



Open Day / Meet the Groups



The second annual u3a Open Day was combined with our annual Meet the Groups event. We advertised it in local media and other places, and looked forward to welcoming people who were curious about what exactly we do.

Steve Hall, our Chair, greeted our main guest, Councillor Pankit Shah, the mayor of Welwyn Hatfield. He arrived quite early and opened the event at 10 am. He spent a long time looking around with Steve and talking to lots of people. He was very impressed by what we do and enthusiastic about telling others about us.

It's no wonder he was impressed as the atmosphere was absolutely buzzing! Ninety-four people were registered, with seven visitors. Some people even

CONTENTS

Page

- 1 Open Day
- 5 Notes from the Chair
- 7 The Panto: Robin Hood AND The Babes in the Wood
- 10 Supper Dance
- 13 Christmas Lunch
- GROUP NEWS
- 14 Craftea
- 14 Italian Lunch Club
- 15 Travel: Scotland / Ireland
- 24 Wartime Memories
- 24 Reviews: Poetry about Hatfield
- 25 Wednesday meeting Prospects

arrived as we were finishing, so just caught a glimpse of our activities.

The morning ran smoothly. Tony Tutton was MC, and introduced the Ukes group (as usual!) who played two sets of popular sing-along songs. Viva Voce (a combination of people from the Play Reading and Theatre groups) read poems linked to topics studied

u3a Welwyn-Hatfield NEWSLETTER

Published three times yearly, in Spring, Summer and Autumn
Edited by Hazel K. Bell

Back issues from No. 37 to date
plus cumulative index from issue No. 1 to date
are available on the Website at
<http://www.u3awelhat.org.uk/newsletters.html>

© u3a Welwyn-Hatfield 2023
Printed by Triographics Printers Ltd
121 London Road, Knebworth, SG3 6EX



Pankit Shah, Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield, with the Ukulele Group

by our groups. The poem for the Gardening group was by Pam Ayres, called "When I get up from my Chair". It was an amusing take on how much effort it sometimes takes to actually get on with the gardening.

In the foyer were displays of wonderful photos courtesy of the Photography Group and the Walking Group showed which walks they do. The Arts Appreciation group had a display of all the places they visited during the year too. The main notice board was there, and several Welcomers greeting people with enthusiasm.

In the main Hall there were very impressive displays of Watercolour and Oil Paintings. Craftea had their plethora of exquisitely hand made items – some of which were for sale (see page 14). The Board Games and British Sign Language groups were there for the first time as they are new groups this year. They attracted a lot of interest. The Travel Group had a running display of photos of the places they'd visited during the year. There were several different recorders on the



Recorders group table, and the Wildlife Watch group had photos of places they had visited.

Coffee and tea were served as usual, and after admiring the displays on show lots of people sat in groups and chatted or listened to the ukes and the poetry. It was a very successful morning. Many thanks go as always to the contributors and to Joan Scales, the main organiser.

Text by Ann Davies; photos by Peter Fox



Notes from the Chair



This time from a very large deckchair in Suffolk . . .

As I write my last Notes from the Chair, I feel it is appropriate to look back to when I was first elected.

In March 2022 Covid 19 was still a major issue and I was elected in my absence as I was at home suffering from Covid 19. As a relatively new member, few people knew who I was, so I made a point of introducing myself on my return.

We have recovered remarkably well from the impact and after effects of Covid, which initially left a number of members somewhat nervous about joining large group activities. However, thanks to the continued commitment of our group leaders, the groups are once again thriving and numerous trips have been undertaken by many of our groups, which have been very well attended.

The Wednesday morning meetings have also returned to their pre-Covid levels of attendance with

over 100 members regularly attending them. The presentation team have done a great job in securing a range of speakers covering a wide variety of topics, and I continue to be impressed by their ability to get a replacement speaker often at extremely short notice, if a speaker is unable to attend due to some unforeseen circumstance, which has happened to us a few times lately!

The highest attendance at a Wednesday meeting so far, has been for Tony Tutton's presentation on the life and music of Buddy Holly, in October, which drew an audience of 154 members. As with Tony's previous presentation about his own life in music, it was extremely interesting and included a number of well known songs which we were all able to sing along with. It proved to be a most entertaining and enjoyable morning. In addition to his presentation this term, Tony also organised our very popular Autumn Dance in November.

In October we held our second Open Day, once again opened by the Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield, which was



very well attended, as was our New Members meeting in October. Our membership remains very consistent at around 820 members.

