



Looking Up



Our picture shows Sir James Thornhill's *trompe-l'oeil* masterpiece, The Painted Chapel ceiling in the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, as virtually shown to our members at the Zoom talk on Wednesday 27 January, and to Exploring London Group (2) last August (see page 16).

Prospects too are looking up, with the beginning of the end of lockdown! Many hopes of our soon meeting in real space are expressed throughout this issue. May they prove justified!

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U3A Welwyn-Hatfield NEWSLETTER

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Musical memories on a Spring evening



Musical Maestro Tony Tutton

It's amazing how a lockdown situation makes you think outside the box! Welwyn Hatfield u3a's very own musical impresario Tony Tutton had the brilliant idea of asking people to think of records that held memories for them and send them to him. He would then compile the requests and, via the wonder of Zoom, play them one Saturday evening so we could relive those moments.

Saturday 20 March was that wonderful evening. Dean Martin was singing, appropriately, "Memories are Made of This" as 42 machines logged on at around 7pm, so between 50 and 60 people had great fun singing along, dancing, tapping their feet, hand-jiving and most of all laughing. Then the fun began – oh, how those songs took us back to our youth! "Waterloo" by ABBA, about the ninth song, had the magical effect of getting many people up or singing along to the lyrics with wide-open mouths. (We did have all sound muted until "Hey Jude" at the very end. Everyone understood the wisdom of that move from the cacophony of noise that ensued at that point. Zoom still has to find a way of synchronising sound. I fear that is an impossible dream.)



u3a members dancing the night away in their homes

The requests ranged from Sinatra to McCartney to Bill Haley via Kenny Ball, the Stones, Liza Minnelli and Elvis. The music style went from Rock to Skiffle to trad Jazz and Motown – in fact there was something for everyone. It was a fantastic evening, and such a welcome escape from the tedium of the present situation.

Some people shared their stories of where they first saw the groups or heard the music and what the record meant to them. Tony also talked about local venues where well known acts of the time such as the Small Faces, Tom Jones, David Bowie and Chris Barber played. He mentioned the Locarno, Cherry Tree Hall, Breaks Manor and the Hop to name but a few. People chipped in with their personal experiences of these places too.

Tony still has enough material to do at least one more evening but this time he's hoping to do it with a live, real audience at one of our local halls so we can dance properly and sing loudly together! I cannot find enough ways of thanking him for all his hard work putting this together and providing us with such pleasure. He's a brilliant compère / DJ and knows just what medicine to prescribe to give everyone a much needed huge morale boost.



The end of a wonderful evening

Thank you, Tony!

Ann Davies

Notes from the Chair



Pamela Williams

At the time of writing there is much talk in the media of the anniversary of the initial lockdown, and many of us have been reflecting on the past year and what it has meant for us. Of course there were the sacrifices – staying at home, not seeing friends and family, no school or work for some people, the dreadful death toll – but, out of all this, we were able to salvage some joy. First, there was the beautiful spring we had last year and the gift of free time we were afforded to pursue some hobbies and interests. This year we hope the spring will bring renewal and return to near normality in the foreseeable future, now we are on the way to complete our vaccination programme.

For our u3a the year has seen a process of evolution. We have transformed ourselves into a different type of organisation, while maintaining our core values. The mainstay of our organisation was our Wednesday meetings. These have now been transmuted into Zoom meetings on alternate Wednesdays with Coffee Mornings between.

The website, the newsletter and regular mail-chimps have expanded into a necessary means of communication. Some Study Groups have also managed to maintain their activities by the use of Zoom. The net result is that many members have been able to participate in activities and maintain social contact. Needless to say, this would not be possible without the sterling efforts of, principally Ann Davies, Jill Longman, Roger Swaine and Hazel Bell, but other members of the committee too – you know who they are!

We have been treated to some interesting and varied Speakers on Wednesdays. The programme began in January with a presentation on “British Comedy Greats” – much nostalgia went on there as well as memory challenges on catchphrases! It was an entertaining morning and I found myself remembering comedians my parents had enjoyed as well as myself – evidence that this was a comprehensive survey of the topic. The next talk was delivered by my own brother, Michael Rodway. He had worked as a guide at The Painted Hall, Greenwich, during its recent restoration, so he had a wealth of information and anecdotes about the paintings and the representation of characters contained within them [see picture on the front page]. It was factual and entertaining.

Our next talk in February was on “Heraldry All Around Us” and was delivered by an expert on the subject with plenty of visual material. It was another interesting insight into a fairly arcane subject, with its own language and symbols. The second talk in February was about Adela Pankhurst of the famous Suffragette family. She was a lesser known member of the family but it was an opportunity to focus on all their efforts to obtain votes for women.

