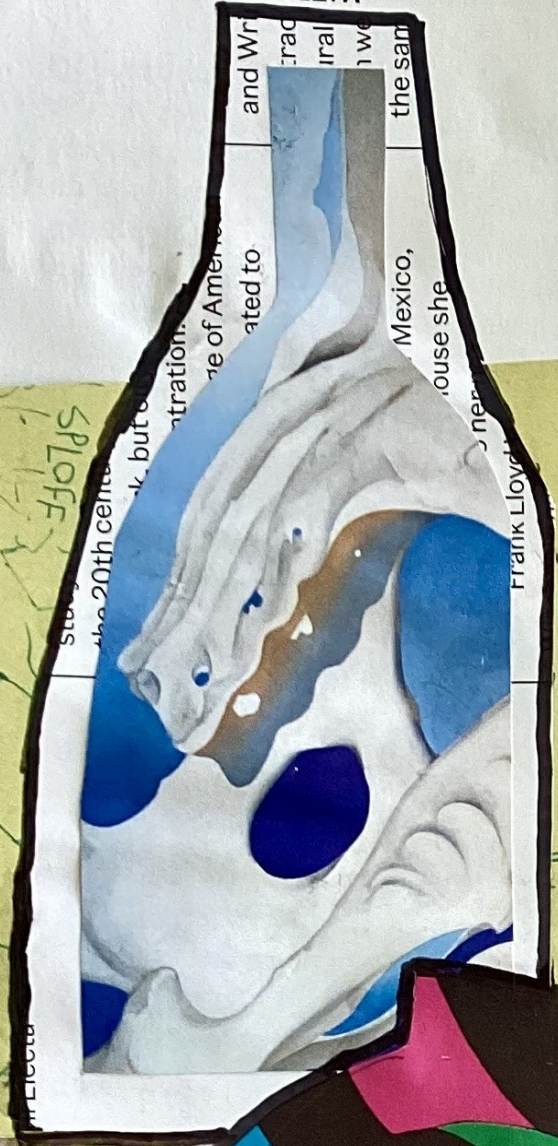


Palmers Green & Southgate u3a YOUR u3a MAGAZINE



Chairman's Message



Well, we had a glorious summer, but now it is mellowing, and the air is full of autumnal smells.

It is also the time of year when, as Chair, I look back over the previous year in order to prepare my report for the upcoming AGM.

I set out, four years ago, with the goal of increasing our membership from 385 to 500 by the time I completed three years in office. I am pleased to tell you we have passed that goal due, in no small part, to our members telling their friends, family and neighbours about us. They have realized that joining our u3a gives them opportunities to learn new things, go to new places and make new friends. Please continue to encourage them to give us a try by

attending a Monthly Meeting, visiting an interest group or by attending a Welcome Tea where new and prospective members learn more about what we offer.

The next such occasion will be a seasonal afternoon tea party on Friday, December 12th 2.30 -4.30pm at Christ the King church hall where we had such a wonderful time at the 10th anniversary celebration. There will be no charge for this event, so we encourage you to bring as many prospective members as you can, but make sure you tell us so we provide enough refreshments! In addition to cake, mince pies, mulled wine, tea and coffee there will be a raffle with some great prizes. There will be an opportunity to give a donation to offset some of the expense of the event. We hope many of you will join us and get the festive season off to a jolly good start.

I am fortunate that the Executive Committee is a great team of people who are prepared to work hard to keep this u3a thriving. I am also pleased to say that we have had four new people volunteer to be on the Committee to take the place of those who have completed their three-year term.

Our volunteers are our lifeblood, vital to our survival, so I urge you all to consider giving more to the running of our u3a. If you value what we do, please offer to help us in some capacity, whether it is periodically making refreshments for events, leading an interest group or being part of a team or the committee, that provides all the things you enjoy. We can only move from strength to strength if we have members prepared to give a little time and energy to others. Get in touch with anyone on the Committee or me if you are willing to help . You will be made very welcome.

In the meantime, enjoy the glories of autumn. I wish you all the joys of the season.

Val

u3a Member Profile: Louise Woodford

'It is not in doing what you like, but in liking what you do that is the secret of happiness', so said J.M. Barrie of Peter Pan fame.

When listening to Louise Woodford, that is what immediately came into my mind. Here is someone who can modestly list many achievements and experiences and truthfully say that she enjoyed them all.

Louise grew up in Chellaston, a quiet village four miles south of Derby, in what sounds like idyllic countryside and young Louise and her best friend would enjoy a Sunday walk to the canal to open the Swarkestone lock gates.



