



2023 Bulletin

MONTHLY MEETING

Tuesday 14 November 2023

St Johns Church Meopham

2pm

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR – *Mike Chantry*

Thanks for the great response to the Cream Tea Quiz which is now sold out. We have started a waiting list in case any teams drop out. Those on the list who miss out will be given priority for the one we will be having next autumn.

Last Tuesday we had a meeting of the Social Team and we prepared a draft plan for 2024. We will firm up on this plan and will be publishing a social programme in the December Bulletin. As we had to cancel the Christmas Market Trip and the Beatles Christmas Party events due to lack of takers, we need feedback from you as to the events that would appeal to you most. Please email chairmu3a@gmail.com with any ideas.

We are still looking for 4 or 5 more volunteers to join the Social Team. These events don't just happen, and it would be good to share the load. You won't be expected to lead the team or be on your own running an event, but we do need more support. Please email me at chairmu3a@gmail.com to find out more.

Talking of volunteers, thanks must go to John Thompson and Roy Lingham for stepping in to be our Group Co-ordinators. Being such an important role, they could do with at least one other member to help out. Please ask them, or me for more details at the November monthly meeting. Thanks should also go to Carole Dickenson, Heather Wright and Ann MacEwan who kindly stepped in to hold the fort till we found a replacement for Sue Bates.

New Member Promotion: we have bought a Tree for the Christmas Tree Festival that will be run at the Church between the 4th and 10th of December. We'll be decorating it to illustrate what Meopham u3a can offer and hopefully your group leaders will be able to supply a decoration (no bigger than 4 inches square) to promote your group.

Let's spread the net even wider. We've a very entertaining speaker this month so why not take the opportunity to invite a friend or neighbour along? There will be a £3 charge, but this is fully refundable if they decide to join us.

That's enough from me for this month, I hope to see many of you at the November meeting on the 14th.

INTRODUCTION TO OUR SPEAKER – *from Beryl Connelly*

Our speaker this month is Pat Bryer presenting 'A Woman of a Certain Age'

This entertainment is a light-hearted look at the ups and downs of life as we mature (physically, at least!), told through comic verses and songs. These include poems and a song by the wonderful Victoria Wood, as well as humorous verse by Pam Ayres, Roald Dahl, A.A. Milne and Jenny Joseph. We start with A.A. Milne's poem: "The End", (which is really about the beginning!), progressing through the teenage years, motherhood, middle age, and finally the pros and cons of old age.

The programme concludes with a short playlet entitled Resting Place, where an elderly couple, Jim and Minnie, stop for a rest on their way home at a cemetery and discuss their future. This is a bittersweet comedy, showing the enduring value of the simple things in life, and told with great humour and insight. The programme will last for around 40 - 45 minutes.

HEARING LOOP - The front two rows of the church are being reserved for those members who struggle with their hearing. The hearing loop works best if you sit in the aisle seats close to the front of the church.

MONTHLY MEETING TEAS – *from Carole Dickenson*

Many thanks to the Local History group who managed the refreshments in October. Members really appreciate the opportunity to have a hot drink while they catch up with the u3a friends in the church rooms so when it's the turn of a group you belong to, please make every effort to go even if you don't usually make the monthly meeting a priority.

In November it will be the turn of Fitness for Fun. If you are part of this group please arrive at about 1.30 to set up the tables, get out the mugs etc. Everything you need for the refreshments will be supplied on the day.

In December and in January it will be the turn of the four French groups. French Advanced and French Improvers in December please and French Improvers 2 and French Improvers 3 in January.

The refreshments at the December meeting will have a seasonal theme and will be supported by the Social Committee.

SOUTH EAST u3a FORUM SUMMER SCHOOL – from Beryl Connelly and Andrew Morgan

Tuesday evening waiting for the talk on Tangmere Airfield to start, Mrs Jones is sitting next to me, 'I'm with the Dorking u3a,' she says.

'How about that' I reply, 'I was born and brought up in Dorking'.

'I actually live just outside Dorking in Newdigate, 'she adds.

