

Editor's update



Welcome to the September edition and it is a bumper one with many members' musings - thank you all for your contributions. As well as our group updates I also include news that Peter Brady our Treasurer has decided to step down from the committee from the end of 2021. Peter has done a fantastic job for nearly five years and certainly deserves a break. He has steered us through the uncertain financial times of the pandemic and through a huge move towards members using online banking for payments. He has been a highly valued member of our committee who has presented the financial information in a clear and comprehensive way which has helped guide the Committee's decision making. We will miss him.

Monthly meetings

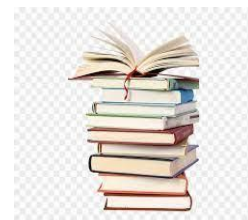
September 8 will hopefully see our last meeting totally via Zoom as we plan to resume them at the Community Centre in October. However, members can still access the talks via Zoom as we will be offering both means of attending the meetings. Then for some of us it will be back to socialising safely and seeing each other face to face whilst enjoying a cuppa! Gary Tomlin has been at the helm throughout lockdown organising the technical side and helping us all get used to all the terminology, logging in process and accessing the talks, our thanks Gary and to Geoff Clegg our speaker co-ordinator who is managing to find some interesting speakers for us.

You will all have been sent details of both our monthly speaker meeting via Zoom on Wednesday September 8 at 2pm and of a number of talks from Thames Valley Network this month which are always varied.

Book Club 2 is now meeting on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

New members welcome. Please contact Chris White

bookclub2@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Garden Visits

The garden visits group had a lovely afternoon recently in Oxfordshire on a private visit to The Grange in Chalgrove. There was much to explore in this 11 acre garden complete with babbling stream and a lake with an island. The owner gave us an interesting history of the garden and its development. One of our bigger outings with 45 people. We finished the day with homemade cake, tea and coffee. This year we have concentrated on local visits and have had some lovely experiences with lots of inspiration for our own more modest gardens!

Italian for Beginners will be reconvening on Thursday 30 September after our summer grandparenting break. We meet every Thursday at the Ethorpe hotel at 4pm. We would welcome any new members, so if you are interested, please contact Roger Austin convenor at italianbeginners@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

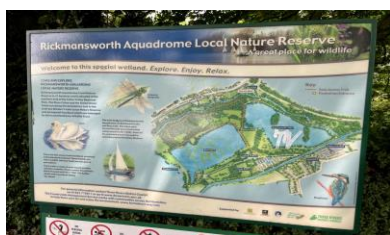


Spanish Conversation. Linda Walton who convenes this group is keen to find a few more members and is resuming face-to-face meetings in September in the Chalfont St Peter Community Centre, on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month at 3pm for one and a half hours. The focus is on general conversation rather than grammar or structured learning. If you are currently studying the language and are looking for extra opportunities to speak it or if you would like to refresh your existing skills. Please contact Linda at spanishconversation@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

New Experiences. Angela Cranston has organised another fun event for us on Friday September 17 at 11am when we will be canoeing or kayaking on the Jubilee River near Taplow. The activity will take about two hours and there will be one and half hours on the river. newexperiences@chalfontsu3a.org.uk.



Photography Group



The next scheduled meeting is on Thursday 23 September, from 2pm to 4pm. We are destined for a pleasant walk around the Rickmansworth Aquadrome. This is a delightful location and has lots of photo opportunities. With two lakes, and the Grand Union canal that runs alongside it, and bird hides, if you enjoy taking pictures of wildlife they prove to be very useful. The group last went there in the winter of 2020 in the early morning. Hopefully it will be warmer at this time of year!



We meet up at the CSP Community Centre at 1.40pm. We try to travel in as few cars as possible, and some members now don't have transport so this is not a hindrance for us. We will meet for a drink/cake etc. at the Cafe On The Park at around 3.15-3.30pm. We then travel back to CSP and should be back shortly after 4 o'clock. To find out more about the group go the 'Interest Groups' page on our website and click on 'Photography Group'. New members are always welcome. Contact Tony Darbyshire at photography@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

TaiChi



The joint Chiltern and Chalfont Tai Chi group enjoyed an open air experience in Milton's Cottage garden followed by a bring your own picnic. Discussions are underway for restarting face to face which will be relayed to all who have registered with John Bradley who is acting interim convenor.

Theatre Group Update



The response to the recent email/letter asking members if they would be interested in making their own way to the theatres, either locally or in London was insufficient to make it worthwhile to organise any group visits. The situation in respect of booking future theatre outings and travelling by coach remains unchanged for the time being. We will review the situation in a couple of months with a view to making bookings for 2022. Of the two shows that we obtained refunds, *Pretty Woman* is running until December 2021. Unless the run is extended, we will not obtain tickets. Currently there is no date for rehearsals to begin for *Hello Dolly*. Interest has been expressed in seeing *Cinderella* which currently runs until February 2022 so that could be a possibility depending on availability. Thank you for your patience.

Sheila Tarrant & Danny Robins. theatretrips@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Dovedale Peak District Walking Weekend September 10-13 update from Mike Lawson



The 60 members who were to visit Dovedale this year in 2020, have become 47 due to Covid delaying the timing which caused clashes with previous commitments. Many of the 47 have been to HF Holidays walking weekends before and we are all looking forward to some enjoyable walks, covering between 3 – 10.5 miles and even more enjoyable company. Dovedale is a beautiful part of our country and we will not be undertaking arduous climbs, rather more ambling. If we see some sunshine it will be the icing on the cake, we are certainly due some.

