

YOUR u3a MAGAZINE



Chairman's Message

Here we are in summer at last. But we British are rarely satisfied with the weather, too cold, too wet and now.... too HOT!! But it always gives us plenty to chat about when we get together.

Lots of new activities have been taking place in the last few months, including opportunities to try bowls, croquet, petanque, padel and pickleball and go-cycling. We hope some of these will become regular features.



A Philosophy group began and is already full, and we're looking for members to create a new Current Affairs group. If you have any ideas for new groups, please get in touch with groups@pgsu3a.org.uk.

We are particularly proud that PG&S u3a will be represented at the u3a Festival at York this year. Tim Rhodes, a member of the Improving Your Photographs interest group, has had a photograph chosen from the many entries submitted to the u3a Eye competition. This is a national photography competition with a new theme each month. It is judged by u3a members, including the u3a Subject Adviser, not just on photographic skills but on the creative interpretations of the theme. Learn more about what the PG&S group gets up to by reading the article inside.

Our next big event will be the annual Summer Garden Party on Thursday, August 6th, 2.00 to 4.30 p.m. Please remember to book so we get the catering right! Remember, you can bring prospective members along too. We have a reputation at PG&S for being welcoming, and this will provide yet another opportunity for us to show non-members what we all enjoy about being in our u3a.

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer!

Val Girling

Member Profile

Peter Lewinson

'Every Child Has Potential' is the mantra Peter Lewinson lives by, which is why he made it the motto of the Southgate Private Tutorial School he founded in 1995.



Peter has always liked people, young and old. As a child, never shy of asking direct questions, such as *What do you do? How much do you earn?* Peter actually wanted to know the answer and get to know the person.

That curiosity has shaped a life that has taken him through science, social work, teaching, gardening, volunteering - basically helping

people discover abilities they never knew they had.

Peter has been involved with u3a for around twenty years. He first joined Barnet u3a while still working, having carefully planned his retirement around three interests: u3a, voluntary work and gardening - plus, of course, family.

He started Barnet's first gardening group and also threw himself into helping grow the numbers of members, perhaps with too much success, because as Barnet grew, Peter began to feel a little lost. Eventually, he transferred his membership to the nascent Palmers Green & Southgate u3a and was on the first Committee, meeting at the Intimate Theatre, and was responsible for membership.

Today, many PG&S members know him through the Gardening Group, which he has run for the last ten years, although the title is something of a misnomer. 'There's less gardening, more garden visiting!', he says. The group has been to gardens across London and beyond, but Peter realised that many members actually wanted to *do gardening!* So, he started a Practical Gardening Group. 'People can get their hands dirty or if they don't want to, they get given gloves. If they still have a problem, it's not for them, no problem', he says.

The group meets at the famous Lewinson allotment and elsewhere, learning everything from seed sowing to plant care. Members are encouraged to bring along mystery leaves, struggling plants or gardening problems for discussion. Showing his teaching background, Peter provides the materials, demonstrates first, then works alongside each member, offering advice and encouragement, quietly building confidence.



The Green Finger growing Rudbeckia

Questions arrive almost daily via WhatsApp. Peter seems delighted to answer everyone.

Born in England to parents who had come from Berlin, Peter spent his early childhood in a refugee hostel near Reading. From the age of five to fourteen, the hostel provided both his Jewish and general education.

He remembers two remarkable women there who had a profound influence on him. Rather than focusing on limitations, they concentrated on what people *could* do and encouraged them to exceed their own expectations.

Peter attended a technical school in Reading and was fiercely competitive. After getting a BSc at Birmingham University, his first job was a research scientist in London, investigating specific heat at high temperatures, intellectually stimulating but ultimately unsatisfying. In his early twenties, he found a lab job at Jerusalem University, did a Hebrew course and lived in Israel for a year before returning to the UK and obtaining a grant for a social work course, again at Birmingham. He had decided that what he needed was to work with people. 'I found I couldn't talk to the laboratory apparatus!', he says.