'Even more extraordinary. We moved there in the early 1980's – we lived in Peartree Cottage.'

'Well, I live in Spring Cottage – I was your next-door neighbour. The Morgans wasn't it?'

What a small world. This is how extraordinary conversations begin here at The SE u3a Forum Summer School.

We were blessed with beautiful weather at The University of Chichester's campus, Monday 4th – Thursday 8th September. Plenty on offer for the 150 attendees, from archaeology to yoga – something to suit almost everybody. I was in the French group among 12 ladies from all over the country with Susanne as our truly lovely tutor. Nous avons bavardé, discuté, lis, écouté, regardé, traduit en fait nous avons passé de très, très bon moment –c'était top!

The accommodation was in the student flats which were fine for three nights (though my mattress was far from comfortable) and meals in the campus restaurant. I was particularly pleased to find delicious pain au chocolat for breakfast. Generally, I thought the catering was very good.

After dinner each evening we had some entertainment. A quiz on Monday – our table (8) were middle ranking but thanks to Beryl her table were the champions each winning a packet of chocolate fingers. Tuesday was the excellent talk on Tangmere with a film as an alternative if you didn't fancy the talk. On Wednesday Jane Glennie, who specialises in theatrical talks, presented 'Violet's Titanic Escape' about how Violet Jessop a ship's stewardess survived the sinking of the Titanic and then the sinking of her sister ship Britannic. It was totally enthralling; I have never known an hour fly by so quickly.

All in all it was a fabulous 4 days not only for the courses but for all the different people that you meet. Monday afternoon to Thursday lunch time – £375. An enormous thank you everyone involved in organising it. I know that many, many hours of hard work went into it.

12 courses were on offer. <https://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/events>

This link takes you to the 2023 information page.

We took:-

Andrew –Fun with French– Intermediate

Beryl –Mahjong– Beginners

Linda –Fizzics for Fun

Lynda - Archaeology & Egyptology

Moria - Walking/Rambling – A Coastal Delight



	Bouquet				Tea			
Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP – *from Carole Baylis*

On the 15th September members of the Archaeology Group visited Richborough Roman Fort and Amphitheatre. As you can see from the photo, they enjoyed the trip, especially with the wonderful weather that day.



VISIT TO HORSE GUARDS – *from Ann MacEwan*

LV1 went to London on 25 September on a visit organised for us by Fran and Andrew Dunk. It was a delightful day as the weather was very kind and so, instead of taking a bus from Victoria, we walked through St James' Park where we stopped for a refreshment and then on to Horse Guards Parade. The display by the Blues and Royals was very good and appreciated by all watching. We walked on to the Museum and were warmly welcomed. There were ornate silver items given to the guards, portraits, an artificial leg dating from the 1800s, uniforms, helmets and adornments, diaries and scrapbooks full of the details of life as a horse guard. in different time periods. Then we saw the guards coming in with their horses and removing their kit. There was a girl there being kitted out as a forerunner to joining the guards. She is already in the military police force but very hopeful that she will be accepted. Our heads were buzzing with facts as we exited back into the sunshine for another pleasant walk to Trafalgar Square for lunch.



GRAVESEND FOOD BANK – from Carole Dickenson

Meopham u3a are again offering members the opportunity to donate food, toiletries or cleaning products to the Gravesham Food Bank. Collecting boxes will be inside the church porch at the November and December monthly meetings.

These are the items that the food bank would particularly value at the moment. Items in red (first column if you print in black and white) are the ones that they are most in need of.

Biscuits	Jars of pasta sauce
Tins of cold meat, hot meat, hot dogs, meat pies	Tins of custard
Tins of vegetables - sweetcorn, carrots, tomatoes, potatoes	Small packets of rice
Crackers, savoury biscuits, cereal bars	Small bottles of squash
Sweets, chocolate bars	Small jars of mayonnaise
Tins of fruit	Tomato ketchup
Cereals	Small tins of evaporated milk
Packets of instant pasta and sauce	Ready-made jellies
Tins of spaghetti	Microwaveable hot puddings
Coffee	Tins of soup
	Packets of noodles
	Tins of fish (not anchovies)
	Toothpaste
	Men's and Ladies' toiletries
	Washing-up liquid

Thank you for your support but **no baby milk or mince pies please!**

VISIT TO LEIGHTON HOUSE - *from Ann Macewan*

Thanks to Claire Elder's recce and careful planning, eleven members made the visit to Leighton House, the home of the most eminent British artist, Frédéric Leighton, in the heart of Kensington showcasing his work and acquisitions gathered over his lifetime, e.g. Tintoretto and Reynolds.

