



Chair Chat

I recently lost a member of my family and reflecting on his long and happy life made me think about people who have had a great influence on me and made who I am today. When I was 7 I joined the local library and the Children's Librarian was called Daphne (I have always tried to grow Daphne flowers in my gardens without any success!), she recommended her favourite books, one of which was Anne of Green Gables which as many of you will know is my all-time favourite book, I have travelled to Prince Edward Island to visit Green Gables. She also showed me her favourite paintings, some of which were by Fragonard, and when in New York, I visited an art gallery, which had many on display. And of course I was a Librarian all my working life and for the last 28 years, I worked with girls aged 4 to 18. Who would have thought that someone I met when I was so young would have such a long lasting influence on me. Obviously your background and upbringing will influence you as well, my love of Jellied Eels and being able to gut a fish and prepare a crab, I learnt at my father's elbow, watching. My mother taught me to love Ballet and classical music, and one of my sisters influenced my political thinking even to this day. But the people you meet, not always for a long time, sometimes just a fleeting moment in your life can have a great effect. I worked with a fellow Librarian who only ever read J.R.R.Tolkein, over and over again; I resisted that one and never became a Lord of the Rings fan. I had a boyfriend who just loved motor bike racing and I spent many happy hours at Crystal Palace, and a colleague who was a great Netball fan and found myself at the Commonwealth Games getting very excited watching England lose! I was asked if a Sixth Form student could paint my portrait in the style of Lucien Freud, he loved wrinkles!, I didn't really know this artist's work but after some research learnt that most of his models were nude, but luckily for me she only wanted my face! But I go to every art exhibition where his work is on display. Everybody you know and meet will have an influence on you and your views and approaches to life, even if you disagree with them, and make you who you are today. And of course, we must be having an influence on everybody we meet, even without knowing it, which is a very scary thought.

Sandra

2021 Subscription Renewals

Many of you have renewed your membership of our u3a, which in these difficult times is very heartening. Subscriptions were due on April 1st and the membership team would appreciate it if all forms and monies are received by 31st of May.

We are hopeful that we will be able to resume activities and meet in person, this summer but of course, that will depend on Government regulations.

But a word of warning, unless members volunteer to join the committee, then we might have to close almost as soon as we restart!!!!

Hi All. Well! We are still here with hopefully a light coming closer down this very long tunnel. The one thing I have learnt with all this is to have good friends and keeping in touch with these friends is

very important. I have friend in now living in Keswick in the Lake District. Together with his Family he Purchased an 8 bedroom Guest House there. Apart from a short burst in the summer last year, he has had an empty Guest House in the past year. He has been doing a lot of redecorating to get it ready for Re-opening, hopefully in May.

I met Paul and his family in the Early 90's through my job As a Sales Manager for a Video Equipment Company. We have kept in touch ever since. We got on well because our interest in Video Making and Photography.

Since Paul had some more time on his hands he often goes for walks with his Dog into the Area around his Guest House and makes short Videos then he sends them to me. While we are unable to go and Visit then watching these Videos make me feel I am there. As well as making me feel good.

I had threatened to descend on him when we can! However, this will not be possible until at least the Autumn, Why! because he is fully booked from Mid May until September. Good for him. I know when I finally get there I will be made very welcome.

It is well worth keeping in touch with some old friends You never Know what it could lead too.

If you have any Stories like this Please share it via our Bexley u3a Newsletter. Mary would love to hear from you.

Look out for our next Zoom Meeting Thursday 8th April
This will the First Zoom meeting we are running so fingers crossed.

Keep Well Safe and Keep Smiling - Terry

.....

Details of our next Talk on Zoom Thursday 8th April
The Subject - Behind Closed doors - The Personal Experiences of a Prison Officer
Talk by Pauline Martindale

Time 14.00 -15.00

Zoom site opens from 13.45 for people to say hello. Everyone except the speaker will be muted at 14.00. Questions will be held after. Please indicate with a Thumbs Up to ask questions.

The website version of this newsletter does not contain the meeting details or password for obvious reasons; they are contained in the printed version which has been sent to members. Please contact Terry if necessary.