He became a childcare officer serving Stratford-upon-Avon and based in Leamington Spa - according to Peter, 'a dead place for young people'. It was a challenging job, involving rich but troubled families. He escaped to London every weekend. Oh, and somewhere along the way, he met Janet! Coincidentally, she had been in Israel at the same time without meeting him. The romance blossomed when her best friend, on a date with Peter, introduced them. The rest, as they say, is history...

This was the mid-1970s, and time for another change of direction. Now in his late thirties, Peter re-trained as a teacher, the first *man* on his nursery teacher training course.

After two years in nursery education, he moved into primary school teaching in Inner London. His school was next door to Arsenal's old ground, which may explain his lifelong loyalty to the red and white shirts! He taught in some of London's most diverse and deprived communities and later concentrated on special educational needs. Living in Southgate, his own children went to local schools, and he taught at Jewish primary schools in Barnet.

After moving to Barnet, in the mid-1990s, Peter decided to draw on his forty years of educational experience to establish the Tutorial School. With a grant from Barnet Council, an annex for classrooms was built on the side of his house. Peter did all the teaching, six days a week and Janet looked after the children. The school helped three- to eighteen-year-olds prepare for entrance examinations and develop their confidence and skills. Peter became an expert on admissions procedures for sought-after local schools and built an enviable reputation. Even the Mayor of Barnet's children went there. The venture proved hugely successful.

He stopped tutoring at the age of 72 when his own children said that 'kids won't continue to relate to you', but he's still not sure if they were right...

Former pupils still recognise him decades later. People will approach him in Asda to say thank you for helping them gain entry to a particular school or overcome educational difficulties. In Finsbury Park, a university mathematics professor introduced himself as a former pupil and credited Peter with helping launch his academic career.

Teaching may have been his profession, but helping others has become his vocation.

For more than a decade, he has volunteered with Kisharon, working with children and adults with learning disabilities. He gardens with them, teaches practical skills and enjoys watching the journey from planting seeds to harvesting vegetables and eventually making soup – which they then drink!

Peter's charity work is not only outstanding but stands out – in 2015 he won the Jewish Chronicle People's Choice Award at the Jewish Volunteering Network (JVN) Awards.

When the pandemic interrupted face-to-face sessions, Peter simply moved online and carried on. 'I'm never defeated', he jokes!

He now concentrates on the partially sighted and volunteers with Middlesex Association for the Blind (MAB). And after only two years, he won their Hidden Heroes Award! He telephones clients, helps solve everyday problems and ensures that support is tailored to what matters to *them* rather than what others think. Practical assistance is important, but listening is even more so. He writes touchingly in the MAB's magazine that 'what began as a simple desire to help, turned into one of the most rewarding parts of my life.'

Meanwhile, retirement remains remarkably busy.

Travel has taken Janet and Peter across the UK and Europe in the family camper van and across Australia and New Zealand by motor caravan.

The six grandchildren remain a joyful if tiring focus for shared outdoor physical activities, from swimming and swinging in the park to Chicken Shed and Arts Depot outings, not forgetting lessons in growing sunflowers from seed.

Gardening occupies much of his time. When he moved into his current house, he obtained a quote from a landscape gardener and then decided he could learn to do it himself. Thirty years later, he is still at it.



Playing the violin is another string to Peter's bow! At the hostel, so many years ago, music appreciation rather than music theory instilled in him another long-standing passion. With little time for fiddling when still working, around the age of sixty he picked it up again and discovered that, like riding a bicycle, the basics were still there. He later joined the u3a orchestra before helping establish a smaller group more suited to his style of learning and playing.

If you don't already know Peter, don't be surprised if, when you meet him, he asks a question or two. After all these years, he is still curious about people, listens to what they have to say and unlike some folks, is interested enough to remember the answer and not ask the same question the next time you meet him!

Edward Doff

Scouting From Conception to Date

Scouting is the biggest and most respected youth organisation in the world. In 2025 there were 176 nations with Scouts, equating to approximately 60 million Scouts worldwide. A very large family indeed!

