



Editor's update

Welcome to the March edition, 'Spring has not quite sprung yet! but I hope you enjoy the news about our celebration event, interest groups and of course Members' Musings. There's information too about membership renewal.

Chalfonts u3a Celebration event - Tuesday 5th April 2-4pm

Not too long to wait now until our Birthday! Come and join us at The Hub in Church Lane, Chalfont St Peter. It's a home-grown celebration with our talented members providing entertainment, demonstrations, and information about the interest groups you can be part of in our U3A. There will be homemade cakes available too! Feel free to bring your friends for a fun afternoon, or just come on your own and chat to other U3A members.



Membership Renewal for 2022-2023

The next membership year starts on the 1 April 2022 and runs through until 31 March 2023. The subscription will be £20 per person. At the end of March, you will be sent an email with your membership number and information on how to renew. **There is nothing for you to do until you receive these instructions.** Those not using email will receive a letter. For any queries, please email Val Smith at membershipsecretary@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Update

Interest Groups Update

Interest Group Directory

If you haven't already seen it on the Chalfonts u3a website do click on the link below to see the complete list of interest groups. Just so much is on offer!

<https://chalfontsu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/>

Mixed Walking Cricket



HOW ZAT!! We had our Taster session at Chalfonts Leisure Centre where 25 budding cricketers turned up. Bucks Cricket provided 2 coaches and from the feedback received everyone enjoyed it. We are now going to run an 8-week coaching course on Tuesday mornings from 10-11am starting 8th March, so if there were any members who would like to join us, please get in touch with Eileen Powell mixedwalkingcricket@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Coffee Morning update

We had another very successful coffee morning at the Greyhound on Wednesday 23rd February. We are holding our **next one on Thursday 24th March** at 10 am once again at the Greyhound. Anyone who would like to come along please let me know as we need to ensure we have enough coffee and croissants. The cost is £3.50 cover the croissant and tea/coffee. Please email Lesley on groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk to say if you are coming along.

Excursions

At last we can get out and about again. The excursions are proving very popular so, like the Theatre group, we have had to introduce a ballot system if a trip is over-subscribed. If numbers allow we will do our best to re-run a trip.

What's coming up:

Bletchley Park – 16 March. Those on this trip have been notified of their place.

This outing will be repeated and those who didn't get a place on the first trip will be given priority.

Maritime Museum and day in Greenwich: Friday 1. April (ballot has been necessary)

Arundel Castle & Tulip Festival – Tuesday 26 April

Queen's Platinum Jubilee: Royal Windsor & guided tour of the Castle – Thursday 5 May

About four weeks before each trip members of the excursions group will be contacted with information about the excursion. If you have any suggestions of where you might like to go as a group do email excursions@chalfontsu3a.org.uk.

And, thank you to those who have already contacted us.

Val Smith & Tricia Reeve (Joint Convenors of the Excursions group)

Mah-jong Group

WE ARE BACK and in full swing!



We are delighted to say that the Mah-jong Group which has grown in numbers no longer has a waiting list. We are fortunate that from 13 April we will be playing in the Tony Graham Room at Chalfont St Peter Community Centre.

Games will take place on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month starting at 10.30 am. Due to the changes announced recently by the u3a Committee there is a small charge to cover hire costs and refreshments.

Whether you are a complete novice, an expert or somewhere in between and would like to join us please send me an email. We predominately follow the British rules but have made some tweaks to improve our experience.

We will be at the Chalfont U3A Celebration Event so why not come along, say hello, and have a go!

Sam Patel mahjong@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Photography Group



Next Meeting Thursday 17 March 2-4pm approx.

We are visiting the lovely market town of Wendover this month. Lots of historic buildings and fascinating houses, as well as a busy shopping area. All have excellent photo opportunities.

We plan to meet up at the CSPCC at 1.25pm and travel in as few cars as possible. Members of the group will be sent an email reminder a few days before with details of the café we will meet in for tea/coffee/cake before we travel back to CSP.

If anyone, whether a member of the group or not, wants to join us then please write to the convenor (Tony) at photography@chalfontsu3a.org.uk Visit our monthly meeting plan <https://chalfontsu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/photography/>

Yoga Our classes are fully subscribed at the moment, so after Easter we will be moving to new locations so that we can accommodate more members in the classes. After Easter, our Friday class will move to 0930 to 1045 in the Community Centre main hall and our Tuesday class will move to 11.15 to 1215 in The Studio at Chalfont Leisure Centre. If you'd like to try a class, please get in touch with Geoff Clegg yoga@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Now over to our Members' Musings ...



This highly relevant piece was sent by **Sue Shaw** reflecting our thoughts and concerns for our world today.

I was musing about how lucky I am to be living in a democratic society where we can satirise our politicians without being arrested and as a grandmother, I am not learning how to use a gun or make Molotov cocktails to protect that freedom. I asked my son-in-law what he would like for his birthday, his reply was "world peace". Imagine.

A RETURN TO CRICKET by David Liston

In my early twenties and beyond, cricket meant everything to me. Although I hadn't succeeded in my ambition to become a professional cricketer, I played at every potential opportunity. That was on both days at weekends, leaving work early for evening matches and taking days off for knockout matches. Even after I met my now wife, habits didn't change. The ageing process eventually led to me forgoing my favourite pastime. The problem was that cricket was something at which I was good. As a left arm spin bowler, I played on well beyond my fitness capabilities because I could still take wickets, even though my body relentlessly told me to give up.

When I was forced to end my cricketing career, I took up golf. I found another sport with similar obsessive qualities as cricket, but it didn't take as long to play. Also, I found I could improve my golf to a competent level.