After A levels, she went to Leicester Poly (now De Montford University) to study English and History, as well as joining the sailing, skiing and cycling clubs and generally having a great time. Then on to Manchester Polytechnic for a postgraduate diploma in Hotel & Catering Administration, and her first job as Deputy Housekeeper at the International Hall of Residence, Brunswick Square in London. Surrounded by students not much younger than herself, with a short walk to £5 set meals in Chinatown, and a chance to explore nearby sites, this was when she met her future husband, Mark.



After a couple of years, she moved on to a role as Domestic Supervisor at King Edward VII's Hospital for Officers, and with Mark, moved to Southgate into an International Moderne (Art Deco) house with characteristic streamlined, horizontal lines and curved ribbon windows. This was the start of Louise's love affair with Art Deco and a determined effort to scour Art Deco fairs at Battersea and Ally Pally for the best furniture and objects for the house. So was the collecting bug born!

She then decided to pursue her ambition to work at a museum, so left the King Edward to volunteer at Grange Museum in Neasden whilst doing temporary paid admin jobs. The curator and educational officer were inspirational and she was soon taken on as a regular employee. The next step was an MA in Museum Studies at University College London, studying the influence of history and social change and how objects should be conserved - the ideal recipe for success in her chosen career.

Whilst doing the course, she found a placement at the Geffrye Museum (now the Museum of the Home), a hidden gem in Hoxton, East London. This led to a 3-month paid contract as Curatorial Assistant and eventually promotion to Assistant Curator/Registrar. The scene was set for what Louise describes as a rewarding and enriching seventeen years.



Each day was different, from cataloguing the whole collection onto computer, to researching for the annual Christmas exhibition by looking through historic diaries, to meeting Vanessa Feltz, Michael Aspel, Hilary Kay from Antiques Roadshow and Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen, (there for filming), to bidding at auctions and editing text for displays in the new wing, opened in 1998. She says she learned so much about room styles, design, interiors, styles of decoration, architecture and furniture design and the job was varied and interesting with lovely staff, knowledgeable and sharing her love of the place.

She thinks that she had a lucky break getting the job. Now it's even more difficult to find museum work and many museums are having a tough time. She says that she worked hard but it was her dream job and a privilege to do it.

Another dream came true during that time: Louise found her dream wedding dress by chance in Covent Garden. An original 1920s beaded, drop waist item, it was perfectly



aligned with her favourite Art Deco period. The guests were so enamoured that half of them dressed as flappers for the occasion. Not one the wedding photographer would likely forget!

Louise and Mark moved into their current house - naturally, more Art Deco with curved Critall windows, steel-framed and single-glazed, and original radiators. Don't ask about the fuel bills! When their daughter, Sophie, started school, Louise left the Geffrye to be a volunteer Teaching Assistant at Sophie's school. Always keen to be involved, she joined the PTA, helped children reading, went on school trips and worked in the library. She enjoyed her time at the school and was there for 10 years, curtailed only by Covid.



The next chapter was to explore her love of baking, inherited from her mother, taking courses in Cake Decorating and Sugarcraft, and a City & Guilds Patisserie and Confectionery course. She even sold bespoke novelty cakes for a while. Did I mention that she likes to keep busy?!

Onwards and upwards, of course, meant joining Palmers Green & Southgate u3a! Louise had come across u3a before when groups visited the Geffrye. When Sophie left for university, she 'dragged' Mark along and tried several groups. She found the natives friendly, and having heard from Val about outings and holidays, soon joined the Travel Committee as an organiser, and found it to be just up her street!

Having seen how Shirley organised the Lake District holiday, she was asked to take over responsibility for the next one, back on home turf to Derbyshire. She had been an attentive pupil and the whole holiday was immensely successful - 'perfection really!'

Shirley and Gail have been doing travel and outings for nearly 11 years so many places have been 'done'. Although challenging to come up with somewhere new, that's half the fun for Louise. The research and visits to historic buildings, galleries and museums for a recce is a labour of love and with such varied architecture in London, she's always amazed at all the places still to be explored. Thank heavens for the Freedom Pass!

Leighton House and Southwark Cathedral are among Louise's outings that have pleased her most. Suggestions are always welcome and one of Louise's first achievements was to do a members' survey to find out what we all want.

Many good things are on the horizon, including the Kennel Club in February, the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in March, and in October, The Worshipful Company of Stationers. The next holiday is full up - this time to North Yorkshire - but plans are already afoot for 2027 so get your diaries out!

Louise tends to throw herself wholeheartedly into anything she does. As well as helping at monthly meetings and seasonal parties, she's joined groups for Mahjong, 3-5 mile walks, Book Club, Film Club, Geography Group ... She also started and is convenor of the Healthy Eating Supper Club - appropriately, another bitesize group! And she's on the Executive Committee.

