



## Editor's update

Welcome to this special November Remembrance edition where we think particularly of those who contributed to our country in so many ways and we wear our poppy with pride, symbolic of those times. I must also say a big thank you to those members who sent in their amazing stories for **'Members' Wartime Musings'**

Details of this month's meeting on November 10th have already been circulated along with login details so do hope you will join us either in the hall or via Zoom.

Included now are details of the December meeting on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> at 2pm where June Howlett Road Safety Officer, Transport for Bucks will talk about something dear to our hearts **"Mature drivers and our driving."** "Each time you have a MOT it checks that your car is roadworthy, so why not consider giving yourself a driver MOT?"

June joined Buckinghamshire in 2002 and is responsible for the delivery of road safety education, training, and publicity across the county.

Some of the areas June will cover are driving at night, awareness, technology – and many new factors that affect us all.

Nigel Trotman forwarded this disturbing article from BBC Local News. Details of man losing his house. Land Registry Property Alerts for protection against this sort of fraud.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-59069662>

**A Message from our Chair Jane Barker. REOPENING.** I am delighted to report that the majority of our groups are now meeting again in person, including at the Community Centre and Leisure Centre. There are some extra measures in place and so far, things are going well. Many thanks to all our Convenors for the extra effort they have made to arrange face to face meetings again. Our group co-ordinator, Lesley Bedford, continues to offer invaluable support to the Convenors as things get back to near normal. I am also pleased to report that our new Ballroom dancing group has started meeting and also the ukulele group is up and running. We continue to have new members joining our u3a which is very encouraging.

**BOUNCY EMAILS.** We are aware of an issue with email replies from a few members to Convenors not getting through to the intended recipient which is very frustrating for all concerned. The issue appears to be that some of these emails get "stuck" (technical term) going through the website on their way to the recipient's address. We are working on solutions to address this as a **priority** so please keep using the Beacon system which provides a secure way of sending out communications and reducing risks of scams and hacks to personal emails for our members and convenors. Please contact Gary Tomlin [webmaster@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@chalfontsu3a.org.uk) if you are experiencing problems receiving emails.

## HELP NEEDED



As Peter, our treasurer, is putting away his u3a calculator from January next year we are in need of help for our incoming treasurer.

The role of Finance Officer was introduced in October 2018 as our u3a expanded its activities and has proved a valuable asset to the u3a. It is this role that we are looking to fill with an enthusiastic and numerate person.

### The role is outlined below:

To support and assist the Treasurer, specifically to manage the banking, payment, and accounting for the following u3a activities:

#### Membership:

- New members: log new member online membership payments and update Membership Secretary regularly.
- Annual Membership renewal:
  - Assist Membership Secretary in establishing annual renewal protocol.
  - log online membership payments and update Membership Secretary regularly.

#### Room hire / court bookings:

- To monitor and manage the cost of all room bookings / court booking in line with current policy,
- Ensure that groups are contributing the correct amounts for room hire / court bookings in line with current policy.
- Assist the Group Co-Ordinator in setting member group activity contributions where appropriate.
- To recommend changes to subsidies to ensure that they remain affordable.
- To provide regular reports on activity.

To deputise for the Treasurer in their absence.

If you are numerate, like detail, can use excel spreadsheets and are prepared to put a few hours a week we would love to hear from you.

Please contact [Chris White financeofficer@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:Chris.White@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

## Update from Lesley Bedford Group Coordinator

### Convenors Meeting and Lunch

It was lovely to see so many of our group convenors (51) on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November, in person for the first time in a long while. It was a wonderful opportunity to discuss some of the changes we are looking at to keep membership of our u3a as fair as we can for all members as well as having a very enjoyable two course lunch. The committee are very grateful indeed for all the work that group convenors put into running their groups and if anyone is keen to start a group or help in some way, please do let us know.

A new group we are hoping to start up for members is [Indoor Short Mat Bowls](#) which will meet on Friday afternoons at the Chalfonts Community centre between 2-4pm. Please contact in the first instance [Lesley Bedford groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:Lesley.Bedford@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

**TaiChi:** We have been extremely fortunate to have had zoom sessions with the Chilterns u3a Tai Chi Group and are now looking to start at least one group meeting in person at the Chalfonts Community Centre with a qualified demonstrator. If you are interested