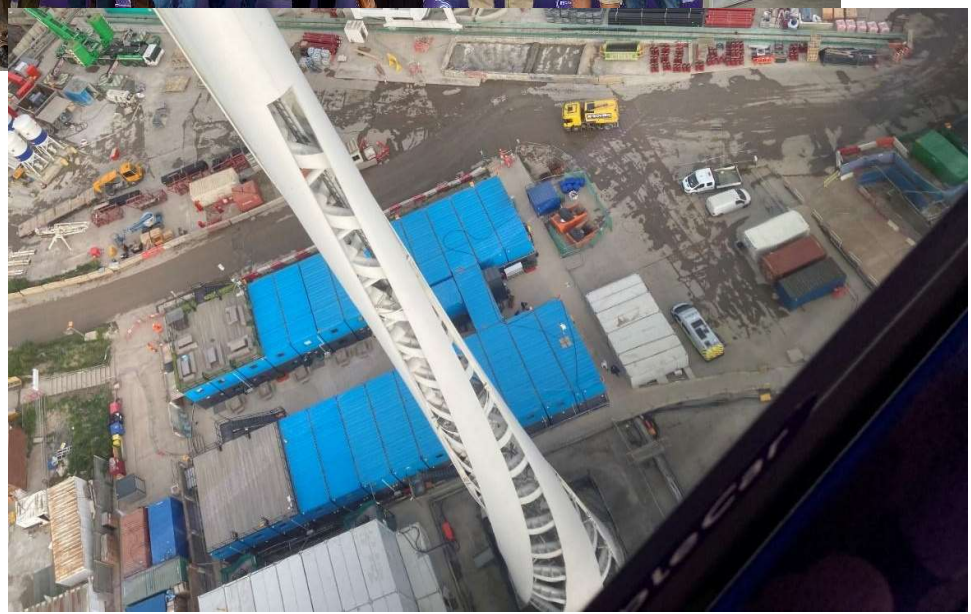
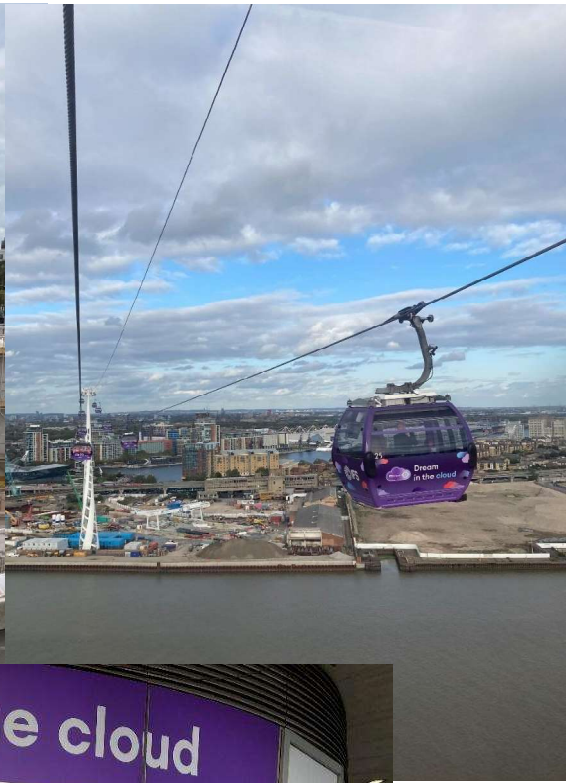
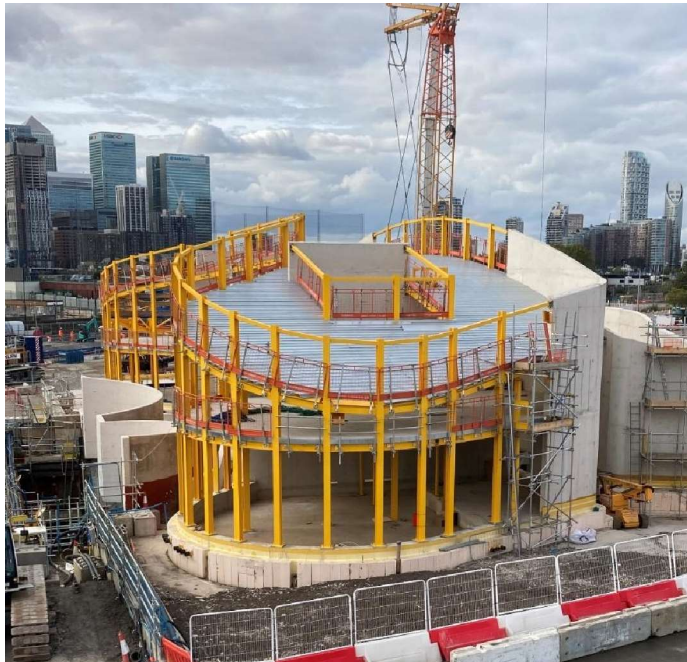
The home of the famous artist has recently undergone refurbishment and is a very pleasant venue where works can be viewed at leisure. Sambourn (a Punch cartoonist) House is a short walk away so members were able to view both houses while others walked through nearby Holland Park.

