



HAVERHILL & DISTRICT

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

News and Views

Supported by



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

January 2025

From the Chair

I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and I send my best wishes to you all for 2025.

The Christmas Concert in early December was a great success and my thanks to all the members who said or sent emails to say how much they enjoyed it. I would like to thank David for being an excellent and entertaining compere for the afternoon.



David



Saffron Walden
Ukulele Group



Forever Young



Singing for Pleasure

We were entertained by Saffron Walden u3a Ukulele Group, Marie Dooley, our Forever Young Guitar Group and our Singing for Pleasure group. A mince pie and drink during the interval was very welcome. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this such an enjoyable afternoon.

Barbara Lavender

Speaker's Corner

On Tuesday 26th November, our speakers at the Arts Centre were Sabine Dornbush (General Manager) and Robert Green (Trustee Chair) from Bury Drop In. Bury Drop In serves people who are homeless and vulnerably housed - to care for and inspire homeless people as they work to ensure everyone has a place to call home. There are 150 registered homeless people in Bury St Edmunds and at the Drop In (which is open on Tuesdays and Fridays) they are able to eat a home-cooked meal, obtain toiletries and receive vouchers for a shower at a local sports centre. We heard brief case study stories about some of the people helped by this charity which is working to ensure "that everyone has a place to call home".

The next open speaker meeting is on Tuesday 28th January. Our speaker will be Iestyn Edwards whose talk is entitled MY TUTU WENT AWOL – Entertaining HM Forces in war torn Iraq. Doors to the auditorium and free beverages in the bar are available from 10.00 a.m. and then, after brief words from our chairperson, the talk starts at 10.30 a.m. Looking forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Sue Dickinson

Church Crawlers

For the October meeting, the last before the winter break, we visited St. Mary the Less church in Westley Waterless. A smallish church, 12th century, plain outside, the inside holds a surprise. Two full sized brasses of Sir John and Lady Alyne de Creke are set in the side aisle.

They are considered of national importance and brass rubbings can be made with permission. Above them hanging on the wall are painted pictures of them which made studying them much more comfortable! Lady Alyne is set to the right of her husband which is unusual and indicates her higher rank. The de Crekes were benefactors of the church and the brasses were erected by their son Sir Walter, probably as part of a wider commemorative scheme in 1340 celebrating their royal and noble service and marriage alliances.

Sir John was appointed Sheriff of Cambridgeshire and served 3 or so terms. In 1308 he was responsible for arresting the then disgraced Knights Templar.

After coffee in the church, we drove on to Burrough Green and the church of St Augustine. Built in the early 13th century with major renovations done in the late 17th century, St Augustine's is an impressive building. It has rare three gabled aisles, stone sedilla and double piscina. The star attraction are the 5 stone effigies of the de Burgh family about whom little is known. They must have been very important and certainly rich to have the stone effigies!

I recommend both churches which are kept open. Lunch was at the White Horse in Withersfield where we had good food and friendly service. The next meeting will be the planning meeting in January.

Gill Jones

Cycling Group report for 12th December Ride

Five go searching for daylight.....

On a grey morning that was greyer than the greyest day in Greyland, five hardy souls met outside the sports centre, suited and booted as befits the winter cyclist. With the railway path through Sturmer likely to be a hippo's paradise we turned westwards and headed off towards Withersfield. Our journey continued on our old favourite Skipper's Lane past the Jelly Factory. At this point however one of our group suggested Temple End rather than

Streetly End and so we turned right heading off towards Thurlow. The suggestion was a good one because the traffic was very light; surprisingly the views were better and a lot of it is downhill! We were soon into Thurlow and heading for the Wrattings and the lung testing climb past Pelican House Farm before swooping down into Great Wrattling. A veritable Wrattlingfest followed, with West Wrattling and Little Wrattling before rejoining the Bury Road at Broadlands.

A few hundred yards saw us onto the cycle path and the descent towards the Tesco roundabout. Traffic avoidance ended up with the group being split up with two staying on Wrattling Road and the others rejoining the railway path and through Tesco's. All was not lost and in no time we were reunited outside St Nicholas' Hospice Cafe where we ordered tea, coffee and scones - one member even had a huge slab of sponge cake with jam and cream filling, justifying his extravagance by claiming he'd not had breakfast before leaving home.

Suitably refreshed we exchanged the compliments of the season and went on our way.

The date of our next fortnightly outing happens to be Boxing Day so we will enjoy the holiday and meet again in the New Year.

Peter Thomas

Lifelines

In 1987, the documentary 'Fourteen Days in May' was screened by the BBC about the days leading up to the execution of Edward Earl Johnson in Mississippi, and the fight to save his life by Cambridge born human rights lawyer Clive Stafford Smith.

One of those watching was also a resident of Cambridge, an inspiring man called Jan Arriens. (Like me, a Quaker.) Jan said: "This quietly spoken, thoughtful young man was widely liked and respected. No one, from the warden to the chaplains to the other prisoners, wanted him to die. The agonising inevitability of his execution was dreadful enough.

but as well as this there was the totally unexpected humanity of the other men on the row interviewed in the film.” Jan wrote to the other men in the documentary and shared their “articulate and deeply felt” replies with friends. From this he founded the organisation Lifelines”.

