

NEW MEMBERS MEETING

This will be held at the end of the meeting on 14th July to welcome all new members. The Committee and some of the Group Leaders will be present to give you information about their groups and it will be a chance for new members to ask any questions they may have

A reminder that the TEA/CAKE/CHAT group started recently. This group meets on the last Tuesday of each month from 10.00am to 12 noon and is an opportunity to meet up with other u3a members for a natter. For more information about the group please contact Doreen and Vi who will have a table in the Church entrance at each meeting.

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**Patricia Easterbrook**

I heard recently that a person that used to belong to U3A has passed away. She would be known by many members. Patricia Easterbrook (wife of Barry). She passed away a few of weeks ago. Both her and Barry were active members of Stan Hutson’s walking group and other activities.

**Pam Freeman**

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Current Bexley u3a Groups

Alternative Book Group (Vacancy); Armchair Travellers (Vacancies); Choir (Vacancies); City Explorers; Crochet; Decorative Arts; Family History Advanced; French Conversation (Vacancies); French Intermediate; Gardening (Vacancies); German Conversation; Heritage Railway (Vacancies); Italian; Jazz Appreciation; Life Story (Vacancies); Listening to Music; Micropubs (Vacancies); More of London; Photoshop Workshop; Play Reading (Vacancies); Poetry Reading; Ramblers (Vacancies); Reading for Pleasure; Rummikub; Scrabble (Vacancies); Self-Help Art; Spanish Conversation (Vacancies); Stitchers; Strollers (Vacancies); Tea, Cake & a Chat; Wartime Memories.

If you are interested in any of the above groups, please contact me – E-mail, Text, Whatsapp, leave a message on Voicemail. I will get back to you with details of the group or groups that interest you.

Cynthia Allen (Group Liaison)

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*I came across this poem in the SAGA magazine and noticed that our very own Jo Livingston had won the annual poetry competition. She said that it was inspired by the sight of magpies during her woodland walk.*

Congratulations Jo!

Brenda Evans

## Counting Your Life

One for sorrow waits for you  
 But you can pass it by.  
 Ignore its mourning plumage,  
 It will only make you cry.

Two for joy are better far,  
 Catch them if you can,  
 But much too soon they fly away,  
 Tails spread like a fan.

Three and four are girls and boys  
 To last you all your life,  
 To bring you all those sorrows, joys,  
 And happiness and strife.

And then you'll yearn for five and six  
 To raise your growing brood,  
 Gold and silver melt away  
 On shelter, clothes and food.

But seven lingers out of reach,  
 That secret won't be told  
 Until the need for it has gone –  
 Revealed as you grow old.

*Jo Livingston*

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## Book Reviews

From Jenny:

### The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt.

Aged 13 Theo Decker, son of a devoted mother and an absent father, miraculously survives a catastrophe that otherwise tears his life apart. Alone and rudderless in New York he is taken in by a family of a wealthy friend. Theo is tormented by longing for his mother and down the years he clings to the thing that most reminds him of her, a small, captivating painting that ultimately draws him into the criminal underworld.

Many pages, but well written. I have had this book on our shelf at home for many years and this was just the right time to read it.

### Elizabeth and Margaret by Andrew Morton

From the idyll of their cloistered early life, through their hidden wartime lives and into the divergent paths they took following their father's death, this book explores the relationship of these two remarkable women. In it, Andrew Morton, offers unique insight into these drastically different sisters – one resigned to duty and responsibility and the other resistant to it – and the lasting impact they have had on the Crown, the royal family, and the way it has adapted to the change of the twentieth century.

Very topical about our Queen and her sister Princess Margaret. As a royalist I loved it, so much information.

### The Italian Matchmaker by Santa Montefiore

Luca has to admit his life is empty, his marriage is over and he barely knows his young daughter. In search of serenity, he flees to Italy to the magical Palazzo Montelimone lovingly restored by his parents, to reconnect with himself. But life on the sun-drenched Amalfi coast is not as peaceful as Luca Hoped. The Palazzo is filled with his mother's eccentric friends and haunted by ghosts of its murderous past.

Then he meets a woman whose dark eyes are heavy with sorrow, and a solemn little boy with an incredible secret. And he begins to unravel a mystery that has its roots in a long ago act of violence. Luca is forced to face his greatest fear in exchange for the greatest truth.

I loved the book and am loving books by Santa Montefiore, an easy read, but very descriptive which I find endearing.

### The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes

Allice marries handsome American Bennett Vaclav Cleve , hoping to escape her stifling life in England. Yet she doesn't much care for her domineering father-in-law or the judgemental townsfolk of Baileyville, Kentucky.