I have been with my Scout Group since the beginning of 1977 and have held/hold many positions there and in the Scout District. I am also an active Beaver Leader

Scouting celebrated its centenary year in 2007 – which in itself is quite remarkable.

Baden-Powell's concept of Scouting solely as an additional activity for existing organisations had to be abandoned, because upon the publication of his book "Scouting for Boys" in 1907, boys all over the country started setting up Scout Groups - and the rest is history. Although Scouting has moved on in 119 years, no longer The Boy Scouts, but a mixed sex organisation, the basic tenets are the same.

Baden-Powell realised early on that a "code of conduct" was required and adopted the motto "Be Prepared" which he saw as the boys being prepared to come to the aid of anyone in need of help and adopted the "doing a good turn every day" as a means of forming the habit in his scouts of thinking of others. He went on to set out the Scout Law and Promise as the way to set standards of citizenship to make his boys useful to their community and hence their country.

This photo is typical of "Off to Camp" in the 1950s.



He stressed 1) the importance of trusting the boy and giving him responsibility (even at the risk of occasional failure), 2) the need for setting before the boy a positive, not negative, standard of conduct – embodied in the Scout Law, 3) capturing the boy's love of romance by the nature of the activities offered him in scouting. The wording of the Scout Law has changed in the last 100 years but the basic code is the same, as a few of the original wordings illustrate "A Scout's Duty is to be Useful and Help Others"; "A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other scout, no matter to what country, class or creed the other may belong"; "A scout is courteous"; and one of my favourites "A scout smiles and whistles under all difficulties".

The difference between the existing boys' organisations and BP's ideas of how to engage boys' interest was that Scouts was not solely a club for Christians – i.e. "A scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other scout, no matter to what country, class or creed the other may belong". I feel this has been the main reason why it has spread worldwide and is still going strong today, more than 100 years after Baden-Powell put his ideas of child development into print.

Although he was a famous Victorian Army General, he was also a pacifist and longed for all to live in peace. Near the end of his life, Baden-Powell wrote, "One thing is essential to general and permanent peace, and that is a total change of spirit among the peoples, the change to closer mutual understanding, to subjugation of natural prejudices, and the ability to see with the other fellow's eye in friendly sympathy". He was both a man of his time and a man ahead of his time.

His dream lives on. The 21st World Scout Jamboree and the 100 year celebrations were held in Chelmsford in 2007. 40,000 scouts and leaders from 158 countries camped together, in peace and friendship, for 14 days and enjoyed each other's company and friendship.

Hopefully, this will influence how they see the world as they grow to adulthood and have a chance to influence their own countries into peaceful futures.

I feel children need to mix with their peers, not necessarily only their personal friends, and learn to work together as a team – this leads to thinking of others as in the Cub motto, "Think of others before yourself and do a good turn every day," and all that this entails.

What is unique about our organisation that attracts children?

It has a good reputation and members come because they have heard from friends that it is "great". The majority of British men, however fleetingly, have been cubs or scouts at some time in their childhood, and consequently want their children to enjoy the things they did. The appeal is very much based on outdoor adventure, which appeals to an ever-increasingly urbanised population.

What challenges face the Scout Movement today? Many are still the same, except we have had to adapt to modern technology to keep abreast of the "kids". Maybe kids are less disciplined. Busy parents never have time, so they tend only to give money to their children.

The amount of activities children do outside school means that they never have time to be children and amuse themselves using their own imagination. Many of the things we taught the children are now part of the National Curriculum. Schools adopted our ideas, so we have to think up new ones. And then there are other challenges that changing values bring.

I sign off with “We must be doing something right to have lasted 119 years and still growing”

Sarah Brandi (Bagheera)
2026



“You don’t TAKE a photograph, you MAKE one! Quote Ansell Adams (1902-1984)

The interest group entitled “Improving your Photographs” began about 18 months ago as a result of four Bite Size rounds of tuition about improving composition, observation, interpretation and developing the language to aid constructive criticism.