After watching, and being horrified by, the same film, I joined Lifelines in 2011, writing to a young (then) man in Florida, thinking I might do someone some good. I've learned so much, not least how privileged I am to have had a stable, loving family and to have had a good education. Not a young life where gun violence was the norm, a murdered brother dying in my arms and not subject to racist abuse or attacks.

Through Lifelines conferences, I have met the most extraordinary people. Those who have spent decades on death row despite the authorities knowing they were innocent, such as Anthony Ray Hinton. He had a cast iron alibi but was told by the interrogating detective, “I don't care whether you did or didn't do it. In fact, I believe you didn't do it, but it doesn't matter. If you didn't do it, one of your "(black)"brothers did and you're going to take the rap." Anthony spent 28 years on death row. I've met family members of murder victims vehemently opposed to the death penalty; lawyers, including Clive Stafford Smith and Bryan Stevenson; many others.

My pen friend is quite clearly not the person he was when he was convicted. He says little about the awful conditions in prison. He is keen to educate himself, is curious about the world outside, and cares deeply about his family and fellow inmates. He loves hearing about my activities - what am I growing in the garden am I afraid of alligators when there are floods!? and the places I visit. To find out more, go to <https://lifelines-uk.org.uk/>

Avril Dawson

Arts Centre Event

Some members will already have seen the ARTS CENTRE upcoming programme and noticed the performance that will be taking

place Sunday 16th February under YOUTH & EXPERIENCE. The Haverhill and District u3a Singing for Pleasure Group will be included at this event. This performance will be to help raise funds for the Polished Brass Trust helping young Haverhill brass and percussion musicians with the cost of their exams. Hopefully, members would like to support us on that day.

Aldine Horrigan

Short Walking Group

The short walking group's final walk of the year was an easy stroll from Birdbrook to the impressive Moyns park hall. The autumn colours along the mile long drive are very pretty at this time of year. We passed the aptly named half mile cottages where a herd of deer were seen in the distance.

While on the walk we chatted to two dog walkers who told us about the warm hub in the village hall which was open for anyone to drop in for tea or coffee.



We enquired on our return and were made very welcome and enjoyed tea, coffee and biscuits, making a donation for their funds.

Maura Green

Away with the Birds

Some years ago, I took my glider to The Deeside Gliding Club near Aboyne in Aberdeenshire. This is a most beautiful part of the world near to Balmoral with the river Dee passing through.

Deeside Gliding Club is renowned for very high gains of height emanating from wave formations from the Grampian Mountains and it was my aim to achieve "Gold Height" or even "Diamond" from this site.

My glider was attached to the tug plane, slack was taken up and "ALL OUT" signal given. Halfway down the runway I took to the air and we climbed at a steady 4 knots per second. The tug pilot took me towards an interesting lenticular cloud and at 2000 feet above the ground, I hit 8-10 knots of climb. After 1-2 minutes the climb rate was constant and I released myself from the tug. Very quickly I was at 5000, then 7000 and 8000 feet.....at this point something extraordinary occurred. I was joined (or did I join it) by a skein of nine geese who attended my continued climb in wonderfully smooth rising air. They flew without more than one or two flaps of their wings per minute and seemed intent to fly by my side, allowing me to look them in the eyes. Quite an emotional experience!

At 12000 feet I donned my oxygen mask and a little later my lovely geese seemed unable to manage the diminished air and oxygen and we sadly departed company. I continued to 16000 feet (Gold Height plus) but still ascending and was forced to descend rapidly due to increasing cloud coverage in a mountainous area!!

A memorable experience. Flying gliders is a very satisfying sport. Unfortunately, due to my age, I am no longer able to fly any more, a more docile way of living is now my lot. Thankfully we third agers have u3a!

Tony Vermot

Bridge Group

This year we have managed to increase our membership by nine, which has allowed us to continue to function for the foreseeable future.

Our last session was on 19th December, when we played progressive Chicago for the Terry Keogh memorial plaque and had our Christmas party. Twenty four players

took part and the winner was Marie Peet, who will look after the trophy for the next twelve months.



We resumed playing on January 2nd 2025.

David Jefferies

Thank you

The editorial team would like to thank all the members who responded to the email sent out by Alice in November. The articles received will be kept in a file and used whenever space permits and we look forward to receiving more in the future.

Barbara Lavender

Mud and Grub

After torrential rains, the January mud and grub walk from Shalford by the river Pant got off to an ignominious start.

There were flood warnings in force, but before getting to the George pub we had to cope with an unannounced road closure between Finchingfield and Wethersfield.