Then, in March, we had a talk on the “Wardrobe and Lifestyle of the Windsors” with some fascinating insights into the life of Edward and Wallis Simpson, which didn’t fail to astonish. This talk was our “lure” to ensure we had a quorum at our Zoom AGM, which was to be brief and to take place before the talk.

The AGM duly took place in accordance within the requirements of the National Organisation, Officers were elected and necessary amendments made to the constitution to comply with regulations. So – on into the next year!! We all hope that there is an imminent end to this situation and we may be able to meet face to face. Until then, stay well and stay in touch.

Best wishes,

Pam Williams

Notes from the Secretary

The u3a Trust has been keeping us informed of the latest updates regarding Covid 19 regulations; all being well, we shall begin to meet again in the not too distance future.

The u3a Trust, Herts Network and East of England Region have all been focusing on recruitment and retention of members. We have decided that our priority for Welwyn Hatfield u3a should be how we are going to function as a u3a as the restrictions are gradually lifted.

Steve Hawkins, one of our members, is now the chairman of Herts Network, and Barbara Cordina, who was the previous Network chairman, is now our Regional Trustee. Both have been keeping us updated with forthcoming events via Zoom. Roger Swaine has been putting the links on our website – thank you, Roger!

I attended a u3a meeting about u3a Day, which was due to be held last year, but because of Covid the arrangements were cancelled. U3a day is now to become an annual event held on the first Wednesday in June therefore u3a day this year will be on 2 June. The Trust and East of England both agree that any activities should be local, not national. Our committee have yet to decide how we are going to mark u3a day.

I can't tell you of the latest guidelines as they will have altered by the time this newsletter is printed. As soon as we know when we can recommence live activities we will put them on our website.



Marie Scales

Marie Scales

Whilst we still await a number of the over 800 members of our u3a to pay this year's membership subscription of £20, a number forgot to change their standing orders from £5 to £20.

Sue Talbot, our treasurer, would therefore appreciate anyone who has not paid their full amount of £20 (£16.00 for associate members) correcting this and letting her know by cheque or pay by bank transfer.

Five new members have already joined this year despite our being in lockdown.

Email treasurer@u3awelhat.org.uk

AGM 2021



Jill Longman

AGMs are no-one's favourite meeting. We all know they have to happen, but the formal process is hard to sell as an enjoyable social occasion and there is always a concern that we won't manage to attract enough members to reach the magic quorum. In March 2020, there was another concern to add: we were all beginning to hear about some new virus that seemed to be causing great problems elsewhere in the world and was considered a potential danger to us, too. There were suggestions that we might need to suspend

“mass gatherings” and even frankly fanciful notions that we might, at some point, be told we all needed to stay at home! But certainly people of our age group were beginning to consider where we went and whether our health conditions made it advisable to steer clear of crowds. Would that be the last straw when deciding whether to attend the AGM? In the event, we managed to scrape through with enough participation to tick off the process as having been completed.

Move forward a year and what a different world we found ourselves in! Zoom on Wednesday mornings was now the norm, but we'd never before done anything like an AGM by Zoom. Should we attempt it, while emergency rules allowed us to do so, or take the other option on offer and delay the AGM in the hope that face-to-face gatherings would be possible soon enough? The old dilemma reared its head again – how best to ensure a quorum? Attendance at virtual meetings on Wednesdays has been steadily increasing, but we still don't get quite as many as used to pack into the hall for a talk, so would we manage a quorum from within the smaller set of happy Zoom users?

A sub-group of the committee put their thinking caps on to work out what was needed to make the meeting run smoothly. Our Secretary, Marie, set out the items that should be covered to fulfil the business of the AGM, including updating our constitution to allow for future AGMs to be held electronically should the need arise. Ann Davies and I “played” with Zoom to understand how the built-in polling system worked and whether we might use it to hold votes during the meeting.

We considered how to encourage members to attend – would the “carrot” of a particularly interesting talk to follow the brief meeting be

sufficient? We added a little “stick” in the form of warning that late-comers would not be admitted (to foil the plans of anyone thinking they might wait until the business was over, then log-in to catch the talk!). When the time came to open bookings for the meeting, we held our collective breath to watch for responses. Phew! It soon became clear that our pleas for support had been heeded.