Since then, we have worked on developing those skills, mostly through digital photography using mobile phones. We added to these basic skills, manipulating images in post-production by cropping and using filters. More recently, we have become very adventurous and experimented with using software available on our phones or downloaded for free.

We have been on photo shoot outings together, and it has been fascinating to see how differently we all saw the place or event. We have spent time working together using AI, looking like a roomful of teenagers on our phones!! These have enabled us to become amazingly creative with our pictures and allowed us to interpret some very challenging themes.

Members of the group say:

“I have learnt that my phone can do a lot more than I thought and I have really enjoyed the process.” Christina

“I’ve really enjoyed learning from Val and the others in our group. Everyone has a different and interesting perspective. I love it! “ Karen

“Whenever I took a great photo it’s always been by default! Since starting in the group I now have a better understanding of what I’m doing and never stop learning from other members of the group”. Helen

“Learnt a lot from scrapbooking using my photographs as a resource”. Christina

“I have learnt to use AI to adapt, enhance and change photos. I have really enjoyed seeing photos from others and how they have interpreted the different topics we have focused on.”
Tim

“Looking at other people’s interpretations of the theme is really interesting. I am a better photographer since joining the group” Yvonne

We are now working on themes suggested by the national u3a photography group – u3a EYE- which suggest a bi-monthly theme and runs a competition for the best interpretation of it. Fifteen are chosen as winners and showcased online. This has enabled us to have a goal in mind, and we’ve had great sessions looking at each other’s work, choosing our favourites and suggesting edits ready to submit our entries. Two of our members were selected in June and Tim Rhodes has had a photo chosen to be exhibited at the u3a Festival in York July 1-3, so we seem to be heading in the right direction! Here are some examples of our work.

Winning photos for the u3a EYE competition on the theme of “FANCY”



Tim Rhodes



Yvonne Mulder



Street Life by Karen



“Fancy” by Helen Billam



“Looking Down” by Helen Ryan



“Layers” by Martin Worrall



**“Nostalgia”
by Andy Demosthenous**



“Looking Up” by Val Girling



“Fancy” by Chris Moore



“Layers” by Vijay Joshi

U3A Visit

Bletchley Park Museum

On Thursday, the 21st of May, a group from PG&S u3a set off to visit Bletchley Park Museum in Buckinghamshire, the famous centre of Allied code-breaking during the Second World War. You may have seen the Oscar-nominated film, 'The Imitation Game' (2014), 'Enigma' (2001) with three wins at the British Academy Film Awards and the very popular ITV series, 'The Bletchley Circle' (2012). All set at Bletchley Park.

After an easy coach journey, we arrived just over an hour later. We were welcomed by a volunteer who told us that coffee and biscuits were available for our group. We had time to have a look around before we met our guide at the Chauffeurs' Hut.

The guide began with the history of the mansion house.

It was bought in 1883 by Sir Herbert Samuel Leon, and it still has his mixture of Victorian Gothic, Tudor and Baroque styles. At the death of his widow in 1937, the mansion and the site were bought by a builder for housing development, but in May 1938, it was bought by Admiral Sir Hugh Sinclair, head of the Secret Intelligence Service (now MI6), for use in the event of war. He thought its location was ideal. It was out of but near London, very close to Bletchley railway station, through which passed the line between Oxford and Cambridge, from which universities Sinclair expected to recruit his code-breakers. Sinclair had to use his own money, as the Government said there was no budget assigned for the activity!



The Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) was opened for business in August 1939. The Naval, Military and Air Sections were on the ground floor of the mansion; the top floor was allocated to MI6. I loved visiting the Mansion House. They have created it exactly as it was in WW2 with authentic period office equipment, outdoor coats hanging on hooks by the door, pipes and ashtrays on the desk among the papers.

There is a wonderful library that was also the office of Commander Dennison, the operational head of GC&CS. It also has a collection of veterans' stories and early days exhibitions.

