



2023 Bulletin

MONTHLY MEETING

Tuesday 10 October 2023

St Johns Church Meopham

2pm

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR – *Mike Chantry*

I know these notes are normally just my rambling thoughts, but this month there are some important points which I would like you to read carefully, and hopefully respond to.

1. **The Social Team plans.** You'll be pleased to know we will be having another Cream tea quiz on the 11 January 2024. Details to follow next month.
2. We are looking to run a coach to **Winchester Christmas market** (approximately £25) in early December (exact date TBC). We would need to fill a coach to make it viable, so I would like an email from those who could be interested. If I can get at least 60 people who are interested, we will go ahead. Please email me asap at chairmu3a@gmail.com with the subject matter "**Interested in the Christmas market trip**" then I can keep you updated.
3. I sent a separate email regarding the **Beatles Christmas party** at the Mercure Maidstone (better known as the Great Danes) hotel near Leeds Castle on Tuesday 21 November 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To date there has been very little response, so unless we get at least 20 people by 10 October, this won't be going ahead as a Social Team Event.

A REMINDER OF THE PREVIOUS EMAIL:

URGENT ATTENTION NEEDED. We have secured 30 places at the Beatles Christmas Party at the Great Danes Hotel on Tuesday 21st of November. No

night driving will be needed. It's not enough people to lay on a coach but I'm sure we can arrange some car sharing. Full details in the link: [Maidstone - BeatlesChristmas Show Party \(greatdaysholidays.co.uk\)](http://Maidstone-BeatlesChristmasShowParty@greatdaysholidays.co.uk), but please don't book direct with them, just confirm your booking with me by 10th October, payment details to follow once your booking has been confirmed. Strictly first come first served, although we may be able to get a few more tickets if we get more than 30 people interested. PLEASE PLACE YOUR ORDER FOR THE BEATLES CHRISTMAS PARTY TICKETS NOW by emailing me at chairmu3a@gmail.com I'll get back to you to confirm your booking and give you details re payment.

4. **Christmas Tree Festival at Saint John's Church** (3rd December to 10th of December). We have bought a Christmas tree for this event at the Church. We see this as an ideal opportunity to promote Meopham u3a. We will decorate our tree to reflect the Meopham u3a image and promote new members. Our initial idea is to have small decorations from as many groups as possible to place around the tree. At the top of the tree, we will include details of how people can join us. We need someone to mastermind the operation and have a small team. Any volunteers? Please email me on chairmu3a@gmail.com with the subject matter **Christmas Tree Festival** and I'll get back in touch. Otherwise see me at the next monthly meeting. After the chair decorations at the July meeting, I know there are lots of creative people out there, so please don't be shy to step forward.
5. **Sound in the Church.** Like many of you, I have hearing aids and have in the past struggled to follow all the speakers at the monthly meetings. My new hearing aids can be connected to the hearing loop and I found the sound at the last meeting to be very good using this facility. In future we will try and reserve the first two rows in the church for those who really struggle with their hearing. At the next meeting I'll invite those who are still struggling, to stay behind after the meeting and we'll try and find a sensible solution for them. Those whose hearing is fine, please try and leave the first two rows for those with hearing problems.
6. As you know Carole Dickenson, Heather Wright and Ann MacEwan kindly stepped in and are sharing the role of Group Co-ordinator until the end of the year. We do need to find replacements urgently. We have one member who could possibly help, but we feel that the role would be best shared amongst two or three people. Please let me know if you could help out. You won't be on your own and you'll have loads of support from those that have done the job before. Email me on chairmu3a@gmail.com with **Group Co-ordinator** in the subject field and I'll get back to you.

Sorry to be so long-winded this month but this is my only opportunity to reach out to all of the members.

GOLF GROUP LESSONS

We've had a few enquiries from potential new members who were worried that their game was a little too rusty for them to join the group. John Reeves has kindly agreed to run three refresher lessons to those who would like to give it a try. If we get enough people interested the first hour long lesson will be on Thursday 12th October 11.00am at Pedham Golf Centre in Swanley. I, and hopefully a couple of other golf group members, will be there to help out. First week we will focus on putting. Driving, and chipping lessons to follow. If you're interested, please let me know if you will be there by emailing me on mikechantry@mail.com

Congratulations to David Burkitt who got a hole in one on the fifth hole at Poulton Wood last month.

The golf group are a friendly bunch who play more for the fun of it rather than being too competitive. Although we have 20 members, we normally only get a maximum of 12 who play 9 holes on the first Monday of each month. We therefore have room for new members. We are happy to have anyone join us for a taster session before committing to join up. Please contact Group Leader Mike Chantry at mikechantry@mail.com



GRAVESHAM FOOD BANK

Last year Meopham u3a supported the Gravesham food bank and collected items at the November and December monthly meetings. They were particularly delighted with toothbrushes and toothpaste, hand soap, shower gel and deodorants. That said all our donations were very gratefully received by the food bank and put to good use in the local area.

It is proposed to do the same this year and we hope you will feel able to support the collection.

Please check in the November bulletin for those items most in need this year.

INTRODUCTION TO OUR SPEAKER – *from Beryl Connelly*

Thirty years of Bother on the Hover - a pilot's eye view of operating the world's largest hovercraft out of Dover, focusing on the many humorous events that occurred.

