



Chair Chat March 2019

I recently went to a Scout Gang Show where 120 children and young people took part. We all took part in the traditional songs and actions at the finale. We all had great fun and there was lots of laughter.

But it occurred to me that none of this could have taken place without the volunteer Group Leaders of the Brownies, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and the Explorers. Ordinary people doing extraordinary things. That particular group of adults include a Headmistress of a local primary school, an Ocado driver, a gas engineer and Banker, who give time and energy to the weekly meetings, camping trips and other activities.

All over the country, people run sports clubs, orchestras, Boys Brigades, youth clubs, soup kitchens, man overnight refuges for homeless people, and thousands of other activities.

Royal Voluntary Service organise the Home Library Service, Hospital trolley services and Hospital Car Service to mention a few.

There are so many good people in this country who week in week out, quietly just get on with it. They obviously enjoy it and find it satisfying otherwise they wouldn't do it.

I recently attended a U3A London Region meeting where delegates from all over London were discussing "Volunteering". It would be so easy to concentrate on all the common problems such as getting offers to go on the committee, become group leaders etc. but I don't want to forget all the volunteers we have who are just getting on with running our great Bexley U3A. To paraphrase a paragraph in a recent Third Age Matters, Groups consist of members who are prepared to share their life skills for the benefit of the wider movement. In doing so, they reinforce the U3A ethos of self-help which is reflected in the U3A success story.

Our communities would be a poorer place without the thousands of volunteers who may only be doing a little bit but it adds up to a big bit!

Sandra Goulding



Monthly Meetings and Speakers:

The main meeting is held on the 2nd 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. For this meeting please arrive early for 1.45 start

March 14	Kinder Transport. Children Refugee Train	Speaker tba <i><u>Please note the Speaker will start at 1.45 and finish at 3.30</u></i>
April 11	Support Dogs	tba
May 9	Wilf Lower	Behind the Scenes of Television's Golden Years
June 13	Tony Neild	Hall Place Gardens – Return Visit!

OPEN GROUPS Town and Around - Maire Carr/Margaret Collin; **Decorative Arts Gallery Visits** - Margaret Collins; **Strollers** – Tuesday mornings - Barbara Wheeler; **Choir** – Terry Mosely; **Micropubbers** - Derrick Allen; **Jigsaw Swap** – Monthly- Maureen Wilkins

Please contact me for further details: Pat Fearnside



Themed Walks

In mid-February, in spite of no rail services on the Bexleyheath line, we all managed to reach Charing Cross station in time for our meeting. Bus 91 took us to Russell Square area. After a brief stop for refreshments, we started our walk through Bloomsbury.

We passed by a large Brunswick Shopping Centre. Then one of the first houses we came to was the former home of J M Barrie, writer of Peter Pan. Nearby was a large building - UCL School of Pharmacy. Another Blue Plaque stated 'Bloomsbury Group Members Virginia Woolf, Duncan Grant, Adrian Stephen. Leonard Woolf and John Maynard Keynes lived in the house on this site 1911-1912'. On a nearby information board, there were photographs of eight prominent individuals who had lived in the area. At Brunswick Square, there was a house where the novelist E M Forester, creator of 'A Room with a View' lived for 15 years.

Crossing Henriette Mews, we came to St George's Gardens. In 1713, the open space in the country used as the first burial ground away from a church; it served two parishes. Apparently, the families were not willing to use it as it was 'so far from town'. After an influential parishioner Robert Nelson wrote in his will that he wished to be buried there, many followed, until in 1855 it was closed as a burial ground. Today there are many old gravestones positioned leaning on the all around. The grass and pretty crocuses brightened up the garden.

Next spot of interest was the statue of Capt. Thomas Coram. He was born at Lyme Regis and lived in America for seven years. Once back in London he was the founder of Foundling Hospital in 1739. Within his 'Thomas Coram Foundation for Children' there is the Foundling Museum and Coram's Fields nearby. These sports fields were well used by various groups of young people, as we passed by. Apparently, at the entrance there is a notice stating: 'Adults may only enter if accompanied by a child'.

Moving on along Mecklenburg St we passed two more Blue Plaques showing that 'R H Tawney, Historian, 19th-20th C' and 'Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Scholar, 19th C' lived there. Further on, a large attractive square building was named 'Goodenough College'. In the same street there were also a few other elegant Georgian houses. We crossed the well-known Great Ormond Street, home to the equally famous children's hospital.

In Rugby St a Blue Plaque indicated that Lawrence Sheriff, founder of Rugby School in 1567 lived there. We finally walked through another small green area - Red Lion Square, with a cafe in the park. Now we were on our way to have lunch at an attractive but busy and noisy Shakespeare's Head pub in Kingsway, before bus 91 took us back to Charing Cross station for our return trip home. This was a rather short but interesting walk. The whole area was unusually quiet and peaceful in comparison to the neighbouring parts of London.

Tomira Carson



The Barn Dance On a foggy Friday evening we promenaded, galloped, swung our partners, we stripped the willow, we laughed and generally had a good time!

The occasion was, of course, the Barn Dance where we danced to the Skinners Rats who tried in vain to teach us our left from our right and the difference between clockwise and anti-clockwise!