It all went well! All the documentation had been available for members to access online, and had been sent out by post to those for whom we hold no email address. Advance notice of questions had been requested and none had been forthcoming, so we were able to work through the business of the meeting as speedily as we had promised. Approving reports, confirming committee members, appointing auditors, etc., was boiled down to nine votes, each of which popped up on screen at the relevant moment, requiring members to click on either “Accept” or “Reject”, and they did! The numbers on the automated count whizzed up and we were happily able to display to all those present the “100% Accept” result after each vote. The whole thing was concluded inside 30 minutes so that we could welcome our speaker bang on time and sit back and relax while she told us all about the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and their extraordinary lifestyle. It was brilliant.

A number of members commented afterwards about how well the voting had worked and how straightforward the whole AGM had been. As the attendance figure was better than at most “normal” AGMs, Zoom might be the method of choice in future years.! Perhaps we should all vote on it –



Jill Lonngman

Welwyn Garden City, My Home



Kadam Dance and Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith are celebrating Welwyn Garden City in its post-Centenary year through a series of Zoom sessions in presentations that touch issues of faith, identity and culture. Dance, music, poetry and spoken word are used in the expression. On 2 March, the theme of *Home* was explored – so fitting, since Ebenezer Howard's dream was to build not just a town but a Garden City that was home to a community that lived, worked and played together. WelHat u3a again had the pleasure of opening the proceedings, with poetry readings and reflections on life in Welwyn Garden.

It is impossible for me to write a review that will fully reflect the pleasure, the joy, the pain expressed by the readers or the reflections of invited guest speakers.

Sanjeevini Dutta opened the readings, setting the tone with a few lines well known to us all: *There is no place like home*. Diana Holt followed with a poem specially written for last year's centenary celebration by Glyn Maxwell, born and brought up in Welwyn Garden City: he reminisces about boyhood roaming the woods and fields surrounding our town.

But the poems did not always dwell on happy times. Hazel Bell read a poem specially written for this session by Jon Westoby, in which he reminds us that home for some is a cardboard box [see page 24]. Sam Segar's heartbreaking reading of Auden's *Refugee Blues*, written in 1939, reminds us starkly of the trauma of today's dispossessed and unwanted.

Then our spirits were lifted by Karl and Jay Dewar, two young men who reminisced about childhood visiting Campus West, Stanborough Lakes and feeding the ducks; and now as young adults, the ease of catching a train to London and its theatres. Covid had brought them restrictions, inhibiting their university and school life, but also given them a fuller appreciation of all that was on offer in and around their home town. Then Ivana, who with her family had settled in Welwyn Garden, recalled the early years suffering devastating postnatal depression and the comfort she could draw from the warmth, friendship and acceptance that she found in her new town. So much pleasure, gratitude and awareness of the gift of light and space with which we are surrounded.

More poetry – with Maryam Rodway reading Stephen Young's *Coming Home and Needing to Touch*, expressing joy in the familiar and ordinary. David Steed with Robert Frost's *Walls* and its teasing refrain, "good fences make good neighbours". Pamela Williams reading East London activist poet Jasper Kaur's reminiscent *The Summer of '98*. Jill Longman reading from new poet Helen Mort's *Utterance* based on her conversations with the elderly. (This is so us, well worth searching out and reading in full.)*

I want to say, I'm scared beyond reason.
I want to say, carry on girl, and smile.

David Steed brought the evening to a close with a reading of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Requiem*, ending with those well-known lines:

Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

All an utter delight. You can watch it on YouTube at –

<https://youtu.be/lg4zjPWt4L0>

Jo Roscoe

*A UK Age Concern sponsored project.

Tuesday Morning Fun Quiz



Prior to lockdown, Doreen and I would spend our Tuesday mornings out with our walking group and once a month after the walk we would retire to the pub for lunch and a quiz. Of course all that changed and whilst we could still go out walking, albeit on our own, around our local area, we missed the enjoyment of testing our knowledge against our friends at the monthly quiz.

Yes, it was quite competitive! I was aware that Tony Tutton, our resident quizmaster and all-round entertainer did quizzes with his computer group, but recently I learned that he was now hosting a standalone quiz group on Tuesday mornings and all are welcome.

I contacted Tony who very kindly sent me a Zoom link and we promptly joined around fifteen other members on the next Tuesday morning at 10a.m. We were then treated to a test of our knowledge of musicals and popular music with extracts being played to us for us to identify. It certainly got the brain working quickly, but clearly not quickly enough as some of the other members really knew their stuff. In subsequent weeks other members of the group took turns to be quizmaster and we were tested on a wide range of general knowledge, TV advertising slogans, bones of the body, more music and even how well we listened! We did better in those.