Come along and find out what it was like to be involved in this groundbreaking, but short lived, mode of transport.

HONG KONG MAHJONG – *from Linda Mei*

The group has remained strong with 11 members. We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at my house. Players enjoy the social aspect of it and learning new challenging skills, i.e., special hands at each session. At the end of the year, the player with the highest points gets rewarded.

MUSIC FOR PLEASURE AND MEN'S SINGING GROUPS – *from David Burkitt*

MUSIC FOR PLEASURE GROUP

After several years (I'm not sure exactly how many!) of meeting monthly (on Zoom during covid) the Music for Pleasure Group is winding down between now and next July when, unless there is a "rescue," it will cease to function.

All members have been loyal and supportive of the group over the years and I thank them for that. Most have belonged to the group from the start. We have shared listening to an extremely wide variety of music scanning pretty well all genres. Standard practise was around 2 hours of listening with a midway gap for refreshments, also much enjoyed; and lots of chat! My clear impression was that it became a friendship group.

Most months a member introduced a programme of music. There were also regular requests sessions and on two occasions most of the music was "live;" played by our two very talented piano playing members. The Group arranged two visits: to the Music Museum in Kew and the Handel/ Hendrix house in Brook Street.

During covid we welcomed a small number of guests who were designated "associate" group members.

Although it is a shame the group will be folding, members generally agreed that it has run its course: having given a great deal of *Pleasure* to all involved.

MEN'S SINGING GROUP

After a gap during covid we are now back on a regular series of visits to entertain residents of care homes and set-ups like dementia clubs and other charities

Because our programmes always contain well-known songs, residents and audience members usually join in and sometimes even dance while we sing! Although designated a singing group, two vitally important and very talented members are instrumentalists; playing the piano/keyboard and flute.

Although we have a number of regular venues where we perform, if any members have relations or friends in local care homes or are involved in charities, please let me know and we can find out if they would welcome us.

If any members (men only I'm afraid) fancy joining us and having fun singing with us, please get in touch with me. Don't immediately think "I can't sing;" you're almost certainly wrong! Come along and find out!!

CHURCH REFRESHMENTS – *from Heather, Ann and Carole*

Thank you to all those members of the Cycling Group who served the refreshments at the September monthly meeting. I'm sure everyone agreed that it was good to have the opportunity to have a cuppa and a chat rather than just disperse once the meeting was over. Particular thanks to Alan Forman who, as well as helping with serving the teas proved to be an expert with the dish washer!

As we are learning how this works best as we go on along, the rota only extends to the end of 2023. It will be as follows:

10th October 2023 Local History group.

Alison and Paul Hillman will be bringing the supplies.

14th November 2023 Fitness for Fun

Rosemary Rumana and Lynda Bolton will be bringing the supplies.

12th December 2023 Social Committee

Thank you all for your help.

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP – *from Alison Hillman*

The Local History group had a fascinating talk from Peter Hartley who kindly shared his extensive knowledge and enthusiasm for the history of Cobham, the Church and College. The whole group were very appreciative of Peter and of Janet who provided us with refreshments and made us all very welcome.

The group now plan to visit another church, one which originally fell into disrepair at the time of the 'Black Death'. This is Dode Church, now recreated by the current keeper who will tell us about Dode on Monday 2nd October at 2.00 p.m. we still have a few places left for this visit, so if you would like to come along, whether or not you are a member of the group, please email alisonmaryhillman@gmail.com



MEMBERSHIP REVIEW: 20 SEPTEMBER 2023 – from Andrew Morgan

Current membership is 383, down from 434.

19 members have resigned usually due to health reasons or moving out of the area. 32 members have let their membership lapse. We have welcomed 12 new members during August and the first half of September.

136 (35.5%) re-joined by signing up to the Member Portal and using PayPal either using their PayPal account or their debit/credit card as a PayPal guest (you don't have to have a PayPal account to renew this way). 84 (21%) used BACS. 163 (42.5%) paid by cheque (134) or cash (29).

It is really encouraging that over half (56.5%) of the membership paid their subscription electronically. This really does ease the burden for the treasurer and membership secretary.

Please do consider registering on the Member Portal during this year, you will then be ready to re-new online when the 2025 subscriptions are due. Here is the link to the relevant page on our website where you will find easy to follow full instructions:

<https://www.meophamu3a.org.uk/homepage>

(Just follow instructions 1-7 initially to register. Instructions 8-14 are to be used when it is time to renew your membership for 2025, usually starting in July).

The screenshot shows the website's navigation bar with links: Welcome, Home, Events Calendar, Members Events / Outings, Study / Special Interest Days, Group News, and Contact Us. The main content area features three columns: 'Interest Groups Page' with links for contacting John Peters, new groups, membership forms, and meeting information; 'What's on today and tomorrow' with a calendar entry for 'Art Appreciation - 21 Sep 2023 | 12:00AM - ZOOM'; and 'Picture Gallery' with a list of links including 'What is Meopham u3a?', 'Our Constitution', 'Covid19 testing', 'National Study / Events News', 'Monthly Bulletins', and 'Easy Website Index'. A Facebook icon and two 'u3a Beacon' logos are visible at the bottom right. A text box with an arrow points to the second Beacon logo, stating 'Click on this button for instructions on how to register for the Portal'.

END OF THE BULLETIN