

Editor's update



Welcome to the October edition. And a very warm welcome to all that have joined Chalfonts u3a recently. We hope you find groups to interest you and join up with old friends and make new ones. At last we could hold our monthly meeting in the Chalfont Community Centre. This was on 13 October with an informative talk from Colin Oakes on "John Hampden in Buckinghamshire" and enjoyed by 75 members and more logged in via Zoom on the day. If you missed this don't worry it was recorded and is available via the members' page on the Chalfonts u3a website. Thanks must go to Geoff Clegg our speaker co-ordinator and of course to Gary Tomlin our webmaster for arranging this hybrid meeting.

A message from our Chair – Jane Barker

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT! When our U3A started we set up a REALLY USEFUL GROUP (RUG) of members to provide practical support for the monthly members meeting and other big events. Tasks include putting out chairs, arranging tables, helping with teas and coffees and maybe with registration of members as they arrive. The group is now very small and in great need of new members. The group has a new Convenor - Sharon Duncan- who is taking over from Joyce Cripps, who has done a wonderful job for the last 6 years. Being a member of the RUG would be a lovely way to meet more members whilst also offering much appreciated help. Please come forward if you can. Let us know you can help by emailing rug@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Interest Group News – from Lesley Bedford, Interest Group Co-ordinator

The list of Groups that have started meeting in person in COVID secure venues has as expected increased with nearly all groups meeting in person now, many of course meeting in members' homes. The Leisure Centre has now seen table tennis and badminton running for a few months with no problems.

The Community Centre now has many groups meeting in person including Pilates which is about to increase to 3 groups from Monday 18th October, Yoga which is very well attended and a new group that formed some time back but has only just been able to get off the ground is ballroom dancing.

Bridge, scrabble, Textiles and Craft, the iPad group, Spanish conversation, family history have resumed meeting at the Community Centre or are about to. A couple of groups have asked to run their groups at the centre these include Crochet and Ukulele. If any other convenors would like to explore using the Community Centre as a venue do let me know by email groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk.

On a very positive note it is great to see a number of new members joining our u3a when many are losing members.

Bird watching

The Birdwatching group continues to meet and plans during October and November to visit either College Lake, Jubilee River, Marsworth Reservoir, Rye Meads and Otmoor, with or without murmurations. Also on the schedule will be a Christmas Lunch at The Spade Oak Bourne End. Keep an eye out for all the updates from Tony Micallef. If you are interested in joining this group please contact birdwatching@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Flower Arranging

Angela Kemps convenor for this group reports that the first face to face meeting will be at the Community Centre on Thursday 21 October at 2pm with a Halloween theme. Emails have already been sent to the group with full details. If you are interested in joining this group please contact flowerarranging@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

New Experiences



On September, 21 the New Experiences group took canoes and kayaks out on the Jubilee River in Taplow. It was a beautiful morning and we had great fun messing about on the river. The group has Battle Archery and a Gong Bath planned. Intrigued? Contact Angela Cranston by email newexperiences@chalfontsu3a.org.uk
Do visit the Chalfonts u3a website to see all the photos taken. Thanks to John Hardwick for being the photographer for the day

Current Affairs

The Current Affairs group was kept alive and lively during the lockdown by the majority of members using weekly Zoom meetings and these will continue. Here are a couple of the meeting titles to whet your appetite from the latest Zoom fixture list:-

Putin Town v. Biden Rovers and Woke Professors v. Free Speech United
Plus face-to-face meetings can also now restart in the Community Centre. If you're interested in joining this lively fun group email currentaffairs@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Ukelele

This new group currently meets on a Monday afternoon in members' homes and has space for others to join. Please contact James O'Flynn convenor by email ukulele@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Tai Chi

The joint Chiltern and Chalfont Tai Chi group have enjoyed a weekly Zoom collaboration for the last 18 months and the last joint Zoom meeting will be on Tuesday 26th October. Restarting face to face will require Chalfont members joining Chiltern U3A and registering for the Tai Chi Group if they wish to join in the face to face weekly event. The capacity in the new Leisure Hall in Amersham is still uncertain, so early registration is advised.

