

Current Bexley u3a Groups

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 (**2 Vacancies**); Self-Help Art; Spanish Conversation (**Vacancies**); Stitchers; Strollers (**Vacancies**); Tea, Cake & a Chat; Wartime Memories; Alternative Book Group.

If you are interested in any of the above groups, please contact me –Text, Whatsapp, leave a message on Voicemail, or E-mail me.

I will get back to you with details of the group or groups that interest you.

Cynthia Allen (Group Liaison)

More of London Group - I have one vacancy for a tour of the lovely, Jacobean, Charlton House plus a cream tea on Tuesday 17 May. Travel to Charlton House is easy by 486 bus from Bexleyheath Clock Tower to Charlton Park and then a very short walk. We are due at the House at 12 pm. Cost for the tour and tea is £8.00.

Please ring me if you are interested in coming along.

Maureen Wright (Group leader)

NEW MEMBERS MEETING

We will be holding a short meeting to welcome all new members to our u3a on Thursday 9th June at the end of our normal meeting. Some of the Group Leaders will be present and they will be able to give information about their groups and it will be a chance for new members to ask any questions they may have. The Committee will also be available to discuss any queries. Hopefully all the new members who have joined either during lockdown or since we have returned to "normal" will be able to attend.



NEW GROUP

TEA/CAKE/CHAT - run by Doreen Trudgill & Vi King

This will be an opportunity to meet and socialise with other u3a members. It will be an open group for 10 people which will be on the **last Tuesday of each month from 10.00am to 12 noon**. There will be a cost of £1.00 per person and it is to be held at Doreen's house which is on the 422 bus route from Bexleyheath.

Doreen and Vi will have a table in the vestibule of the church at each monthly meeting for you to give your name if you are interested and get more information. **Please support this new group**



CLOSED GROUPS

Several people have asked me how many Bexley u3a groups we have lost since the beginning of Covid. Following is a very sad list of those that have closed.

Town and Around, Advanced Family History, Amblers, Backgammon, City Explorers – 1 group, Classical Music, Genealogy, Geology, Greek, Holidays, Jigsaw Swap, Mah Jong, Meditation – 2 groups, Rummikub – 2 groups, Spanish- 1 group, Local Lights, Writing for Pleasure, Themed Walks

London Theatre bookings (2 groups) have been suspended until theatres are fully open and prices come down.

Decorative Arts has reopened under new leadership.

Cynthia Allen

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Book Reviews

From Irene:

Saturdays at Noon by Rachel Marks

The book is structured around an Anger Management Course run on Saturdays which both Emily and Jake attend.

Emily has to attend due to a court order and Jake is trying to save his marriage to Emma and help him bond with his six-year-old son's angst, rages, and meltdowns.

Jake is a stay-at-home dad and refuses to believe that Alfie's problem is due to autism and would rather believe it is due to poor parenting.

Emma moves to her sister's in Paris, and Jake must return to work. At Alfie's request, Emily becomes his nanny but finds it difficult as she endeavours to implement the rules and behaviour that Jake insists is imposed on Alfie.

Slowly she changes the regime and Alfie blossoms under the changes.

Rachel Mark's son also has PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) a disorder on the Autism spectrum. This is highlighted in the structure of the story as it is told from Emily, Jake and Alfie's points of view. Alfie tells us he can only understand the rules of his own games and the other children tell him off because he plays their games wrongly. I admit I had a little tear then!

I read the book in one sitting and have to say that four days later I am still thinking about it.

From Jenny:

Longbourn by Jo Baker

A genuinely fresh perspective on the tale of the Bennet household.

"It is wash day for the housemaids at Longbourn House, and Sarah's hands are chapped and raw. Domestic Life below stairs ruled with a tender heart and an iron will by Mrs Hill – the housekeeper, who is about to be disturbed by the arrival of a new footman, bearing secrets."

If you love Pride and Prejudice, you will love this book also – from below stairs!

Jo Baker writes so well.

A splendid tribute to Jane Austen's book, Pride and Prejudice and a joy in its own right.

I loved it.

The French Gardener by Santa Montefiore

Miranda Claybourne is a city girl by nature. But when her son Gus is expelled from school and her husband David suggests a move to the Countryside she finds herself reluctantly agreeing to a change of scene. Nestled deep in the Dorset Hills Hartington House should be the perfect rural home, but David spends more time than ever in London and Miranda finds herself longing for her old life.

Then an enigmatic Frenchman arrives on their doorstep. Jean- Paul sets out to restore the gardens to their former glory but soon he begins to transform the lives of Miranda and her children. When Miranda finds a journal in the abandoned cottage at the bottom of the garden, she uncovers secrets planted long ago, secrets that cannot be kept hidden any longer.

A love story – 2005 the story begins and goes back to 1979. Lots of gardening, very descriptive. I loved the book. It only took a few days to read.