Please make sure all TVs, radios, mobiles etc are turned off before joining as this will be picked up and stops others from speaking. Thank You

As it has been such a long time since we've had any visits to London here are a few facts that I hope you might find interesting: (Information taken from "I Never Knew that About London" by C, Winn)

Wormwood Scrubs - a large open space north of Shepherd's bush was first recorded in 1189 as Wormholt Scrubs. The prison, popularly known as "The Scrubs" was built by convict labour between 1875 and 1891 to replace the Millbank Penitentiary in Westminster. The gatehouse is perhaps the most photographed and recognisable prison icon in England. Some notable inmates there have been Ivor Novello, the Kray twins, Keith Richards and Brian Jones – two of the Rolling Stones - and George Blake, a communist double agent who escaped and made it to Moscow after serving only 5 years of his 42 years sentence.

Execution Dock was a place on the River Thames near to the shoreline at Wapping used for more than 400 years to execute pirates, smugglers and mutineers who had been sentenced to death by the Admiralty courts, A plaque close by marks the site where the original headquarters of the Marine Police was founded

in 1798. The Thames River Police Museum is located in what was once the carpenter's workshop at Wapping Police station. Exhibits give a unique insight into the oldest, organised police force in the world.

The Bank of England was the world's first privately owned national bank. It was founded in the 17th century to provide King William III with money to finance his war against France. The first governor of the bank was Sir John Houblon, grandson of a Huguenot refugee. By 1754, the Bank had moved from its first home at the Mercer's Hall in Cheapside to its present location in Threadneedle Street and over the next 100 years it was gradually extended to cover 5 acres, the building has more space below ground than was contained in the former Nat West Tower at Bishopsgate. The Bank of England Museum illustrates the work of the Bank and the financial system.

London's only Lighthouse at Trinity Buoy Wharf is tucked in a dusty, potholed side road beside the brown waters of Bow Creek in Tower Hamlets. One of a pair, the first lighthouse was built in 1854 and demolished in 1928. The surviving lighthouse was built in 1864 to be used for testing maritime lighting equipment and for training lighthouse keepers. This lighthouse and other buildings at the Wharf now house a variety of arts and creative industries.

The Savoy Hotel – In 1881, Richard D'Oyly Carte built the Savoy theatre as a venue for the famous opera productions of Gilbert and Sullivan. Next door, a few years later, he opened the Savoy Hotel, the first hotel in Britain to have electric lighting and lifts. The Manager at the time and his chef set about building up a clientele of the rich and famous, sometimes creating exotic new dishes and naming them after their guests. Peach Melba was named as a tribute to the Australian diva of Covent Garden, Dame Nellie Melba who had adopted this name after her hometown of Melbourne. The Savoy's oldest resident is a black cat called Kaspar who is used to make up the unlucky number of 13 dining guests to 14. Carved from wood he wears a napkin and is served each dish at the same time as the other diners. The forecourt of the Savoy hotel is the only street in Britain where traffic drives on the right because of the restricted space in the courtyard to pull up smoothly at the front of the hotel.

Maureen Wright

Book Reviews

From Norma: "A Garden of Bones" by Andy Done-Johnson.

I do not read a lot of murderous books, but I have enjoyed this one. It is based on a true story and happened in Mansfield. In 2013, the skeletal remains of two elderly people were unearthed from the back garden of the house they had mysteriously left 15 years earlier. But why were their relatives still getting Christmas cards from them until the year before they were found? Why were they still on the electoral roll and why were they still replying to letters from their doctor?" The author is a local newspaper reporter who was first on the scene when the bodies were discovered, and he presents the gory details of the case in a low-key way that makes it seem worse somehow. I have since Googled the case and it must have been in all the papers. It is strange that I don't remember anything about it!

From Jenny: "The Wisdom of Sally Red Shoes" by Ruth Hogan

Masha's life has stopped. Once a spirited independent woman, her life has been forever changed by a tragic event twelve years ago. Unable to let go of her grief, she finds solace in the silent company of the souls of her local Victorian cemetery and at the town's lido.

But a chance encounter with two extraordinary women, the fabulous and wise Kitty Muriel, a convent girl turned magician's wife, seventy-something, roller-disco-fanatic, and the mysterious Sally Red Shoes, a bag

lady with an amazing voice – opens up a new world of possibilities and a chance to start living again. But just as Masha dares to imagine a future, the past comes roaring back.

