



**CHAIR CHAT MAY 2019**

I have recently spent a lot of time in London. Earlier this year The London Landmarks Half Marathon took place and I went along, not to run, but to support my daughter-in-law! The atmosphere was wonderful, lots of cheering crowds supporting everyone not just the ones they knew. All the runners were running to raise money for lots of different charities, such good will among all colours, creeds, shapes and sizes and all ages. The Chelsea Pensioners were there in their wonderful uniforms shaking hands with as many runners as possible. One runner had a karaoke machine on his back, encouraging the runners to sing along with him as well as run! It was London at its best, not a policeman in sight, all the spectators had a smile on their faces, especially when the people in costumes ran past, and the litter was minimal. This month I also went on a visit with More of London Group to Kings Cross, a formerly run down industrial area with a bad reputation. It has now been transformed into a bustling, thriving area with lots of restaurants, a wonderful water feature and the home of the University of the Arts, London who are using an old Granary as part of the campus. And to see the old gas holders converted into flats and a play area for a nearby school, with great use of mirrors and steel, was inspiring, to show what can be done. Thank goodness they didn't just knock it all down!

Over Easter I visited the Docklands area, another area that has been regenerated; it is now a bustling, busy area of the City with interesting architecture using the original docks as background.

And of course walking across Hungerford Bridge towards the Festival Hall always lifts my spirits, the buildings in all directions look magnificent, especially St Paul's. With the recent news of the fire within Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. I feel it is time to remember to appreciate our great churches of all denominations, our wonderful buildings, old and new and everything that London has to offer.

London is my favourite city in the whole world, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else but I am a Londoner, born and bred and proud of it! So perhaps I am slightly biased!

**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.

May 9	Wilf Lower	Behind the Scenes of Television's Golden Years
June 13	Tony Neild	Hall Place Gardens. Return Visit
July 11	Summer Social with Aiden Kent Singer	Don't miss. He is Great!

August 8	Oliver Wooller	The Blind Mayor and the Ghostly Cat Also the History of Hall Place the House
September 12	Gaye Illsley	Lasting Powers of Attorney. Don't be put off by the Title!

## LOCAL LIGHTS

Straight from London to The Orchard

### THE BODYGUARD

2.30pm Thursday 9th January '20

We know the story, the music and the lyrics. Buy someone a lovely Christmas present or why not treat yourself?

I have secured front row circle seats, the group rate is £38 saving £8 each, enough for one drink or two ice-creams...

Book and pay at this meeting please. Remember to collect your tickets next month. Cheques to U3A Bexley or cash.

Organiser Carole Alleway

## SUPPORT DOGS

At the April Meeting, we welcomed Rosie and Ivy, two beautiful Labradors, one who had retired from being a Support Dog and one who was in training to become one. We made an exception to our usual practice and allowed collection boxes. We raised £321 and we have received a lovely letter from the organisation thanking us for our donations. I think everybody who was there was fascinated and enthralled, and our hearts were touched by the difference these dogs make to the lives of disabled people, people who suffer from epilepsy and autistic children.

Thank You to everybody who gave so generously.

**Sandra Goulding**

\*\*\*\*\*

## Themed Walks

London in Spring is a wonderful sight! However, during our walk through London in mid April we were exposed to the more proverbial April showers: rain, hail, sunshine in between and cold. After meeting at Charing Cross station we called at 'Sulivo' in Villiers Street for coffee. The interior of the restaurant was an interesting combination of old and new: the ancient brick walls and old photos in the modern setting. Soon after, and two stops further on by tube, we reached St James's Park.

The park was teeming with visitors and walkers: large group of people, some with guides, were criss-crossing one another along the wide paths. Here and there, they all stopped to view and admire the beautiful and very colourful flower arrangements, as we did too.