She was good at sprinting and athletics at school, loves to watch it on television and still recalls the roar from the crowd when she saw Mo Farah at the 2012 Olympics. She's done a keep fit class on and off for 37 years for the exercises and the music - and the visit to the pub afterwards when it becomes the 'Keep Fat Club'!

One thing's for sure - Louise Woodford is never going to be bored!

Edward Doff

AI (Artificial Intelligence) – What’s It All About?

So wondered those individuals from across London who arrived at an event convened by u3a London Region. Our objective: understanding AI and its repercussions.

What is AI?



An obvious question, but I came away with a sense that it is very hard to explain in lay terms. I suspect that if we had polled the attendees at the end of the day, we would have collected some interesting responses. What we can say for sure is this: AI is with us, and its application into virtually all walks of life is

proceeding apace. So, let’s regard this question as a challenge and endeavour to share some insights.

Is AI new?

I was surprised to learn that the ideas behind AI were first devised in the 1940s, but in those early days of electronic computers, the technology was not there to turn theory into practice. Efforts to create AI were revisited over subsequent decades, but the current state of the art is very much a 21st century phenomenon. AI uses computers with lots of very fast computer chips that can process vast amounts of data (text, numbers and images) using a lot of electrical energy in a short space of time. Within a few years, AI will have ingested all the data available!

Isn’t AI just a fancy computer?

No. Traditional computers are very much controlled by the inputs made by human beings that tell the computer what to do. The quality of what a traditional computer does is down to the programmers and data inputters. Classic AI is where humans provide training, and the AI system makes decisions. We now hear increasingly about Generative AI, where the human asks a question and the system provides an answer using the data it has harvested from the internet, social media and any other available sources. Effectively, the human being asks a question (e.g. *Why should u3a members know about AI?*) and AI gives an answer. Not dissimilar to a conversation!

What can AI do?

There seems to be no areas of life where AI does not have an application. The concrete examples cited at the u3a event came closest to facilitating understanding, so let’s reprise a few.

Prompt and accurate diagnosis is a vital stage of medical treatment.

It can involve scans (X-rays, MRIs) using complex equipment, which then have to be assessed by a good old-fashioned human being using the Mark 1 eyeball.

Can we guarantee that the human has sufficient knowledge and visual acuity to spot the difference that might signify a life-threatening condition? Is the

human really going to be as 'fresh as a daisy' for scan Z as they were for scan number one? Imagine a system that has access to all possible scan images and the ability to match the one under review with near as 100% accuracy. It doesn't need tea breaks, get tired or go on vacation, so efficiency along with accuracy. It's called AI and it is currently in use.

Education is another area where AI is currently in use. University students no longer need to research and write essays. They put the essay title into a general system, such as Chat GPT, and get the essay they need. Easily spotted by the lecturers, you might say. Not so said our speaker from the University of Surrey. Plagiarism has always been an issue in the academic world, but with the advent of AI it's time to change your thinking and focus on ensuring that students actually understand what they are presenting, regardless of where it comes from.

The legal professions often need to research previous cases to demonstrate precedents – perhaps in support of an argument or ensure consistency in sentencing. AI is ideal in the role of a legal 'partner' as its capacity far exceeds any human. In fact, all professions face change, positive and negative, as a result of the intervention of AI.

Will AI take over the World?

The Luddites and Saboteurs resisted the impact of earlier industrial technologies as they threatened their jobs. AI will make some occupations redundant, including white collar and customer service jobs. Will these be replaced by equal numbers of new jobs? No one knows seems to be the best answer to that one.

Much of our current understanding of AI comes from science fiction stories and films, often featuring very intelligent robots. It makes a great drama as lowly humans battle to prevent world domination by mechanical monsters, but is it going to happen? Our speakers offered us 3 options for the future resulting from the ever faster development of AI:

