



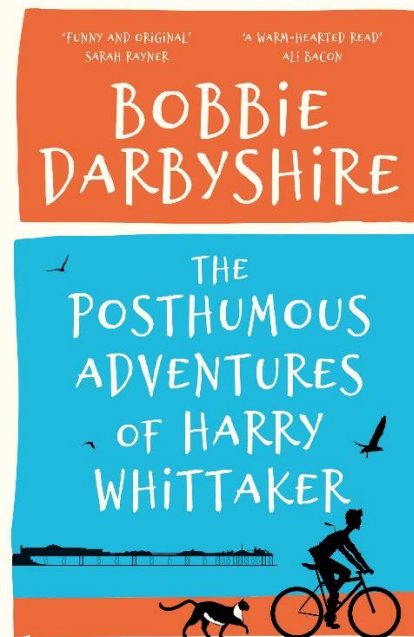
May 2023 Bulletin

MONTHLY MEETING

9th May 2023

St Johns Church at 2pm

**A BEGINNING, A MUDDLE & AN END:
Where do novelists get their ideas from?**



In an entertaining, informative talk, Bobbie Darbyshire will explain how the complex world of character, location, plot and subplot arrives in a writer's mind. Winner of the 2008 fiction prize at the National Academy of Writing and the New Delta Review Creative Non-fiction Prize 2010, she is author of four novels, including "The Posthumous Adventures of Harry Whittaker", and has a fifth due out in October 2023. Bobbie has worked as barmaid, mushroom picker, film extra, maths coach, cabinet minister's private secretary, care assistant and volunteer adult-literacy teacher, as well as in social research and government policy. Bobbie lives in London and hosts a writers' group.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

I've been away a couple of times this month so I have nothing significant to report.

However, I would like to express our gratitude to fellow Meopham u3a member Sylvia Fletcher for her excellent talk on hats. As a member we're not allowed to pay her so she asked for donations to her favorite charity "The Leybourne Grange Riding School for the Disabled. Thanks to your kind generosity members contributed £190.

Along with three other Meopham u3a committee members and Carole Dickenson I attended a Kent U3A network meeting last Thursday and came back full of ideas. It will take me a while to digest all this, but just wanted to highlight a couple of items that may be of interest to you. As part of your membership you can take part in online talks on a whole range of subjects. Please take a look at what's available in [u3a - Online Learning Events](#)

I've also been impressed with how much information is available on the National u3a website please take a look on www.u3a.org.uk

HI KENT

SOUND SUPPORT FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE

Three Mu3a members have joined this group already so why not go along to this new social group for people living with hearing loss in Meopham with them. 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 next meeting is on Friday 5th May 2pm to 3 pm at the St John's Centre. .

Email v.kirk@hikent.org.uk or phone 01622 691151 to book a free place.

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

NEEDLE CRAFT

Post Box Toppers

The toppers are here.... and here..... and here!

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. This is now available on the national u3a website.

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.





Many groups are posting on our face book page and this is attracting interest from other about joining Mu3a.

Please consider taking some photos (make sure everyone is happy to be snapped) and posting them with a short description on our page.

If you need some support with posting please contact a member of your committee.

WRITING GROUP

Our new Writing group is now up and running but we still have a couple of vacancies if anyone cares to join us.

Meetings are held at 10.30am on the third Tuesday of the month at the Cricketers in Meopham. Contact Group leader Lynne Townsend to join. Log onto [Writing & Reminiscing \(meophamu3a.org.uk\)](http://Writing & Reminiscing (meophamu3a.org.uk))

At a recent meeting we were all impressed with a piece from Theresa Johnston on Friendship which is shown below.

A FRIEND

A friend is a rainbow when sometimes there's only showers
A friend can be the only star shining in the darkness
A friend can hold you up when all around you is pulling you down
A friend can catch you when you fall to make your landing softer
A friend is a listening ear even when they have heard it all before
A friend asks you how you are and waits to hear the answer
A friend turns up at the right time even though it may be the wrong time
A friend is like a warm hug on a cold night
A friend feels for you
A friend cares for you
A friend shares with you
A friend laughs with you
A friend cries with you
A friend knows your faults
A friend knows your thoughts
A friend knows you, but likes you
A friend doesn't judge, nor holds a grudge
A friend is warmth when the world feels cold
A friend knows when there is a time for silence

CYCLING GROUP

In April the Cycling Group did two rides of quite different nature. The first started in Southfleet and went through Greenhithe to a path just west of Asda which lead to a track alongside the river, see the photo with the Dartford Dartford Bridge in the background. We returned to Dartford via Temple Hill and had a coffee in the Cafe in Dartford Park. Ten people attended and the distance travelled was 15 miles