According to the records St James's Park has gone through many changes in the past centuries. It is the oldest Royal park in London. In the 13th C the area was home to a Leper hospital dedicated to St James the Less. In 15th and 16th C, it was the Royal hunting ground. In 1532 Henry VIII established it as a deer park, and built the Palace of St James. In 1603 James I turned it into a park with exotic animals like camels and crocodiles. In the 15th C cows were found to be grazing in the park and people used to come to buy fresh milk at the "Lactarian". The final change came also in the 18th C when a part of the park was taken over for the Horse Guard Parade. At some stage, the previous canal through the park was turned into a pretty lake, with a Duck Island, which is now home to swans and a variety of other water birds.

Strolling through the park we went across the Blue Bridge, which offered lovely views of Buckingham Palace on one side and London Wheel on the other. Then we left the park and ventured into the St James's area, which apparently is the richest part in London. It has a great number of buildings with Blue Plaques, and stores with well-known names along St James's Street, Kings Street and Jermyn Street.

At lunch time, we reached the Victorian "Old Star" pub along Broadway. The pub, with a few small rooms, was busy. We found one room ideal for us - 4 tables, no chairs but long benches along walls and enough space in between tables for us to squeeze in and out; the ceiling was domed. The food and service were very good. In spite of the weather, we enjoyed our day out.