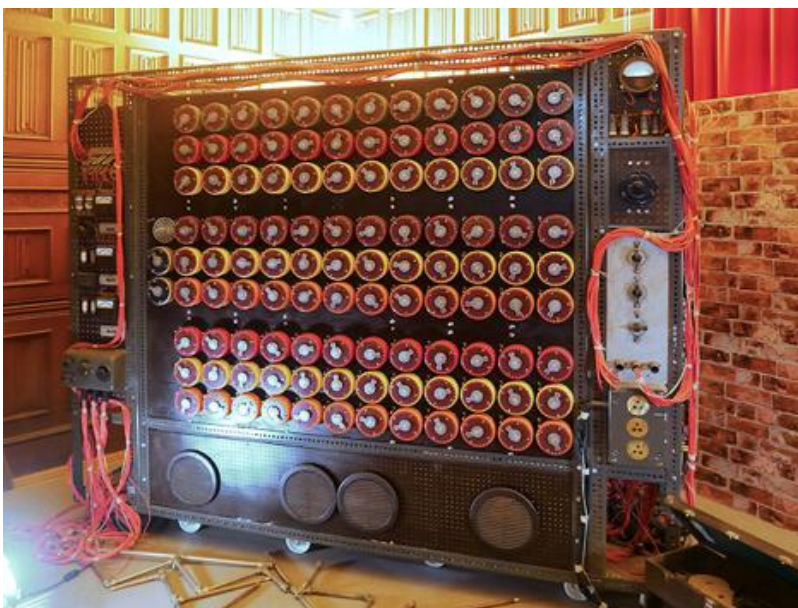
The house was not big enough, so wooden huts were constructed close by. These huts have been faithfully restored to bring to life the WW2 ambience. You can easily imagine what life was like there. The huts are small with few amenities, so it must have been cramped working there for long hours. They must have been cold in the winter and hot in the summer.

Hut 1 housed the very first Bombe machine, the electro-mechanical device used to help decipher the German Enigma machine-encrypted secret messages. Hut 3 translated and analysed decrypted German army and air force messages, while Hut 4 concentrated on the navy.

Hut 6 was the critical cryptanalysis section responsible for breaking the German Army and Air Force Enigma ciphers.

Hut 8, where the Naval Enigma was deciphered, is the most famous as it holds Alan Turing's office, just as it was when he was working there. Also in Hut 8, there is an exhibition 'Pigeons At War' showing that rather primitive methods were still in use in carrying secret messages in wartime.

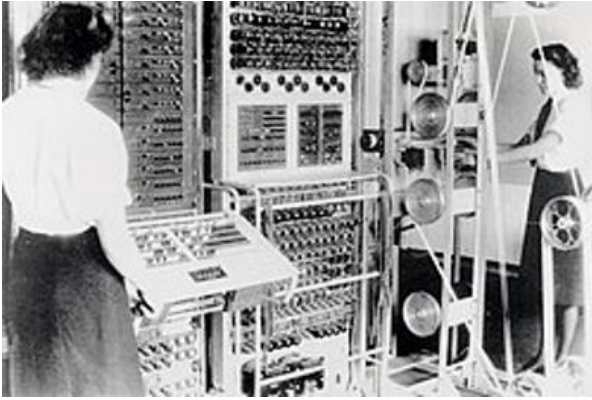
Huts 11 and 11A are home to the Turing-Welchman Bombe machines and they have recreated the horrendous, noisy atmosphere in which they worked.



The whole site has been conserved as it was during the war, even to volunteers in the uniforms of the WW2 military services walking purposefully about the site. It is as if the whole operation was preserved in aspic.

Our guide related several stories about the people who worked there during the war and how they signed the Official Secrets Act on their first day. I was surprised at how many people kept the secret of working there from their friends and families. Sometimes the

secret was only found out when the person died and papers were discovered.



I was also surprised that 75% of the staff were women. Many came from middle-class backgrounds and had degrees in maths, physics

and engineering. They worked on the ten Colossus computers, the world's first (semi-) programmable electronic computers.



Women with foreign languages were in high demand. They worked in particular sections, decoding German and Italian signals. I also heard about the Polish mathematicians and intelligence pioneers, Marian Rejewski, Jerzy Rozycki and Henryk Zygalski, of the Polish intelligence service, who helped shape and influence the code-breaking work at Bletchley Park, and the Enigma breakthrough.

