



HAVERHILL & DISTRICT

u3a learn,
laugh,
live
News and Views



October 2023

From the Chair

It was good to see so many of you at the Open Day and I would like to thank everyone who helped to make it such a great success. I was pleased to welcome Councillor David Smith, the Mayor of Haverhill, and his Consort, Councillor Liz Smith, who were very impressed with how many members we have.



My special thanks to all the Group Leaders who attended and helped to make the day so successful.



My only disappointment was that no-one spoke to Mark to enquire about joining the committee.

The new online renewal system has worked very well and made Open Day much more relaxed for the membership renewal team, even though they were very busy. If any member is a U.K. tax payer and has not signed up for Gift Aid I would ask them to please think about this carefully as at no cost to you Haverhill and District u3a can claim £2.50 from HMRC for each signed up member. A consent form can be found on our website haverhillu3a.com. When completed please return this to the membership secretary.

Tickets for the Christmas Concert sold well but there are still a few available. Caroline will be in the bar area at the meeting on 31st October, so if you have not already bought your ticket please see her then.

Barbara Lavender

Speaker's Corner

It's going to be great to be able to get back to normal on the last Tuesday in the month for our meetings in the Arts Centre and to start this season off, we are delighted that our very own David Caulfield will be giving his talk entitled "The Semi-Pro Sixties" which is based on David's book of the same name. The talk covers the period 1961 to 1976 when budding musicians were forming groups and starting to play gigs in youth clubs, pubs and clubs. This talk, I am sure, will evoke musical memories.

Wendy Foster, a long standing valued member of the u3a committee, an events committee member and a group leader, sadly passed away last week. When Wendy asked that I take over the speaker secretary post when she decided to step

down earlier this year, she made me feel very welcome and together we put together the u3a open meetings 2023/2024 programme. She will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Sue Dickinson

Camera Group News

The **CAMERA GROUP** will sadly no longer be meeting.

SHAME!!!

Instead, the new **PHOTOGRAPHY for PLEASURE** will take its place.

HURRAH!!!

Our emphasis now will be on encouraging members to take better photographs on whatever they use, whether that be a phone, a tablet, or a camera. Our friendly members will always offer advice if required.

More outside trips will be arranged to places where photo opportunities can be found and we will meet for refreshments at a suitable café afterwards.

Meetings in our usual venue will be for viewing images created by the members. At times short presentations will take place to get your creative juices flowing or we will all join in with some studio work such as portrait, close-up or whatever members suggest.

We had problems with outings on Mondays as so many places now close that day! To overcome this problem, from January 4th 2024 we will meet on the first Thursday of the month from ten until twelve, still in the visitor centre in East Town Park. The cost is £2.00 to cover the hall and refreshments.

I look forward to seeing you at a future meeting whether you are a current member or a u3a member who is new to the group. Our contact details can be found on the website <https://www.haverhillu3a.com/> or via prwt1502@gmail.com.

Kind regards,

Peter Tatam, Group Leader

Sunday Strollers

On a lovely warm autumn morning we welcomed 2 new members to the group

before setting out on a 3.25 mile walk around Weston Colville. Apart from one rough ploughed field the walk was a good one.

Our next walk will commence from the football pitches in Harp Lane, Clare, on Sunday 12th November at 10-30 am.

David Jefferies

Nature Group

For our September meeting we returned to Welney, a Wildlife and Wetland Trust reserve on the borders of Cambridge and Norfolk, where we were given a very comprehensive talk on the management of the reserve followed by a visit to several hides. The reserve takes in 1,000 acres of the Ouse Washes – a floodplain for the River Great Ouse and Britain's largest area of seasonally-flooded land. During the summer cattle and sheep graze the grassland and are returned to local farms before the reserve floods in late autumn and the over-wintering birds return. Great White, Little and Cattle Egrets could all be seen feeding on the wet grassland where the ground was disturbed by the grazing animals.

All the reserve maintenance such as cutting back the trees, improving paths and slubbing (desilting) the ditches has to be done before the site floods in late autumn and the over-wintering birds such as Whooper and Bewick swans return to breed. House and tree sparrows were busy on the feeders close to the Visitor Centre and after a rather misty start to the day the sun came out bringing with it numerous beautiful red Common Darter Dragonflies.



From the hides we could see Canada and Greylag Geese, Shovelers, Widgeon, Teal, Ruffs, a Pintail and the scoop of the

day was a Curlew Sandpiper that breeds in arctic Siberia, winters mostly in Africa and is a rare visitor in the UK. Marsh Harriers were also seen flying over the reserve. 36 different bird species were seen and recorded during our visit.

