



HAVERHILL & DISTRICT

u3a learn,
laugh,
live
News and Views

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HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

September 2023

From the Chair

At the last committee meeting we had a discussion regarding the continuity of the Haverhill and District u3a Committee. We have for several years been implementing assistants for the various roles. We would now like to expand this further and are looking for members to understudy committee members with a view to taking over a role in the future. Mark will be at the Open Day on 26th September and will be happy to discuss this with you and give you more information. Alternatively, I will be very happy to meet with any member who feels they would like more information before making a decision. I can be contacted by email at chair@haverhillu3a.com.

Please think very carefully about this. Committee members are only allowed to serve 3 years in any given role and several of the committee only have one more year to serve. Without more volunteers our u3a could be in danger of folding.

Next Tuesday, 26th September, is our Open Day at the Arts Centre. It is an opportunity to have a cup of coffee, meet the group leaders and renew your membership. If you have already renewed your membership you can collect your new membership card.

I look forward to seeing you.

Barbara Lavender

Speaker's corner

Barbara Meyer, a wildlife photographer, spoke to our members at the Old Independent Church on Tuesday 29th August – Big Cats around the Globe.

She explained the various types of big cats, where they live, their situations, problems and conservation. The photographs were exceptional; Barbara gives photography workshops at Colchester Zoo where most of her photos were taken with Barbara knowing the big cats by name. We were grateful to Barbara for stepping in at the last minute as the booked speaker had to cancel.

Next month is Open Day on the 26th September, back in the Arts Centre.

Our next speaker at the Arts Centre, on Tuesday 31st October, is our very own David Caulfield – “The Semi-Pro Sixties”.

David always raises plenty of laughs as he takes us on a musical trip down Memory Lane.

From Barbara Meyer: A huge thank you also from Kim for all the donations. We gave £48.36 on your behalf to the Lion Guardians in Kenya. Thank you ever so much to everyone, and especially to those who put £5 and £10 notes in our collection box.

Sue Dickinson
Speaker Secretary

Nature Group

On 24th August, the group met at Broaks Wood which is one mile south of Sible Hedingham.

The wood is managed by Forestry England, a subdivision of the Forestry Commission with conservation as their priority, but they also extract 500 tonnes of timber annually.

The woodland has a wide variety of soil types making it home to a unique range of tree species. Trees seen on the day included Beech, Hornbeam, Oak, Cherry, Hazelnut, Hawthorn, White Poplar, Sweet Chestnut, Willow, Sitka Spruce, Birch, Wild Service Tree, Western Red Cedar, Thuja Plicata, and Coastal Redwood.

Much of the wood is designated as an Ancient Woodland Site and is estimated to have existed since the end of the last ice age, 12,000 years ago.

Once in the wood we noticed large areas of Giant Horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*), an indicator of ancient woodland, starting in marshy ground and spreading outwards. Other indicators of ancient woodland were Pendulous Sedge, Scaly Male Fern, Lady Fern, Hard Shield Fern, and Enchanter's Nightshade. We also saw Creeping Thistle, Purple Loosestrife, Bulrushes, Yellow Pimpernel, Lords and Ladies, Earth Balls and Puff Balls.

Of especial note was the grove of Coastal Redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*) native to the Californian coast. Coastal Redwoods, are said to be the tallest trees in the world. They have a thick red spongy bark which protects them from naturally occurring low intensity forest fires and also helps the germination of seeds. If these fires are suppressed more serious and destructive high intensity fires occur killing both trees and seeds.

Fran Armes

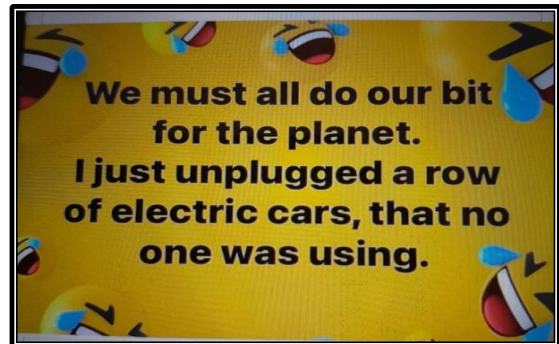
Sunday Strollers

On what turned out to be the hottest day of the year so far, we met at Steeple Bumpstead for a 3.5 mile walk. Covered in sunscreen and floppy hats and carrying our bottles of water, we set off towards Wiggins Green, turned west towards the Haverhill Road and made our way back to Steeple Bumpstead. We spotted deer and buzzards on the way.

