



**Chair Chat February 2019**

Common pronunciation of February is not to sound the first R – mainly because it is easier, although pronouncing the first R is still the correct way. I shall listen to the BBC announcers more carefully this month!

February is named after the Latin word Februum which means purification and originally the month was a time for purification.

Nowadays one of the most popular celebrations this month is Valentine's Day. He was a Third Century Roman Saint and the first recorded Valentine's Day was in 496 AD.

One version of his story is that he was arrested and imprisoned for marrying Christian couples, another version is that he married soldiers which was against the law because the Emperor thought married men were bad soldiers.

When St Valentine was put in gaol he fell in love with the gaoler's daughter and on the day he was executed he sent her a note saying "From Your Valentine".

Now it seems a good excuse for red hearts, over indulgent tokens, over-priced red roses and over-priced meals in restaurants, but it could be used to show our loved ones, parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, god-children or very good friends how much we value them.

**Sandra Goulding**



**Monthly Meetings and Speakers:**

The main meeting is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month at 2 p.m. (be there by 1.45 pm to get a seat!) at Roberts Hall behind Christ Church, Bexleyheath Broadway.

*N.B Amendments to dates for 2019. The meeting in July is the 11<sup>th</sup>, the meeting in November is the 7<sup>th</sup> and this is also the new date for the AGM. Our 10<sup>th</sup> October speaker is Saffron Summerfield, *A talk with music, Milton Keynes to Mississippi!**

Please remember the talk 14<sup>th</sup> March will be longer. Our speaker is a Survivor of the Kindertransport of the Second World War. This will be a Special Afternoon as there are not too many of the Survivors alive now.

February 14	Ingrid Janson	Organise Your Home!
March 14	Kinder Transport. Children Refugee Train	Speaker tba <i>Please note the Speaker will start at 13.45 and finish at 15.30</i>
April 11	Support Dogs	tba
May 9	A Very Special Speaker	Details later** subject to acting commitments

### Obituary for Beryl Carleton

Beryl, one of our oldest Group Leaders in the Bexleyheath U3A, has sadly passed away at the age of 97. She was one of the original members of Bexleyheath U3A and was a Group Leader for French Intermediate for many years. She was a Group Leader until 2018 when Thelma Davis passed away leaving just Beryl and myself left, and so she took the decision to disband the group.

I would just like to add that I found her an amazing teacher who was always full of bright ideas to make our French lessons so fun and interesting and I will miss her greatly. Her spirit and enthusiasm inspired me to become a Group Leader myself, but in Writing for Pleasure.

**Irene Wallace**

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### 2019 U3A LONDON REGION SUMMER SCHOOL, Tuesday 23rd to Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July at St Bride Foundation, Bride Lane, Fleet

This is the popular annual non-residential event. Members can choose to attend for one, two or three days.

There will be a wide range of subjects on the themes of Art, Current Affairs, History, Literature, Music, Science and Travel -- A choice of 27 different talks, 5 workshops, and 6 guided walks around the City of London.

This year, we are including some talks, which will explore the theme of "Celebration of the Sea"

**Online and postal booking will be launched mid-February via the London**

**Region website:** <https://u3asites.org.uk/london-region/events>. Details also in next magazine.

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### *Local Lights next trip:*

### **The Belvedere Concert Band at St Peters Church, 7.30pm, Saturday 23rd March,**

Fabulous music and a glass of wine or a soft drink.

Tickets confirmed at £8.50, so please pay your balance today. Correct money appreciated.  
New bookings still taken. A really enjoyable evening.

Organiser: Carole Alleway

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### **SPEAKERS SECRETARY URGENTLY NEEDED**

As you may know, Terry Mosley, our erstwhile Speakers Secretary, has recently given up the post, as he is moving to Devon. In his usual, impressively efficient way, he has already booked speakers for most of 2019. We now need a replacement for Terry - ASAP, as visiting speakers often need to be booked up to a year ahead. If you think this might be something you could do, perhaps as a job share, please contact one of the Committee and they will explain to you what is required.

If we are unable to find a new Speakers Secretary, then from December 2019 we shall have to entertain ourselves at the monthly meetings. So Please Help if you can!

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### **GROUP VACANCIES & NEWS**

**Armchair Traveller** 3 vacancies - Group Leader - Carole Hunt; **Backgammon** 4 vacancies - Lynne Brown; **Classical Music** - Dorothy McCarthy; **French Intermediate** 2 vacancies - Elizabeth Dearing; **Mah Jong** 1 or 2 vacancies - Christine Kitchen; **Rummikub 7** 1 or 2 vacancies - Christine Kitchen; **Self Help Art Group** 1 vacancy- Margaret Collins; **Spanish Conversation** 1 vacancy - Christine Kitchen.