Hilary Thomas

Cribbage Group

I would like to thank all members past and present for supporting the cribbage group whilst I have been Group Leader over the past 14 years. I have now hung up my spades, clubs, diamonds and hearts and will happily become one of the players. A new leader has been appointed, this is Sue Dickinson. Should you wish to join the group or have any queries please contact her on 07850524947.

A big thank you to the current members for the bouquet of flowers I received on my last afternoon.

Pat Palmer

City Walkers

This month the City Walkers group visited The Museum of the Home, in Shoreditch. After our train journey from Audley End to Liverpool Street Station, we took the bus to the Museum which is located in eighteenth century almshouses on three sides of a quadrangle making it a very impressive site. The museum was closed for extensive renovations for some years, opening again in 2021. The emphasis is on home life from 1600 to the present diverse living experiences of today.

We were greeted by our guide whose first statement was that 50% of the world is feminine but only 0.5% of recorded history. She walked us through the galleries stopping to discuss paintings and artefacts showing women at work, not necessarily in the home, and pointing out subversive content in some of their work. We finished our tour looking at some exquisite tapestries from centuries past. It was all very interesting. After that we retraced our steps to look more closely at the objects on display. On another floor were room settings, plenty of discussion here. The sensory gardens, full of herbs, was another delight.



From the Museum we went to Spitalfields Market for our street food lunch which most people really enjoyed in this busy, bustling atmosphere. We browsed around the stalls, then discovered the many golden elephant statues in the area around the Market. On our walk back to the station our leader had some interesting anecdotes to tell. Our journey home was not without incident but our group kept the other travellers amused while we waited for yet another train.

Sue Lindop

Country Casuals Walking Group

Our September walk started from The Colne Valley Arms in New England (previously run as the Birdbrook Tavern and the Taste of China). We walked along the disused Colne Valley railway line – the section from Halsted to Haverhill opened in 1863 with the last passenger train running in 1961 - in a NW direction turning right when we reached the farm track towards Ains Ford and Wixoe. Crossing the River Stour we looked across the farmer's fields where planning permission is being sought for a solar farm.



We stopped at St Leonard's Church in Wixoe then continued through the village turning right to cross over Baythorne Bridge back into Essex.



From Eagles Farm we followed the edge of the field to climb up to the railway track again and followed this back to the pub.

There were only 7 walkers. With some strong gusts of wind it was a good feeling to make it back to the friendly and enthusiastic welcome from the landlady.

Pam Gilchrist

Joining the U3A

Scene is set, tables are out
They'll be plenty of people about,
Even the Mayor will show his face
Going round the room at a cracking pace.

What new hobby shall I choose
Knitting, sewing, crochet too
No! Don't have the patience or tools to try
To fund them all would be too much to buy.

Maybe a walking group would be best
As long as half way we have a rest
At the end they have a pub lunch
Makes them sound like a merry bunch.

Singing for pleasure, not with my voice
No I don't think that's a choice.
There seems to be games a plenty
I'll choose one that's elementary!

Camera group taking photos sounds fun,
Please don't point your camera like a gun.
Conversations in German and French
But I always get muddled with the tense.

Reading, writing, gardening too
So much you could do
I'll take a chance and try something new
And hopefully make friends with you.

Pam Farman

Walking Talking Munching

A chilly morning greeted the eleven hardy members of the Walking Talking Munching group who made the trip over to the Green Man at Shepreth Turnpike.

The walk, led by David and Jean Boxall, was to take in The Fowlmere Nature Reserve, so heading in that direction, the group skirted fields of buckwheat, looking attractive with its white flower heads. A small road led to the Reserve, and one would hope that a footpath may be created in the near future that would allow walkers to avoid the regular vehicles using the access road.

Once safely in the Nature Reserve, a well constructed boardwalk allowed safe passage through the different areas.



The area had formerly contained watercress beds, and remnants of the plant can be seen in the Crystal clear waters of the Shep which runs freely through the Reserve. The Shep like many streams in East Anglia is chalk based, which encourages many forms of wild life. Otters, Water Voles and Brown Trout frequent the area. Three large hides are contained within the area where serious "Twitchers" can observe many species of birds.

The Green Man provided a superb lunch and with a large Garden Centre nearby the trip proved to be a very popular one.

Ken Hainsby

London Originals

This month's day out took us to the Long Shop Museum at Leiston, where we had a most enjoyable and very interesting visit.

Richard Garrett (1755-1839) started the business when he realised the importance of agricultural machinery which would revolutionise farming. A good water supply was essential for the business which resulted in the sinking of their own well which is 483 feet deep. This depth was required to get the water from below the water table which was not contaminated with the chalk, which would clog up the working parts of the steam engines.



All in all a full on day out.

