



Chair Chat

Recently I was fortunate to go away for a few days where the Len Phillips Big Band were playing every day, at coffee time, lunchtime and the wonderful evening concerts, which in today's world is very unusual and special. The musicians told us, and it was obvious, how special it was to be able to play to a live audience. I know we can listen through the Internet, and go to the cinema for plays, ballets and opera to be streamed but if we don't support our performers, there will be no live performances to stream! I personally love just being there and seeing and hearing it live! It is so uplifting to see music performed live and it is good for mental health and well-being as well.

Live performances of all genres are very rare, concerts, pop and classical, ballet, opera, drama are all so important in most people's lives and one of the joys of being retired is being able to attend such events.

But as Joe Pettit (Leader of the Big Band) told me

"The future is bleak for Arts and Culture in this country".

About 40% of musicians known to Joe receive no furlough or self-employment grant. We have 'world-beating' session musicians who are now brick-laying for a living. Do we really expect them to come back and compete on the world stage for the next Hollywood film soundtrack?" Or to perform at concert halls and theatres all over the country.

Do we really want ballet dancers to retrain to work in a call centre? If we don't support the young performers and musicians then, when life goes back to normal, we will have no performers to perform!! And the experienced performers will not be working in the industry, so they won't be able to act as mentors to the next generation. We lose our Arts and Culture at our peril!

There are several ideas of how this situation could be helped:

Government support along the lines of "Eat Out to Help Out" where they pay for the empty seats required for social distancing.

A national scheme to employ musicians to play in schools, shopping centres and on TV.

A mopping up process where those who slipped through the cracks with grants/furlough are recompensed. (This shouldn't just be for the performers but for lots of other workers too).

Arts get grants like the £1.57bn Cultural Recovery Fund, which only go to the venues and organisations; it is not keeping musicians solvent.

Aeroplanes have been full for months and yet there is no clear guidance for theatres (and football arenas and cricket grounds, and there are no crowds at any motor sports events either).

U3A have several groups which enjoy music, Jazz Appreciation, Classical Music Appreciation, both Theatre groups and of course our Choir who just love singing for their own enjoyment and ours!

As you can no doubt tell, this is a cause close to my heart!

Sandra

U 3 A BEXLEY

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT : Year ended 31 August 2020

	£		2018/19	
	£		£	
RECEIPTS :				
Members Subscriptions	(450)	5400	(472)	5664
Income from Social Events		926.2		1139.1
Bank Deposit Interest		11.26		15.49
TOTAL RECEIPTS		6337.46		6818.59
PAYMENTS :				
Hall Rental & Committee Room Hire		697.5		1060.5
Speakers Fees		402		788.3
Third Age Trust : Members Fees		1827		1946
Third Age Trust : Postage TAM		980.66		950.9
Printing, Stationery & Postage (incl. Newsletter)		973.04		955.64
Social Event Costs		739.92		922.27
Donations		159.88		355.23
Gratuities		39.78		56.48
Miscellaneous Expenses		97.85		57.47
Website Costs		-		91.41
Laptop Repairs		-		50
		5917.63		7234.2
OTHER COSTS				
Depreciation and Write down of Assets		186		291.02
TOTAL PAYMENTS & OTHER COSTS		6103.63		7525.22
Surplus (Excess of Payments & Other Costs)		233.83		706.63
		6337.46		6818.59

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 August 2020

	£		2019	
	£	£	£	£
CAPITAL ACCOUNT brought forward	8916.96			9623.59
Surplus (Excess of Payments & Other Costs)	233.83			706.63
		9150.79		8916.96
E. BRUMBY BEQUEST brought forward	3491.52		4543.55	
Less : Grants to Groups & Group Leader's Lunch	1098.66	2392.86	1052.03	3491.52
TOTAL INCOME FROM GROUPS	6114.36		15829.12	
Total Group Expenditure	7504.44		13034.87	
	-1390.08		2794.25	
Balance brought forward	2794.25		-	
Cash held by Groups	298.6		443.68	
FUNDS held on behalf of Groups		1105.57		2350.57
		12649.22		14759.05

represented by :

CASH AT BANK :	Signed :	£		2019	
		£	£	£	£
Santander UK Current Account)	6709.54		8670.56	
Metro Bank Deposit Account) TRUSTEES	5026.75		5015.49	
Cash in Hand)	25.93		-	
SUNDRY ASSETS :)				
Value of Stocks : brought forward		49			
Write down of Assets		4	45		49
Equipment at cost		1681.73		1681.73	
Less estimated Depreciation		839.73	842	657.73	1024
		12649.22		14759.05	

Examiner's Report to the Members of U3A Bexley for the year ended 31 August 2020

I have examined the records, receipts and vouchers of the U3A Bexley for the year ended 31 August 2020. I certify that the Accounts, as set out above, are in accordance with those records and present a true and fair view of the financial position of the U3A at that date.