A big Thank You to Terry who had the brainwave and for organising it all. **From a happy dancer**

TOWN AND AROUND***ALL OUTINGS AT YOUR OWN RISK***

Thursday 25th 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 22nd 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

Friday 21st June 2019. Royal College of Physicians. Near Regents Park. Meet at Charing Cross at 10.15ish, then onwards by Underground. Tea/coffee/biscuits on arrival then tour of the Museum and also a tour of the medicinal garden with a Garden Fellow. In the afternoon visit Regents Park to see Queen Mary's Rose Garden. £10

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.**

Organiser: Margaret Collins		
Bookings: Maire Carr		
Money: Sabine Wayt		

TOWN AND AROUND**VISIT TO****WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE GALLERIES****BY MARGARET COLLINS**

Despite the landslip over the tracks at Barnehurst causing the closure of the Bexleyheath line our large group managed to meet at Charing Cross by various routes before getting the bus down Whitehall to visit this historic Abbey.

The group entrance took us through the cloisters and then to Poets Corner where we went up by lift to see the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries opened by the Queen accompanied by Prince Charles in June 2018. This is a wonderfully built space between the gallery and the roof of the Abbey. The old oak beams of the roof were exposed which made it very special. These galleries provided space for many artefacts which had not been displayed before. However, the views from the gallery looking down on the floor of the South Transept of the Abbey were wonderful, and so were the views from the lovely flower shaped windows looking out onto the outside. We particularly liked the buttresses with the fantasy animals climbing down, lions, griffins, boars, dogs and others with no known name. All of this so high you would not normally see it. We could also see the Masons Yard, which is always there to carry out restorations.

The displays were fascinating. It had been the custom to have a dressed wooden effigy of those who were to be buried in the Abbey placed on top of the coffin for the population to see when the procession passed on its way. These wonderful wooden figures were displayed, and many were clothed in reproductions of the original clothing, fragments of which had been discovered. King Charles 1, Elizabeth 1, Queen Anne,

Queen Mary II, and Horatio Nelson were amongst clothed figures on display. The wax faces and hands had also been reproduced sometimes taken from the death masks. Interesting to see what they actually looked like. The wooden effigy of Queen Elizabeth I was unclothed except for a reproduction of an undershirt and a beautifully worked corset; she was very slim and tallish if this was an accurate representation. Wonderful old carved bosses, embroidered ecclesiastical copes, interesting illustrated Charters and books, bits of stained-glass windows, paintings, replicas of the Royal crowns, swords, and regalia, Morris and Co tapestries, and even the graffiti covered Coronation Chair used by Mary II at her Coronation with William of Orange in 1689. The portrait of Queen Elizabeth II in her Coronation cloak standing on the Cosmati pavement, where her Coronation took place, brought the history full cycle. The Marriage Licence for Prince William and The Duchess of Sussex was displayed. Some of us could have stayed there all day but hunger got the better of us and we left to have some lunch.

After lunch we visited the Abbey itself. This started as a Benedictine Monastery in 785 on Thorney Island. Rebuilt by St Dunstan in 960, and then again in 1065 by Edward the Confessor. However, by 1245 it was pulled down again, except for the Nave, and the present Abbey was re-consecrated as the Collegiate Church of St Peter by Queen Elizabeth I in 1560. Since then continuous work has been carried out, and thankfully there was only minimal damage during World War 2.

Under the wonderful fan vaulted roof, it is the Church used for Coronations, Royal Weddings, and of course funerals. There are some 17 monarchs buried here, starting with Edward the Confessor, who has a huge shrine. Many other military and naval heroes are also honoured or buried here. We found the tomb of Queen Elizabeth I intriguing as her half sister Mary I is buried with her, but then Mary Queen of Scots has a very exuberant tomb on the opposite side of the building. You have to take time in Poets Corner reading the inscriptions dedicated to so many authors, poets, and playwrights. The Chapel of Henry VII started in 1503 has the banners of the Order of the Bath hanging above the wonderfully carved misericord chairs. The tomb of the Unknown Soldier always brings a lump to my throat. My grandfather was killed in the First World War, but we do know where he is buried unlike many a family. We all commented on the David Hockney window, and none of us were impressed. The Chapter House with its ancient wall paintings was fascinating, along with the Pyx, a strong room for the valuables of the Abbey. So much to see and all in such good order.

We were debating whether we would see a Coronation in our lifetime? Now we know where the cameras will be it is even more interesting.

Wartime Memories

Another year and we are still a stable group, able to find interesting subjects to research and discuss. The last year, we learned about: **The Multi Nationals** who aided the UK during WW2. **The forgotten story of the women** – who fought the WW2 on British Canals transporting Timber and Steel between London and Birmingham and coping with the 150 Locks between. **The London Blitz** and what happened to people once bombed out – it lasted 8 months and 43,000 civilians lost their lives with 30,000 tonnes of bombs dropped overall. After 1941, and the end of the Blitz the Luftwaffe still made Air Raids on the U.K. especially in the South East. **Decoys** used in defending the U.K. from the ground, i.e. Barrage Balloons, Maunsell Forts in the English Channel and Starfish Sites. The latter were large-scale night time decoys created during the Blitz to simulate burning British Cities to divert German night bombers from their intended target. **The work of the Special Operations Executive** – the initial choice of agents was not of soldiers with military expertise, the key factor was whether someone had any special qualities that would be useful in occupied territory. **Fishermen and Fish** – 1200 British Fishermen were killed and two thirds of the English and Welsh trawlers were lost through enemy action, so although fish was off ration quantities slumped to 35% of the pre-war total so supplies were low and prices rose.

For our pre-Christmas meeting we had a Quiz on what we had discussed during the year together with a Memory Test – 12 wartime items, followed by lunch contributed by everyone present. This year, for the first 5 months at our meetings we propose to go through the events of each year of the war as they developed. **June Chambers**

Executive Committee 2018 - 2019

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

Please submit all contributions to April newsletter by

Midday - Tuesday 19th March nb early deadline due to holidays

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