



HAVERHILL & DISTRICT

u3a learn,
laugh,
live
News and Views

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HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

MARCH 2022

From the Acting Chair

Hello to all members

I have often opened by mentioning the weather and proceeding to complain about what we must put up with. However, with the awful pictures we are seeing every day from Ukraine, the weather seems so trivial in comparison! Don't you agree?

The war, although 1,500 miles away is already impacting on fuel and food prices and this could deteriorate further as the war goes on. I thought that climate change and Covid were enough to worry about and at least we had peace in Europe, but that is now shattered by Putin and his megalomaniac ideas. The world our grandchildren inherit will not be as settled as we might have hoped.

The committee is ready for the AGM on the 29th which will be followed by Jenny Marks talking about the National Gardens Scheme. Members who have attended the talk elsewhere raved about it, so make sure you come along.

Plans are moving ahead for our celebration of the u3a 40th anniversary which we are holding on July 2nd on the Great Meadow in Kedington. The events committee are working daily on finalising arrangements and should be able to make a formal announcement shortly.

As I must stand down at the AGM, may I thank every member for the support and kind words said to me during the last four years, I do appreciate your support which has remained steadfast during some extremely difficult times.

I wish the incoming Chair every success and hope that they enjoy the same level of backing as I have.

Take care and keep safe.

Peter Tatam, Acting Chair

Speaker's Corner

For our February meeting, David Williams gave us a superb talk on the London Underground which was the first underground railway system in the world. He started with the fact that in the mid-1800s there were seven mainline train terminals on the outskirts of London but no railway connections to the city centre. This led to the overcrowding of horses and carts and carriages in the city's streets. So much so that there was a danger of the horse manure reaching several feet in depth.

This led to the idea of running trains in underground tunnels. However the technology of building tunnels, especially in the unstable soils of the area, was very rudimentary. Initially there were casualties as the tunnels caved in.

This was followed by the cut-and-cover technique which was somewhat safer but took up much space and badly affected the foundations of local buildings. Later a system of boring a tunnel with a rudimentary rotary mechanism was developed whilst shielding the workers and shoring up the tunnels. As time went by technology improved and tubes were dug at lower levels.

The first line completed in 1863 was what is now the Metropolitan Line and linked the

stations from the North of the Thames to the city centre. Initially open-topped wooden carriages were used with steam trains. The smoke was unpopular with the public and electrification was seen to be the way forward.

By 1905 the Metropolitan and District Lines were electrified. The first deep-level tube line, the City and South London Railway, opened in 1890 with electric trains. Many small lines were opened which were not viable and soon closed. Other lines would amalgamate into The Underground Electric Railways Company of London in 1902. From 1912 onwards there was a joint marketing of all the underground railways as the London Underground with the distinctive Underground logo.

People found it hard to find their way round the underground system so to relieve this Charles Beck, a technical draughtsman, came up with a colour coded map based on equal distances between stations. This was published in 1933.

Several disasters were mentioned – in 1943 in World War Two, Bethnal Green station was being used as an air raid shelter. As people were rushing down the steps, a woman slipped causing others to fall and be crushed. 173 people died but the matter was hushed up to save morale.

In 1987, a large fire broke out in King's Cross St Pancras station. Thirty-one people died, killed by the toxic fumes and extreme heat of the blaze. The fire was the result of a discarded match or cigarette igniting debris, detritus and grease beneath the wooden escalators. There is now a smoking ban which is strongly enforced and the wooden escalators have been replaced with metal ones. My thanks to Fran Armes for this resumé as I could not be there.

Our next meeting will be the AGM followed by a talk on NGS, the National Gardens Scheme, by Jenny Marks who will give you a short history of the NGS followed by some beautiful photos.

Do you know who the NGS raises money for? I was surprised and delighted when I found out. You will have to come to the meeting to find out!

If you have any requests for topics or speakers please let me know and I will do my best to fulfil them. A note on the back of the feedback form will do.

The meeting will start at 10.30am. Entrance to the Arts Centre will be via the front or rear doors which will open at 10am.

Wendy Foster, Speaker Secretary



City Walking Group

On a rather cold, windy Monday in March we were greeted by our guide, Mr. David Gevaux, at The Heritage Centre, Long Melford. After a short talk about the archives in the Heritage Centre we set off to walk through the High Street on the South side.

Observing buildings on the North side we learnt that Long Melford was once a thriving industrial town. The main industries in the 19th Century were coconut mat making, horse hair preparations, an iron foundry and oast house malting's.

It had a strong workforce that were very protective of their Long Melford industry to a point that they regarded Glemsford, their nearest workforce, with not a little animosity.