**OPEN GROUPS Town and Around** - Maire Carr/Margaret Collin; **London Theatre** - Vi King; **Local Theatre** - Carole Alleway; **Decorative Arts Gallery Visits** - Margaret Collins; **Strollers** - Barbara Wheeler; **Choir** – Terry Mosely.

**Contact me for further details; Pat Fearnside**

**My name is Maureen Hinton** and I am a new member in Bexley U3A. I was a member in North Wilts and have run a group there. I am a new member and I would like to start a *stitching group*. I am self-taught and mainly interested in decorative hand embroidery e.g. crewel, free embroidery with some mixed media, applique. I hope to show the kind of work I do on a table at the back of the meeting in February. If you are interested in either a 'drop in' group or a supported beginners group, please contact me

**ARMCHAIR TRAVELLERS** We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month in Bexleyheath to investigate travel destinations we would like to visit, Sometimes these are 'pie in the sky' but sometimes past experiences play a part. We often sample local foods (and drink) and last autumn some of us went to the Moon Festival in Chinatown after 'visiting' China from our armchairs. There are 2 spaces in this group if anyone would like to join us. Further details from Carole Hunt

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**TOWN AND AROUND**

**ALL OUTINGS AT YOUR OWN RISK**

**Friday 8th March. The Mansion House. Please note revised date.** Meet Cannon Street Station at 10.30ish, using first Freedom Pass train available then short walk. One hour guided tour of the Lord Mayor’s office, the setting for many official civic occasions. £3.00

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April. Tulips at Anglesey Abbey, Gardens and Lode Mill.** Meet Opposite Library in Townley Road at 9.15. Historic house and beautiful grounds with great displays of tulips at this time of year (hopefully). Café, Plant sales, If you are a member of National Trust you must bring membership ticket with you. N.T. members £14.00. Non N.T. members £26.00.

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. Two hour circular Boat trip from/to Windsor via Bovney and Bray.** Meet Waterloo mainline under the clock at 10.15ish using first Freedom Pass train available. Join train to Windsor and Eton Riverside. **PLEASE GET A RETURN EXTENSION TICKET FROM YOUR OWN STATION TRAVELLING BETWEEN FELTHAM TO WINDSOR AND ETON RIVERSIDE (approx. £7)** Time for lunch before boarding at 2.00pm. Refreshment bar and wc on board. £14.00

**PAYMENT PREFERABLY BY CHEQUE MADE OUT TO U3A BEXLEY, MUST BE MADE AT TIME OF BOOKING.** See notices in Roberts Hall for more details. **If you are on the reserve list for a trip please keep day free, or let Maire know as soon as possible if you are unable to come.**

Please make a note of our Mobile telephone numbers, which are printed in the Newsletter so we can be contacted by phone or text even on the day of the visit.

<b>Organiser: Margaret Collins</b>		
<b>Bookings: Maire Carr</b>		
<b>Money: Sabine Wayt</b>		

## TOWN AND AROUND

### Visit to The Palace of Westminster

By Margaret Collins

The Rt Hon Sir David Evennett MP kindly arranged our free visit and tour on this January day and a cheque for £150 has been sent to Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice as a token of our appreciation.

Strict security started our day and of course, with so many replacement hips, knees and shoulders it was like a musical interlude as we went through the arch. However, there was much hilarity at the frisking some had. Then to the café for a warming cup of coffee before going into Westminster Hall to meet our guides.

We split into two groups and our guide told us about the way that Parliament was formed and developed over the centuries. The Palace of Westminster was started to be built in 1097 by William Rufus, including Westminster Hall, most of the palace subsequently burnt down in 1513 then rebuilt more as a royal residence and also where the Barons could meet, and then in 1834 a further great fire left Westminster Hall practically the only original 11c building still standing. A competition was held and Charles Barry was the architect chosen with his gothic revival building, he then employed Augustus Pugin to design the interior decoration. Work started in 1834 but it took a further 30 years to complete, sadly, both had died by then. More ground was required so land was reclaimed from the Thames, which gave it the illusion of floating on the water. Bomb damage was caused in 1941 and the Commons Chamber was rebuilt after the war. As we know, further major repairs are taking place now with the Elizabeth Tower and Big Ben covered in scaffolding.