One week we were tested on our knowledge of sights in Welwyn and Hatfield complete with carefully taken photos, (a difficult one for us, living in Stevenage), world geography and general knowledge, hosted by Suzanne and John Brown all the way from Tasmania. We have certainly been put through our paces; each member of the group brings something new to the quiz when it is their turn. It will be my turn soon, so I hope I can meet the challenge.

The Quiz Group is open to everyone so if you fancy testing your knowledge let Tony know and he will send you the link. Contact Tony on 01707 328943 or email tonytutton1@yahoo.co.uk

I hope to see you there.

Steve Hall

Group News

Book Group (2)

Recommends – Girl, Woman, Other

In 2019 Bernadine Evaristo won the Booker Prize with her eighth novel, *Girl, Woman, Other*. Unfortunately, she had to share it with Margaret Atwood (no comment!). It's a complex book about how women become themselves – wonderful to read, impossible to precis, so I won't even try - just give you enough to make you want to read it!

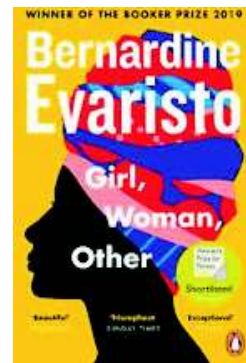
It's the story (well, many stories actually) of twelve women, mostly of colour, and a whole cast of other characters, all connected in some way to the first character we meet, Amma, a strong black lesbian feminist. She's walking along the Southbank to the National Theatre, where she's the Artistic Director, for the first night of her latest play.

(I have to say that not only did it feel wonderful to imagine walking along the Southbank to the National again, but it felt wonderful to imagine a woman Artistic Director at the National, or the RSC!)

The structure is simple, with the portraits of the women divided equally across four chapters in a writing style that abandons punctuation in favour of a free-flowing conversational style. Evaristo says that she 'writes what she feels needs to be written. Characters that readers won't have met in fiction before.' And we hadn't. And many of us didn't recognise the country either, as the book spanned a century of life from the top to the bottom of the country.

There are themes of race, class, sexual orientation, slavery. It's political, but Evaristo doesn't rant. Her characters are flawed, complex and beautifully drawn. Bummi, proud of her daughter but distraught that she's lost her culture at Cambridge, is the immigrant mother who would rather her child did anything but bring home a white partner.

Shirley and Lennox, children of immigrants, have good jobs and a good marriage. She holds forth while he quietly prepares food:



‘The truth is that hierarchies of power and privilege won’t disappear.’

Lennox stirs in the red curry paste and grates ginger.

‘It’s the principle of social mobility I’m arguing here.’

Lennox chops coriander stalks.

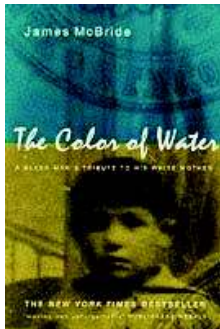
Then he betrays her in the most devastating way.

It looked as if we would end back at the National, as some of the characters we’d met gathered for the after-party. Then, on page 439 comes the Epilogue with a startling denouement.

This extraordinarily rich and powerful book, which seems to reflect Evaristo’s own life, gave us much to talk about in the book group – and the conversation goes on!

Highly recommended!

The Color of Water



Black author musician James McBride recounts a conversation with his white mother when he asked her if he was black or white. She replies: ‘You’re a human being’. ‘What color is God?’ he asks. “God is the color of water. Water doesn’t have a color,” she says.

We hear both their voices as McBride weaves his own story into this loving tribute to his remarkable mother – Rachel Shilsky, a Polish girl from an Eastern European shetl who came to rural Virginia and was shunned by both black and white because she was a Jew. She was not allowed to be in her High School Musical because the other girls would not dance next to a Jew, and couldn’t go to her graduation either as it was held in a church.

Escaping from an abusive Rabbi father, she hops the train to New York City, discovers 1940s Harlem and marries an African-American man, is widowed, marries again and is widowed again. Left in poverty with twelve children to raise, only two things really mattered to her – school and church.

‘You’re a human being’, she says. ‘Educate yourself or you’ll be a nobody!’

She arranged for her children to be bussed to neighbourhoods with better schools, Jewish schools, where she knew education would matter.

McBride recalls “Every morning we hit the door at 6:30, fanning out across the city like soldiers armed with books, T-squares, musical instruments.”