- Humans stay in control
- Humans work in partnership with AI



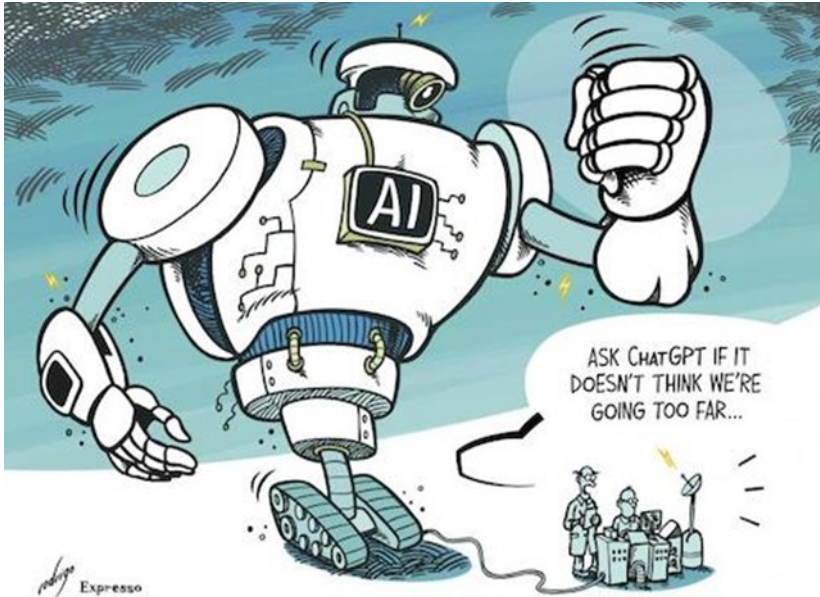
- AI takes control
- *Guard rails* – as they are known – can be imposed to limit the generative power of AI. Ask a Chinese AI what happened in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and you will get a blank screen. Such censorship could be regarded as desirable or unwelcome depending on your point of view.

There has been talk of a regulatory regime for AI, but development is so fast that legislators can hardly keep up. In any case, we supposedly have regulation for more established technologies, such as the water supply, and how effective is that?

AI in action!

Just to illustrate how AI works I input my simple ‘*Why should u3a members ...*’ question to a free version of ChatGPT AI. Here are just a few lines from a much more comprehensive response:

AI is becoming a significant part of our daily lives, from smart devices to social media algorithms can help enhance digital literacy and make them feel more comfortable navigating a world that's increasingly influenced by AI technologies ... The U3A community is all about lifelong learning. AI, as a cutting-edge technology, provides a fascinating subject for exploration.



You can find ChatGPT in your search engine. Why not pose your own question?

Love it or loathe it. Reject it or embrace it. Opportunity or threat. Your response is yours to decide but one thing is for sure. AI is here and heading your way!

More information about AI can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/4hpzpe39>

Robin Charnley

Bring on the BiteSize!

The idea for 'BiteSize' Groups came about because, in the past, we relied on u3a members offering to convene an interest group. However, in recent years, fewer people have been willing to commit to that, maybe feeling that it was too much responsibility.

Interest Groups are central to the u3a ethos. u3a members have diverse interests and pursue them through local self-help groups to share knowledge and skills. The groups are run BY the members FOR members, working on the premise that all participants will take a turn – either alone or with someone else.

About four years ago, the situation became urgent. Recruitment to the membership was growing rapidly and it was vital that there were enough interest groups for them to join, but a high proportion of the existing interest groups were full. We had to create more interest groups for the new recruits to join!

That's when the idea of 'BiteSize' came to me. We could offer new short 'tasters' of new topics and if they proved popular, they could convert into regular interest groups. I also thought that existing members might be willing to run a four-week session in a topic they themselves enjoyed, whereas they had previously shied away from running a group because it seemed too onerous. This proved to be correct. The idea was that if the tasters were popular and the participants keen, they could be consolidated into regular groups to be featured on the website and open to everyone.

We decided to launch the tasters, named 'BiteSize', at the Welcome Tea events, which I had initiated as part of our recruitment drive. The first ones on offer were Book Group 5, the Curry Club, Architectural Heritage Walks, Mah Jong, and two film clubs. All took off and were very successful. Two are still going; others weren't able to continue in the long run for external reasons, such as the loss of the venue for the Film Clubs.



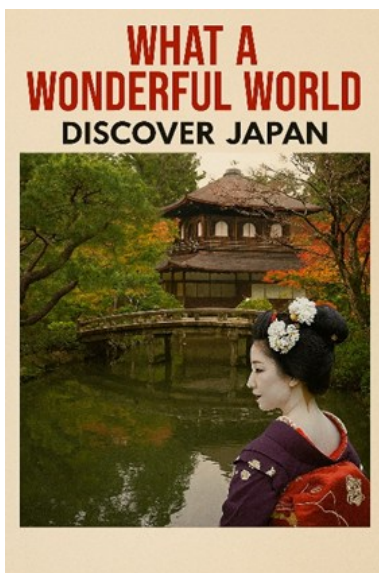
The experiment was such a success that 'BiteSize' has become a regular part of PG&S u3a activities. Over 20 groups have started that way over the last few years.

The 'BiteSize' initiative led to a new willingness to lead groups. Some members, who initially found leading a session daunting, felt a huge sense of achievement when it was received well by the group, and offered to lead another straight away. Most subjects benefit from having someone with some expertise. However, there are so many online resources

available now that this is less important than a willingness to join in, to participate and encourage others to do the same. Members have become increasingly confident in sharing their views and opinions and benefit enormously from this active, rather than passive, involvement.