In fact a great brawl occurred on one occasion when the Militia from Bury St. Edmunds were called out to quell the riot. Many windows were smashed and compensation demanded. Just one very brave butcher, armed with a shotgun and a cleaver, was the only shopkeeper to escape with windows intact. That butcher's

shop has only just closed after being in that same family for many years.

A large number of the shops and houses along the High Street are timber framed, with brick fascia's only having been added in the late 19th Century. In one such shop front window, now closed down, one can see the timber framed overhang still intact.

The town then having a railway, was convenient for transporting goods. It also had more than one busy market. Sadly, there is no longer a market and Long Melford has once again become a village.

Our walk continued, after a splendid lunch at The Hare Inn, with more information about the church.

An incredibly good day for historical information and a healthy walk.

I have the contacts if any other group would like to partake.

Jean Parsons

Camera Group

Following discussions within the Camera Group it has been decided to change the name to **Camera & Smartphone Photo Group**.

New developments in cameras and phones make it easier to take good photographs on any device, providing you know what a good photograph is!

The group will reduce the amount of technical advice that relates only to more complicated cameras and instead it will concentrate on the picture itself.

We will encourage members to get out and use their devices to take pictures on a particular subject with the images being shown at the next meeting, with advice offered if requested on how the image can be improved.

I hope that this change does not disappoint existing members as you will still be able to contribute as before, but we need to address the many members who do not use cameras anymore, preferring to rely on the phone that is always with them. It proves the old saying that the best camera for any picture is the one you happen to have with you.



Photo of woodlands taken on iphone using natural light.

I look forward to seeing existing group members and perhaps some new ones at our meeting on the 11th April at 14.00 in the visitor centre in East Town Park.

Peter Tatam, Group Co-ordinator

Strollers

The Strollers' first gathering of 2022 was an "afternoon tea" at the Haven Cafe on the last Friday in February.

The Haven is next to the library and run by the very friendly volunteers for raising funds for the St. Nicholas Hospice.



Seventeen Strollers had a "good catch up" whilst enjoying the many eateries and teas & coffees.

Our leading lady, Jean Lansdown, made the very generous gesture of treating the whole group and it was much appreciated.

Peter Cundall

Cycling Group

On a beautiful early spring morning seven members of the Cycling Group met at the Sports Centre for their fortnightly ride. Electric bikes are beginning to dominate the group but the Luddites amongst us held

our own on the surprisingly hilly 15 mile route.

Heading along the old railway line west, the group joined the road into Withersfield where the first of a number of hills took the group through the village and on and down into Great Thurlow.

Many of the hedge rows were adorned with daffodils which appeared to nod in unison at our passing as early blossoming trees created picturesque patterns against a pellucid sky.

Turning left into Acre Lane a freewheeling ride to Carlton Green gave some rest to tiring legs. Joining Skippers Lane just before the huge Jelly Factory we headed back into Withersfield passing The White Horse and St Mary's church before retracing our route back into Haverhill.

Thanks go to Peter and Hilary Thomas who marshalled the group safely and surely.

Ken Hainsby

London Originals February Outing

As February can be cold and damp we stayed close to home and decided to visit the Guildhall in Bury St. Edmunds.

We started the morning with warm drinks and, for some, toasted teacakes at Baileys 2 cafe in Whiting Street. Then out into the rain for the short walk to the Guildhall entering through the imposing arch which dates back to the 13th Century.

The Guildhall was built by the Abbey but quickly became a community meeting place with much argument between the Abbey and the local Aldermen as to its use. It was not until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the late 1530s that complete independence from the Abbey was achieved. The building was a major power base in the English Civil War.

It has also been a court room, assembly rooms, library and, more recently, a Playhouse. Outside there is a medieval kitchen and garden.

One of the upstairs rooms was used as a base, covering East Anglia, for the Royal Observer Corps during WW2 and has been preserved as it was then.

Our guides, Terry and Colin, filled in the bare bones of the building's history with tales of local celebrities and ruffians and tussles with the Abbey and brought to life the interesting background of the oldest civic building continually in use in the country.

We lunched at nearby Wetherspoons but returned in the rain to the cosy Baileys 2 for coffee and cake.

Margaret Johnson

City Walkers

It was great to get together for our annual group meal at The George in Babraham at the end of February. A chance to catch up on news and make plans. Various destinations were discussed for this year's trips and our calendar is filling up.

We do have some spaces in our group, due to ill health, and those that put their names down first on our reserve list at Enrolment Day last September will be contacted shortly.

Gill and Gerry Sexton

Group Leaders of the City Walkers

Tell me why?