James McBride is now an award-winning author, composer and musician, brother of two doctors, a social worker, a professor, a midwife, a sound engineer, a computer engineer and two teachers. Their mother, Mrs McBride Jordan gained a degree in Social Work from Temple University when she was 65. You couldn't make it up!

We loved this book. Please read it!

Carol Bush

Exploring London (2)

Here in Tasmania for what was to have been a six-month visit, we had just started thinking about planning our next trip to London for our group, ready for when we were back in Hatfield in May 2020, then – oh dear – we couldn't return, because of Covid 19! We embraced Zoom to keep in touch with family and friends back in the UK, finding



Suzanne and John Brown on one of the Whitsunday Islands in Queensland, wearing Tilley hats

it very reliable and easy to use. We were emailed by London Walks, previously used many times for our London visits, who told us that they were able to provide virtual London trips using Zoom. Aha, we thought, let's give it a go. We emailed our group, '*We wondered whether any of you would be interested in doing a virtual London walk?*' and had 11 replies back the same day, so with such a response we decided to give it a go.

Our first virtual trip in August 2020 was to Greenwich. We soon realised the benefits of a trip using Zoom; what wonderful closeups we had of Sir James Thornhill's *trompe-l'oeil* masterpiece, The Painted Chapel ceiling in the Royal Naval College, with no neck-craning! [This Painted Ceiling is shown on our front page.]

Since our first 'outing' with 22 attending, we have visited, Kensington, Vauxhall and Hammersmith; last time, there were 31 of us! Our next trip at the end of April will be to Chelsea. After going on a tour of Bloomsbury with Amber Tallon on a Wednesday morning session, we decided to arrange our future trips with her. She has proved to be a splendid guide; her research is extensive and thorough, her use of technology is brilliant and her presentation is outstanding: what a find!

We last visited Chelsea in July 2018, on a wonderfully warm and sunny summer's day, spending the morning in the Chelsea Physic Garden, with lunch at the Tangerine Café under the shade of enormous trees, and the afternoon spent exploring the Chelsea Hospital, guided by a Chelsea Pensioner. Amber's tour will be showing us other gems of Chelsea; she has a very memorable day to compete with, but we're sure she will delight us as always with another interesting and enjoyable trip.

Suzanne Brown

Exploring London (3)

We have enjoyed three exploring London virtual trips since the last newsletter, starting with "The Virtual Lights of London" at the end of December.

Despite being in lockdown, we were able to see not only the annual Christmas lights in Regent Street and Oxford Street, but also some of the other areas of the West End that have magnificent displays but are not so well known. We saw several decorated Christmas Trees and the displays, over the years, in Covent Garden and parts of Mayfair. We

also learnt about the evolution of lighting in London generally. When we are next able to visit we'll be looking very carefully at the pedestrian crossing lights at Trafalgar Square!

Our next virtual tour in early February was "Alleyways of the Old City". We had a fascinating tour around the nooks and crannies of the city, including the new as well as the old, and learnt why the alleyways were so named and their medieval uses. The rebuilding of the City after the devastation of the Great Fire of London was also explained whilst we explored Pudding Lane, Bread Street, Lovat Lane, the chewing gum wall in Bow Lane, St Alphage Walway in the Barbican, and the Time and Tide art installation on the pavement of Plantation Place in EC3. Something else to add to our list for when we can visit in real life!

Our third virtual tour in March had a musical flavour: "Handel's London", looking at the London locations associated with Handel's most famous pieces of music, such as Water Music, Music for the Royal Fireworks and the Hallelujah Chorus. We also looked at his famous Brook Street Residence which is now a museum known as "Handel and Hendrix" (Jimi Hendrix lived next door for a short while) and a pub, complete with a blue plaque. The charismatic commentary gave us a very comprehensive knowledge of "The greatest musical Englishman ever born in Germany".

Sue McLellen & Tony Dodd

Family History

The March 2021 meeting was the tenth that we have held via Zoom. We were rather slow to take advantage of the technology, being concerned that our members would not join in and it would be a 'flop'. It wasn't! We've had our 'ups and downs' while getting used to Zoom, but it has all been taken in good spirit.

The main difference has been the number of new members. We are not a large group; during 2018-19 the average attendance at Mead House was 10.8 and 11.4. In the ten Zoom meeting we've held to date, the average attendance has been 14.4 and increasing, maximising at 20 in the February 2021 meeting. What we have noticed is the change of profile. Some of our Mead House regulars do not log into our Zoom meetings – which is a pity. But, as a result of the lockdown, new members have joined the WH u3a. Several are interested in the



histories of their families and find that these days most of their research can be done at home in any spare moment.