This year we also staged our first ever pantomime, in place of the usual Christmas Party, which was a great success and was very well attended. In fact the demand for tickets exceeded the 120 available and we had to create a waiting list! A great job done by all, both those involved in the Pantomime, and also providing drinks and Mince Pies to the very large audience, afterwards.

As you can see from the above, not only is our u3a in good shape, but also continues to develop. My thanks to everyone for their support over the past two years, and I look forward to handing over to my successor at the AGM In March a thriving and successful u3a in which we can all be proud.

My very best wishes to you all for a happy and healthy New Year, when we can once again, Learn, Laugh and Live life to the full!

Steve Hall

The Panto: Robin Hood AND The Babes in the Wood

WAS IT GREAT? – YES! DID WE LIKE IT? – YES!!!!

What a fantastic performance!

WelHat's rolled-into-one of two well known pantomimes, Robin Hood and The Babes in the Wood, was a huge success.

Familiar faces, mostly recognisable in mob caps, pointy hats and, in the case of Robin Hood (Terry Scudder), with a purloined hobby horse (I think she usually rides a real one). Great costumes, all courtesy of The Barn Theatre.



Then there was Esmeralda (Roy Madell). Costume possibly not courtesy of The Barn, but which u3a member is 6'2" and possesses enough frillies (including stripy socks, fur coat and pearls, plus duly hiked-up assets) to disguise a quiet and restrained committee member whose light is clearly normally hidden under a bushel? Or in this case, a black wig. And the ad libs – all clean, in deference to the genteel ears of the audience.

The other player-as-you-have-never-seen-him was the Sheriff. Normally an even quieter, restrained uke-plucker, the Sheriff (Dave Charlwood) showed a completely different five sides to his character that we never even suspected. A magnificent performance.

"Peasants" he called his subjects. "You're peasants, too" he told the audience. The audience cheered.

In between, signs were raised labelled Hiss or Boo or, occasionally, Cheer. We did.

The author/director Tessa Abberley is used to dealing with unruly rabbles and it showed. The large cast were exemplary. With rare exceptions, they spoke clearly and remembered their lines. There were a couple of mishaps, but the show kept moving.

Keeping them moving were an accordion, keyboard and cajon drum. If a song had a second verse, the



Esmeralda with the Babes

keyboard player played at twice the speed and the cast fled (no arthritic elderly knees here) through the woods (sorry, the audience) to the back of the Forest.

The Babes" in the Wood, (in)appropriately accompanied by Cliff Richard's "The Young Ones", were played by Jill Longman who gave an excellent and well-observed performance as a teenage boy, and Ann Madell as her mob-capped, be-nightied twin who captivated the audience with her plaintive requests "Will

you be our Mummy?" Sadly, no one would, not even when, in desperation, she approached a potential "Daddy".

Being a panto, there were inevitably complications. The Sheriff wanted to marry Maid Marion; she, emphatically, did not - instead, she chose Robin Hood (clearly love triangles have long historic roots), plus the twins. And the Sheriff's bag of (chocolate) coins, courtesy of Tesco, which his soldiers (Jean Davis and Ann Davies) thought was his laundry (silly pair). The Sheriff was captured by Esmeralda: "Got 'im" she cried, as she led her hangdog spouse away.

All this was with the the blessing of Pam Williams as Fairy Godmother (that's how you know it's fiction) and finished with a rousing chorus of "Happy Days Are Here Again" and of course "There's No



Business Like Show Business”.

Thank you, Tessa, and all your cast and helpers, front and back stage. It was a magnificent performance!

Text by Dee Thomas; photos by Peter Fox

Such was the enthusiasm of the audience that this unsolicited tribute was also sent to the Editor:

Superb! Excellent! Fantastic! Funny! Wonderful! Well done everybody involved in the show. What a wonderful time I had. Thanks to all involved – including the writer; the cast; the props people; the musicians; the tea/coffee makers; the liaison people with Tesco, and all the numerous helpers. It is a privilege to be a member of such a talented group of people. I hope you all have a great Christmas and a wonderful new year!

Jean Shepherd

A sparkly red jacket at the Supper Dance



On Saturday 18 November at Ludwick Family Centre in WGC Tony Tutton's group Simply 60s held a Supper Dance — the supper being delicious hot fish and chips (or other options). The music, as suggested by the band's name, was mostly high-action 60's music. Over a hundred WelHat members attended and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. What caught my eye was the sparkly red jacket worn by Tony. I asked

it afterwards what it thought of the occasion:

- *I've not seen you here before.*

No, this is the first time I've been to the Ludwick Family Centre.