I watched a short film that really explained how successful and effective Bletchley Park was during the war, to the extent of claiming it shortened the war by two years. I also experienced an immersive cinematic explaining Bletchley Park's role in the planning of the D-Day operation. The total workforce at the height of the war was 9,000. Most were billeted in homes nearby to Bletchley Park. Anyone with a spare room had to take in a lodger from the workforce.

I found the multimedia directions and information very useful and if you followed the map we received, you couldn't go wrong finding your way around the exhibits. Outside, the garages contained wartime vehicles and showed how top-secret intelligence material was transported.

At lunchtime, we had lots to choose from at the café, with meals cooked on site using locally sourced produce, and also a coffee shop. There were deck chairs provided to sit around the lake. Some of the group members had gathered and enjoyed a picnic.

We were lucky to have perfect weather, as much of the visit entails a fair amount of walking between the huts, the stable yard buildings and the garages.

The shop with WW2 memorabilia was very interesting, with lots of games, T-shirts and other gifts for the grandchildren.

It is a very dense and complex site. A typical visit takes between 4/5 hours. I will return for another visit, and the good news



is that if I return within the year, I can use my ticket, which is also an Annual Pass, and enter for free as many times as I want to!

Gail did a brilliant job organising this memorable visit, and I would like to say a big thank you to her.

Linda Evangelides

U3A Visit

The Wren Churches of the City of London

Our outing started at Monument with an introductory talk by our guide Stuart McGowan. He introduced us to Sir Christopher Wren who, as well as being best known as the famous architect who designed St Paul's Cathedral, was also a professor of astronomy at Oxford, a scientist, mathematician and anatomist. He was born in 1632 and was in his 30s by the time of the Great Fire of London in 1666. After the fire, in 1669, he was appointed Surveyor of the King's Works, overseeing royal building projects and supervising the reconstruction of London churches. There were about 107 churches before the Fire, of which 86 were destroyed. Wren rebuilt 51 and today there are still 23 in existence, which are known as Wren churches.



So to the walk . . . starting at the Monument to the Great Fire and a reminder of the destruction the fire caused to the City of London. It was interesting to learn that Monument also housed a laboratory in the basement and a telescope to observe the sky above it!

When Wren designed his churches, they were all different but had certain key features – they were suitable for Protestant worship and had no stained glass in order to let in as much light as possible. Also the focus was on the preacher, who could be heard from anywhere in the church. There was very little imagery – a plain uncluttered space with architectural harmony rather than decoration.

Our first stop was to St Magnus the Martyr – not now in keeping with the above key features as it has stained glass windows and is rather gloomy. The history of St Magnus is tied up with that of London Bridge and there is a cardboard model of the Medieval London Bridge in the church which was made in 1987. It was made by a former policeman and contains 900 figures of people – one of them in modern dress – a policeman no less!!

The next stop was St Mary Abchurch – a domed church of which type there were none in England before Wren designed some – three still exist, including this one. It was damaged in the Blitz but was repaired. The carved wooden font cover is interesting – the counterweight is through in the vestry. St Mary Abchurch is also known as a Guild church, which since 1952 can hold services on days other than Sunday to cater for city workers and the livery companies.

We visited St Swithin next, an example of a Wren church that was destroyed in WWII and not rebuilt. Instead there is a garden built on the site of the churchyard. There is a memorial to Catherine Glendower, wife of Owen Glendower, who led the Welsh rebellion in the early 15th century and who was buried in St Swithin along with their daughters. It's a memorial to all women and children caught up in wars.



Then on to St Mary Aldermary for our morning coffee break. The church has a relief on one of the walls showing another demolished Wren church – St Antholin - which was demolished to make way for Queen Victoria Street. This was another domed church – oval this time with eight pillars.

A quick visit to St Nicholas Cole Abbey was next, to look at the front of the café serving counter which shows part of a plan that Wren made for the rebuilding of the whole City which never came to fruition. His plan was radial in nature, with wide streets, squares and circuses. The site of the café is marked with a small wren motif.