**Lesley Bedford** [groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

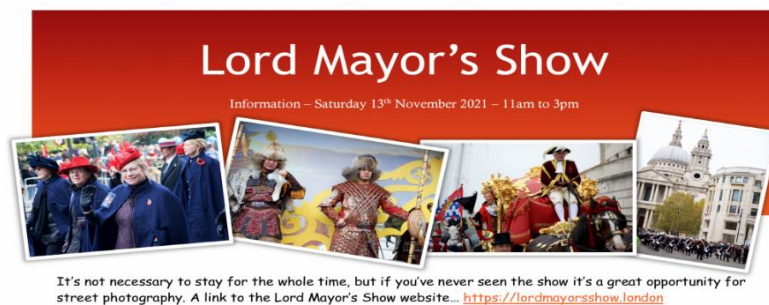
**Flower Arranging** The theme of our meeting this month on 18th November at 2pm in the Community Centre is 'Making an arrangement with foliage' (no flowers). After this we will have a bow making demonstration and practise ready for our Christmas wreath making at the December meeting (Thurs 16/12, 2 - 5 pm).

Please contact Angela Kemps convenor at [flowerarranging@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:flowerarranging@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

**New Experiences** Remember playing Cowboys and Indians as a child? The New Experiences Group regressed to their childhood with Battle Archery in October. Two teams, armed with bows and arrows, competed to eliminate the opposition. Extra points could be won by hitting targets but that put yourself in danger of being shot. Of course, special foam tipped arrows were used. There were several battles, but in the end the best team won. (The other team might disagree.) All in all, a really fun new experience. Some photos on our website.

Contact Angela Cranston for more information [newexperiences@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:newexperiences@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

## Photography Group



The group are going into the City of London to see and take photographs of the Lord Mayor of London's Show on Saturday 13th November 2021. The event starts at 11am and usually finishes around 3pm.

Initially they are meeting at Pret A Manger at: 217 The

Strand (close to the Royal Courts of Justice.) Afterwards they will meet again at 2.15pm for lunch/drink at Pret A Manger.

The Photography Group page has more details of this event in a pdf on the website. This is the link: <https://chalfontsu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/photography/>

The group welcomes more members. If anyone would like to join, then contact Tony Darbyshire convenor at [photography@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:photography@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

## Current Affairs

Are you for free speech at universities?

Do you want to macerate Macron?

Do you want to separate Scotland?

Is Johnson a joke?

Was COP 26 a copout?

Have you got an HGV licence?

Is China more dangerous than Russia?

Should we ask to re-join the EU?

Should we help the NHS or is it there to help us?

You are welcome to Zoom along to lend your lifetime's experience on Wednesdays at 10.30 am. For more information email: [currentaffairs@chalfontsu3a.org.uk](mailto:currentaffairs@chalfontsu3a.org.uk)

## Now over to our Members' Wartime Musings



I would like to include my mum's recollection as a 7-year-old child in Kenya, part of East Africa during the Second World War. On the occasions when there was a chance of bombing, a nominated warden, with a black band around his arm would come and inform the residents that there would be a siren and the whole household had to hide underneath their beds. They had to take snacks for the children in case they got hungry. One of my mum's brothers had a healthy appetite and so they had to stuff the snacks in a drum, push it underneath first and then the rest of the family would follow.

When a siren sounded everything stopped cyclists, cars (although not many,) buses, and trains would come to a halt. Shops would put their shutters down and close.

At school they had a long basement built in the school grounds and the children would hide there. On one occasion she remembers the children couldn't get into the basement as there was a snake in there and so they had to be sent home. They were assembled in groups of 10-15 until the parents or guardians picked them up. My mother couldn't be picked up because her father was away working in the railways, and her mother was looking after her younger brothers and sister. A neighbour who lived nearby was asked by my grandmother whether he would be prepared to pick her up with his children. He refused as he was afraid and didn't want to take responsibility. The security guard asked whether my mum's home came first before the neighbour's, and she said yes. The guard told her to follow the neighbour until she reached home safely.

When the siren rang the second time it meant the residents were allowed to come out from their hiding places.

She also remembers that the windows in the house were taped in crosses all the way down so that if the windows broke the glass would not fly everywhere. At night curtains were drawn by residents who had curtains. Those that didn't used newspapers to block the light. Even light bulbs were covered. The people ate early and formed this habit because of the blackout. There were also water shortages. Some residents had mains supplies but for the others a tanker was used to supply the water and only two containers were allowed although it was difficult to know whether people would be coming from the same household.

This has been shared [by Siddarth Patel](#) whose mother is 89 years old, and her name is Sushilaben Apabhai Patel.