6th October 2020

Alan Smith, Appointed Examiner

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London Events and Celebrations

One of the oldest celebrations, held in some winters on the tideway of the River Thames in London, was the annual **Frost Fair**. For many centuries, the Thames froze over during hard winters in London. Londoners marked these occasions by building markets, cooking food and playing games on the icy surface of the river. Recorded as far back as the 7th Century this Fair took place until the early 19th Century.⁵

The Lord Mayor's Show takes place in November and is one of the best known events in London, dating back to the 1600s. When a new Lord Mayor is appointed, every year, a magnificent, colourful parade takes place through the city of London, reflecting that this was once one of the most prominent offices in England.

Bonfire Night was first celebrated on 5 November 1605, the very night that the Gunpowder Plot was foiled in the Houses of Parliament. Bonfires were lit to celebrate the safety of King James 1. Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators were later to meet a brutal death. Traditionally, bonfires are still lit on 5 November every year.

Christmas was first recorded in England in 1038 (Christ's Mass) but Christmas celebrations, as we know them today, really took shape in Victorian times when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert popularised the event. The Christmas tree, placed annually since 1947 in Trafalgar Square, is given by the city of Oslo as a token of their gratitude to the people of London for their assistance during World War II. Illuminations in central London started in 1954.

Notting Hill Carnival in West London has been celebrated every year since 1966, lasting over a two day period during August. Vibrant and spectacular, it is held by members of the British West Indian Community and is one of the world's largest street festivals.

In 1987, the first **New Year's Day parade** took place through the streets of the West End of London. This is a grand, annual parade, with many floats and displays, organised for the Lord Mayor of Westminster. The event often attracts over a million spectators.

(Information taken from Internet sources), *Maureen Wright*

Are We There Yet?

A Journey by Edna Sutton

They say curiosity killed the cat but I have found that, unlike the saying, curiosity can be fun and most rewarding.

Fancying a sea voyage, my friend and I made our way to Woolwich Ferry intending to visit the Railway Museum on the north side of the river. We had been there once before only to find it shut so we decided on a second try. Although the notice board said open in April we hadn't read the small print which mentioned *school holidays*, so again no luck - no entry.

Still, not to be deterred, and as I had visited the museum some years before, I persuaded my friend to walk onto the platform of North Woolwich station to see if he could see rolling stock or anything else of interest. Well if he did not, I did. Yes, there was a train just waiting to be boarded. With no hesitation on my part (and quite a bit on his), we got on.

'Where does it go?' he said.

Answer - does it matter? We don't pay! With that, the train moved off going to goodness knows where.

We seemed to follow the river and the Docklands Light Railway. And I was quite confident, when Canning Town was reached, that we were on our way to a main at line station. Fenchurch Street perhaps. West Ham was the next stop followed by Stratford, where upon my friend said

'We can catch the Docklands railway back, make our way home via Greenwich.'

'Oh no,' I replied. 'Much too ordinary. We know where we are now and it will be nice to be surprised.'

Well, as we couldn't agree, and confident on my part of our destination, I said let's wait and find out where we're going. My companion was a bit perturbed but had a bright idea.

'Perhaps there's a map.'

And yes, the carriage had one. In front of it sat a large lady and a small curious boy. I for one was not going to show my ignorance and ask them to move so we could see where we were going. Most people know their destination so we both sat tight.

Stations came and went. Gardens and unfamiliar streets, so interesting especially if you're nosey, flew past.

Imagine our horror when we found ourselves at *Kentish Town* station. North of everywhere I knew. Where on earth were we going? Not to Fenchurch Street that's for sure. Now the panic set in. We were lost and it was all my fault.

