



Hello everyone ...

As I write this the weather is due to turn very cold so I hope you are all keeping warm and looking after each other where possible.

In a couple of weeks' time we reach the Winter Solstice, at precisely 9.47pm on Wednesday 21 December. I always feel that the solstice is the turning of a corner; the days start to lengthen, and we have something to look forward to. There may still be a lot of cold weather to get through but we have passed a milestone en route to Spring.

Of course this month is taken over by the Christmas celebrations and the prospect of the turning of the year. I think many of you will be partying, shopping, wrapping, planning, and cooking, in varying proportions, but I hope you have time to read and enjoy the newsletter.

Chalfonts u3a committee would like to wish all our members a Merry Christmas. May your celebrations turn out to be just the way you would wish.

Val Darbyshire, Newsletter Editor

Monthly meeting dates for your diary:

14 December at 2pm - A Christmas Special!



A monthly meeting with a difference!
We will be entertained by Ventriloquist & Magician David Tomkins, who has some super reviews from local groups.

We'll hold a bit of a social get together after the show and are planning to serve mince pies and mulled wine as well as tea, coffee, and biscuits.

So wear your Christmas jumper, Santa hat and some tinsel in your hair to join our early Christmas get together!

Don't forget to bring a cash donation towards refreshments!



14 January 2023 at 2pm - Slovenia - A Beautiful Balkan Secret with Nick Brazil

This little-known Balkan country only gained its independence in the 1990s after a short war. Although quite a small country, it is rich in beautiful scenery, architecture, and history. Included in this is one of the most beautiful Balkan cities – Ljubljana

8 February 2023 at 2pm - A History of Moor Park Mansion

Alison Wall will introduce us to the history of Moor Park, starting from the time of Cardinal Wolsey down to the present day, including its use during the Second World War for the planning of the Battle of Arnhem.

News from our Interest Groups

Garden Visits

Where would you like to go? If you have an idea about a garden to visit that would be an interesting trip for u3a members, please let us know. You can email the Garden Visits group at gardenvisits@chalfontsu3a.org.uk.

New Members Coffee Morning

After our very successful inaugural coffee morning for new members in November we are doing it again! This time on Wednesday January 4th 10-11 at Gerrards Cross Community Association, East Common.

£3.50 for tea/coffee/cakes/pastry but you must book your place as catering numbers required. Contact Eileen Powell vicechair@chalfontsu3a.org.uk.

Weekend Group

Following an initial discussion after the last Members' Meeting it has been decided that a new group will be formed. Initially it will be called the Weekend Group – some meetings will take place on Saturdays and some on Sundays.

As with other u3a groups, the idea is that all members contribute in accordance with the u3a ethos - by the members for the members. So one or two people are needed to act as administrators and convenors, and everyone can contribute by organising outings. These can be simple - such as a walk & a lunch somewhere, a visit to the cinema, a bus trip somewhere- only on a Saturday obviously - or going in cars maybe to a National Trust property or a garden centre.

It was decided to hold a first meet-up on Saturday 14th January 2023 at Smith's Garden Centre, (Oxford Road, Denham, Uxbridge) maybe for a cup of tea and cake at 2.30. The garden centre is accessible by car and the 104 bus from CSP, CSG and GX does stop nearby,.

If you would like to join this group and/or attend this first meeting please contact Val Darbyshire at newsletters@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Birdwatching

Members of the Birdwatching group recently went to RSPB Otmoor for the starling murmuration at dusk and we weren't disappointed, though numbers of birds were down on previous years.

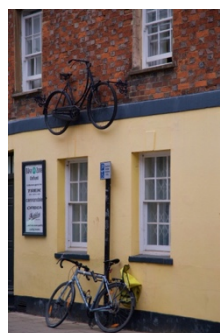
We enjoyed the afternoon and of course managed to fit in some lunch!



Photography Group

Our final meeting for 2022 will be in the CSP Community Library on Thursday 15th December, from midday to 2pm. Our discussion, over lunch with a mince pie and some hot seasonal mulled wine (non-alcoholic!), is to go over what we've done this year, and then consider what we want to do in 2023.

This year we've had some nice trips out to various locations including Uxbridge, the National Trust property in West Wycombe, Wendover, Princes Risborough and Oxford. The pictures we've submitted this month were taken by group members.



If you fancy having a go at guessing where the pictures were taken, then we will leave you to make up your own mind! (Sorry no prizes, but I'm sure you will have a bit of intellectual stimulation to figure out the locations, but some are easier than others!)

We always welcome new members. If you're interested in joining the group then please contact Tony Darbyshire by writing to: photography@chalfontsu3a.org.uk to register your interest.