It also made way for a new system of managing the groups that encourages a collaborative approach with shared responsibility. Group leaders have been augmented by Group Conveners who liaise with members of the group, and with Ann Rayner and me as Group Coordinators. The burden of running the group is also shared in many groups, with members taking turns to lead a session, to choose a film, or to plan a walk.

This collaboration has become part of normal routine in several groups, such as Science 2, Film Review Club, Improving your Photographs, Book Groups 4 and 5, Creative Writing.

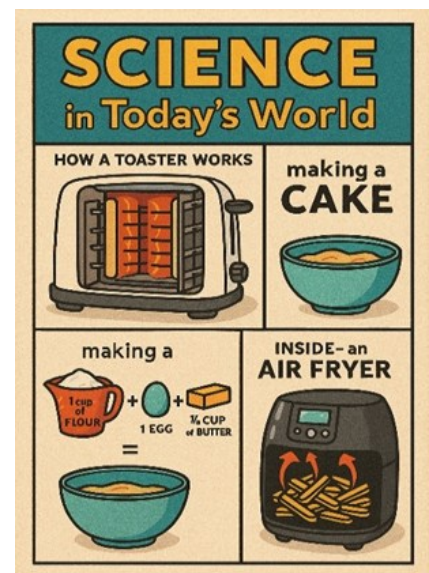


Other new groups have just started, such as:

Science in Today's World

Strollers (not hikers or power-walkers!),

Geography group entitled "What a Wonderful World."



Our programme of BiteSize interest groups is spreading across the London Region. I have almost completed my first year as Chair of the London Region Network and the concept of BiteSize has been central to helping some of the 43 u3as in the region to increase their offer of interest groups. u3a Palmers Green & Southgate are TRAILBLAZERS!

The u3a is as much about giving as receiving. The more people who are generous with their time, interest and expertise, the fewer times they need to be called upon.

Be brave and join one of these new-style groups as more are being created every few months.

Watch this space!!

Val Girling

Howdy Partner!

Line Dance 27TH September 2025

On Saturday night, over fifty eager members and their guests in sensible footwear turned up for a great evening of line dancing. Our instructor for the evening was the enthusiastic Rosemary and she soon got us moving out of our seats and on to the floor of Christ the King's community hall.

Those uninitiated thought they were coming to a version of English Country Dancing but learnt pretty quickly that this was an American 'hoedown' to country and western music! You don't have partners, you don't touch each other, and you all face in one direction! It's a bit like Irish dancing in that only the feet move!



Rosemary got us organised, with some difficulty, into four rows of dancers all facing her. First, she explained the moves while demonstrating them. Then we had to copy the moves. The first routines were relatively simple, mainly walking "Right, Left, Right, Point Your Foot" – Repeat, (though some had difficulty sorting out right from left), and "Sidestep-Together-Step-Close, and Back Again." Not so easy once the country music was switched on and we had to rely on

Rosemary calling out the steps and the count. The tempo was quite a bit faster than we anticipated! However, everyone soon picked up the moves of this first routine and we all enjoyed getting into dancing together. It was a fast-moving routine that caused much laughter as we tried to keep up with the beat.

As the evening wore on, the steps got more complex - Toe Strut, Step Turn, Swivel, Stomp (easy – everyone could do that one!), but Pivot Turn, Weave and the dreaded Kick-Ball-Change got the old grey cells working overtime!! So, we were all very pleased when Rosemary moved on to a slower waltz-like routine which was easier to manage. Toward the end of the evening, we did some routines in rows facing each other and interacting with the people opposite us.

It was great fun and at the end of the evening we all felt we had done a good workout and had enjoyed ourselves immensely.

Robert Holford

Meeting Cliff

When we were 15, my friend, Wendy, and I were fans of Cliff Richard. Wendy had heard that he lived in Winchmore Hill, with his mother, at 2 Colne Road. We decided to pay him a visit,



to try and get his autograph. We both remember walking a very long way, perhaps all the way from where we lived in Southgate. We took our autograph books and cameras. Mine was a Brownie Box camera.

When we finally turned into his road, where the house was on the corner, we waited for a long time outside, hoping he would make an appearance. There was the sound of running water coming down a pipe at the front of the house, so we knew that somebody was in, and had just had a bath.

Eventually, the front door opened and out came Cliff with a friend! I stepped forward with my brown autograph book open. “Can I have your autograph?” I asked. “Not now, darling, I’ve got a TV show”, Cliff replied, in his mid-Atlantic showbiz accent.