Their initial concerns have been that the FHG would be too advanced for a new starter – we aren't! The profile of our meetings accommodates newcomers as we allow time in the schedule to cover the 'rudimentaries' of using specific sites if we are aware that a member needs help.

Another change is that we've noticed that some members are happy to give a talk via Zoom, whereas they wouldn't be so keen if standing in front of an audience. Since Christmas we have talked about how to find ancestors in England, Ireland and Scotland using the various websites available to us. But the high point must be the lectures given by two members.

Joan showed some of her techniques for finding ancestors, including using Facebook to make contact with living distant cousins and the Familysearch Discovery compare-a-face photo comparison feature. Above is a comparison of a photo of Joan and an unidentified picture from her Grandmother's album, showing that Joan shares a 40% likeness to the lady she believes to be her father's mother in her twenties around 1912. She matches a later photo of her at 60%!

The second talk concerned social history. Margaret Gittins talked about a family ancestor who was a beggar, taken in by police and sent to Canada with other children to help on farms. He became a successful farmer and a member of the Canadian Rifles in World War II.

Brian Bolton-Knight

Remote gardening

After 23 March 2020 the realisation gradually dawned that this lockdown situation was going to be long-term – so the Garden group had to cancel all the outings planned for Summer 2020 and return the deposits that had already been paid. What a blow! Our normal activities are that during October to April we meet indoors monthly for talks, but from May to September we travel to wonderful gardens within roughly a two-hour drive. (We need to take into account our comfort breaks of course!) This takes us in all directions and we have been fortunate enough to see some beautiful grounds. They are all different and inspiring. The coach is always crammed on the way home with interesting-looking packages of greenery and we all want to inspect each other's purchases.



Ann Davies

By May, I wondered if anyone in the gardening group might be interested in trying gardening via Zoom. Some 80 people are on the membership list. They were asked to contact me if they were interested so we had our first meeting on 9 June in the afternoon. I had asked people to send me photos of their gardens to share with everyone. I showed some of my very small garden and found a couple



Bourton House

of YouTube clips of gardens of interest. It's surprising what you can find on YouTube! We had a bit of a chat too and people were interested enough to want another go. We should have visited Leonardslee Gardens in July and so I found some video clips instead and we visited it remotely. In August we should have gone to Batsford



Dahlia Festival at Ayletts

and Bourton House so I sourced videos of them and once more we did the visit by proxy! We were quite enjoying this different way of doing things if we couldn't actually visit them.

From September we started meeting at our usual group meeting time – the second Monday of the month at 10am. We 'went' to Pashley manor which would have been our outing and also to the Dahlia festival at our own local garden centre, Ayletts.

Our speakers from September onwards were already booked and fortunately some were willing to do their talk by Zoom. Kate Harwood talked to us about Garden Cities and other Utopias in October, Darren Lerigo did A very British Garden in November and Tom Cole did Container Gardening in December. All these talks were very well received and numbers were growing.

Suzanne and John Brown – loyal WelwynHatfield u3a members who were stuck out in Tasmania for the duration – joined us for the morning gardening talks. We had been keeping in touch via WhatsApp and FaceTime and they'd been telling me about and sending photos of their struggles to get their garden dug over and planted up. One day I had the idea of asking them if they'd be willing to talk to the group about their efforts. To my amazement they agreed and were set up for January -- then the curse of wifi problems happened so they did their talk in February. I had compiled a fun gardening quiz so we did that in January, with lots of laughs.

On 12 February John and Suzanne's talk was amazing: they had put so much trouble into the presentation. They told us about where they were in Tasmania, about the local flora and how they were tackling their rock-hard soil! This interested so many people that our numbers rose to around 60 machines.

For our March talk Andrew Sankey spoke about the gardens of William Morris – a subject crossing the borders between Art & Design and Gardening. It was lively and really interesting as of course Morris took so many of his wallpaper design ideas from his garden. Very few people were aware how avant-garde Morris' ideas about gardening were, nor that he was such a well known gardener.

We have yet another different venture planned for April – one of the official London Walks, "London Gardens from Botanic to Urban". The jury is out about what is going to happen from May onwards. I am happy to organise Zooms while we can't go anywhere.

So we have carried on gardening regardless and managed to visit some lovely places – but haven't been able to bring anything green back from them. We are all looking forward to a time in the near future when we will be off gallivanting to a real garden not too far away. One of the vital requisites is that the tea room must be open as well as the plant sales area!