By the middle of the 1800s the population of the City of London was falling and there were too many churches so the Union of Benefices Act was passed in 1860 which allowed parishes to merge and churches to be demolished under certain conditions. So over the next 80 years, 23 churches were demolished, including some of Wren's.

Today the Friends of City Churches has a scheme of Church Watchers – volunteers who watch over neglected city churches at least one day a week so that visitors and worshippers could be welcomed.

There are now over 100 Watchers who help to keep about half of the City churches open in any given week.



We ended our tour of the City churches at St Brides in Fleet Street - a journalists' church which has a spire like a wedding cake.

The church has associations with Pepys, Johnson, Keats and Dickens to name but a few of the journalists. However, we were there for a different reason – to enjoy a lunchtime recital of Baroque music performed by Rudolf Balazs (Baroque violin) and Emma Alter (Baroque viola). This made a very appropriate ending to our tour of City churches.

With thanks to Stuart for his excellent guided tour and for imparting so much interesting information along the way.

U3A Travel Holiday

Yorkshire Delights 22-26 June

On Monday, 22nd June, with the weather forecast promising a week without rain, we set off on our five-day trip to Yorkshire.

On the way to our main destination, York, we stopped at Hardwick Hall, a National Trust property in Derbyshire. It is a magnificent building constructed between 1590 and 1597 for Bess of Hardwick, who, as a result of her four marriages, became the richest woman in England after Queen Elizabeth I.

Designed by Robert Smythson in the Renaissance style, it is one of the finest Elizabethan buildings in England. We were impressed by the large number of windows. Robert Cecil, the first Earl of

Salisbury, had commented that there were “more windows than wall”. There were eager guides in every room waiting to tell us about the spectacular 16th-17th century textiles and needlework from around the world that Bess has amassed.



Onwards to York, our hotel, a welcome drink, and our evening meal, which was much enjoyed.

Next morning, our first visit was to the York Minster, an imposing medieval Gothic Cathedral. On the site of earlier churches from 627 AD, the present building, dating from 1225-1472, was intended to be the greatest cathedral in England. We were amazed at the scale of the Minster and the size of the windows.

The great east window is the same size as a tennis court. The Minster retains most of its medieval stained glass. As we sat listening to the guide in the Chapter House, an octagonal space where the Church's governing body would meet, we were in awe of the huge space and the detail of the 800-year-old stone carvings which decorate the canopies about the stalls. Our guide provided lots of architectural details, including the fact that over 140 different types of glass were used in the construction of the windows.

We were reminded that the Minster is still a place of worship and we sat for a few minutes in silence whilst a short prayer was said by a cleric.

The 15th century choir screen was another amazing sight with its almost life-sized statues of the Kings of England from William the Conqueror in 1066 to Henry the VI in 1422. Sadly, the huge Rose Window completed in 1240 was undergoing repair and was boarded over at the time of our visit.

After the Minster, we had free time to wander. Some visited the narrow cobbled medieval streets including The Shambles, while the more adventurous walked the ancient City walls.

After lunch, we visited the Jorvik Viking Centre which is built directly above the excavation site in Coppergate, where, between 1976 and 1981, the 1,000 year old Viking city of Jorvik was discovered. Beneath a glass floor we were able to see a reconstructed 10th-century blacksmith's home. An underground time-travel train took us through various Viking settings, so we could experience some of the sights, sounds and smells of Viking life!



Back at the hotel, we were grateful to rest our feet and enjoy cold drinks as the temperature had begun to soar, though not as high as in London.

Next day, we set off for Pickering, one of Yorkshire's oldest towns, founded in 270 BC. This is a busy market town situated on the edge of the Yorkshire Moors. In the Church of St Peter and St Paul we marvelled at the medieval wall paintings that date from 1470. They are one of only five surviving sets of wall paintings in the country, revealed in 1852 after some plaster collapsed. However, the vicar didn't like them and had them plastered over! Fortunately, a subsequent vicar started a restoration of the paintings, and they are now visible for all to admire.