The ending is such a surprise

From Christine: ["Platform Seven" by Louise Doughty](#)

My February book of the month is by Louise Doughty. Amongst her other titles is Apple Tree Yard, which was televised by the BBC a few years ago.

Platform Seven at a.m. Peterborough Railway Station is deserted. The man crossing the covered walkway on this freezing November morning is confident he is alone. As he sits on the metal bench at the end of the platform, it is clear his choice is strategic - he's as far away from the night staff as he can get. What the man doesn't realise is that he has company. Lisa Evans knows what he has decided. She knows what he is about to do as she tries and fails to stop him walking to the platform edge. No one is more desperate to understand what connects her to this man than Lisa Evans herself. After all, she was the first of the two to die... This Murder Most Foul novel is all about domestic abuse and how anyone can suffer from it and even the most charming and outwardly sincere people can be perpetrators. It is very well written, and you find yourself willing the victim to stand up for themselves and leave but you know that an apologetic sorry will just delay the inevitable abuse from starting again.

There are also back-stories of the staff who work at the station which are also well crafted. All in all, although a harrowing story, it is well worth a read.

From Irene: [Black Summer by M.W. Craven.](#)

Jared Keaton, chef to the stars, charming, charismatic, psychopath . . .

He's currently serving a life sentence for the murder of his daughter Elizabeth. Her body was never found and Keaton was convicted largely on the testimony of Detective Sergeant Washington Poe.

So, when a young woman staggers into a remote police station with irrefutable evidence that she is Elizabeth Keaton, Poe finds himself on the wrong end of an investigation, one that could cost him much more than his career. And then Elizabeth goes missing again . . . I found the book gripping and unputdownable and liked the characters.

From Cynthia: [The Glass House by Eve Chase](#)

This book is written in the present and in 1971. The Harrington family has moved to a house set in the Forest of Dean after a fire in their London home. Rita, nanny to Hera and Teddy, accompanies them, as Jeannie, the children's mother, is suffering from depression after the loss of her newborn baby daughter. Her husband, Walter, is working abroad so Jeannie invites her lover, Don, to join them. The couple spend much of their time in bed together while Rita tends to the children's needs, taking them out to explore the forest. One day, Hera is in the woods when she finds a baby, left in the cleft of a tree. Rita, only a teenager herself, is persuaded to take care of the child. In the present day, Rita is in a coma in hospital and her daughter Sylvie is torn between her concern for her mother and her distress at the problems encountered by daughter Annie. The two strands of the story finally join, and the reader discovers how all the characters are linked. I found it to be an absorbing book. And yes, it does fit into this month's theme of Murder Most Foul, as one of the characters dies of a gunshot wound!

From Hilary: [Prayer by Philip Kerr](#)

This fits this month's topic of Murder Most Foul. It's set in current day Texas. The main character is FBI Special Agent Gil Martins. He is asked to investigate a series of unexplained deaths of victims known for their liberal views like pro-abortion and strong anti-religious views. He is told that they are being killed by

prayer, hence the title. Gil doubts this but is soon fighting for his life. The book is described as a supernatural thriller and it's certainly different. The large American evangelical type churches feature in the book. It's well written but I found what happened to Gil a bit disappointing. I love Kerr's books but if this had been my first I may not have read his others.

From Maureen: "The Bloody Tower" by Carola Dunn

This was my choice for our Murder Most Foul topic. The book is part of the Daisy Dalrymple Mystery series set in the 1920s. Daisy, daughter of a Viscount, is married to Chief Inspector Alec Fletcher. They have baby twins, looked after by a nanny. The story begins with Daisy being invited to write an article about the Tower of London. For this purpose, she and a friend are invited to lunch at the Tower to meet the resident Governor and other important characters involved with the running of the place. She is also introduced to several of the Yeoman of the Guard and taken for a tour around the tower by Yeoman Crabtree, Chief Warden of the Tower, whom she finds very agreeable. However, she takes an instant dislike to the Warden Gaoler, Rumford. Following the success of this visit, she is invited to attend the Ceremony of the Keys and as this takes place late every evening, she would stay the night at the Tower. All goes well but on leaving the Tower, early in the morning after her stay, she finds the body of Warden Crabtree lying dead on some outside steps. He has been stabbed in the back with a pike. Daisy's husband Alec arrives at the Tower to begin investigations into the murder. Daisy is on hand to help. This was not really my style of novel, but I enjoyed the descriptions of the Tower of London and the Ceremony of the Keys. I had the pleasure of attending this evening ceremony a few years ago, as well as a tour of the Tower led by one of the Warders, and so I could visualise the event. I was not inspired enough by this novel to want to read any more of the series.