Those with sat nav's were sent round flooded single track roads, and needed a car wash. The walk leader finally got through with a clean car via Great Sailing after been turned back 3 times due to roads closed by stuck vehicles. This all meant that we did not start walking until 10.50 am. The weather was sunny and cold, and although very wet in places there were no ploughed fields to cross. The birds were

particularly active around the ancient woodland. Looking down in the valley we could see large areas where the river Pant had created overflow lakes and pressed on hoping for the best. We passed the house of Eric Ravillious the famous First World War artist, and walked the river bank with the river in spate. It was covering the sunken lane which we needed to follow, so we walked the field edge alongside until safe to descend. The Church and ruins of the manor house destroyed by a crashed American bomber came into view and we were soon enjoying the roaring fire at the George.



The limited menu belied the delicious meals of smoked meats and prawns, and though the portions were hearty, not a scrap was left on anyone's plate. A most enjoyable start to the walking Year.

Ian Johnson

Cycling Group

We'd not had a cycling group ride since 12th December partly due to the festivities around 25th December and then the ice and snow on the 9th January put paid to our scheduled ride, so we were looking forward to our outing on 16th.

So, it was on a dull, grey winter's day that eight intrepid members of the Cycling group met at the Sports Centre for a ride. After some discussions it was decided we would take a circuitous half mile route from the Sports Centre finishing at the Hospice Cafe for coffee, cake and a catch up. A good hour's

gossip followed the refreshments, the outcome of which was to meet up again in a fortnight for a longer ride, weather permitting. Or perhaps we will just become the Coffee and Cake group instead!

Peter Thomas

Sunday Strollers

Our first walk of the year, on a lovely frosty winter morning, took twelve walkers on a 3 mile circular walk from East Town Park to Sturmer and back. We all agreed that it was nice to be out on such a pleasant morning.



I have attached a picture of some "Folk Art" that we encountered en-route.

The next walk will be from the Social Centre car park in Kedington starting at 10-30 am and is approx. 3 miles long. A walking pole could be useful.

David Jefferies

City Walkers

On Monday, 4th November, City Walkers met our Blue Badge Guide, Frankie McGhee to "walk and talk" us through a thousand years of history of Cambridge in just two hours! The main objective for our tour was to see the Chapels of three iconic Cambridge Colleges – Pembroke, Queens' and King's

The group met outside the Cambridge Guildhall and headed to Pembroke College. As we walked the cobbled streets

Frankie told us stories about famous Cambridge alumni.

Pembroke, Cambridge's third oldest college, founded in 1347, by a French noblewoman, Marie de St Pol (1303–1377), wife of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke. In the span of a single day, the 17-year-old went from being a maid to becoming a wife and then a widow.

The Wren Chapel at Pembroke was significant as it was the first completed building by Christopher Wren. It was gifted by the Bishop of Ely, Matthew Wren, a Fellow of Pembroke College and uncle to Sir Christopher Wren. The Chapel was consecrated on St Matthew's Day 1665 and extended at the altar end by George Gilbert Scott in 1880. An east window (the stained-glass featuring benefactors of the College) is a late addition of 1906 in honour of the mathematician George Stokes.

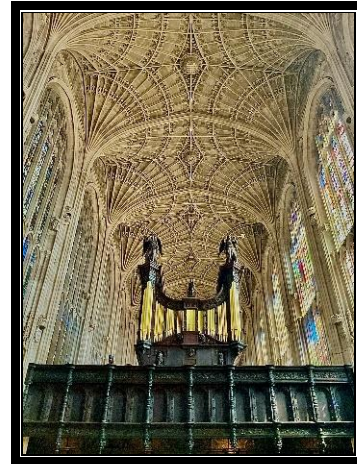
We then moved on to Queens. Two Queens of England founded the College – first in 1448 by Margaret of Anjou (wife of King Henry VI - the founder of King's College), and secondly in 1465 by her rival, Elizabeth Woodville, wife of King Edward IV. However, Andrew Dokett "initiated" its founding in 1446.



The Chapel was designed much later than the college by George Frederick Bodley in 1886, built by Cambridge-based firm Rattee & Kett (1889-91) and consecrated in 1891.

The highlight for us all was King's College Chapel, which we saved for last.

Admired for its stunning Gothic architecture, and home to the largest fan vaulted ceiling in the world, King's College Chapel is the most recognisable and iconic building in Cambridge, it also has a large collection of majestic stained-glass windows.



King's College and its chapel were founded by Henry VI in 1446, who is believed to have laid the first stone on St. James' Day on 25th July, 1446.

We all enjoyed a delicious and leisurely lunch in the Eagle Pub, after which a few City Walkers revisited King's College Chapel for further exploration. Our guide, Frankie McGhee, certainly painted a vivid picture of Cambridge's past with all her stories and anecdotes – truly a "fount of all knowledge"!

Caroline Choat

Next Meetings: Tuesday 28th January
Tuesday 25th February

Deadline for the Rolling Screen
Tuesday 18th February

e-mail to: chair@haverhillu3a.com

Deadline for next edition: 14th February

Please either post to:

The Editor U3A
c/o Haverhill Arts Centre
High Street
Haverhill CB9 8AR

OR

e-mail to: havu3anews@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE WEBSITE ADDRESS
haverhillu3a.com