There will be a discussion with the Chalfont Convenor about a possible Chalfont TaiChi Group, however this will require finding another Tutor or another person to host the weekly Zoom events. The contact for this would be Lesley Bedford our interest group co-ordinator email groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Excursions



Brighton: We couldn't have been luckier with our first visit since 2019 to Brighton on the 8th September. We had brilliant warm sunshine without a cloud in the sky. The day started with coffee and pastries in The Jury's Inn Waterfront hotel and then we did our own thing exploring Brighton. So much to see and do – The Royal

Pavilion, the Open Top Hop on Hop off bus to the Marina, the promenade train, strolling along the pier, exploring the Lanes with all the jewellery shops or just sitting in a deckchair watching the world go by. A thoroughly enjoyable day – it was just so good to be out and about again. And of course Martin our driver did us all proud with a speedy comfortable journey.



Forthcoming trips

“Behind the Seams Tour” – Tuesday 23 November



A chance to tour the studios and workshops in Croydon of DSI the company that make the dresses and costumes for Strictly Come Dancing. Lunch afterwards at a local venue. Excursions group members have been emailed with details and as this trip has proved popular it will be repeated at a later date.

Blenheim Palace – Tuesday 7 December



This will be an afternoon/early evening trip to “The Story of the Nutcracker” decorations inside the Palace and the Illuminated Trail outdoors. And it all begins at the Christmas Market in the Great Court. Promises to be a good trip. Full details to be emailed soon.

2022 We are looking ahead to our excursions for next year but it is early days and after the Covid restrictions many venues haven't yet produced their rates and opening times for next year. We'll keep you posted...

If you're interested in joining the excursions group email:

excursions@chalfontsu3a.org.uk Tricia Reeve and Val Smith are the convenors.



Chalfonts U3A Long Weekend Walkers – A report from Mike Lawson

After two years of incubation on 10 September we arrived at Peveril of the Peak Country House, near Ashbourne in the Derbyshire Peak District. (The name Peveril is derived from William Peverel who was a Norman knight granted lands in England following the Norman Conquest), It was the first big

Chalfonts U3A get together since March 2020 and boy were we ready for it. 47 of us, down from 60 pre Covid, lined up, cheerfully chatted and caught up while we checked in. This was our sixth visit to an HF Holidays house and it was a little different to previous visits due to hygiene measures but we soon got the hang of it.

Check in was 16:00 and by 18:00 many of us were in the bar and at 19:00 we were called for dinner, which was a buffet with lots of options over the spectrum for meat lovers, fish eaters and vegetarians. After the meal the four leaders met with us to describe the four walks on offer the next day ranging from 3.5 to 9 miles.

We had perfect weather for walking around 20C cloudy with a slight breeze, The four groups shared a bus to the different drop offs and off we went. We stopped for coffee and then had packed lunch at around 13:00. We were provided with sandwiches or salads along with crisps, cake, chocolate bars, nuts, fruit: too much but very enjoyable. We completed the walk and went back to the hotel and by the time we had removed the day's grime it was time for dinner.



After dinner around a third of us took to the lounge to chat, whilst the rest found their way to an upstairs auditorium, where the staff had kindly set up, laptop, projector and screen, so we could watch the final of the US Open Tennis Championship and noisily cheered on Emma Radacanu.

Day three started again with a choice of full English, smoked haddock, Eggs Benedict, or actually anything you could dream up. We then picked up our lunch bag and set out from the hotel on one of three walks from 5.5 to 10.5 miles and from experience we know that you can add two or three miles to these estimates. Again we had a delightful walk in ideal conditions, still enjoying our new found freedoms.