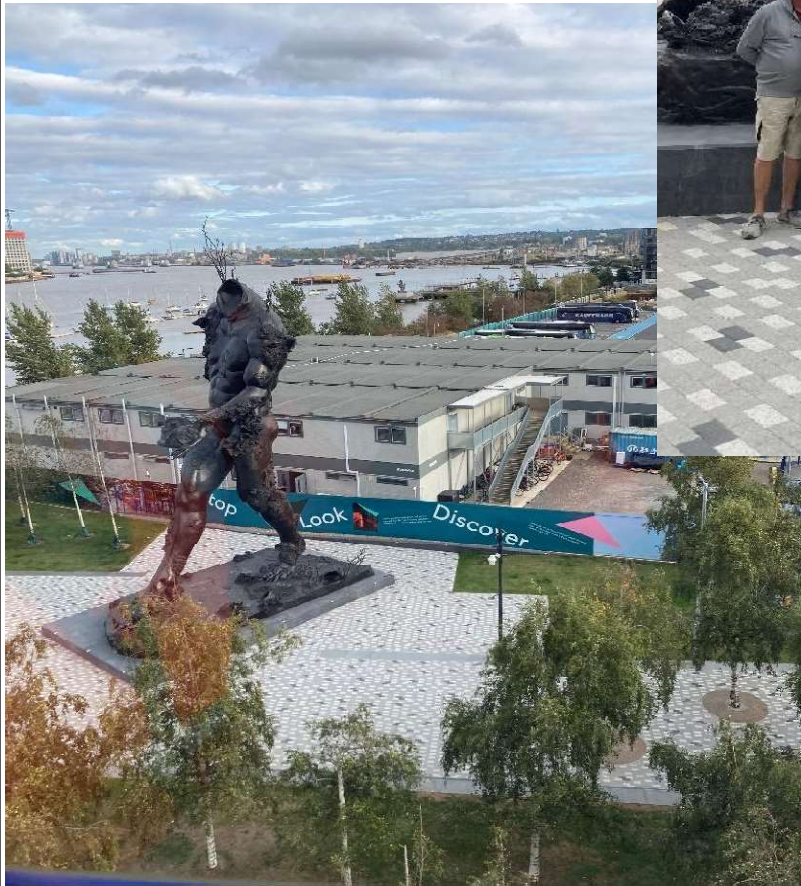
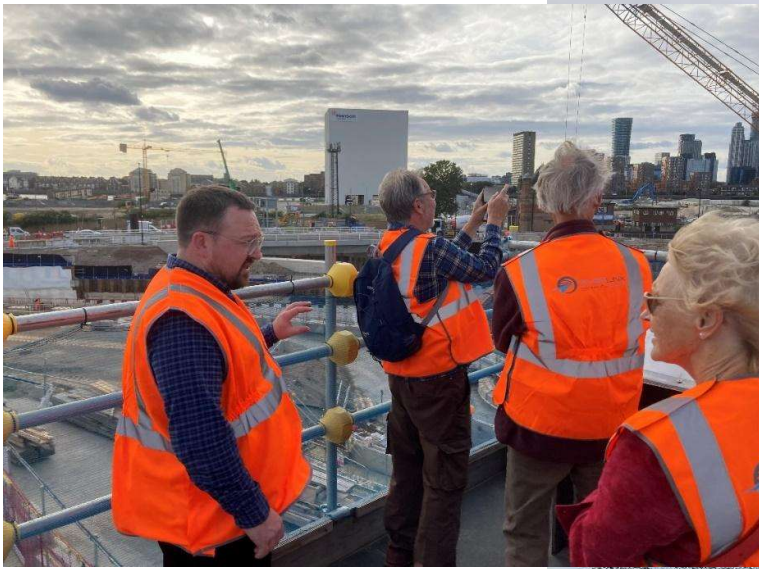