We moved swiftly up the stairs and travelled through St Stephens Hall, the Central Lobby, and the Peers Corridor until we arrived at the Royal Gallery. These spaces are covered in artworks, with wonderful tiled floorings and decorated ceilings. The Royal Gallery is hung with Royal Portraits, right up to date with Queen Elizabeth, Prince Phillip and Prince Charles. We then went into The Queens Robing Room where Her Majesty dons her great ermine trimmed cloak and her crown before entering the House of Lords to deliver The Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament now held every two years. She would then process through the Royal Gallery to go to the House of Lords as she is not allowed to enter the House of Commons.

We then visited the House of Lords. The Royal Canopy and Throne is truly spectacular, shining gold against the wood panelling. There is beautiful red leather seating, each with hanging microphone and loudspeaker. The red woosack was pointed out to us, which represent the historical importance of the wool trade. This is where the Lord Speaker or Lord Chancellor would sit during debates.

The Princes Chamber was next, with Tudor themed paintings, showing Henry VIII and all his six wives, and Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth I and others.

We visited on the day before the meaningful vote on Leaving the EU was to take place, and we were taken into the voting corridor for the Nays (no) in the House of Commons. Our guide explained how the system works, with the Yays (yes) corridor on the other side of the chamber, and how the votes were counted and presented to the Speaker of the House.

Then into the House of Commons with its green seating and large public gallery, which now has bulletproof glass dividing it from the debating chamber. We saw the despatch boxes that we often see used as resting places for notes and the Prime Ministers hands when delivering speeches.

We then retraced our steps back to Westminster Hall, where we were told a bit more of the historical events which had taken place here. Originally used for Banqueting, particularly after Coronations, but then used for many trials, including those of Charles I, William Wallace, Thomas Moore and Guy Fawkes amongst others. Brass plaques on the floor remember the Lying in State of Kings and Queens. Other notables including Winston Churchill also laid here. Many foreign Heads of States have addressed both houses here, including Nelson Mandela, President Obama, Charles de Gaulle, and Pope Benedict XVI. The hammer beam roof made from oak from Surrey is decorated with angels looking down on the proceedings and lit by a huge stained glass window commemorating those Members and staff who lost their lives in war.

It really was a most interesting visit, especially during this so important time for us all. Let's hope they come to the right decision whatever that may be.

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## THEMED WALKS

On a cold day, early in January, we met at Cannon Street Station, then travelled by Circle line to Farringdon station to start our walk through Clerkenwell. Apparently, in the past, the area was known for a large Gordon's Gin factory. Nowadays, as many offices are closed on Saturdays, as are some cafes and restaurants, the area is very quiet at weekends. After a stop at Pret A Manger for hot drinks, we were ready for our walk.

We started along Cowcross St. It was named after the fact that farmers used to drive their cattle across the river Fleet, which now runs underground, to Smithsfield live animals market; it ended in 1855. We visited the Charterhouse, which has had many uses since the 14C. Originally, the area was a burial ground for those who died of Black Death in 1349. Later it was a monastery but destroyed in the 16C. However, some building materials from its ruins were later used for building the Charterhouse. In 17C a benefactor Thomas Sutton established the charity to help the poor and established a school. According to their leaflet today "the house is a thriving alms-house with over 40 residents". We spent some time in the Museum and the Chapel. There are many objects to see and well displayed written information to read. Names of some well-known men are mentioned as former pupils of the school.

Our next stop was St John's Gate and the Museum of the Order of St John, with many historical collections of the past. In their "Public Events Programme 2019" a notice states: "10 minute talks, tea & biscuits, Second Wednesday of each month, at 1230 p.m. Free drop-in event". It sounds inviting!

We stopped to have a look at the building known as "Rookery" from 1764. In the past it was a slum, but now it is an expensive hotel with ornaments - five cow heads friezes, one on each floor. Another interesting building from 1737 is the Marx Memorial Library with a collection of socialist literature.

Finally, after passing by other unique buildings, we managed to find an Italian restaurant at Exmouth Market, open for business. After lunch, a circular walk of a few miles, took us back to the station for our return trip home.

Tomira Carson

### Executive Committee 2018 - 2019

Chair	Sandra Goulding		
Vice Chair	<b><u>VACANCY</u></b>		
Secretary	Maureen Wright		
Treasurer	Ron Clayton		
Membership	Douglas West		
Speakers	<b><u>VACANCY</u></b>		
Group Liaison	Pat Fearnside		
E-mail & IT	Nino Parascandolo		
Social Secretary	Thelma Wilkes		
Catering	Vi King		
Hall Manager /Database	Nino Parascandolo		
	Cynthia Allen		
<b>NON-COMMITTEE ROLES</b>			
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		

*Please submit all contributions to March newsletter by*

*Midday - Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February*

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

**Thank you**

**Mary Jupp**