David Jefferies

Ramblers Wellbeing Walks – Walking for Health

These are weekly walks for people who want to start with short walks for various reasons. In order to offer walks on every Monday and Thursday a team of first aid trained leaders, mostly u3a members, offer “beginners walks” starting from the Leisure Centre at 2.00p.m on Mondays.

On Thursdays we offer a variety of walks in the town and local villages. A programme for these is available. You do not have to join just turn up on any Monday where Lynne Thomas and her assistant leaders will give you a friendly welcome and ‘register’ you for insurance and funding purposes (statistics!). There is no charge or joining fee.

On every walk we walk at the speed of the slowest participant, and volunteer leaders are available to escort you if you need to return to base at any point. Most walks are planned to last an hour and any longer routes will offer a short cut.

If you would like to know more details please contact David Payne on 01440-704591

David Payne

Art Appreciation

Mulling over the lively discussions the group had at the October meeting, it seems that despite the titles of the themes we were meant to be exploring, we were actually considering what exactly was, and still is, regarded as art, or more properly, high art of the kind seen inside galleries,



The firm flourished under Richard Garrett III who built the Long Shop in 1852 which was the first purpose built assembly line in Britain and possibly the world. His idea came after a meeting with Samuel Colt at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The women of the Garrett family were very forward thinking, one of whom, Elizabeth, became the first female doctor in Britain after qualifying in Dublin. She subsequently went to France to train as a surgeon.

The guides were very informative of both the exhibition and the family and the excellent displays were also very informative.

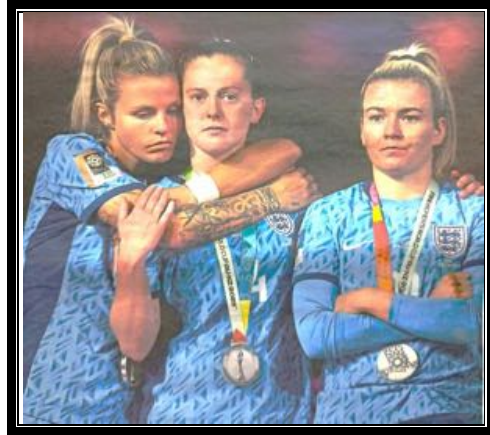
We followed this with a very nice lunch at Friday Street Farm Shop cafe, before moving on to Woodbridge and another very interesting tour of the Tide mill Unfortunately the tide was wrong for us to see the mill turning.

but not in newspapers or on walls outside galleries. We looked, for instance at *The Stone Breakers*, an 1849 painting by Gustave Courbet which is an example of realism, showing an old man and a boy breaking rocks; poor people toiling in order to survive. On first exhibiting and for a long time thereafter, the painting received much criticism and was considered to be an improper subject for high art, its depiction of ragged workers with unseen faces perhaps implied a threat to the ruling elites. Criticism even extended to saying the thick oil paint had been applied carelessly. The image is undeniably powerful and perhaps even disquieting. Might those broken rocks metaphorically be ready to be thrown as weapons? Sadly, and not without some irony, this painting was destroyed in the Allied air raids on Dresden during the war and only photographs and a second smaller, darker mirror image version also by Courbet now exist.



In a similar manner perhaps, are photographs used in newspapers ineligible to be considered as high art, and if not, why not? We looked at a number of photographs taken during this year's Ladies Football World Cup which showed a whole range of real emotion from ecstasy to despair. Most moving of all was a photograph that appeared in the newspapers taken by the young American sports photographer Maddie Mayer showing three of the England Lionesses shortly after receiving their silver medals. Despite their tremendous achievement of progressing so far in the tournament, their looks and postures depict only the agony of broken dreams and ambition. A picture paints a thousand words as they say, and rarely has any posed and deliberately

created painting over the centuries captured the human condition as well as this "low art" photograph does. Today's newspapers may be tomorrow's chip papers, but such images are timeless and haunting.



Neil Dickinson

Booklovers II Book of the Month

'The Salt Path' by Raynor Winn.

The day after Raynor and Moth found out they were going to lose the farm where they had brought up their two children, a doctor told Moth that he had a rare degenerative brain disease. Within days bailiffs came knocking and they were homeless.

What do you do when you are in your 50s and lost your worldly possessions and been diagnosed with a terminal illness? Naturally, you walk the South West Coast Path. A 630 mile walk from Minehead in Somerset to Poole in Dorset....

This is an uplifting true story of a couple courageously embarking on a journey across the windswept South West coastline to defy all odds and find their future.

Jeanne Parsons

Next Meetings: Tuesday 31ST October
 Tuesday 28th November

Deadline for the Rolling Screen
 Tuesday 21st November email to
 chair@haverhillu3a.com

Deadline for next edition:
 Friday 17th November

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