The next walk, on the 8th October, is from Weston Green, parking in the car park opposite the Reading Rooms ready for a 10.30 start.

The walk is about 3 miles long.

Helen McFeely



Cycling Group

On a late summer's day, the full contingent of the Cycling Group met for the first of the September rides. Peter and Hilary Thomas led the way through the town and up Camps Road. With a promise of a mystery destination, the riders were interested to see which way the route would go.

In fact, it turned out to be a combination of quiet lanes and byways that the group had covered before. The transmitter mast towards Camps End provoked a discussion on the highest points in and around the border areas of Essex, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. The views from this promontory were far reaching suggesting it was very close to being the highest. The golden swathes of crops of earlier months are replaced now by the rich brown earth of the ploughed fields.

The mystery destination was revealed as the group headed through Helions Bumpstead and took the road to Steeple Bumpstead. Pulling in at their home, Peter and Hilary invited all into their large back garden and the shade of a pagoda where coffee and cool drinks were provided.

As is the way with many such pleasurable gatherings the talk turned to oddities of countryside names: "Why are there so many Cock Hills in the counties" asked Dave Edwards? Because when a horse pulling a heavy load came to such a hill, a 'Cock Horse' was required to assist the horse and cart to the top. Think 'Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross.

After more country folklore and refreshments, the group dispersed on their different ways back to Haverhill.

Ken Hainsby

Mud 'n Grub

Great Bardfield has suddenly become a popular base for the Mud and Grubbers, with two walks based there in the last three months.

September's walk on one of the hottest days of the year, followed the Pant valley, and included shady ancient woodland near Waltham Cross. The route gave charming and photographic distance views of Gibraltar windmill from all sides over the rolling countryside.



The beautiful but invasive Himalayan Balsam was in full flower as it choked the river which we crossed at Daw Street, and then back again at the picturesque mill pond.

Our grub was served at the Blue Egg, where staff efficiently had our tasty meals ready on our arrival despite the queue waiting to be served. It is a very popular bakery venue with a large selection of mouth-watering cakes.

Please note: In the plans submitted to Braintree District Council for the development of Woodlands Hotel into a nursing home, there is no recognition of the existence of the footpath through the wood linking East Town Park and the planned Haverhill Country Park.

This footpath has been enjoyed by the general public and particularly by our walking groups over the past fifteen years.

Please go onto the Braintree planning website and go to "Comment on a planning application", then "Comment online". Click the link and put in 23/01994/FUL or the word "Woodlands"

and say you oppose the plans unless the maintenance of the footpath is a requirement of the planning consent.

Ian Johnson

Newsy Information

During the month of September, the Suffolk Family History Society with the Haverhill & Local District History Group have formulated a programme of heritage events in Haverhill. One of the events will take place at St. Mary's Parish Church at 10:30 a.m. Saturday 30th September when Derek Hunt has been asked to give another talk on stained glass & conservation. Derek is the resident painter at Ely Cathedral and has previously given a talk to the u3a. He is currently making a documentary with the BBC.

Please do come along.

Aldine Horrigan

Walking Talking Munching

A dozen members met once again at the Red Lion Great Wrattling, one of the few pubs that's open on a Monday for lunch. Led by Gerry and Yvonne Partridge, the walk commenced through Little Wrattling before crossing the A143 to pick up the road running parallel to the Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah Witnesses.

The route then opened up as the group climbed steadily before descending into Kedington.

On this section, there were old and new tractors to admire at work in the field and Gerry's knowledge came to the fore. Having been a machine engineer, the older Massey Ferguson A35 brought back nostalgic memories because he had learned his craft on that very model.



Entering Kedington and crossing Mill Road to cross over the Stour, a path was taken that passed alongside the interesting church of St Peter and St Paul. It is one of the historical treasures of East Anglia, dating from the late 13th century. However, the church is built on top of a Roman villa, the remains of which can be viewed under small trap doors located in the pews towards the back of the nave. John Betjeman understandably christened Kedington church 'a village Westminster Abbey'.