In our childhood we went through a phase of constantly asking why? Maybe, it was one way of getting attention. In our second childhood perhaps it would be interesting to go through that phase again as members of the u3a, so let me start you off:

1. Why is the U3A cycling group on our website not included as an outdoor activity like the walking groups? Perhaps they cycle indoors or maybe they race each other so it could be classed as a sport rather than an activity.
2. Why do over half the members of Haverhill u3a not attend monthly speaker meetings? I would love to know what they do instead that is more interesting, (but I am, of course, excluding those precluded by health, family circumstances and transport issues).
3. Why are we the only u3a in Suffolk to produce a monthly newsletter?

4. Why does almost 40% of our membership fees go to National (as capitation and Beacon) and what do we get in return?
5. Why after this money is taken, do we get such fantastic value from the £6 of the membership fee remaining, for Speakers and a cup of coffee and biscuits at monthly meetings? Where can you get 11 cups of coffee and biscuits for £6 down the high street?
6. Why are editorials in newspapers in the middle whilst the chairman's address is the first item in News and Views?
7. Why do we need u3a insurance that necessitates so much bureaucratic form filling, and puts people off leading groups? Does the benefit it provides outweigh the disincentive, worry and inconvenience it causes?
8. Why do people enjoy the u3a so much that it is one of the few clubs and societies whose membership is increasing, whilst in many other clubs membership is falling?
9. Why would anyone publish this?

Ian Johnson

Sunday Strollers

February's walk at Thurlow was a pleasant stroll of 3.5 miles.

Points of interest along the way, were, swathes of Snowdrops and Aconites as we walked by the river. The church of All Saints at Little Bradley, commonly called The Printers Church, a Grade 1 listed building. Its round tower dates from 950AD and the nave and chancel from 1040AD. Inside there are brasses commemorating the great 16th Century printer, John Daye, who died in 1584. He was one of the first to print music, produced the first English hymn book with music and words and printed Elizabeth 1st's prayer book in six languages. A window is also dedicated to him.

We then walked on to Little Thurlow and the 12th century church of St. Peter, which

was open. Inside is the splendid monument to Sir Stephen Soame and his wife and children. He was Sheriff of London in 1589, Lord Mayor of London in 1598 and M.P. for the City of London in 1601. We next passed the Grammar School, which is still in residential use and provided by Sir Stephen, along with nine alms-houses before returning to our cars.

Our walk in March was a pleasant 3.5 mile circular walk from Swards End to Cole End and back via bridleways and field paths. We were lucky with the weather as the rain started not long after we had finished the walk.

The next walk is at Ousden, parking at the village hall. It is 3.5 miles and there are no stiles and a possible short section of secondary road walking, leaving at 10-30 am.

David Jefferies

Country Casuals

The day dawned beautiful and bright for our walk on 15th February in Linton taking in some of the interesting sights of the village.

Starting in the village car park we crossed to the High Street and then walked down Church Lane, to St Mary's Church which dates largely from 1871 but there has been a church on the site for around 900 years.

Opposite the Church is the half-clad timbered Guildhall built approximately 500 years ago. It has served as; the Town hall, a poor house; a wedding parlour, an entertainment space; a refuge from the plague and currently as a private dwelling.

Crossing over the river Granta via the duck bridge we recounted the tale of the late departed Goose known as Mussolini. Unlike his (or her?) namesake this was of a goose who looked after the ducklings and broke up fights between unruly ducks.

On to the Crown public house to order lunch and then to the far end of the Recreation Ground and the Clapper Stile – a Grade II listed monument, one of only five in the country, though what you see now is a recent rebuild. The original is in Saffron Walden Museum.

The Clapper Stile is formed from three wooden beams pivoted on a central post, weighted at one end. These return to a closed position after they have been held down at the un-weighted end for someone to pass through. See the picture taken from page 7 of the March 2019 edition of the Linton News.



On to Symonds Lane and the view of the Old Workhouse which is now an old peoples' home and then to the Chalklands area where we found a 'yarn bombed' post box where we took our photo.



We then crossed the bridleway and entered a field where we had a good view of the water tower. This is a Listed Building in the Art Deco style (no doubt much to the annoyance of Cambridge Water as it would make the cost of the repairs done a few years ago very high).

Through the housing estate and down the High Street. Through Camping Close and past the Church, we regained the High

Street, where several of our group recognised number 35 which had been the International Store, and the Linton Kitchen Café which had been a Barclays Bank. At that time there were three banks in Linton and seven public houses. We then returned to the Crown for lunch.

Keith and Frances Armes



Next Meetings: Tuesday 29th March 2022
Tuesday 26th April 2022

Deadline for the Rolling Screen:
Tuesday 19th April 2022
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