SILVERTOWN TUNNEL VISIT – *from Paul Campion*

The Silvertown Tunnel visit went very well. We were firstly given a 45 minute presentation by a senior engineer on the background and progress of the tunnel works. We were then taken out to look at the West end of the site from a viewing platform and finally we went over the Thames in the cable car. A very impressive and complex engineering feat and judging by all the questions, everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. The project involves building a tunnel under the Thames linking Silvertown to the Greenwich Peninsula in east London and is due to open in 2025. This new 1.4km twin-bore road tunnel under the Thames is the first in London in over 30 years and aims to reduce chronic congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel and allow for better public transport links, including more cross-river bus journeys.







BROGDALE FARM VISIT – from Paul Campion

On 20 September, fifteen members of the HTW group visited The Brogdale Collection in Faversham. Although we braved strong winds, the rain luckily held off for the whole visit. During our 1.5 hour tractor tour Mary our guide gave details of the work of the farm and spoke of the various types of fruit at the collection. When we stopped, we were able to taste a number of the variety of apples that had been picked that morning. Following the tour members visited the shop and bought some of the local produce that was available.

Brogdale Collections is the home of the National Fruit Collection and works to provide access and education about the National Fruit Collection. Set in over 150 acres of farmland, it has over 4,000 varieties of fruit trees here from apples, pears, quinces and plums to cherries and more. The Collection's orchards are a living history and heritage of fruit.



BEACON – from Andrew and Others

It is encouraging to see so many groups making good use of Beacon for sending email. As of today (24 October) an amazing 10,203 emails have been sent using the system in the eight years since Mu3a began using it.

Sometimes members ask why we use Beacon. Quite simply it's the secure database that we use to ensure the safety and protection of all our members and to safeguard their personal information as required by GDPR legislation. Beacon was originally devised by a single u3a to store its own membership and group information and it was so successful that they agreed to share it across the movement. Now it is administered by a team of volunteers who do all the technical tweaks behind the scenes and introduce updates when needed. It even has its own website!

It has recently been suggested that the requirement to use Beacon puts members off volunteering to be a group contact. Of course the contact doesn't have to be the person who uses Beacon but in reality it usually is. If this is you, please let one of the Beacon Team know and one of them will be only too happy to help you to get started. This can be done anywhere with internet access so a café, your home, their home ...wherever you feel most comfortable....and on a laptop or a tablet.

If there is sufficient interest, the team will also offer 'refresher' sessions to look at the updates to Beacon for all 86 Meopham u3a Beacon users.

Andrew, Carole, Chris, Helen and Moira



That's all Folks!

(END OF THE BULLETIN)