The route now was back in the direction of Gt. Wratting but not before passing what looked like archaeological trenches being dug to check for finds of any importance. It is well documented that the Roman IX Legion engaged in a mighty battle with Bouddica and her allies in this area in 60CE and the area gained the name locally as Blood Field. Continuing on, a fair amount of vegetation was beaten down by the lead walkers to clear the way for the group to emerge next to Hall Farm and the short walk back to the pub for lunch.

Ken Hainsby

City Walkers

Shardlake's Norwich Tour with Paul Dickson on 4th September, 2023

Early in September the Haverhill u3a City Walkers Group visited Norwich for a walking tour celebrating C.J. Sansom's best-selling novel "Tombland", featuring Tudor lawyer Matthew Shardlake's visit to Norwich at the time of Kett's Rebellion (1549). It is perhaps the closest thing that Tudor England ever saw in a class war when Wymondham farmer, Robert Kett, led a rebellion of 16,000 peasants against the rich landowners who had unlawfully taken and enclosed the common land used by the peasant farmers to graze their livestock.



A brief synopsis of Sansom's 7th Shardlake novel, sees the lawyer embroiled in the case of John Boleyn's wife's murder, when Lady Elizabeth (a young Queen Elizabeth I) instructs Shardlake to investigate the crime, which takes him to Norwich, where he finds himself caught up in the midst of the revolt.

The tour was expertly conducted by Paul Dickson, who gave the group a good insight into both the book and the historical event, separating for us the "fact from fiction" elements!

As Paul pointed out, very little is documented on Kett's Rebellion, which has given the author artistic licence to create fictional characters in real historic event.

The tour started from the Maids Head Hotel, where Shardlake and Nicholas Overton stayed and was subsequently taken over as part of the Earl of Warwick's HQ. It included visits to Tombland - the ancient Anglo-Scandinavian Market Place, Augustine Steward's House, Norwich Cathedral Close, Bishopgate and the Great Hospital, Bishop's Bridge – another pivotal location in Tombland, the site of Bishop's Gate and Lollards Pit, followed by a climb up to Kett's Heights to see the remains of St Michael's Chapel, known as Kett's Castle.

It was here that Robert Kett set up his headquarters as the escarpment provided an ideal vantage point where he could see exactly what was happening in the city beneath him. His army camped up on Mousehold Heath, and during this time he had a good command of the situation. He eventually fought a battle at the Bishop's Bridge and bombarded Cow Tower from the heights using captured artillery. It was only when Kett left the heights that he was defeated.



On our return journey Paul took the group along the north side of the river Wensum, passing Cow Tower and the site of the city's guns on July 21 1549, and Jarrold Bridge to St Martin at Palace Plain, and finally, back to Maids Head where the tour finished.

The tour was a great hit, especially for those in the group who were fans of Shardlake and had read (or started to read!) "Tombland"! Here one could discover where the melancholy lawyer stayed, the location of Gawen Renold's house, Holmstreet and the Blue Boar where Jack Barack stayed, and many more places mentioned in the book!

Afterwards the group met for a lovely leisurely lunch at The Briton's Arms.

For those of you who enjoy reading Sansom's Shardlake Series, it is well worth visiting Norwich and joining one of Paul Dickson's "Shardlake's Norwich" Tours.

Caroline Choat

Renewal of Membership

The fees for 2023-4 were due on the 1st Sep 2023 and a big thank you to all the members who have renewed already.

You can collect your new membership card at the Open Day on the 26th Sep 2023 at Haverhill Arts Centre at 10:30.

If you haven't renewed yet, we will be there to help you. You can get a renewal form from our website, www.haverhillu3a.com, fill it in and bring it with your cash or cheque and collect your membership card all in one go.

Renewal forms are also available now at the Arts Centre reception and will be available on the day.

If you are paying with cash, the correct amount will be appreciated.

Thank you in anticipation.

David Campos
Membership Secretary

Next Meetings: Tuesday 26th September
Tuesday 31st October

Deadline for the Rolling Screen
Tuesday 24th October
e-mail to chair@haverhillu3a.com

Deadline for next edition:
Friday 20th October

Please either post to:
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