



## April 2023 Bulletin

**MONTHLY MEETING**

**11th April 2023**

**St Johns Church at 2pm**

**Local and a Royal Milliner \*Headfirst\***

**Sylvia Fletcher**, is one of London's leading milliners. Her collections can be found exclusively at Royal Warrant Holders James Lock & Co, St James Street, London. Her distinctive and stylish hats are worn by many celebrities and members of the Royal Family including the Princess of Wales (below). Throughout her career her creations have complemented the collections of Paul Costelloe, Stella McCartney, Bruce Oldfield, Prada, Anna Valentine, and many more and have appeared regularly in the fashion press, including Cosmopolitan, Tatler and Vogue. Sylvia is also a poet and writer, and her approach is best described in her poem "Two Passions": 'Two passions intertwine. A tangle of fantasies. I make no attempt to unravel them. They burn together like small coals. Sparking my imagination'. Her book "Headfirst" contains an amalgam of couture millinery, poetry (both humorous and romantic) and prose. Partly biographical, the book gives an insight into the eccentric world of hats with just a touch of fantasy.



# **NOTES FROM THE CHAIR**

Our social programme got off to a great start in March with the **Cream Tea Quiz** for 90 members. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and it was the Archaeology Group who "dug up" the most correct answers and ran away with the Trophy and the prizes.

The Quiz was superbly run by quizmaster Richard Blythe and the delicious scones were baked by Linda Hall. A huge thanks to both of them and the other helpers on the day; Hilary Blythe, Carole Dickenson, Helen Pearce, Beryl Connelly and Kevin Divall.

We hope to have another quiz later in the year.

You will by now have received an email regarding the next social event, a coach trip to the **Hampton Court Flower Festival**. If you missed it, the details are also attached to this bulletin.

The success of the quiz and the enthusiasm shown by **Social Team** and the **Committee** shows what we can do when people are prepared to step up and help.

However, it's all too easy to sit back and let others do the work.

We are always looking for people to help out, either in a small way on one particular event or a bigger role. For example Sue Bates is sadly stepping down as group coordinator and we need to replace her in July.

This is a key role as without a good variety of groups on offer and our committed group leaders we would struggle. The **Group co-ordinator** ensures this happens. This role will take up some time but I'm sure whoever takes it on will enjoy it. What's more, Sue said she will be more than happy to be on hand to offer her advice and support. ....Now, while you're thinking about it, is the time to email me on [Mu3aChair@gmail.com](mailto:Mu3aChair@gmail.com) to request more information. No commitment, just an initial enquiry. Go on.... please do it now.

We also have other positions that we need to fill. These would only take up a couple of hours each month. Again, please email me your interest. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Regards Mike Chantry

**PS** It's always good to spread the word which helps us recruit new members. If you're on Facebook please join the Meopham u3a group and post items on any group meeting that was particularly memorable.

Carole Dickenson is also looking out for articles for this bulletin so again, please let her know about your group too.

Regards Mike Chantry

07969931108

# **SOUTH EAST u3a Summer School**

## **A FEW SPACES LEFT**

The 2023 Summer School will take place at the University of Chichester from Monday 4th to Thursday 7th September, inclusive.

Participants stay at the University campus and full board is included. There are social activities, quizzes, films etc. planned for the evenings.

All the courses are tutored by experienced u3a members and there is a wide range of subjects, academic through to practical and active; something to suit everyone including cycling, French, mah-jong, mathematics ,poetry, ukulele, archaeology, creative writing, physics, yoga and mindfulness or walking.

Information on each course, 'How to Book' and to access the 'Booking Form', (available to download or to fill in online) can be found here-:  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/events>

Each member of Mu3a will need to make their own booking etc but it may be possible to share transport.

Please contact me if you are interested or just want more information.

Beryl Connelly  
berylconnelly@btinternet.com  
07854 221410

## **NEEDLE CRAFT**

### **Post Box Toppers**

Keep a watch out in and around Meopham during the middle of April to see what this group of very talented crafters have produced.

Word has spread and Helen Pearce and Di Parker were interviewed for a special Coronation podcast that is being produced by the central u3a team. Once we know when this is to be broadcast we will let you know.

If you are inspired by what you see then you might like to know further "toppers" are planned so please contact group leader **Helen Pearce** via the website for more details.