Unexpectedly in the middle of the dales, we came upon a trolleybus terminus. Run by a group of enthusiasts, staff in uniform and even some of the passengers in period dress. We continued on our way enjoying the views, managed to avoid being crumpled by the myriad of bicyclists belting along what once had been a railway line, before Beeching. Stopping for lunch, we even managed to find some picnic tables.

Another unusual sight we encountered was the style of stile, which was very much in keeping with the beautiful dry stone walls, comprising two vertical stones, sloped to form a V - easier than climbing a wooden stile but still pretty tricky.



We were back by 16:00 or so, adequate time to have a couple of drinks before dinner, which again offered a plethora of choices. Many of us chose the roast beef, which looked perfect until you tried to cut it! Some said it was because the knives were not sharp enough, others leaned toward boot soles. None of us starved.

Now it was time for the famous HF quiz, run by the leaders. The questions were hotly contested and we arrived at a winner, with the runners up half a point behind. By now midnight was chiming and we bid our good-nights.

On Monday it was down for breakfast, settle the bill, pack the car and settle down to three hours or so of motorway driving. The end of another amazing CU3A walking weekend.

Now over to our Members' Musings ...



From Lesley Pease

'All bad things come from America', my mother used to say. I tend to agree regarding Trick or Treat after an off putting experience some years ago. I opened my door to a group of wizards and witches of varying sizes, smallest at the front. Leaving the door ajar, I popped into my kitchen to fetch the box of Quality Street bought specially for the occasion. To my surprise only the little ones were still there, looking rather uncomfortable. I filled their proffered baskets and it was only when I turned back and looked down the hall that I noticed the broken egg still sliding slowly down my dining room door. Yellow yolk sank to the floor and the stain on my pink carpet took considerable elbow grease to remove. I'm only sorry they got their chocolates!

From John Forsaith

Debates and listings about the greatest of man's inventions will frequently identify the printing press near to and sometimes at the top of the list.

The craft of printing finds its roots in the wooden tablets used by the Chinese in the 9th century. It was in about 1440 that Johann Gutenberg, working in Mainz, modified a wooden worm screw press to transfer an inked image onto paper and invented correctable type (the 'lead soldiers').

In 1476 a figure stood on a London wharf and watched anxiously as a wooden crate was off-loaded onto the quayside. The man was William Caxton and the contents of his precious cargo – a printing press. The printing process had arrived in England and was to set alight the intellectual energies of the nation.

He set up his press in a shop close by Westminster Abbey. In November 1477, at a simple ceremony, Edward IV was presented with a copy of the first book to be printed in England. This was titled "Dictes and Sayenges of the Phylosophers". Caxton was a person of great energy. As well as running his press, printing and binding some 100 titles he also translated many documents and in doing so contributed to the creation of a standard form English.

He died in 1491 and was buried in St Margarets, Westminster. His foreman, Wynkyn de Worde continued the printing business, moving it some years later to Fleet Street where in later years the world's premier newspaper industry was born.

Caxton's contribution to the United Kingdom was more that the mechanism of printing and the standardisation of its language. These were to be the vehicles which allowed the inherent genius of a nation to be excited and makes its special contribution to civilisation.

This is a printing office
Crossroads of civilisation
Refuge of all the arts
Against the ravages of time
Armoury of fearless truth
Against whispering rumour
Incessant trumpet of trade
From this place words may fly abroad
Not to perish on the waves of sound
Not to vary with the writer's hand
But fixed in time having been verified in proof
Friend, you stand on sacred ground
This is a printing office

Beatrice Warde 1932

Footnote

An ancestor of mine, John Smyth Forsaith started in business as a printer in 1838 near the City of London. His son took over in 1874, followed by my grandfather and then my father (all John's!) who then ran the company until the early sixties when it was merged with a large printing group. I worked in the printing and publishing industries for 25 years.

So, my vote for mankind's greatest invention is the printing press!

