of Crime Officer (SOCO). He has examined over 25,000 crime scenes.

13 Welwyn Garden City

Colin Oakes – “Sweeney Todd – Fact and Fiction”

Colin is an archaeologist who, as well as giving talks, takes groups on walking and coach tours in London and the South East.

20 Hatfield

Jo Laurie – “Air Miss”

An illustrated talk of Jo’s career in the WRAF (not quite *Private Benjamin*, the film with Goldie Hawn, but close!).

27 Welwyn Garden City

Malcolm Wells MBE – “So Far, So Good”

Malcolm is an ex-Army musician (Cello) and medic who saw service in the Gulf War. He has played for Royalty on many occasions during his 24-year service. He was a national speaker for Canine Partners which brought him into contact with well-known figures.

NOVEMBER

3 Hatfield

Geoff Bowden – “Doin’ What Comes Naturally – Life & Times of Irving Berlin”

Geoff was a Chartered Librarian but his love was Musical Theatre. He formed his own musical revue group touring England and Wales. He editor of the official magazine of The British Music Hall Society.

*10 Welwyn Garden City **Meet the Groups***

Our groups display their products and illustrate their activities.

17 Hatfield

Tony Eaton – “Windsor and the Nazis – Dupe or Traitor?”

Declassified German files shed light on the relationship between the Duke and the Nazis, while British files are still subject to the 100-year non-disclosure rule accorded to the Royal Archives. Tony assesses the facts and rumours.

24 Welwyn Garden City

Mervyn Edwards – “Policing Environmental Protests”

Mervyn served for more than 30 years with Thames Valley Police and retired in 2002. Over half his service was spent as a marksman with the Tactical Firearms team; he was also in charge of Special Operations and was part of the National Network Group

DECEMBER

1 Hatfield: Steve Dimmer – “A Christmas Carol”

A one-man show in which a single actor takes you through Dickens’ immortal classic tale of Yuletide redemption, playing all the characters and even providing the sound effects.

8 WGC Christmas Party

Please bring your own food – drinks will be provided.

15 Christmas Lunch at Mill Green Golf Club

Tickets on sale in October

The Spring term starts on 6 January 2022 at WGC.

Welwyn Hatfield u3a does not endorse any products or services offered by speakers.

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