



Chair Chat February 2020

I recently received from Ian McCannah, Chairman of the Third Age Trust, an interesting letter.

I shall quote the interesting and significant parts of the letter below: -

“Late last year the Trust started to implement its medium term Development Plan after a two year period of consultation with all parts of the U3A movement. High on the list of recommendations was the need to raise the profile of the U3A movement.

We have put into effect a number of initiatives to achieve these objectives.

As a first step, we dropped the term University of the Third Age from our logo and its usage in the way we describe ourselves. This was widely seen as a barrier to membership of people who would otherwise participate in U3A, and who would bring the benefits of diversity to the movement. It has been replaced by the strapline Learn, Laugh, Live.

The aim is to establish “U3A” as a recognised and acknowledged leader in positive ageing for the wellbeing of older people and the communities in which they live.

We have also launched a day of celebration for the movement both locally and nationally.

Many U3As throughout the UK will be celebrating U3A Day on Wednesday June 3rd. The Trust will be seeking press and social media coverage for this day of celebration.

These changes are necessary to sustain and broaden the movement. We believe that the changes are responsive to members wishes to see the Trust project U3A for what it is – a movement for a dynamic, exciting and ultimately fulfilling way of living”

These are direct quotes and not my personal opinion.

I want to communicate the fact that nothing, I repeat nothing, fundamentally will change about our U3A, our groups, social events will continue as usual. I wanted to let you know what we know! Especially if you hear programmes on the Radio, TV and find information on Social Media.

But what is most important for the continual running of our U3A is finding people to offer to be on the Committee. Without a treasurer we cannot continue after November 2020.

So come on members, we want Bexley U3A (or whatever we end up being called!) to thrive and we need members to help!

Sandra Goulding

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**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.**

|                      |                     |                                                                   |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>February 13th</b> | <b>Dr Helen Fry</b> | <b>A Very Secret War. Bugging the Nazis in WWII</b>               |
| March 12th           | Nick Dobson         | A funny thing Happened on the way to the Potting Shed             |
| April 9th            | Pauline Martindale  | Behind Closed doors. The Personal Experiences of a Prison Officer |
| May 14th             | Ian Keable          | Charles Dickens – Conjuror                                        |
| June 11th            | TBA                 | TBA                                                               |

**From Terry:** After our Last Talk from Alan Ashby on the work of the RNLI I am glad to announce the sum of £179.59 was donated from our members' own pockets, not sure where the 59p came from?

The Barn dance tickets are selling very well at time of writing. 19 January only 15 left and by the time you read this, probably sold out, wonderful!

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### **Local Lights**

The Belvedere Band is performing at St Peter's Church, Pickford Lane on Saturday 21st March (eve) and tickets are £8.50 including a glass of wine or soft drink. If you were lucky enough to hear them at The Orchard in December then you won't want to miss this treat!

Carole Alleway

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**From Jo Livingston:** Shirley Williams sadly died on 19<sup>th</sup> December with the funeral on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Shirley was a member of our U3A and a member of Jo's poetry group. Our thoughts are with her family and friends.

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### **Group Vacancies**

**Life Story** 1 or 2 vacancies Group Leader Jo Livingston; **Armchair Travellers** 4 vacancies & **Play Readers** 1 vacancy. For either of these contact Carole Hunt; **Greek** 4 vacancies & **Backgammon** 5 vacancies. For both contact Lynne Brown; **Holidays** 4 vacancies Richard Flatt; **Italian for beginners** To find out if you are suitable for this level - Beverley Winstanley; **Mah Jong** 1 or 2 vacancies Christine Kitchen; **Photoshop** 1 or 2 - Len Morgan; **Reading for Pleasure** 1 vacancy Lynn Fish; **Friday evening Rummikub** 2 vacancies Val Dean; **Spanish Conversation** possibly one more - Christine Kitchen; **Stitchers** could take a few more - Maureen Hinton;

**Open Groups:** **Town & Around** - Group Leader Margaret Collins; **Decorative Arts Visits** - Margaret Collins; **Amblers** - Beryl Hutson; **Micropubbers** - Derrick Allen; **Strollers** Barbara Wheeler; **Jigsaw Swap** - Maureen Wilkins; **Evergreen Revellers Choir** – Terry Moseley; **Local Lights** (local theatre trips) Carole Alleway

If there are no contact details for the group leader, contact Cynthia Allen, Group Liaison.