# **New groups information update.**

It must be Spring! New groups are sprouting up all over the place.

First of all three new groups were formed on Mon 27 March 2023 at Millbrook Garden Centre over tea, coffee and cake. These are **Science, Local History, and French Chatting.**

In addition, a **Classic Vehicle** group, an offshoot of How Things Work, has formed itself and arranged meetings.

Another new U3A group is to be formed called “**Solar Power, Insulation & Electric Vehicles**”, for anyone with an interest in the technical issues, the financial issues, and the environmental issues thereof. A lot of us either have or are thinking of investing in solar panels or electric vehicles, and are driven by concerns over climate change, and the high cost of energy. This Group will provide the opportunity to explore these matters further.

Please let the Groups Coordinator know on [mepgroups22@gmail.com](mailto:mepgroups22@gmail.com) if you wish to be part of these groups or join via our website.

## **GROUP CONTACTS MEETING**

Our 6-monthly meeting of the Group Contacts was held on Mon 13 March 2023 at a change of venue to Meopham Village Hall, which enabled us to hold a ‘break-out’ session where Group Contacts moved to different tables to engage with people they may not previously have spoken to, while responding together to questions concerning their roles in their groups.

29 people attended this meeting, representing 37 of our groups, ie 63%. There were 7 apologies, but we were also delighted to welcome a few members who were deputising for a Group Contact who was unable to attend.

Those who attended found it a useful and helpful discussion. Unfortunately this still left 15 groups from who we heard nothing at all. The next Group Contacts’ meeting will probably be held in autumn 2023.

## **GROUP REFRESHMENTS ROTA**

### **14th Apr 2023 Circle Dancing**

Please contact Sue Bates, Groups Co-ordinator on [mepgroups22@gmail.com](mailto:mepgroups22@gmail.com) if you have any questions regarding this rota.

# **NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS**

## **WINE GROUP 1**

At a meeting earlier this year Wine Group 1 discussed the effects of climate change on wine production.

The boundaries of wine production in Europe are moving northwards. Prime examples are the production of prize-winning

Chardonnay and even Pinot grapes in England.

On the continent, north facing slopes are increasingly being used for vines where previously south facing slopes were dominant. The converse applies in the southern hemisphere.

We tasted two English white wines (Flint Valley and Surrey Gold), both of which all members enjoyed. However, in a blind test no one identified them as English

A social change affecting wine was also discussed, specifically the increased drinking of organic wines. We sampled two red organic wines in blind tests, both from Italy (Nero D'Avola and Terre diFaiano; Primitivo Puglia). Again, all members greatly enjoyed both!

## **WEEKEND GROUP**



The Weekend Group visiting the Peace Doves at Rochester Cathedral last Saturday evening.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

We have had three meetings since our start in February. The first was simply to determine where and when could meet. Later it was decided to use the small hall at Meopham Village Hall.

To start the ball rolling we had a talk on the archaeological discoveries on the Island of Rhodes and at the following meeting we had a very interesting presentation by Nigel Sewell about the recent excavation of the Roman Villa at Trottscliffe. He also brought along a selection of artefacts which Anne, his wife, assured us was just a fraction of what he has at home!

At that meeting it was mentioned that the Kent Archaeological Society (KAS) website has information about opportunities to take part in digs and this is something to pursue in future months along with possible field walking and other external visits. Our next meeting will focus on Finding the Neanderthal and new discoveries in Meopham.

Oh and by the way a team of six from this group took part in the 2023 Cream Tea Quiz at Culverstone Hall and WE CAME FIRST [and we've got the trophy to prove it!!!]

## MUSIC ENSEMBLE

The Music Ensemble group now has six members who between us play piano, flute, guitar, ukulele (2 people) and alto saxophone. We meet monthly in each other's homes and have a go at playing a variety of music. Our current repertoire includes pieces such as:

Scarborough Fair (traditional with arrangement by one of our members Jane Self)  
Circle of Life (Elton John)  
I Dreamed a Dream from Les Misérables (Claude-Michel Schönberg)  
Imagine (John Lennon)

We are all at different stages of learning our instruments but have fun working together to learn new pieces (and sometimes new notes and chords!)



## CREATIVE WRITING

We held another lively group meeting today focussed on the subject of "Police".