From Cynthia:

Should We Stay or Should We Go by Lionel Shriver

It is always delightful to find a new author, one whose work you have not read before but intend to seek out in the future. Having never read any of Lionel Shriver's novels, I found this book fascinating and shall certainly read more of her work.

The novel is similar in its framework to Kate Atkinson's Life After Life. In this case, rather than the protagonist being re-born, central characters Kay and Cyril decide on a suicide pact, intending to end their lives when Kay reaches eighty.

Each chapter from then on shows a different possible outcome: Cyril dying, Kay surviving; Kay dying but Cyril changing his mind; both partaking of a new drug that ensures their immortality; the couple opting for cryogenics; the country being overwhelmed by refugees and the pair undergoing a particularly hideous death; the horrors of a "Care" Home.

The results are often hilarious, sometimes unpleasant, occasionally dark, always thought-provoking.

In the Dark by Deborah Moggach

Deborah Moggach is the author of The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel.

The storyline of this novel is totally different, and certainly not funny.

Set in 1916, the plot centres on Eithne Clay, along with her husband Paul and son Ralph. The couple run a dilapidated South London boarding house, assisted by Ralph and their maid of all work, Winnie.

It is a constant struggle to ensure that the family and their lodgers survive the rigours of war, with all its deprivations – lack of food, heat, medicine. To add to Eithne's sorrows, Paul Clay enlists and is later reported dead.

Then her life is transformed by the local butcher, Mr Turk, a lascivious creature who falls for Eithne's charms and begins his ardent pursuit of her.

They marry, and he provides all that Eithne could want – electric lighting, sumptuous meals (including the best cuts of meat, of course), beautiful clothes, and lots of sex. Then son Ralph begins to discover Turk's secrets.

This is an absorbing story of the effects of WWI on the civilians left at home and the tragedy of survivors returning to a life of misery and hardship. It has been well researched and is skilfully written.

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Jubilee Celebrations Around the Borough

This year Her Majesty The Queen became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms, and the Commonwealth. Bexley Borough has a wealth of celebrations. Here are a few:

Lesnes Abbey Lodge, Lesnes Abbey Woods, New Road, London SE2 0AX

11am to 4pm, Sunday 5 June

Join in with traditional lawn games such as egg and spoon race. Meet the author of children's book 'The Queen Knickers' Nicholas Allan. Bring a blanket and enjoy free entertainment, live music, and the kid's zone. There will be have-a-go stalls, food concessions, Prosecco, Pimm's and more. Leave your families mark on the Jubilee at our 'Legacy Station'! Free entry.

Queens Platinum Jubilee Big Lunch

Hall Place & Gardens Bourne Road, Bexley, Kent

5 June 2022 Big Lunch 10am-4pm Free, drop in The Big Lunch is the UK's annual get together for a nationwide act of community and friendship. This year coincides with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. So why not come down to Hall Place and picnic in the beautiful grounds with friends and family, or even enjoy a treat in the Riverside Café. Also onsite will be the popular Hall Place Farmers Market for you to stock up on local produce. Why not make a day of it with a visit to Bexley Butterfly House and Plant Centre, Jambs Owls Experience (charges apply).

Lighting the Queen's Beacon

9pm to 12am, Thursday 2 June, Viewing Platform, Lesnes Abbey Woods, New Road, London SE2 0AX

Lesnes Abbey is involved in the lighting of the Queen's Beacons, where thousands of beacons are being lit to celebrate Her Majesty's Jubilee. Come and see the beacon that will shine out from the Viewing Platform.

Wasteless Market - Jubilee Special

11am to 3pm, Sunday 5 June, The Exchange Erith, The Old Library, Walnut Tree Road, Erith DA8 1RS

Join Teresa and the Wasteless Team for a special Jubilee Wasteless Market. It includes a free crown-making station for those wanting to feel a little 'royal' on this celebration weekend.

Plus, The Bookstore will be serving delicious cakes and tea all day. Along with the usual fantastic plastic-free stalls, you can also drop off your teracycle plastics, crisp packets. For every person who attends a Wasteless event, a tree will be planted.

Jubilee Coffee Morning

Open to all ages to come and make friends, have a chat, and enjoy a cuppa from Rooted Coffee House.

11am, Tuesday 31 May Blackfen Community Library, 7-9 Blackfen Parade, Blackfen DA15 9LU

Executive Committee 2021- 2022

Chair	Wendy Scott		
Vice Chair	VACANCY		
Secretary	Maureen Wright		
Treasurer	Keith Scott		
Membership	Douglas West		
Speakers	Paul Morris		
Group Liaison	Cynthia Allen		
E-mail & IT	Keith Scott		
Social Secretary	VACANCY		
Catering	Vi King		
Database	Keith Scott		
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		

All contributions for **June newsletter** to be submitted by
Midday **Monday 30th May**

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