**Rummikub** There is a waiting list for Rummikub, but no vacancies in any daytime group. If you would like to start a group, Maggie Ellis has offered to pass on her games, and Suzette Higgins has kindly said she will help the new leader set it up. If you are interested, contact Cynthia Allen

### For Leaders- Disclaimer Forms

Recently, in accordance with U3A rules, we sent copies of a disclaimer form to leaders of open groups. As our Chairlady, Sandra, will already have explained in her 'Notices', several people have asked us to supply them to leaders of groups that meet in members' homes or at other venues. For this reason, I have sent disclaimer forms to all group leaders, either by e-mail attachment or by post.

Upon receipt of the form, group leaders should ask each member who attends the group to sign it. They need sign it only once. Then I would ask you to keep it safely and ask any new members to sign it at their first meeting. This is for insurance purposes.

You may already have one of these forms. If another one arrives, please ignore it and continue to use the first form. I'm sorry but, as I'm new to this job, I am not sure exactly who has received one already. If you have *not* received a form, please let me know asap. (My details are on the back page).

If you have any trouble downloading or printing the form, let me know and I shall post you a hard copy. Sorry for any confusion!

Cynthia Allen (Group Liaison)

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*Have you seen what they've done with the Carnegie Library in Erith?*

The Exchange is a vibrant, lively, friendly space, re-using this wonderful building.

Visit for great food, conversations, exhibitions, workshops, creative and community events and activities.

<https://www.theexchangeerith.com>

*And a very nice café too! Pop along and have a look*

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#### TOWN AND AROUND

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**ALL VISITS AT YOUR OWN RISK AND YOU WILL BE ASKED TO SIGN A DISCLAIMER.**

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The Worshipful Society of Apothecaries. Blackfriars.** Meet Cannon Street Station at 10.15/10.30 then underground to Blackfriars North side and short walk. Guided tour of this historic Livery Hall, destroyed by the Great Fire and rebuilt in 1672. £15.00

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Trinity House.** Meet at Cannon Street Station 10.15/10.30 then District Line to Tower Hill. Guided tour of this historic institution, which has been dedicated to looking after Lighthouses, Lightships, Buoys and other navigational aids for seamen since 1514. £10.00

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020. Standen House and Garden - Tulips. East Grinstead. Coach trip.** Meet at Townley Road opposite Library at 9.15. Lovely Philip Webb Arts and Crafts House with William Morris furniture, and William de Morgan ceramics. Wander the hillside gardens with Tulip borders and spring flowers. Café or bring a picnic. NT members £18, non NT members £28.

**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.**

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

Town and Around

## THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM

By Margaret Collins

On a dull January day, just a short walk from busy Russell Square brings you to Brunswick Square, the location of the Foundling Museum: it is like going back in time. At the end of a quiet cul de sac in beautiful leafy Bloomsbury, between the British Museum and the British Library, is the Foundling Museum that tells the story of the Foundling Hospital, and is one of London's most fascinating and engaging museum experiences.

Our guide told us of the way the Foundling Hospital was conceived and funded. In the 1720's Thomas Coram, a retired shipwright was horrified by the many young children and babies he saw abandoned on the streets of London and left to die. Around one thousand babies were being abandoned every year in the capital, most of whom were illegitimate. He spent the next seventeen years working to raise funds to support the establishment of the Foundling Hospital firstly asking wealthy men, without much success, until he drew in their wives, daughters and mothers who were mostly ladies of "Nobility and Distinction" who then influenced their husbands to donate. There were also some of the leading cultural figures of the day, the painter William Hogarth, the author Henry Fielding, and the composer George Frederick Handel amongst them. They all worked to raise funds to establish the original Foundling Hospital that was sited in Coram's Fields next door to the Museum. A Royal Charter was given to establish the Hospital in 1739.