+++++

Another wonderful account from Margaret , 2014 - Town and Around

Visit to Tenterden and Godinton House and Gardens

By Margaret Collins

April is such a wonderful month, Spring has really sprung, the sun was shining, and the countryside was looking beautiful as we made our way to Tenterden along the lanes through bluebell covered woods and beautiful Kent villages for the first of our visits today. A welcome cup of coffee in the White Lion got us off to a good start. We met up with our guides by the Town Hall who were from the Local Historical Society who divided us into small groups to take us around to show us this quaint and historic town. The broad tree lined High Street is a busy and attractive shopping centre with boutiques and antique shops galore. This was once the route the drovers would have brought their sheep to market even up to the late 1950s. This is one of the Cinque Ports; however, the river had long since silted up, along with its trade in wool and woven cloth. Our guides showed us so many ancient buildings, the old soup kitchen, the site where the theatre had been, the workhouse (now a seriously beautiful row of houses), the old grammar school (now Viyella), the old Hall House (now Café Rouge). Several notables were born in the town including William Caxton, and David Frost. Dame Ellen Terry lived in Smallhythe Place for many years. The large church of St Mildred was started in the 12th century, and is the Parish Church still.

After we dispersed from our guides we explored a bit more before settling on a good lunch in one of the many cafes and pubs before joining our coach to take us on the second part of our day out.

Just a few miles further on was Godinton House and Gardens, previously privately owned but now run by a Trust and we were made most welcome. We divided into groups for our guided tour. This is one of the most

important houses in Kent with medieval origins. The house was first owned by Sir Nicholas Toke, (died 1680) who had five wealthy wives which allowed him to continue adding to the original Hall House. His portrait showed a very fine man with a huge lace collar and cuffs, but most amusingly a lace turnover above his boots, which looked like he was losing his pants! Many generations of the Tokes family lived here for four hundred years, they and subsequent owners had embellished and added to the house and gardens. The result is a charming house whose history is revealed through the variety of its style, taste and furnishings from the 14th century to the present day. The house was in wonderfully restored condition with fine panelling, carved fire surrounds, intricate carved staircase, and bursting with paintings, furnishings, silver, and a fabulous collection of porcelain from all over the world, including Sevres, Bow, Chinese, and Dresden but mostly from Worcester. The huge gardens were looking beautiful with Yew hedges, some formal topiary, a well-stocked pond and lawns. The wisteria was in full bloom against the house, the perfume travelled along the sunny terrace to greet us. There is a wild garden, which in March was carpeted with daffodils, the Pan garden with its sculpture we were unable to access due to a bee swarm. The rose garden needed another few weeks of sunshine before it looked its best. In the Walled Garden were planted a national collection of delphiniums one of my favourite flowers. There was also an Italian garden with pond and statues. The vegetable garden had some fabulous rhubarb ready for picking, and also large greenhouses. Before we left, we visited the café for a cup of tea, brownie and flapjack ready to re-join the coach for the trip home.

We all thoroughly enjoyed our day in the sunshine, and the sight of such a beautiful garden will stay with me for some while yet.

Executive Committee 2019- 2020

Chair	Sandra Goulding		
Vice Chair	VACANCY		
Secretary	Maureen Wright		
Treasurer	Ron Clayton		
Membership	Douglas West		
Speakers	Terry Moseley		
Group Liaison	Cynthia Allen		
E-mail & IT	Nino Parascandolo		
Social Secretary	Thelma Wilkes		
Catering	Vi King		
Hall Manager /Database	Nino Parascandolo		
NON-COMMITTEE ROLES			
Meet & Greet	Edna Sutton		Please let Edna know of personal events e.g. significant birthdays, anniversaries, condolences, etc. so that she can send cards.
Newsletter Editor	Mary Jupp		

All contributions for **MAY** newsletter to be submitted by Midday **Monday 3RD MAY 2021**

Please ensure you contribute before the cut-off and have an email acknowledgment from me that I have received your contribution! Thank You