Fabulous that there were so many different interpretations of the subject and writing styles. Being such a current issue, there was also some heartfelt discussion within the group.

For our light hearted, spontaneous writing section, we wrote for five minutes on a piece which included the words "Witches, Strangers, Twilight, Feathers and Coffee."

Our next meeting to be held at The Cricketers will be from 10.30am to 12 midday on 18th April.

Our chosen subject for the 500 word piece is "Friendship".

Is the group you want to join marked 'FULL' or there isn't a group catering for your area of interest?

Groups can be "full" for a number of reasons, often primarily because the group sessions are held in people's homes and there is limited space, chairs etc. for the group meetings.

If you come across this situation this is what you should do:  
Inform the Groups Co-ordinator at a Monthly Meeting or via the website [www.meophamu3a.org.uk](http://www.meophamu3a.org.uk) or email [mepgroups22@gmail.com](mailto:mepgroups22@gmail.com) to let the Groups Co-ordinator know.

A sign-up sheet for a new group or another group in the same area can then be created and members can express an interest at a monthly meeting. New groups can also be advertised in the bulletin or via the website in offer to attract potential members.

Once there is sufficient interest and the group is viable then an initial meeting is held and the group gets going.

This may take several weeks, but bear with us, it happens 95% of the time, if enough interest is generated.

Several of the groups highlighted in this bulletin are new groups and this is how they got started.

## **Plant a lasting memory of the moments that shape your family story.**

Dartford Borough Council is offering eligible Dartford families a £25 voucher to purchase a plant, shrub, or tree to mark a chapter in the story of local families.

Whether you wish to mark a newborn's arrival or first smile, welcome a newly adopted or fostered family member or create a loving tribute to a little one, we hope you will take part in this great green initiative.

Family Trees vouchers are valid until 31st December 2023 and can be spent at one of three local garden centres who are partnering with our scheme. We have up to 1000 Vouchers available and they can only be used to purchase plants, shrubs or trees. Staff at the garden centres will be happy to provide advice about what will grow best in your garden.

Our garden centre partners are:

- Hawley Garden Centre [www.hawleygardencentre.co.uk](http://www.hawleygardencentre.co.uk)
- Millbrook Garden Centre [www.millbrookgc.co.uk](http://www.millbrookgc.co.uk)
- The Plant Centre at L. Mills [www.lmills.co.uk](http://www.lmills.co.uk)

Dartford Borough Council has embarked on an important environmental journey to reduce its own carbon footprint and encourage every family and organisation to take simple steps towards a greener, cleaner future.

The Council has set up its own climate change initiative - Planet Dartford - with an aim to encourage responsible and sustainable actions - large and small.

Over the last few years we have started creating pollination corridors that provide a vital food source and habitat for insects such as bees and butterflies, and allow other wildlife to move safely. Wildflower meadows and orchards are continuing to be created in parks and amenity spaces across the borough for local people to enjoy and connect with nature, whilst helping to reduce the effects of Climate Change.

We're proud to launch our Family Trees scheme, exclusive to Dartford residents.

**If you are interested in the above the explanatory leaflet is attached.**



## THIS CROSS STITCH PICTURE IS LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME

I started this cross stitch picture in 2008 but stopped when my vision deteriorated. I've completed just over half but now it is time to find it a new home. The fabric is 14 count Aida and it is mounted on an embroidery frame. Approx. size is 12" wide by 26" high. Have you the time/interest to complete it and enjoy the finished result.

If you are interested I could bring it along to the monthly meeting in April.

My contact details are:

[berylconnelly@btinternet.com](mailto:berylconnelly@btinternet.com)

07854 221419



PATTERN

**Hi Kent**  
**Sound support for deaf and hard of hearing people**

Come along to our new social group for people living with hearing loss in Meopham. Hearing aid maintenance including batteries also available while the social group is running.

Come along and meet new friends, enjoy conversation, activities, talks, outings etc.

The group meets in the ST JOHNS CENTRE on the first Friday of each month from 1.30 to 2.30.

Email [v.kirk@hikent.org.uk](mailto:v.kirk@hikent.org.uk) or phone 01622 691151 to book a free place.

**Mu3a RECENT NEW GROUPS MEETING**