Initially the criteria for acceptance were very strict, as the Governors became overwhelmed with mothers trying to have their child admitted knowing that the child stood a better chance of survival. The mother had to be of good character before her "fall", the father had to have abandoned mother and child, only the first born child under one year old would be accepted, and the child had to be healthy. Eventually to try to make it fair a balloting scheme was devised. Mothers were asked to take a ball out of a bag, a white ball entitled the child to stay, a black ball was a rejection, and a red ball was a "reserve" ticket in case one of the chosen babies was found to be unhealthy. The babies were then handed over, but often with an identifying token of remembrance, which was lodged with the Governors in the hope that in the future the mother could be reunited with her child. The children were Christened and renamed, and their details were lodged in a ledger.

The children would then be sent to the country to foster mothers, and returned when they were 4 or 5 for schooling.

The Hospital closed in 1926, and the children moved to Redhill, but its work continues to this day in supporting disadvantaged children, and young people. Many of the beautiful interiors, ceilings, staircases, doors and fireplaces from the original Hospital building were re-sited in the Edwardian museum building in Brunswick Square.

Our guides took us over the building, explaining that this was Britain's first public art collection displayed in original period interiors, including work by Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough. Most of the pictures had been donated by the artists to support the work of the Foundling Hospital. In cabinets, there were displays of the tokens the mother left with their child - poignant objects, evoking the sadness that the mothers would have felt. Many fundraising events were held to keep the doors open, and so it continues today.

On the top floor was a stunning display relating to the life of Handel and his philanthropic works. Comfortable red leather armchairs with speakers provided musical excerpts from the Messiah, which although premiered in Ireland, was also played and sung by the children's choir and orchestra in the Chapel. It was fascinating to see the time line table that showed the important things that were happening in the world at that time. There was also Handel's hand written Will. The display cases contained a fair copy of the Messiah left to the hospital by Handel, and also the many manuscripts, printed books, music, libretti, paintings and memorabilia collected by Gerald Coke and given to the Museum by his widow.

We returned to see the introductory gallery that was full of interesting items and told the story with maps, the Royal Charter, and photos. We all found it fascinating to hear the voices of some of those who had been in the Hospital. The foundling boys often were taken into the Army or Navy, and the girls were given apprenticeships mostly into servant or needlework occupations. The children would leave the Hospital when they were 12 to 14 years old.

We then went down to the Lower Ground floor where a newly opened art exhibition entitled Pregnancy through the Ages covered pregnancy in art from the 1500's. There was a wonderful stump embroidery panel showing the Visitation. Pictures of Mary Queen of Scots with her phantom pregnancy, Anne of Denmark and many noble ladies in Tudor times, then to the Stuarts and on through the ages. The incidence of maternal death and stillbirth was very frequent, and it seems that the husbands of these pregnant ladies had them painted as a memorial. The portrait of Charlotte, the only legitimate grandchild of George III, who would have succeeded as Queen, and wife of Leopold of Belgium in a lovely blue gown was very sad as both her and her baby died in childbirth, and the dress was displayed next to the painting.

This was an interesting visit, but it pulled at the heartstrings and stirred the imagination. Thank goodness for the efforts of Thomas Coram, the forerunner of Dr Barnardo's Homes.

**Executive Committee 2019- 2020**

|                            |                   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair                      | Sandra Goulding   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Vice Chair                 | <b>VACANCY</b>    |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| 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 |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| <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         |  |                                                                                                                                  |

*All contributions for March newsletter to be submitted by **Midday Monday 24<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*