[Pam Rich](#) has a recollection closer to home! Back in 1940, my sister and I (accompanied by Ida, our live-in home help) were evacuated to Blackpool from our home in Wembley. Our parents were unable to leave because they ran the dental surgery from the house. However, they hated sending us away and our "evacuations" never lasted long. Blackpool was their third attempt.



We stayed in a boarding house, where we were fed (and hated!) Brown Windsor soup daily. The guests seemed so old and were perpetually knitting socks for the troops. This was December and very cold out but, as we were "on holiday," we were taken for walks every day. The sea was always rough and, one day, we watched someone being dragged from the sea. That attempted rescue failed; we were told later.

I turned six while we were there and I remember talking to our parents on the telephone, feeling abandoned to be away from them on my special day. There, you can now calculate my present age! I remember a birthday cake. My sister and I missed our soft toy bunnies horribly and they arrived about then, dressed in pretty dresses which our mother had made. I wish now that I had kept mine.



### **This recollection comes from Sandra Dawson**

My mother and her identical twin were born in Rome in 1921, they would have been 100 last week. Born one of five children to Primo and Antoinette, they led a simple happy life.

My mother Elena was training to be a tailoress and was clothes mad, she could make anything, and always had the

latest fashion, she was stunningly beautiful with long auburn hair. In 1944 there was a heavy bombing in Rome led by the Allies, it was called the bombing of San Lorenzo and I discovered quite recently that there is footage online. My grandparents lost a huge chunk of their family in the bombing. There is now a memorial garden in their honour.

My mother's twin Augusta was already married when my mother and father met. They ran rings around him pretending, Augusta was Elena and vice versa. He had been a baker in the army, and together with the other bakers they sold fresh dough to the locals. They would come into the camp skinny and go out fat having wrapped the dough around their waist and covered it with their shirts! It was at the end of the war in 1945/6 when he was stationed in Rome being part of the occupying forces and there were still dances going on with the soldiers and the local girls. My father Derek was tall, dark, and handsome, my mother was petite curvy and beautiful, looking very much like the film star Rita Hayworth with long auburn hair, and they fell madly in love instantly. His Italian wasn't very good, and he would tell her she had two eyes like stalla (which means stables, he meant to say stars, stella!)



There was still rationing in Rome so he told my grandmother that he would bring her some cane (cane is dog, carne is meat) but then he was stationed in Rimini. Mum couldn't live without him and together with her father they were taken there in an army truck, and they married with my grandfather as a witness.

I would like to write it was a match made in heaven, but unfortunately my father hid a very dark secret! After my father was demobbed, they came to England, mum always wanted to travel and always wanted to visit Russia, so she was very excited about this new adventure. Little did she know she had married a half Russian, half Dutch Jew! My Dutch grandmother Magritte wasn't too happy about this union; it is not so much she didn't like her; it was about religion!

My father's family his two brothers and two sisters all lived in the same old Georgian house, in the east end of London with each couple having a floor each. My mother became pregnant with me in 1948, that's when things start going wrong, with my father saying if I had been a boy I would have to be circumcised! My mother said no way unless it was medically needed. I was born in 1949, I wasn't a boy! and I was baptised straight away. The marriage was by then in trouble, mum did not want to live with his parents and found it difficult to cope with the whole religion thing. She still loved my dad but couldn't stand it, so she took me to Italy. Eventually she returned to England to help save up for their own house but left me in Rome with my grandparents and I came back when I was six. When I started school and I couldn't speak English, I found it very difficult to settle, especially when some children told me to go back to my own country!! I have always felt I was on the outside looking in, or the inside looking out. In later life I always had friends of all nationalities, colour, and religion.

### **Lesley Pease has a very vivid wartime memory**

I lived by the Thames during the war and when I began school in Egham, my mother regularly took me across the peaceful green expanse of Runnymede on the back of her bike. Imagine my shock when returning home one day to find that, it had become a hive of industry. Everywhere we looked hundreds of soldiers were chest deep in the trenches, they were digging to prevent the enemy from landing on inviting runways. Runnymede had turned brown!

## Howard Dell shares his wartime childhood memories.

Rather than tell a story I have pulled out a few headlines of my experiences. Folk can easily fill in the detail of the events but collectively it is a surprising list for an ordinary suburban little boy to have experienced (and not much different from other crumbles' memories, either!)