- *What did you think of the evening?*

It was fantastic. I've rarely seen such fun being had by people of a certain age—if I can use that description.

- *What makes you say that?*

Well, the dance floor was constantly full of them jigging and bobbing and generally moving about to the music. Some people had to stay seated but they were still singing along with the words (mostly right) and tapping the table or their feet. The floor was almost bouncing.

- *That must have been tiring for them, did it go on non-stop?*

No, there was a break when they sat and had the Supper. It smelled delicious and there wasn't much left. I noticed that on every table there were interesting-looking bottles too which were mostly empty by the end. Some people had brought bowls of extra treats. It looked as if they were really enjoying everything about it.

- *What happened after the interval?*

I'm not too sure because Tony draped me on his chair because I was making him too hot. That was annoying for me.

- *Did you hear anything much then?*

Yes, he kept making them sing along with songs that they knew really well. They were really good and so loud!

- *So would you say you enjoyed it?*

I think it was fantastic. I heard Tony say that they were the best crowd of all the u3as he plays for. Of course he might say that to every one.

- *Any final thoughts?*

Other than saying that I've heard that these dances are so successful and enjoyable that there's always a Spring dance and this coming year it's on April 27th. And, here's a breaking newsflash, next November 23rd Tony is trying out doing a Tea Dance instead of a supper dance. It will be in the afternoon so people don't have to drive late at night.

- *Thank you for that exciting information. Will we see you next time?*

I don't think so. Another of his flashy jackets will be on duty I expect.

- *I'll keep a beady eye open for that.*

Ann Davies

Christmas Lunch



Wednesday 13 December saw our final event of 2023 (excluding those organized by various groups). Ninety-one members met up at Mill Green Golf Club, all grateful that we didn't have to brave the ice and snow that plagued the event in 2022. In contrast to the chilly grey afternoon outside, the hall was full of cheer with Christmas trees, lights, beautiful table decorations and a constant buzz of happy chatter.

Round tables, each seating ten members, filled the hall comfortably and soon everyone had found their place and begun pulling crackers, donning golden paper hats and exchanging jokes (Why does Santa have three gardens? So that he can hoe, hoe, hoe!). Naturally it takes time to serve that many people, but the staff were attentive and helpful, the food was delicious, and everyone seemed to have plenty to say to fill the gaps between courses. When mince pies were proffered to

accompany tea and coffee, many of us could find no room.

It was a really enjoyable occasion and a splendid way to round off the WHU3A year. Many thanks are due to those who organised, sold tickets, managed the seating plan and generally made it happen – namely Marie Scales, Doreen Hall and Ann Madell.

Jill Longman

Group News

Craftea

Thanks to the generosity of donations from our members – the Craftea group, having made many poppies, have raised the princely sum of £236.00 for the Royal British Legion.



Marion Cleveland

Italian Lunch Club

On Thursday 31 August we held our second meeting of "Tony's Italian Lunch Club" at The Terranova Italian Restaurant in Welwyn Garden City.

Our first meeting was on Tuesday 18 July when we had 37 members – but this time the numbers had increased to 50, which was almost full capacity for the restaurant!

Vince (the owner of the restaurant) had also arranged for free parking for everyone's car.

The offering was a superb two-course (starter and main) for a fixed price of £19.00.



The service was top-notch and judging by the level of noise coming from all the conversations a good time was had by all.

It was lovely to enjoy good food and good company overlooking the beautiful south Stanborough lake.

These meetings will go ahead on an ad hoc basis.

Tony Tutton

Travel Group

A Tartan Tapestry – Scotland

“On the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond”.

The trip to the Scottish Highlands in July was much anticipated by all of us. Of course, it's a long journey by coach, so the journey was broken by a stopover at Cedar Court Hotel just outside Huddersfield and a visit en route to the NT property Belton House. This is just outside Grantham in Lincolnshire and made a pleasant visit, with its house dating back to the 1600s and beautiful formal gardens.



The group at Oban Hotel, with their Guide and Coach Driver.

We set off early next morning with a short stop at Gretna Green for lunch. So we were now in Scotland; but I found Gretna disappointing as it was so commercialised compared to my last visit there. Once we passed Glasgow the scenery became very different, passing Loch Lomond and distant mountains; but it was necessarily slower. Eventually we reached Oban to find our hotel on the coast with stunning views of the bay. The hotel rooms could best be described as "a little tired" but were compensated for by the newly refurbished communal rooms and beautiful views of the bay.