As Cliff and his friend got into his car, I quickly took a photo, wound the film on, and took another. Wendy accidentally pressed the shutter of her camera twice, resulting in a double exposure: Cliff with two heads. A few months later, when all the exposures on my black-and-white film were used up, I sent it off to be developed. When the photos arrived back in the post, I remember wondering if the developer had noticed the famous person in two of the pictures. The photos of Cliff and his friend were similar, as they were taken within seconds of each other. One has since got lost. It was some years later that I realised that Cliff’s friend in the photo is Hank Marvin of The Shadows.



Wendy and I have known each other since we were 5. We were in the same class through infant and junior schools. We went to different grammar schools but kept in touch. We recently met for coffee and discussed our visit to Cliff’s house.

Wendy remembers exactly what she wore: a navy suit, matching navy high-heeled shoes, and a frilly white blouse. I probably wore my first high heels: white leather with a square one-inch “kitten” heel.

I had my autograph book since junior school. Most children had them. They were on sale at stationers’ shops. The people who wrote in them were family and friends. I still have mine. No celebrities, but perhaps messages from family members are now more valuable.

Wendy is still a fan of Cliff Richard, now 84, and she may go to his next, and perhaps last concert, before he really retires.

Maxine Elvey

u3a Visit

Southwark Cathedral

Southwark Cathedral was originally known as the Collegiate Church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie. It stands on the South Bank of the Thames near the site of the old Roman bridge and has been a place of worship and hospitality for over a thousand years.

It has a significant history and has links with many famous and influential characters including St Thomas Becket, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens.

There were many unique sights to take in and Southwark Cathedral is a beautiful setting for worship, prayer and reflection.

On arrival we were met by Isabel and Colin, our two guides. As we entered the Cathedral, Colin pointed out the 'Peace Doves', a large-scale, mass participation artwork by Peter Walker. It features thousands of paper doves all carrying personal messages written by visitors, school children and community groups. Together they form a wonderful installation that offers peace, hope and love. The installation over the nave of the cathedral was accompanied by music composed by David Harper.

Southwark Cathedral was formally a church. Between 1106 and 1538 it was the church of an Augustinian Priory dedicated in honour of St Mary over the river. The Augustinians were known as Canons or Friars, and they would have welcomed the pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. The Augustinian Canons created a hospital alongside the church. This was the direct predecessor of today's St Thomas's Hospital opposite the Houses of Parliament and originally named in honour of St Thomas Becket, who was martyred at Canterbury in 1170.

St Saviour's Church became Southwark Cathedral in 1905. The diocese that it serves stretches from Kingston-upon-Thames in the west to Thamesmead in the east to Gatwick Airport in the south. In 2000, major extensions designed by Richard Griffiths were added north of the Cathedral. These provided meeting rooms, a library, a shop and a refectory.

The church was severely damaged in the Great Fire of 1212 and rebuilding took place during the 13th Century. The basic layout of the church was cruciform in plan with an aisled nave of six bays. In the 1390s, the church was again damaged by fire. The state of the building



became a cause for concern in the 1820s. After much argument, the decision was made to restore the building, and it was due to the architect George Gwilt that major parts of today's cathedral are still standing.

John Gower

Perhaps the most famous resident of the priory was the poet, John Gower, who lived there at the start of the 15th Century. He was a friend of Geoffrey Chaucer, who was famous for *The Canterbury Tales*, which begins in Southwark. Gower died at the priory and is entombed in the church with a splendid memorial. His beautiful tomb can be found in the nave of the Cathedral with his head resting on his three greatest works.

William Shakespeare

The Shakespeare memorial commemorates the famous dramatist and was St Saviour's known parishioner. He wrote most of his 39 plays when he was connected with the Globe Theatre, which stood about 400 yards west of the Cathedral. The three light window replaces one by Kempe commemorating Shakespeare and Edmund Spenser, another celebrated poet. In 1954, a competition was held for a new three light window to replace the previous window that was destroyed by enemy action in WW2. The winner was Christopher Webb, and his design used the concept of the Jesse Tree, showing Shakespeare at rest in a meadow. Prospero in the central light forms the trunk, with Ariel above and Caliban at the feet.

Further figures from Shakespeare plays can be found in the branches of the tree. The left light depicts characters from the comedies, and the right light shows characters from his tragedies. The window was unveiled by the famous actress Dame Sybil Thorndike.

We were shown the magnificent screen erected by Bishop Fox of Winchester in 1520. Its general appearance with three bands of carving and statues is much like the original but most of the detail is from later periods. The figures depicted on the screen are saints and people connected with the history of the Cathedral.