Suzanne and John's front garden, showing an indigenous plant called 'pig face'

Thank you Carole King – retiring Gardening Group organiser

Those of us in the Gardening group would like to thank Carole King for all her hard work leading the group for the past eleven years. She has encouraged us to organise visits to innumerable gardens in the summer months and booked fascinating speakers in the winter ones. We will miss her wisdom – although she says she knew very little about gardening when she took it on! Carole has devoted a huge amount of time into organising everything; even going so far as to store equipment in her home. As she's not a car driver it has been doubly difficult for her to get to our venues. She has, single-handed, looked after the finances too – not an easy task to juggle. Thank you, Carole – we really appreciate all the efforts you've made to keep us thriving! It's proving tricky, especially during lockdown, to find someone to replace you as you're a hard act to follow, but we have managed to find several people to work as a team to take your place. Hopefully you'll be coming to our future meetings as a relaxed group member and be able to thoroughly enjoy them as the rest of us do.

Ann Davies

Sunday Solo Lunch Club

This is a group for those living alone. We have been meeting on the second Sunday of the month since last summer for a get-together and a good chat. At our normal lunches, at a pub, there are usually about 15 of us; with our Zoom chats there are on average six to seven. One member suggested that we should all have our lunch then at the same time, which would feel more like being at the pub; but the general opinion was that we would not then be able to chat as much and that this was more important than food. As a result, some of us now enjoy a glass of our favourite tippie with friends!

In February we welcomed Roger Swaine to our group and he helped a couple of our members with their computer and Zoom problems.

Earlier this month I asked the group whether they would like to meet for lunch as soon as this is permitted. The majority have wanted to do so as soon as possible and a few have said September. We hope we shall be able to meet for a celebratory lunch on Sunday 8 August at The Waggoners, Ayot Green.

Marie Scales

Poetry

Jon Westoby of the Poetry Group wrote this poem, "Home(s)", to be read at the Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith event reviewed on page 11.

Is home the same for you
As it is for me?
A place that welcomes two
Where love can flourish free?

Or have you no retreat
No door, no roof, a cardboard box, maybe?
A darkened corner of some street
Where just the rain comes free.

Everybody needs a home.
Isn't it a human right?
Who decides who stays, who roams
We can't give up without a fight.

But, just sometimes, there comes a man,
A man whose vision conjures homes
In towns spread on a spacious plan
Garden Cities, world class biomes.

But will they continue?

The twenty-ninth in our series of profiles of distinguished Welwyn Hatfield U3A members features ...

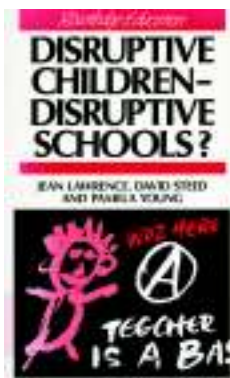
David Steed



David grew up and was educated in Cambridge. After leaving school he did two years military National service in Libya, followed by three years study at Jesus College Cambridge. He graduated there in History, then gained an MA in Sociology of Education from London University.

David's first work was teaching in an Approved school for high-IQ boys in Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire. While teaching there he met Annette Bourdillon in Holy Trinity church. She was an Occupational Therapist at Addenbrookes Hospital; he then came to sing to her patients in the Geriatric department. Annette and David married in 1956. Her family were Huguenots; her uncle, Dick Reiss, was one of the founders of Welwyn Garden City. They had two daughters.

After Kneesworth David worked for two years in the Social Development department in Welwyn Garden City, visiting residents to welcome them as they moved in, and as an assistant to the Ludwick Family Club Youth Warden. He taught History with Music at Alleynes, Stevenage. He then took up a lectureship in the Faculty of Education at Goldsmiths College, University of London, training graduate teachers. The work involved visiting and supervising students on their placements in schools all over London, lecturing in the Sociology of Education, and conducting research into disruptive pupil behaviour in primary and secondary schools. This research, with two colleagues, led to an invitation to lecture



to the British Advancement for Science, and the book *Disruptive Children: Disruptive schools?*, published in 1984.

Meanwhile, in leisure time, David continued to employ his vocal talents for the pleasure of the public. For twenty-five years he performed in the Rotary Old Time Music Hall annually produced by the WGC Rotary Club, and has sung in concerts and recitals for charity – regularly in monthly musical evenings at the Quaker Meeting House in WGC, and in churches and other venues in East Anglia and London. His celebrations of Broadway and Hollywood, accompanied by Mel Sutton, were released as albums for charity and





raised over £10,000. He was on the committee of the Welwyn Garden City Concert Club, and a reader for the local Talking Newspaper for the visually impaired.