This has been described as her best book yet. It's a romance, but about female friends, the outdoors and the magic of reading.

I think it has been a wonderful journey and one of the best books I have ever read – I absolutely loved it.

From Hilary:

### Inheritance by Jenny Éclair

This is about a family who have a large house in Cornwall. It progresses from 1950 to 2018, covering the trials and tribulations of the extended family. Author Jenny Éclair is best known as a comedienne.

From Carole:

### Meet Me at the Museum by Anne Youngson

Anne Youngson worked for many years in senior management in the car industry before retiring and embarking on a career as a writer, so this book fitted the bill of our theme for the month: an author who had a previous career.

When the curator of a Danish Museum responds to a query about an ancient exhibit (Tollund Man) on view at his museum he does not expect to get a reply. Likewise, the enquirer, Tina Hopwood, a farmer's wife in Suffolk does not expect one. However a correspondence is set in motion between the two and the book is written in the form of their letters to each other. They are two people both recently bereaved and both the wrong side of 60. Their correspondence flourishes as they discover shared likes and dislikes and the highs and lows of their relationships with others. It all comes to a climax when Tina's letters suddenly cease. Anders, the professor does not want their relationship to end and begs her to continue to write to him.

As a reader I felt I needed the time to read each letter very carefully and slowly, no matter how inconsequential the subject was, to appreciate them all. As the story progresses the letters became more personal of course.

I enjoyed the depiction of older people by this author. She is far less patronising than some recent authors have been. It was an enjoyable read.

From Norma:

Anatomy of a Soldier by Harry Parker.

He turned to writing after serving as a Captain in the Army, first in Iraq in 2007 and then in Afghanistan in 2009 where he lost one leg to a booby trap bomb and later lost the other to infection. It isn't written as a standard autobiography, instead the action centres on Captain Tom Barnes, described throughout the book as BA5799. Instead of giving us his memories of what happened, each of the 45 short chapters is narrated by an inanimate object connected, directly or indirectly, to Tom and what happened to him after his arrival in the war zone.

The objects include a sack of fertiliser, a beer glass, a banknote, and a fungus. It isn't told chronologically; he wanted readers to be able to read the chapters in any order "because that's what it's like to be blown up". It seems a strange way of writing, to let objects tell the story, but for most of the book he is an object himself, on which many painful procedures are carried out, from his immediate lifesaving treatment by fellow soldiers, through reconstructive surgery and brutal physiotherapy. Alongside this is the story of two boys who once played together but find themselves estranged when foreign soldiers appear in their countryside.

Coming from a military family, I usually steer clear of books about war but this one is different, no moralising, no politics, no self-pity, just a realistic depiction of the horrors of combat and survival. It's not an easy read but it's well worth it to get a picture of modern warfare.

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THE EXCHANGE – ERITH

The Exchange is a community-owned organisation that uses the heritage of Erith's Old Library as a space that was designed and built by local people - to inspire new community-led programmes and activities. This includes craft production workshops, markets and events, concerts and performances, history tours and trails, and conversations about what we would like Erith to be.

OPENING TIMES

10am - 4pm

Wednesday - Sunday

BOOKSTORE RESTAURANT - OPENING TIMES

Wednesday 9am - 4pm

Thursday, Friday & Saturday 9am - 11pm

Sunday 10am - 4pm

Erith Made 2022 — The Exchange ([theexchangeerith.com](http://theexchangeerith.com))

***A Festival for Erith !***

ERITH MADE IS OUR TOWN FESTIVAL CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY, PEOPLE AND VENUES!

We have over 30 fantastic events planned over September 10 and 11!

Most of the events across the weekend are free but some may need to be booked to guarantee your space - FULL PROGRAMME COMING SOON!

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## Executive Committee 2021- 2022

|                            |                 |  |                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair                      | Wendy Scott     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Vice Chair                 | <b>VACANCY</b>  |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Secretary                  | Maureen Wright  |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Treasurer                  | Keith Scott     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Membership                 | Douglas West    |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Speakers                   | Paul Morris     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Group Liaison              | Cynthia Allen   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| E-mail & IT                | Keith Scott     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Social Secretary           | <b>VACANCY</b>  |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Catering                   | Vi King         |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Database                   | Keith Scott     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| <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. |
| London Regional Rep        | Sandra Goulding |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Newsletter Editor          | Mary Jupp       |  |                                                                                                                                  |

All contributions for **August newsletter** to be submitted by  
Midday **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August**

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