The Cathedral Churchyard

The Cathedral Churchyard is an ancient burial ground and place of worship, a place of calm and peace in a busy urban setting and a green space that is different from other open spaces



in the area. The churchyard was restored in 2015 and is planted with flowers and herbs with biblical and Shakespearean connections.

Herb Garden

In 1212 a great fire swept through Southwark destroying most of the priory and surrounding buildings. The garden, built into the medieval foundations, represents aspects of a typical monastic herb garden and commemorates links with the hospital. There are over fifty different kinds of herbs that the Canons of the priory would have used to treat the sick as well as for other uses, such as fumigating, cooking and brewing.



Our tour concluded in front of the memorial to the victims of the Marchioness disaster, a tragic incident where a pleasure boat collided with a dredger on the River Thames in 1989, resulting in 51 young people losing their lives.

Pat Foulds

U3A Travel

Derbyshire and The Peak District, July 2025

The holiday to the Peak District was truly lovely.

We got there in a comfortable coach driven by 'Will', our confident driver, who couldn't have been more helpful. As the coach filled up, I realised I knew most people but not all. I soon got to know the others as everyone was friendly and sociable. The U3A holidays have a reputation for being good; this certainly didn't disappoint.



The first stop was at the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester. There, we were greeted by enthusiastic guides who took us round the museum sharing the historical journey of King Richard III's life, reign, death and the extraordinary discovery of his remains under a car park in Leicester in 2012. Richard III was King of England for just two years from 1483-1485 as he was killed at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.



His remains were buried in a Franciscan Friary in Leicester. A Ricardian scholar, Phillipa Langley, played a pivotal role in leading the search for and the ultimate discovery of Richard III's body. We learnt that DNA testing was used to identify King Richard's remains using two known descendants of the King who were already on the DNA database. After lunch, we visited the beautiful Leicester Cathedral to see Richard's tombstone, his final resting place, and we also had time to visit the Medieval Guildhall adjacent to the Cathedral.

We reached our hotel about 5.00pm in time to freshen up before dinner. The hotel was comfortable, had good food with plenty of choice, a swimming pool/spa and beautiful gardens to enjoy.

On Tuesday morning we travelled to Masson Mills, a textile museum and visitor centre in Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, previously an old cotton mill built by Sir Richard Arkwright in 1783.



Guides in period dresses and bonnets showed us round the mill which was a huge building filled with multiple historical machines. We saw how cotton threads were spun from raw

cotton then woven into fabric by working machines. The guides brought us back in time to the horrific working environment of that era, mainly women and children working twelve-hour shifts in dangerous conditions with many health hazards.

On Tuesday afternoon we travelled to the stunning market town of Bakewell, the largest town in the Peak District. It's such a pretty town with lots of shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants. We explored the shopping area, bought some gifts and enjoyed ice creams in the glorious sunshine. Later we all visited the Old Bakewell Pudding shop to sample the famous Bakewell Pudding. It was an experience to taste the sweet delicacy.

On Wednesday we visited the Museum of Making, previously an old silk mill in Derby. Whilst having a cuppa we watched a short video on the historic working of the mill which was powered by the river Derwent. This beautiful building is now a vast place celebrating Derby's rich history of making, with displays of objects and archives that chart the manufacturing history and its workers. One couldn't miss the seven-ton Rolls Royce engine suspended from the ceiling above our heads. We saw a silk waistcoat made in the 1780's, most likely for

a rich gentleman. On display was the history of silk making which highly excited one of our group, who as a child growing up in South Africa, like all other South African kids, enjoyed the rearing of silkworms as a hobby. Here we had an expert - Cathy Rolfe gave us a very interesting talk on the coach about the life of the silkworm and the making of silk.

On Wednesday afternoon we had a very different experience, we visited Kedleston Hall, a National Trust country house previously owned by the Curzon family, George Curzon was Viceroy of India. This was a stunning house with a vast collection of paintings, sculptures and religious artefacts from the 18th Century, with extensive gardens, a church and a graveyard where some Curzon family members were interred. We sat in the garden for some time enjoying the glorious sunshine before returning to our hotel.



Time was flying by, it was Thursday, everyone was having a good experience. We headed off to Buxton a historic town known for its healing waters. The coach pulled up near the magnificent Georgian Crescent Hotel built by the Fifth Duke of Devonshire in 1782 to attract visitors to the town. It was in ruins for 30 years and only reopened in 2020. By having a guided tour of the Buxton Crescent Experience, we saw some of the ground floor and visitor rooms of the Crescent and got to have fun trying on replica hats of the period. The Pump Room stands nearby where we were given a free bottle of Buxton water.