A trip on the Yorkshire Moors Steam Railway was our next visit, maintained by volunteers since 1973. The train took us through the beautiful scenery of the North Yorkshire Moors, including one of the longest expanses of heather moorland in the UK. The Harry Potter station, Hogsmeade, was actually Goathland Station which we passed through on our journey.

Whitby was our following stop. We set off in small groups to explore this busy seaside town with its fishing port and its views over the River Esk. Some ventured up the 199 steps to the Parish Church and the Abbey, but most wandered through the streets of Whitby itself or sat by the water's edge.



Our fourth day of the holiday was spent at a lavender farm which the owner had started after retiring. The layout of the beds was not in conventionally straight lines, and because the six acres of land were undulating, the lavender beds appeared as swathes of colour across the landscape. There was a vast array of products in the farm shop, from oils to help with sleep and stress, to those with antibacterial and antiseptic properties as well as food and drink containing lavender.

Next destination was the Scarborough Fair Collection, housing fairground rides and dance organs dating back to the 1800's and also a collection of vintage cars and motorbikes. On arrival, we were taken to a huge ballroom where a Wurlitzer organ played a range of dance music. Whilst we enjoyed a selection of



sandwiches, pastries and cakes, we watched another group of visitors who had come prepared with their dance shoes, eager to demonstrate their skills. Then we viewed the many exhibits, including rides on the carousel horses, the ghost train or bumper cars. We all agreed that the visit was a nostalgic reminder of years gone by.

We returned to the hotel for our evening meal with happy recollections of our visit and the memories that it triggered for us.

The final visit of our trip was to a workhouse and infirmary in Southwell near Nottingham. This was built in 1824 and was the template for a further 600 workhouses built across England. It is the best preserved and complete workhouse in the country. The workhouse system was a place of last resort where the poorest in society came to work and where they received food, shelter and medical care. Although harsh and monotonous, some aspects such as education, medical care and diet were undoubtedly better inside the workhouse than for the poor in their own homes. Around 160 people could be housed at the workhouse. They were segregated and there was virtually no contact between male and female, children and old and infirm. We were told that the workhouse buildings had been in use as a temporary housing facility until about 1980, and that children living there were stigmatised because of where they lived.

The journey home allowed us all time to reflect on the interesting cultural and historical visits as well as the lovely Yorkshire countryside and the coast. We also enjoyed socialising with new and old friends – all made possible by the hard work and careful planning of the organiser, Louise. All we had to do was arrive at the coach at the appointed time! A wonderful holiday was had by all.

Text: Susan Gilmartin; Photos: Sheena Thorne.

Invitation to Contribute

We love to receive contributions to the Magazine from the membership

- **There are four editions a year. The deadlines for submission in 2026 are 23rd September; 23rd December.**
- **The maximum length is 1,000 words, but fewer is fine!**
- **Text should be in WORD, in Aptos 12p.**
- **Photographs need to be high resolution, ideally but not essential 300 dpi.**

Send your copy as an attachment to an email to magazine@pgsu3a.org.uk



Looking forward to your material!



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

Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Come Dine with Me
Current Affairs
Discussion
Healthy Eating Club
HEROES
Mindfulness and Meditation
Members on Their Own (MOTO)
Philosophy
Retiring with Attitude
Science, Nature, Technology (2)

History

History
History Discussion
Women in History

Out and About

Bowls (Seasonal)
Garden Visits
Strollers
Travel (Day Trips and Holidays)
Natural History Walks
Walking 3 to 5 miles
Walking 5 to 8 miles
Walking 8+ miles

Languages

French Advanced
Brush Up Your French
French Intermediate (2)
Italian Conversation (2)
Spanish Intermediate
Spanish Conversation

Literature

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

Theatre and Film

Film Review Club
Free Lunchtime Concerts
Fringe Theatre
Theatre

Geography

What a Wonderful World
Around the British Isles

Sports

Padel
Pickelball



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 0300 102 1756 and leave a message.