- 1 Collecting long ribbons of aluminium foil from the roads on the way to school. Luftwaffe 'window': radar-blinding chaff).
2. Playing with the fins from German Incendiary bombs that my father brought home after a fireman's night work in the East End blitz.
3. Cowering with my mother in the Morrison shelter in the front room as a V1 growled overhead
4. Being lifted up by an uncle in his garden in Leamington Spa to have a better view of the flaming horizon that was the Coventry air raid.
5. Asking my mother to explain what she meant when she shouted with excitement when reading the Daily Express.  
"The Germans are retreating at El Alamein!" Her explanation was memorable," Their tanks are going backwards!"
6. Walking with my father through the rubble of what remained of Coventry Cathedral's nave a couple of months after the air raid.
7. Seeing the aftermath of a V2 rocket that fell about a quarter of a mile from our house.
8. Standing in our back garden in Hayes at 8am on a day in 1944 looking up at a sky full of low flying aircraft, squadron after squadron of all types with unusual white painted bands round their wings, all roaring to the southwest and Normandy. An hour later: silence.

## Maurice Botley

This contains excerpts from my 'Memories of 1934-1956' memoir completed about a year ago.

My father was born in 1908, so when World War II started in 1939, he was 31 and too old to be 'called up' (conscripted) for military service. He was then working at Fremlins Brewery in Maidstone, Kent as a Brewer's Drayman, driving Shire horses to make deliveries to local pubs in and around Maidstone, Kent.



However, as the war continued, the eligible birth years for 'calling up' became progressively earlier. For 1908 births this happened in 1943. So, my father was summoned to the local 'calling up' office in the town where he passed his medical as A1 and received his initial posting to a basic training camp in Wales, with travel instructions and railway ticket.

However, when he returned to the brewery and told the Transport Manager his response was "We will see about that." He immediately went to the 'calling up' office and on his return told my father to destroy the travel instructions and ticket. He had persuaded the office that my father was doing work of '**NATIONAL MPORTANCE**' so **MUST** be **EXEMPTED** from military service This was justified by there being in and around the town several large barracks which relied on the brewery to supply **BEER**, considered **ESSENTIAL** to maintain **MORALE!**

The result of my father being exempted from military service meant he could remain at home which was very pleasing for the whole family. He could maintain his promise to visit his mother Rhoda, sister Mildred (both now widows) and her two daughters, then aged 14 and 8) as often as possible. Mildred's husband, Syd(ney), was in the Royal Navy and was killed in January 1941 when his ship, HMS Southampton, which was part of an escort convoy for supply ships from Alexandria to Malta. was dive-bombed by Italian Stuka aircraft and set on fire from stern to stern. About eighty seamen were killed on the lower decks, and as the ship was so badly damaged another British ship scuttled it with torpedoes, sinking in the Mediterranean near Malta.

Fortunately, my immediate family (older brother, Mum & Dad, maternal Granddad) all survived the War!

In the Southeast with frequent air raids, it could have been very different - and nearly was! During one air raid my father opened the front door to investigate and seconds before emerging, a VERY LARGE (about 8"/20cm) piece of still VERY HOT shrapnel, (from an anti-aircraft shell), fell in front of him. A second later it could have struck his head - with dire results!

**Eileen Turnham's memories are shared.** As a schoolgirl I travelled to Richmond on the train every day. We shared the building with the Boys' School and the girls went in the morning and the boys in the afternoon. We didn't do much homework as we spent every night in the air raid shelter my father had built in the garden

At school we took our General Schools Certificate, as it was called, sitting in a corridor. When the warning went, we marched to the shelter where we had to sit in silence. If it was a short raid, we went back to finish the exam. If it went on too long the exam was cancelled, and we were allocated the marks the teacher suggested. In morning assembly our Head Teacher read out the names of the girls who had been killed.

Kew and Barnes saw a lot of devastation and many people including school friends were killed. I still remember girls in my form whose lives were cut so short.

I think it was in 1944 that we were doodle bugged. I remember walking round the rubble of our house. Even clothes in the wardrobes were covered in broken glass. The large table and a heavy treadle sewing machine somehow were found upside down. A kind friend living nearby put us up and we lived in her house for the rest of the war when eventually our house was rebuilt.

We got used to the blackout, streets were in total darkness, not even a torch was allowed. Train lights were extinguished at every station. One night we saw an aunt onto a train going home. It turned out to be a troop train and she was carried nonstop to Waterloo with a train full of soldiers. We laughed about it afterwards but at the time she was not amused. I don't remember how she got home

My two brothers were in the forces, one in Germany and one with the Gurkhas in Burma. One sister was evacuated with the Civil Service to Nottingham, and one worked with the Post Office in London. I was the youngest and managed to get some sort of an education. We were an incredibly lucky family, somehow, we all survived.