Buxton is famous for its festivals and well dressings.

St Ann's Well, constantly fed with pure spring water at a temperature of 27C, displayed a well dressing of 'The Lady with The Pearl Earring' handmade by local artists from growing things like flower petals, wool, bark, leaves and cones embedded in a wooden structure which lasts for about two weeks depending on the weather. It celebrates water and the life it brings. The afternoon was taken up with a walk around Buxton Pavilion Gardens.



Friday the final day of our holiday arrived too soon. We left the hotel, and on our way home headed to Calke Abbey, a National Trust property built by the Harpur family in the 17th Century. It shows the decline of the family's fortune until it was taken over by the National Trust in 1985. The rooms were left as they were found, mostly in a very bad state of decline and this was sad to see. It honestly made me appreciate the brilliant work of the National Trust maintaining hundreds of properties throughout the UK.

Many interesting treasures remain in the house, such as books, paintings and taxidermy. The National Trust restored the dining room to its former glory, and it is beautiful. I'm looking forward to the next holiday in 2026.

Mary Lyne.

Focus on u3a Groups

The 'Remember When' Group



The Group was set up eleven years ago to provide an opportunity for u3a members to get together to reminisce about times past. The modern world sometimes feels quite alien – with electronic cards needed to buy a coffee or the weekly shop, or the terrifying AI which appears to be about to replace our favourite actors, to sell us driverless cars, and settle people permanently on the Moon! So, it's good to talk to fellow human beings who talk the same language and share the same reality.

We are a group of ladies of a certain age, though we wouldn't exclude men. So, we share

common experiences of both major national events, such as the Second World War and its aftermath in austerity and rationing. We recount stories of local and personal events, like the first time you went to school or got a job, went on holiday or got a television!

We have a six-month programme of topics which we know in advance, so we can prepare photographs or memorabilia to share on Zoom. Anyone can suggest a topic to add to the schedule.

But it's not just about sharing memories though. The first part of our meeting is always about current affairs. Anything and everything in the press or on TV can come up, from the Royal Family to the price of a pint of milk. Or the latest development plans for Enfield!



“Government announces sites for new towns and includes Enfield’s Green Belt.”

Even small items of news can start a lively discussion.

We meet on Zoom twice a month on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 10.30 a.m. Every now and again, we meet up socially in one of our favourite local restaurants for lunch and a chat, and it’s always lovely to catch up and see each other in person.

Our meetings are lively and fun, whatever the topic. Even when we think we can’t remember anything, as soon as someone starts to speak, you think “oh yes, I remember that too” and join in. If anyone has special news, good or bad, we are always ready to listen.

If you enjoy reminiscing and would like to join our Zoom group, please contact our Convenor, Shirley Marney.

Barbara Cohen

We love your entries and would like more of you to share your interests, stories, and experiences. The Magazine is FOR the members BY the members.

To help you submit, here are a few rules to follow:

- **The maximum length is 1,000 words, but fewer is fine!**
- **Text should be in WORD, in Aptos 12 point.**
- **Ideally, pictures used in your article should be accompanied by the originals so we can get the best quality.**
- **There are four editions a year, following the seasons. The deadline dates for submission for 2025-26 are: 23rd December; 25th March; 24th June.**
- **Send your copy as an attachment to an email to magazine@pgsu3a.org.uk.**

Looking forward



to your material!

Jennie and George.

LIST OF GROUPS

Arts and Crafts

Art (2)
Art Appreciation
Floristry
Improving your Photographs
Photography

Games and Puzzles

Board Games
Bridge for Beginners
Bridge for Improvers (3)
Cryptic Crosswords
Magic
Mah Jong
Rummikub
Scrabble

General

Come Dine with Me
Current Affairs
Discussion
Healthy Eating Club
HEROES
Mindfulness and Meditation
Members on Their Own (MOTO)
Retiring with Attitude
Science, Nature, Technology (3)

History

History
Remember When

Out and About

Bowls (Seasonal)
Gardening
Strollers
Travel (Day Trips and Holidays)
Walking 3 to 5 miles
Walking 5 to 8 miles
Walking 8+ miles

Languages

French Advanced
French for Beginners
French Intermediate (2)
Italian Conversation (2)
Spanish Intermediate

Literature

Book Group (6)
Creative Writing
Play Reading (2)
Poetry

Theatre and Film

Film Review Club
Free Lunchtime Concerts
Fringe Theatre
Theatre



To find out more about these groups and to contact the group convener, visit the website at pgs.u3asite.uk

For general group enquiries contact the Groups Coordinator, Val Girling, chair@pgsu3a.org.uk or telephone 020 8886 3773 and leave a message.