David retired in 1993. Annette died in that year after battling cancer for 18 years.

In retirement, David has kept very busy, volunteering for many organisations. He took the Newspaper trolley round the QE2 hospital wards for many years; acted as Front of House manager and steward at the Barn Theatre; steward at Hatfield University Arts, the National Trust at Ayot, and the Globe Theatre in London; gardener at Verulamium and St Albans City Museum; and receptionist, driver and gardener at Grove House Hospice in St Albans.

In 2005 David, with Daphne Barker, made a presentation to u3a: "Spread a little happiness", a musical celebration of Broadway and Hollywood. He joined u3a in 2009, becoming a member of Jack Wood's music groups. Later he joined the Playreading, Solo and Shakespeare Groups as they were started, and volunteered as one of the Wednesday morning Welcomers of new members, wearing appropriate sashes.

U3a has made much use of David's vocal and social talents. In 2010 he was a U3A speaker again, on "George Bernard Shaw and his Music", accompanied by Mel Sutton on a keyboard. In 2011 he read passages to illustrate a talk on Literary Figures of Hertfordshire; in 2019 he performed for the Poetry Group a comparison of poems read aloud with singing them set to music. In 2020 he was one of the readers from u3A of two Zoom readings of poetry in the Garden of the World's celebration of WGC's centenary, and also performed, with Maryam Rodway, in John Julius Norwich's version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" at the 2020 Christmas party – they were denied a standing ovation as this was presented over Zoom.

David has continued meanwhile with all his manifold volunteering activities beside u3A – Welwyn Hatfield's own minstrel.

Hazel Bell

Summer Term 2020 – Wednesday Meetings

All meetings are currently held via Zoom. You need to book a place each week; booking opens on Fridays for the following Wednesday. Speaker meetings will be held fortnightly, as listed below, and if attending you will need to be online by 10:25 am for the meeting to begin at 10:30.

On the intervening Wednesdays, when there is not a speaker, we hold a “virtual coffee morning”. These run from 10 am – 11 am and we simply break into groups of five or six to chat for 10 minutes, then shuffle into different groups and repeat!

APRIL

14 *Coffee Morning*

21 “*The Forgotten Art of the Picture Postcard*”: James Taylor

Artist-drawn postcards were the most popular art-form from the Edwardian era to the outbreak of World War II. They entertained, inspired, instructed, motivated, persuaded and lifted up the spirits. Discover the popular subjects and styles by the masters of the medium such as Mabel Lucie Attwell, Donald McGill and Fred Spurgin, and the reasons why their popularity waned with the British public.

28 *Coffee Morning*

MAY

5 “*Clement Attlee – Labour’s Greatest Reformer*”: Francis Beckett

Francis Beckett is an author, journalist, biographer, and contemporary historian. He has written biographies of Aneurin Bevan, Clement Attlee, Harold Macmillan, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, and on education for the *New Statesman*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. He was, for over 20 years, the editor of the National U3A magazine, *Third Age Matters*, until he retired in November 2019.



**Postcard by
Frederick George Lewin
Caption reads:
Just a line to let you know
I'm not being left behind**

12 *Coffee Morning*

19 “*Witness Protection – Hiding in Plain Sight*”: Ian Gunn

Ian is a retired prison governor and criminal justice professional, who has, in recent years, turned his experience and interest in crime-related topics to good use as a speaker on many cruises. In this talk we will hear some amazing stories about mobsters who testified in return for a new life, with some surprising outcomes.

26 *Coffee Morning*

JUNE

2 *National U3A Day*

9 *Coffee Morning*

16 “*Space Wings – the Story of the Space Shuttle*”

Andrew Lound

After the early cancellation of the Apollo program, America concentrated its efforts into a reusable spacecraft – the Space Shuttle. It promised much for the future of crewed spaceflight. The whole story of the shuttle, from the early concepts through triumph and tragedy to its retirement, is explored in a presentation featuring images, music and video.

23 *Coffee Morning*

30 “*Secrets of Hampton Court Palace*” Siobhan Clarke

Siobhan is an author and historian and works as a Guide Lecturer at the Historic Royal Palaces. She will tell us the story of two palaces: a Tudor palace made magnificent by Henry VIII, alongside a baroque palace built by William & Mary. Dig a little deeper and you will find hidden stories covering 500 years of royal history as you wander the corridors of power and pleasure.

JULY

7 *Coffee Morning*

14 *Garden Party*

The Autumn term starts on 15 September.

Welwyn Hatfield U3A does not endorse any products or services offered by speakers.