Coffee Morning group

The group had a great coffee morning in the Greyhound, in the dining room as there were so many of us; over 30 attended. Thank you everyone who came for the delicious croissants and coffee. It is such a relaxing way to get to know other people.

There is another coffee morning on 22 December at the Greyhound at 10 am. Contact the Group Co-ordinator if you would like to attend so we can be sure we have sufficient supplies. Coffee and croissant is £3.50 per person. groupcoordinator@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Yoga groups

Our regular yoga groups will be taking a break over Christmas. So we miss two classes, between 20th and 30th December inclusive.

If you'd like to try one of our classes, then the link is below, or use the contact form on the website.

We held a very successful Chair Yoga class on 1st December, with 9 members trying it out. We have another trial session on 9th December, and then we'll see if we have enough numbers to start a regular class in the New Year.

If you'd like to try Chair Yoga on the 9th December class at 11:00 at the Community Centre, please get in touch! yoga@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Portuguese

The new Portuguese language group is looking for more members. So, if you're dreaming of your next holiday (*and who isn't!*) and being able to enjoy conversing with the local people contact the convenor Brian Wapshare at portuguese@chalfontsu3a.org.uk for more details.

Theatre Group.

The group is going on their first outing under the new team - 35 members are going to the Mill at Sonning to see Top Hat and enjoy a meal beforehand.

Our next venture is to Noises Off on 26th January where we have managed to get 54 tickets so it should be a great evening.

Theatre Group convenors: Angela and Howard theatretrips@chalfontsu3a.org.uk

Science & Technology

Many of you may remember before Covid there was the Science & Technology group which used to meet in the CSP Community Centre once a month for approx. 90 minutes under the direction of the then convenor Cathy Williams who has recently moved away from the areas. After this period of inactivity, depending on the level of interest from members, we would like to commence a programme for this group of meetings and activities which will prove of interest.

The format previously was organising speakers and presentations with a S&T bias plus a series of site visits to places such as Bletchley Park, Greatmoor Incinerator, Maple Lodge STW and the National Physical Laboratory. Clearly the meeting format could also develop into discussions of topical issues in this broad field plus any other ideas from members.

If you are interested in attending, please contact the convenor. We would also welcome input from the wealth of experience within the U3A any potential speakers on relevant topics whilst ensuring it is not a too onerous burden on their time.

Please contact Richard Simmons on science@chalfontsu3a.org.uk so that we can ascertain the level of interest in taking this group forward.

Pickleball

The Pickleball group is now up and running, and we had our first indoor session at the Chalfont Leisure Centre at the end of November. 17 u3a members turned up to play and had an entertaining hour of the new bat and ball game that is rapidly gaining popularity here and round the world.

Indeed, the must-have Christmas present this year, at least for several U3A members, is a Pickleball bat.

With Winter on its way, we have packed up outdoor Pickleballing, and will play indoors for a while. The picture shows Kathy Campbell in full swing at our last outdoor Pickleball session.



There are a few places left in the group, please email Richard Cranston at Pickleball@u3a.org.uk. We meet Tuesdays at 1.30pm.

Excursions



We've had a full year of excursions and visited Bletchley Park, The Maritime Museum, Greenwich Village, Arundel Castle and the Tulip Festival, Windsor Castle for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Savill Gardens, Chichester, Fishbourne Roman Palace, the Windsor Great Park Illuminated Light Show and we finished the year with a seasonal trip to Kew Gardens for their Christmas Light Display.

Thank you to all those who have given us ideas for outings. It's much appreciated and we look into them all to see if they are viable for group visits and suitable to add to our programme.



Planning for 2023 has already started! In February we've arranged an historical guided tour of the world-famous Harrow School followed by afternoon tea – details will follow.



Other trips will follow, and we hope to visit for example: Hatfield House, Kelmscott Manor, Chiswick Park, Chartwell, and Bowood House. Plus a day by the seaside - and much more!

Do keep your suggestions coming in - excursions@chalfontsu3a.org.uk



Season's Greetings and Happy New Year.

Tricia Reeve and Val Smith - Excursions Group

Convenors' Meeting

We had a very enjoyable lunch for our convenors last month, but we did give them some work to do! In groups they worked their way through some questions about running a group and we wanted to draw some key issues from this exercise. These are the main points.

1. It is important that there are clear lines of communication with group members and if helpful a co-convenor could be a suggestion to share the running of the group.

2. Promote your group's activities in the newsletter, announcements at monthly meetings and on the website and ask for suggestions for trips/excursions if applicable.
3. Where group convenors have particular difficulties within their group to be aware of the support available through Lesley Bedford, Group Co-ordinator and Eileen Powell, Vice Chair.