So *Tuesday - Day-3* - was actually our first day of exploring the spectacular West Highlands. We first set off for Fort William for a coffee stop at the foot of Ben Nevis. However, wet and misty weather prevented any clear views of the mountain initially. We then passed the impressive Neptune Staircase Locks and stopped at the infamous Glencoe, site of the massacre in 1692. This was very impressive - the Visitor Centre told the story of the brutal battle which took place in attempting to clear the Highlands. It was a moving story; there was a strong sense of what had happened in this place. There was a reconstruction of a

typical domestic dwelling of the time to explore. We then ascended Glen Spean, stopped for lunch at Spean Bridge, and proceeded onward to admire the Commando Memorial and pay our respects. Our chairman, Steve, was very moved by this site. And here, it was just possible, when the sky cleared to see the tip of Ben Nevis.

Wednesday - Day 4- was a highlight of the tour and an adventure in many ways! The weather was not at all propitious for our tour; but somehow we managed to elude much rain except when travelling on the coach. So today we set off to explore the Isle of Mull, the largest of the Inner Hebridean islands. We took the ferry from Oban to Craignure, and were then faced with decisions as it's a large island and we had to consider catching our return ferries. The main issue was that we wouldn't be able to visit the picturesque town of Tobermory as well as the island of Iona. This was a hard choice: but none of us wanted to miss the historic and significant isle of Iona, so that's what we did. The



Iona Abbey

exploration of Mull was therefore by coach as we made our way to the ferry point at Fionnphort to catch the ferry to Iona. This was when the weather changed to glorious sunshine. The approach to Iona with the Abbey clearly visible was quite magical – even spiritual. It was, after all, the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland and burial place of 59 kings of Scotland. The Labour MP John Smith was also buried here. We had time to explore the abbey and the number of Celtic crosses and grave slabs at the site. There was a true sense of history about the place.

We were conscious of time to catch the return ferry – and that's when the fun began! We all managed to get off the island of Iona with no problems – but our second ferry to get us back to Oban had broken down.

Our guide then had to consider a couple of alternative ferry routes back. The first was too small to take our coach, so we had to drive to another to get us "home". When we got to the ferry port, curiously named Fishnish Bay, there was some time to wait. Our resourceful guide produced her accordion and began to entertain us on the quay. Well, that was the cue for U3A members to exit the coach and start dancing with our valiant attempts at Scottish dancing – thanks Terry et al! This inspired a group of Asian men from Glasgow who were also waiting on the quayside to join in, and pretty soon it was quite a party all round. Much hilarity ensued and intercultural conviviality. But that wasn't the end of the tale, because the alternative port meant an additional 100-odd mile detour to get back to our hotel. This really brought home the challenges of the geography of the area as well as its beauty, as the landscape is fretted with lochs and inlets which make direct routes impossible. So, it was a late supper for us that night with sandwiches instead of a hot meal – but I think we were all in good spirits!

Thursday - Day 5 – We set off for a circular tour to Inverary on the banks of Loch Fyne. We first stopped at an interesting church at Dalmally. After visiting the white-walled Georgian



Kilchurn Castle, near Dalmally

town of Inverary we visited the NT Crarae Gardens – Britain’s finest example of a Himalayan Garden. There was plenty to explore here. From here we headed towards the village of Lochgilphead and along the coast road to Kilmartin Glen with its 5000-year-old monuments and Kilmartin’s church and graveyard with stones dating from 900 to 1600s. These were fascinating and spectacular. The sun shone here and we experienced the full splendour of the historic site.

Friday – Day 6 – We commenced our journey home with a short stop in Keswick for lunch and then a return to our stopover Cedar Court hotel, near Huddersfield.

Saturday – Day 7 – The last leg of our Scottish trip included a stop off at the NT Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire.

This was a most enjoyable trip and wouldn’t have been possible without all the efforts of our Travel Team: Jean Davis and Tony Bristow. They do an enormous amount of work behind the scenes and carry much of the responsibility for the success of our ventures. Thank you so much for all you do.