Walking weekends 2022



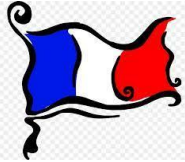
Next year Grace Hunter has two trips organised one to St. Ives and the other to Abingworth in Sussex, although one or two more members are needed to confirm the bookings. If you are interested in either of these please email:
gracehunter@greenbee.net



Now over to our Members' Musings ...



Simon Wheatley extols the value of Chalfonts u3a!



As an avid (but not necessarily fully fluent) French speaker, I was looking for something to enable me to keep some sort of continuity in the absence of being able to travel to France during the pandemic and its aftermath. A friend in France suggested that there may be something in my local u3a organisation, and so I did a quick search on the internet to see if the village of my chosen "forever home" had anything in this line. As it turns out, I had stumbled across a thriving u3a community. I immediately applied to join the most active looking French conversation group, and established that there was a meeting coming up within a couple of weeks, and at a location just the other side of the village. Once there, it was a pleasure to meet and converse with other like-minded people at various levels of ability in French, and guided by a true "prof". We have scheduled to meet next after the summer break, and I am looking forward to continuing to practise my French with (some might say "on") others...Well done Chalfonts u3a, for instantly providing me with exactly what I was looking for.

Some poems from Sheila Ross

For Desmond

How I have missed your
Beautiful, vibrant voice
Ringing out into the afternoon sunshine
Deep, deep-throated - "Ole Man River"
Touched my heart and
Reverberated my soul
Thank you, Desmond
What a talent!
What a fella!

For Elaine

Her bright and constantly positive outlook
Shines into each and every day for us all
Such an innate and complete
understanding
Her gifts fly out before her
Into our wating arms and minds
Such a very big talent
Thank you, Elaine.

A tragedy on the River Thames from John Forsaith



In September 1878 a 200ft pleasure cruiser, the Princess Alice, was rammed in the growing darkness by an empty collier, the Bywell Castle, off Tripcock Point not far from Tower Bridge. The Thames at that time in history was crowded with many ships. Londoners from the East End would go on cruiser outings downstream to the mouth of the river. The cruiser was split in two spilling passengers and crew into heavily polluted waters. 640 were to die from the collision, from drowning or subsequent poisoning. The total compliment of some 800 souls included many children on a Sunday School outing. Some were saved by the collier and others made it safely to the short.

Why my interest in the event?

In 1866, my great grandfather (another John) married a Sarah Ester Roberts. Her brother, Samuel was on board with his wife and child. He was able to save a woman and her child, but on reaching the shore discovered that they were not his family. He then returned to the vessel and recovered the bodies of his wife and child.

Unexpected visitors from Howard Dell

As with many householders, I have a birdfeeder in the garden and enjoy the display of visiting birds, all sizes and colours, and their sometimes entertaining behaviour. All this is generally viewed through glass, of course, whether the kitchen window or binocular lenses. I certainly never expected the up close and personal visit of wildlife I enjoyed on one of the last of those extremely hot days a few weeks ago.

I was in my back garden mid-afternoon doing some desultory weeding, dead-heading and deciding the best positions for transplanting some dahlia plants in a flowerbed in the centre of my large lawn when I saw something in the corner of my eye. I straightened up and was more than a little surprised to see, some 15m away, a large Mallard duck confidently leading her three teenage children at a steady walk in perfect line astern down the middle of the lawn. The young ducks were about two-thirds the size of their mother, seemingly quite capable of flight, and this extraordinary procession made its way across the grass in my direction without losing step.

They didn't pay any real attention to me as they approached but I settled to the ground so as not to alarm them, clutching a trowel which I was about to use to transplant the dahlias. When they were about 3m from me they broke step and looked around for anything of interest. The trio of young birds made soft whistling sounds as they came even closer to me while Mother Mallard stood quite still at a safe distance, looking anxious, muttering 'Be careful' noises. In what seemed no time at all, they were beside me investigating what I was doing, and nibbled softly at my fingers as I prepared the ground for the flowers. The nibbling wasn't aggressive – I assume it was more like tasting. The situation then became very silly when I found myself digging in the flowerbed with the trowel to find worms to hand-feed wild ducks! Unfortunately, juicy worms were surprisingly absent and the best I could offer were very small specimens which, even so, they quickly gobbled up. Mother Mallard looked on, somewhat concerned, but silent and unmoving. How I wished I had a camera with me - but dashing into the house to grab one wasn't an option!

Mother Mallard must have been getting increasingly concerned about this fraternisation as she gave a near inaudible command but which the children had clearly heard as they obediently turned as one and made their way back to her. 'Quick march!' came the command, and back in line and in perfect step they continued their unhurried way down the garden and disappeared into the undergrowth under the trees and into the neighbour's garden at the bottom. But where had they come from? I live in Little Chalfont and my house is a little over a mile as the duck flies from the Misbourne, and even further to the large congregation of ducks on the village pond in Chalfont St Giles. A little later I noticed my side gate was open – had they walked in from the road? From where? But what a delightful diversion on a hot afternoon.