Did I miss cricket? In truth, yes, but I simply walked away from it. I didn't go to watch my club play any matches I'd so enjoyed; I gave up any friendships I'd developed through cricket. It was as if I was compartmentalising my life and golf, was my new activity. I was sad and hurt not to play cricket and that pain did not allow me to look back with any pleasure.

Until recently. I have found that as you get older; you reflect on the past more frequently and that led to my making certain changes, which I'm glad I did. I have attended a few of the annual dinners of my old cricket club, the Buccaneers, and have gained pleasure in seeing some of my old teammates, some of whose sons now play. I have re-joined Surrey County Cricket Club as a member, where I return to the area I grew up and went to school as a child. I met a former school pal, with whom I played in the first team over fifty years ago, and he rekindled my memories of when we played together. And now, I'm playing cricket again.

This time, it is with the U3A, and it is walking cricket. The taster session was amazing. There was a good turnout of almost 30 people, most of whom were women and many of them had not played cricket before, other than on the beach with their families. But they had come along for the experience, to meet people and, perhaps, take part in the eight-week coaching that would follow. I couldn't help getting involved. I tried to help some ladies with their bowling techniques and offered some advice on batting. Some of the opposition accused me of coaching, which they thought was not allowed?

But I really enjoyed being involved, and I have signed up for the next eight weeks. This is the strength of the U3A. There is something for everyone and everyone enjoys doing something.

MAD MARCH O'HARE – by Denise Beddows

Eileen O'Hare was PA to our military attaché in Karachi back in the nineteen seventies. She was tall – around five feet eleven in her stockinged feet, I would guess, not that anyone wore stockings or socks in the heat of a summer in Pakistan. Her height wasn't the most noticeable thing about her, however, as she was also exceptionally thin. She used to boast that, whenever the Commander came looking for her and she didn't want to be found, she would simply turn sideways-on, and he wouldn't spot her. I'm not sure this was true, though, because she was also endowed with the brightest, reddest, carrotiest hair I've ever seen.

Back then, in my salad days, I used to run with the ladies' Hash House Harriers, a running group. Many UK diplomatic posts overseas have a Hash House Harriers for the men of the embassy or high commission, and a few have a ladies' equivalent group. Eileen O'Hare was the leader of our ladies' Hash, and quite fast and fearless she was, too. She liked to choose a different route for us to run each Wednesday afternoon, and she would head out of the office in her lunchtime, armed with a sack of shredded confidential waste, to deposit it in little clumps around the countryside for us to follow later. This was a useful process, especially as it helped any slow stragglers, who might fall behind the main body of the group, to avoid getting lost. Our run would end up at the Consulate club, with cold drinks all round and a good, hot curry prepared by the chef.

I was much slimmer and fitter myself back then, and I used to be sprinting up with the front-runners. In the bright sunlight, Eileen's hair would shine out, luminous and glowing, providing a beacon for us to follow. The routes she set would be tough – up hills, across nullahs (ditches), through fields of cannabis, and around small villages, where the locals thought they were seeing things, as women in track suits flashed past, shouting 'on, on!' Any bullock we should meet along a hill side path would instantly turn tail and flee in the opposite direction. Any venomous snakes hiding in the undergrowth would hear the thunder of our feet long before we got anywhere near and would wisely slither away.

So fearless was Eileen in the pace she set and the terrain she chose, that we christened her 'Mad March O'Hare'. It was almost inevitable that, one day, her impetuosity and daring would get her into trouble. One hot, Karachi afternoon, we were charging through a patch of hillside jungle, when, unexpectedly, we found ourselves in the middle of a construction site. We saw Eileen, undaunted, leap over heaps of bricks, dodge around a cement mixer and shortcut through a roofless, half-constructed house, to emerge again on the other side. As we followed her, we found ourselves being propelled by gravity down a sharp incline, at the bottom of which was something large, half sunk into the ground. With the sun shining off it, this appeared to be a big, black metal box, some eight feet square. Seeing the box as a potential springboard, our 'Mad March O'Hare' leapt onto it – and promptly disappeared!

We all halted by this big square box and realised it was actually a septic tank for the newly constructed houses, and what was more, it was full and there was no lid on the tank. Clearly, the builders had been using the tank for its intended purpose for some months now. Moments later, Eileen re-surfaced. At least we assumed it was Eileen, for her hair was no longer red, but more a sort of khaki colour, and entirely matted with pungent solids. Coughing and spluttering, she managed to heave herself out of the septic tank and up onto the ground. Several helping hands which were extended were immediately withdrawn, as it became evident that she was coated in human and buffalo faecal matter. Eileen promptly started retching and heaving as, with outstretched arms, she approached first one of the ladies, and then several more, beseeching them for help in cleaning herself off. Understandably, if unforgivably, everyone backed away.

Back at the spot where we had parked our cars, an argument broke out as to who would give Eileen a lift home. The lady who had given her a lift there declined, saying she had young children and needed a clean car for the following morning's school run. Several others claimed exemption on the basis of having to drive their husbands to a diplomatic 'do' later that night. Eventually, a compromise was reached. The lady with the oldest car, which happened to be yours truly, was selected to take Eileen back, but not before everyone else had scoured their car boots for plastic bags, paper sacks and school shoe bags, to cover up my passenger seat and footwell.

With all the windows of my Ford Cortina fully wound down and travelling at a steady 20 miles an hour to avoid the breeze spreading noxious droplets over my pale beige upholstery, I delivered our 'Mad March Hare' back to her house, where she showered herself off in her manservant's toilet in the corner of her back yard before running herself a hot bath indoors. Later that afternoon, poor Eileen had her stomach pumped by our RAF nurse. Eileen never ran on the 'Hash' again. She took up bandage rolling for the lepers on Wednesday afternoons instead.