West Cork, The Dingle Peninsula and The Ring of Kerry
"As I was going over the Cork and Kerry Mountains"
(Whiskey in the Jar)

Summer was drawing to a close but not the holiday season as we set off from Stansted in September to fly to Cork for our tour to **Ireland**. A large party of nearly forty, we arrived at the Kenmare Bay Hotel for our four-night stay. It was a splendid hotel; we each seemed to have a suite to ourselves. The food too was excellent; there was plenty of locally caught fresh fish.

Day 2 – Monday – We headed north from Kenmare for a tour of the Ring of Kerry. Our first stop was at Molls Gap for a view of the most breathtaking scenery across the MacGillycuddy Reeks mountains. Derrycunihy and Beaufort afforded similar stops for spectacular views of



Molls Gap

lakes and mountains. Our first port of call of any duration was Muckross House, Killarney, built for Henry Arthur Herbert and his water- colourist wife, Mary Balfour. Queen Victoria stayed here in 1861. It was subsequently owned by a member of the Guinness family, and became the first Irish National Park in 1933. After this we proceeded along the coast road absorbing some of the most impressive scenery imaginable with the mountains on one side of us and the rugged coastline on the other. We passed through towns such as Killorglin, Glenbeigh, Caherciveen, Waterville and Sneem. We stopped at Waterville, a coastal town, for lunch and saw the statue of Charlie Chaplin, a frequent visitor to this place in the past. Our day concluded with a stop back in the town of Kenmare where we explored the stone circle on the edge of town.



Glengarriff seal colony



The wire sculpture of fishermen at the Blasket Heritage Centre.

Day 3 - Tuesday - We set off to Glengariff to take a boat trip to Garinish Island to explore the scenic gardens. They have a mild, humid climate and feature an Italian garden, a Grecian temple and a Martello Tower, which some hardy souls climbed. On the return ferry trip we took a detour round the small seal colony on an island in the bay. We also spotted a sea eagle high up in the trees. In the afternoon we circled the Beara Peninsula and saw some most sublime lake and coastal scenery.

Day 4 - Wednesday - We headed north past the Ring of Kerry to the Dingle Peninsula. Here we witnessed one of the most surprising and affecting experiences of the trip when we visited the Blasket Heritage Centre, a tribute and memorial to the people who lived on the remote Blasket Islands. This was a beautifully curated exhibition which certainly paid homage to these people who had their own language and culture but had to evacuate the islands in 1953. The centre housed an impressive wire sculpture of the Blasket fishermen and many recordings and photographs of the inhabitants, who recorded their lives in valuable documents, which were a testament to a totally different way of life. Then we proceeded to the popular tourist town of Dingle, with opportunities for shopping and food. Back on our coach we travelled amidst wonderful scenery and stopped at the village of Inch, with a most beautiful beach.

Day 5 - Thursday - Today we spent a pleasant time in the town of Kinsale on the south coast, with plenty to explore and places for lunch, on our way to the airport at Cork, then Stansted, and finally home.

Once again, huge thanks for all their efforts to Jean and Tony for a really exceptional holiday. We are all really grateful for all you do.

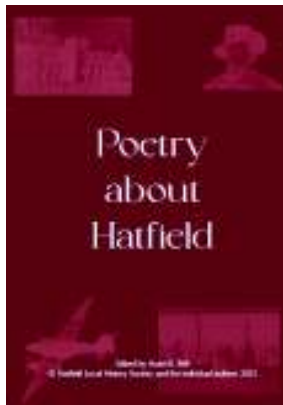
Text and photos by Pamela Williams

Wartime Memories

The booklet produced by this group, *World War II: Childhood Memories – Adult Reflections* (reviewed in this Newsletter Issue 71) sold all copies. The group has now produced a second edition, expanded from 32 to 36 pages (new back cover shown). This will be made available for members at Wednesday meetings.



Reviews



Poetry about Hatfield Ed. Hazel Bell: Hatfield Local History Society, 2023. 32 pages, £2.0. Copies obtainable at -

www.hatfieldhistory.uk/publications/poetry-about-hatfield/

I must admit that when I consider Hatfield it does not generally lead me to poetic thoughts. So when I was asked to review a publication entitled "Poetry about Hatfield" I did wonder what was coming my way, but I was pleasantly surprised!

The booklet, liberally illustrated, contains poems written by residents both current and of earlier years as well as pieces about the town, its history and environment. Thus we are given a flavour of the changing fortunes of Hatfield from its Domesday listing through to the plans to build a further fifteen thousand homes by 2036.