Tomira Carson

~~~~~  
BOOK GROUP

Our group is often regarded as an Alternative Reading Group, as we have for the past six years been doing things slightly differently. We do not all read the same book, but rather have a monthly theme. For example, past topics have been:

Books by a Prize-Winning Author  
A Book with a Very Boring Cover  
Money  
Animals  
Has a Title Beginning with "C"  
Published Before 1950  
Has a Verb in the Title

Yes, you might well think that this is a strange way to run a reading group, but it works. I have been running the group for most of the six years, and during that time I have been fortunate enough to share the monthly meetings with some interesting, intelligent and delightful ladies. (No men have joined us as yet. (I wonder why?))

We have all discovered new authors, often those whose books we would not have considered before. One lady is now devoted to C J Sansom; another to Philippa Gregory. For me, my newly encountered author was Carlos Ruiz Zafon. The books we choose vary widely, anything from Robert Graves to Jeffrey Archer, Classic fiction (Dickens, Austen, Trollope) to Mills & Boon.

We meet on the first Tuesday afternoon of each month in a room in Welling Library, to discuss the varied books we have read, and drink tea. To cover the cost of the room rental and the refreshments we currently pay £4:00 every six months.

**We rarely have vacancies for the group, but at present have a spare place, so if you are interested in joining us, please e-mail or text me for more information:**

Cynthia Allen, Group Leader

## **TOWN AND AROUND**

**ALL OUTINGS AT YOUR OWN RISK. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO SIGN A DISCLAIMER FOR THESE OUTINGS ON THE DAY.**

**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. £7.90)** Time for lunch before boarding at 2.00pm. Refreshment bar and WC on board. £14.00

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019. Royal College of Physicians. Near Regents Park.** Meet at Charing Cross at 10.15ish, using first suitable Freedom Pass train, 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 if you are interested separately visit Regents Park to see Queen Mary's Rose Garden. £10

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Down House the home of Charles Darwin a.m., Biggin Hill Memorial Museum p.m.** Meet coach at Bexleyheath Library for 9.15. Coffee/tea on arrival at Down House. Visit house and grounds free courtesy of English Heritage. Small café for lunch, or bring your own picnic. Rejoin coach and travel a few miles to the recently opened Biggin Hill Memorial Museum. Then into the chapel to have a talk on the history of the airport with its historic connection to Joyce Green, and Woolwich. Leave at 4.30. Price includes coach, tip, entrance to Biggin Hill Memorial Chapel, coffee/tea on arrival at Down House. £20.00

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2019. Restoration House, Rochester.** Meet 10.00 am at Bluewater Bus station stand 11 to catch the 700 bus to Rochester, free with Freedom Pass) and then a short walk along the High Street for 11.00am guided tour. Pretty house first built in 1454, with many additions and alterations over the centuries, with fine paintings and furniture. Beautifully restored private house and fabulous gardens. Small café. Coffee/Tea/Cake on arrival included. £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.**

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

### **Town and Around**

Visit to Anglesey Abbey, Cambridge

By Margaret Collins

A good run by coach, through countryside with its new growth everywhere, made an interesting journey. We were met by a member of staff who gave us information regarding what to look out for during our visit.

Some members headed straight for the café for a refreshing cup of coffee, but I and others ventured towards the house and managed to catch a tour just starting which took us around the outside of the house telling us of its history. There is a mention that Henry 1 built the first Priory (it was never an Abbey) on this site in 1135, but it was then taken over by the Augustinian order. However, by 1536 Henry VIII had the Priory dissolved and the fabric of the building was sold and reused locally in

Madingley Hall. Over the years it became rather derelict until the Vicar of the local village purchased it and in 1848 carried out major rebuilding works. In 1926 Huttleston Rogers Broughton and his brother Henry purchased the property unseen as a party villa for them to use when up for the races at Newmarket where they owned the Barton Stud and for hunting and fishing. The boys were both born in America to an English father and a very wealthy American mother who was part of the Standard Oil family. The family returned to England in 1912 and the boys attended Harrow, Sandhurst and served in the Guards during WW1. Their father was a philanthropist and amongst many other good works purchased the land around Runnymede to prevent it being built upon and gave it to the Nation. For this he was knighted and the title went to his eldest son on his death. When Henry married he moved out of the house, and then Lord Huttleston Fairhaven began his remodelling of the house and estate. No expense was spared and the grounds and the house are now a wonderful testament to his enthusiasm. He even purchased the local quarry to ensure that sufficient matching stone was available. The many garden ornaments, statues, and urns, which he purchased, are beautifully placed in the gardens. Some of the original Roman urns have been taken by the British Museum as too precious to be garden ornaments and replaced with replicas. The house came to the National Trust complete with furnishings and artefacts in 1966 upon Lord Fairhaven's death. What a gift.

The house is completely furnished and some of the rooms are very comfortable and would not be hard to live in with their homely chintz furniture. There are some 20 bedrooms, which would be full of his guests up for the racing, and of course with his American background he had many bathrooms installed, central heating, electric lighting, telephone and good staff quarters added. He was an enthusiastic and eclectic collector of all manner of things. He had to have an extension built to house his collection of some 6,000 books, and over 120 paintings of Windsor Castle. Wonderful clocks everywhere displayed on outstanding furniture. The collection of miniatures was superb, as were the many jewel encrusted crosses on display. The Kitchens and Butler's Pantry where the 9 servants would be working were all interesting. The chef was originally employed on the family yacht Sapphire, which had a crew of 60, and garaging on board for the family Rolls Royce. There was of course other outdoor staff as well, all for one man as he never married. One of the highlights was the Dining Room. This has a fine vaulted ceiling which is the only part of the original Priory still standing. In the main Salon one of the windows has etched on the glass signatures of Royalty who visited. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, George VI, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, Princess Alexandra and her husband and many others over the years. This room had a wonderful display of Elizabethan portraits.

The grounds were looking beautifully manicured with huge pots of tulips in full bloom. The garden rooms are dotted around the house, with vistas terminating in wonderful sculptures, urns, or interesting art installations. I just loved the formal gardens, which you approached through a dark wood, and then wham you are surprised with a magnificent display of orange and white tulips all perfect. A lovely walk along the river took us to the Lode Mill where the millers invited us in to talk about the milling process. Through the Winter Garden where the stand of Silver Birch which are under planted with pink tulips (sadly mostly gone over), made a really outstanding bit of planting. To keep the bark shining these are regularly hosed down, and the effect is very ghostly.

Just time for a cup of tea before boarding our coach home. Thankfully the weather was blue sky but cool most of the day, which ensured we were able to explore this historic house and grounds in comfort.

### 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<br>Parascandolo  |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Social<br>Secretary        | Thelma Wilkes         |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Catering                   | Vi King               |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Hall Manager<br>/Database  | Nino<br>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<br>Editor       | Mary Jupp             |  |                                                                                                                                  |

***Please submit all contributions to June newsletter by***

***Midday - Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May***

**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**