Newcastle next stop, my companion remarked, friendship fast fading. We prepared to get off at the next station but when we arrived it was in the middle of a park. Gospel Oak. This was no time for a scripture lesson. Hampstead Heath was next and no sign of life there at all. Nobody left the train either. Onwards to another station but where? Hooray, I saw a bus from the train. Quick! A bus must go somewhere we know, I said, and as soon as the train stopped, we got off at West Hampstead. Curiously, we looked at the bus timetable and found we could have gone to Richmond and Kew.

After an expensive cup of tea at the pavement cafe, I saw a bus going to Highgate.

'We could get on that bus,' I said.

'We *could* jump on the Jubilee line tube which would take us to Charing Cross and Home!' said my friend, rather pointedly, I thought.

'Alright,' I said reluctantly.

But I wonder why he didn't fancy Highgate??

In September 2017, Town and Around visited Polesden Lacey. Here is Margaret's wonderful account.

Town and Around

Visit to Polesden Lacey, Dorking

By Margaret Collins

September is sad month I always think, the end of the summer and the beginning of the dark evenings. So our trip to this wonderful National Trust Property was a chance to shake away the blues, and we certainly did with the added joy that the sun was shining.

Just a one hour journey took us to this fabulous house, set on a side of a hill, overlooking wonderful parkland and gardens, complete with a ha-ha and long walk. There had been several houses on this land over the centuries the earliest being 1336. A house from 1824 was the core of the remodelled house gifted by Richard McEwan, the beer millionaire, to his illegitimate daughter Margaret Helen Anderson (born 1863) and her husband Ronnie Greville who married in 1891. Richard was a collector of art and artefacts, and these were displayed in the house. Maggie and Ronnie had the wealth and ability to continue collecting some fabulous art, porcelain, furniture and other items which decorated the house when they took up residence in 1906.

We were split into two groups, and our wonderfully entertaining and informative guide took us around the principle ground floor rooms. The low level lighting, although understandable, gave us a few problems seeing the items in the house, but our eyes adjusted and we could see the splendour. The front door led into a huge warm galleried hallway, with magnificent staircase. We were told tales of Maggie Greville's lavish house parties, and the royal connections gained through her husband Ronnie. Often house parties would include members of the royal family including Edward VII and not surprisingly Mrs Kepple his mistress, or foreign royalty, Mr and Mrs Churchill, and Maharajas also visited and the Duke and Duchess of York had part of their honeymoon here in 1923. She would lay on fabulous French cuisine banquets for her guests, offering them tennis, golf, walks, shooting, and horse riding with suitable instructors hired for the occasion. It was explained that she was like Marmite, some people loved her and others loathed her. She was a well-travelled "Gal" but feisty and domineering. We then walked down a wonderful corridor full of antiques, artworks and sumptuous flower arrangements to the dining room with a huge picture of her father Richard McEwan dominating the room although there were pictures by Lawrence, Rayburn, Lely and other famous artists hung. Back along the corridor to the most glitzy room in the house the Salon, the brief had been that it should be fit enough to entertain a maharajah, so there was gold leaf on the ceilings and walls, and bling was the order of the room. There were lovely little cabinets full of treasures which had been given to her as presents, small jade animals, beautifully enamelled boxes, serious pieces of jewellery, and Chinese porcelain. We went through to the library with its thousands of books, leading on to the study with its beautiful views.

Some of us took a garden tour which told us of the development of the extensive gardens, the huge herbaceous border, the remodelling of the rose gardens, the vegetable gardens, and the cut flower gardens. All in immaculate shape as Maggie would have demanded.

After lunch, we visited the upper bedrooms, which had a fascinating display of the complicated linkage between the men in her life, her millionaire father, her charming and well connected husband, and her close friend King Edward VII.

Ronnie and Maggie had a big society wedding in 1891 but had no children of their own although many god children. Ronnie died aged 42 in 1908 so she was a widow for a long time, but that did not stop her entertaining in her accustomed style. Mrs Greville died in 1942, with much of her fabulous jewellery going to The Queen Mother. During the war, she took up residence at the Dorchester Hotel, with Polesden Lacey being used as a convalescent home for British Officers, but she wanted to be buried in Polesden Lacey and she had her tomb in a peaceful and open setting with the burial places of her beloved dogs nearby in the gardens. The house, contents, and grounds were given to the National Trust in 1951 in memory of Maggie's father and are a very well visited attraction with events going on most of the year. Well worth the visit and enjoyed by all.

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		

Thank you to all our contributors.

*All contributions for December newsletter to be submitted by Midday **Monday 30th November***

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

Thank You