Unsurprisingly, Hatfield House and its estate, together with some of the important and influential people who have lived or visited there, feature in several of the poems; but we also learn of long-lost buildings and businesses, including, of course, de Havilland. There is much nostalgia for a town some clearly feel has lost much of its past glory and, perhaps, its sense of community, but it is heartening to read more uplifting verses, too. I particularly liked "Pollarding the Plane Trees" by our very own Pamela Williams, with its hopeful vision that

... they'll be made much more by being less ...

And we must wait all winter for the hope of green."

Jill Longman

Spring Term 2024 – Wednesday Meetings

Doors open at 9.45am. Tea and coffee are served from 10.00am to 10.30am. The meetings start at 10.30am with notices, followed by the talks. Bring your own cup or mug for free tea or coffee.

We are now making recordings of talks delivered at our Wednesday morning meetings, whenever speakers are willing for us to do this.

We are making these recordings without investing in expensive new equipment or requiring a lot of technical knowledge, so the results are not perfect, but improving, and a number of members are now benefitting from the opportunity of watching talks that they were unable to attend in person.

If you would like to receive recordings whenever they are available, please email video@u3awelhat.org.uk

JANUARY

10, Ludwick Family Centre, Welwyn Garden City

Jason Middleton – “The History of Jewellery”

We will look at the role Jewellery has played from the earliest civilisations to the modern day, covering periods such as the Renaissance, Victorian Period, Art Deco, Art Nouveau to Jewellery on line today.

17, Breaks Manor, Hatfield

Philip Birtles – “The de Havilland Comet”

Following a career in the aerospace industry, Philip took early retirement when Hatfield Aerodrome finally closed at the end of 1993. He spent over forty years as a trustee of the de Havilland Aircraft Museum, and he has written over thirty-five books. This talk is an illustrated history of the world's first jet airliner, covering the design, development, accidents and service including the Nimrod.

24, WGC

Lucy Goldsman (Co-op Inheritance Planning) – “Tax, Care and Toy Boys”

In a lighthearted, interactive way, this talk introduces the topics of inheritance tax, protecting your family's nest egg, stopping “sideways disinheritance” and Lasting Power of Attorney, explaining what steps can be taken to plan for the future.

31, Hatfield

Mary and Graham Brace – “Wildlife of Brazil”

Having retired from careers as, respectively, senior school teacher and architect, Mary and Graham are now avid wildlife enthusiasts and conservationists who spend much of their time traveling to the more exotic places around the world photographing the local wildlife.

FEBRUARY

7, WGC

Colin Oakes – “Shrove Tuesday – More than Just Pancakes”

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

14, Hatfield

Mike Howgate – “The Da Vinci Code and the true history of the Templars”

Dan Brown has created a renewed interest in The Knights Templar. We will examine his ‘story’ and use it to launch into the real history of these warrior monks of the Middle Ages. We will look in particular at their London, Hertfordshire and Essex connections.

21, WGC

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

28, Hatfield

Dr Peter Burley – “The Defence of St Albans from Viking Wars to the Cold War

St Albans is usually thought of as a quiet Cathedral town with a long ecclesiastical history. In fact it faced attacks and was fortified against them, from the Viking Wars onwards. We look at those defences, from their height in the late middle ages through refurbishment in 17th century civil wars and what there is still to see of them today.

MARCH

6, WGC

Andy Strange – “History of WWII Airfields”

An overview of strategic air war in WWII. Why East Anglia was selected for RAF and USAAF bomber and fighter bases, with original WWII photographs, drawings

and maps to describe the layout and common components of an airfield. Including some stories of unusual events and the airmen's stories in their own words.

13, Hatfield AGM

20, WGC

Dr David Smith – “Oliver Cromwell: Hero or Villain?”

Oliver Cromwell remains one of the most controversial and complex figures in British history. He ruled over what was so far the only republic in British history, and he deeply divided his contemporaries over whether he was a hero or a villain. Historians' assessments of Cromwell are similarly polarised. This lecture will explore Cromwell's life and career through a selection of his letters and speeches, and examine why opinion about him is still so divided.

27, Hatfield

Paul Barwick – “Alexander Litvinenko - The Spy who solved his own murder”

In London in October 2006, ex-KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko was killed by two Russian intelligence agents. We will look at his life and death and the reasons why a vengeful President wanted him silenced. We learn about the deadly radioactive poison Polonium 210 and touch on the global Police murder investigation; also the conclusions of the public enquiry, set up after his death. Will his family will ever find proper justice?

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

Summer term starts on 17 April 2024 at Welwyn Garden City.