The second ride started in Kemsing and went via Stone Street round the back of Knole Park and along Gracious lane to Ide Hill and Toys Hill. From there we went past Emmets Garden down to Brasted. We couldn't find the Tea Room in Brasted so unfortunately we had to make do with the White Hart for our refreshment. There were only 5 on this ride and the route was 24 miles



CURRENT AFFAIRS: DAYTIME

So, what's is like at a meeting of this group that gets together monthly on the last Friday of the month? We meet in a members' home and the limit on numbers is set at 10 which is as much as the home can accommodate and as many as can reasonably hold a discussion without talking over one another.

Our topics are varied ranging from the very current news: Ukraine, national politics, the NHS (this features widely) and last month building on a piece written by one of our number for the newly formed writing group the topic was The Police. This being a subject very much in the news at that time.

The meeting this month will focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and we are looking forward to a lively discussion. One of the sons of a member has written mini essay with an interesting perspective and we have gleaned a set of discussion points 'Robots and Artificial Intelligence from the internet. It should be a lively session of non-robotic discussion.

Over the several years the group has been running we have become friends and thoroughly enjoyed a Christmas lunch at Bartellas.

ACOUSTIC GUITAR GROUP

Currently our Group consists of nine women and men and we meet for two hours every other Monday afternoon at the Hartley Cricket Pavilion.

The style of playing is mainly rhythm, although a few of our more experienced members also play lead as and when it suits the music.

Our sessions are pretty laid back and unhurried which seems to suit everyone.

This year we adopted a system where we pick two tunes that we prioritise at the beginning of each meeting to practise until we are

sufficiently confident to play them without reading off tabs/lyrics sheets.

For the rest of the session the idea is for anyone to pick a tune of their choice either from our song catalogue or to introduce a new tune to try out and learn.

The genre of music we tend to play varies from popular 60''s to current times of Country, Rock and Ballad tunes.

All levels are welcome and we can assure you that playing as a group is fun and will improve your confidence level more than playing solo.

So give it a go and pay us a visit, you will be made very welcome.

SIGN LANGUAGE

Pleased to say we are maintaining the group, having (inevitably) lost a few who were optimistic about being able to fit it into their timetable, but gained replacements to keep up numbers.

Having generally focused on basic 'words' up to now, we are - with a degree of trepidation for some - about to embark on some simple conversation, so should you notice any of our group in animated mode at future general meetings, they may - in addition to a friendly greeting - be engaging in dialogue with you, even if only to ask whether you would like a biscuit with your tea!

MONEY MATTERS

It sounds like a very dry subject area but the members are very proactive. We share information about cost savings, investments, insurances and tax savings opportunities.

For example we reviewed the results of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's March "mini-budget" and at another meeting we reviewed how to protect your assets from government Inheritance Taxes.

CLASSIC VEHICLE GROUP



Despite a very wet day, the Classic Vehicle Group met at Etype UK, Hadlow and took part in a wet "Drive it Day " from there.

There was, however, plenty to see in the extensive Workshop facilities, too, both cars in restoration and beautiful fully restored cars for sale, for those with deep pockets!

More meets scheduled in May.

How Things Work?



The aim of the group is to range of different things.

individuals interested in finding out how things work – technical, industrial, agricultural, military and artistic – everything and anything is within our remit. Currently we have about 80 members and together we have come up with some fascinating ideas activities and places to visit. The group aims to meet once every month throughout the year usually making a visit to somewhere of interest!

learn about, visit and try a diverse We are a group of like-minded



We have been going since late 2015 with our inaugural visit in November 2015 to tour Rochester Airport and The Medway Aircraft Preservation Society.

Over the past 7 ½ years we have enjoyed making flour, tasting local cheese, sorting out our sewage from the Victorian era to the modern day, learned how to brew beer and distil gin, driven traction engines, been



behind the scenes at The Royal Opera House

workshop, gone nuclear at Dungeness B – these are just a few of the 70 different visits we have been on. The full details and reports from all of our trips are on our webpage:



<https://www.meophamu3a.org.uk/miscellaneous/161-htw-activities>

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 or email 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.

SITUATION SHORTLY TO BE VACANT

As you know Sue Bates is stepping down in July from her role of group's co-coordinator. This is a vital role in our u3a.

Can you help?

It's a role worthy of a team ... could you be a part of that team

Please give it some thought.

END OF THE BULLETIN

