



COMMITTEE MEMBERS – From Sandra

As you are aware, we have been trying to recruit new members for the committee, to enable our u3a to continue.

We have had some generous offers, which we have accepted gratefully, we have a Treasurer, a Speakers' Secretary and a venue manager, but we are still short of some vital people.

A Secretary is very important, taking minutes at the Committee meetings, (shorthand is not necessary), and being the main communication channel for National Office, so that you will know all the extra events and opportunities on offer.

A data base manager is a fundamental part of how our u3a functions, apart from the members' details being kept up to date, the newsletter is emailed to you, as is all the aforementioned communications from National Office. Third Age Matters requires an up to date database being sent to the central mailing office so that you can receive it. Subscription renewals take place in April and a database is vital for records being kept of these transactions.

Don't want to scare you off, but it is a very important role.

Of course, all the present incumbents are very happy and willing to help you take over.

So, unless we get some volunteers, and as I write this at the end of September, I am sad to inform you that the December meeting, instead of being a Christmas celebration, will be a meeting to close Bexley u3a, and all our funds will be sent to National Office.

MEMBERS, IT IS UP TO YOU!

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Up-to-Date Groups List

Advanced Family & Social History ~ Armchair Travellers ~ Choir ~ City of London Explorers ~ Crochet ~ French & French Conversation ~ Gardening ~ Geology ~ German Conversation ~ Heritage Railway ~ Italian for beginners ~ Jazz ~ Life Story 1 & 2 ~ Local Lights ~ Mah Jong ~ Micropubs ~ More of London ~ Play Reading ~ Photoshop ~ Poetry ~ Ramblers ~ Reading for Pleasure ~ Rummikub - 4 groups ~ Self Help Art ~ Spanish - 2 groups ~ Stitchers ~ Wartime Memories ~ Welling Library Book Group

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**Free as a bird ' Bunting - Needlework group Leader Maureen Hinton.**

When lock down started in March 2020 and the stay at home rule was enforced, unable to see friends and family. This brought out the resourcefulness of many u3a group leaders with technology and other means, one of which was Maureen Hinton. Despite limited needlework experience for most of the group, Maureen encouraged members to keep busy with needlecraft ideas and projects and the brilliant idea of the 'Free as a bird' bunting project developed.

This was evidently inspired from Emily Dickenson's words:

Hope is a thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
and sings the tune without the words  
and never stops at all

Maureen sent by post a variety of bird illustrations to her members for them to make their interpretation in their own individual way.

They took up the challenge!

After a few stabbed fingers, the birds emerged and once the 'flags' were completed Maureen gathered the Birds together and added the finishing touches. The stitching group is proud of this joint achievement and hope it will brighten up the notice board when we are able to meet up once more.

Please look out for it when you attend the monthly u3a meetings at Christ Church.

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## **Remembering More of London Group Visits**

### **2 February 2017 – Visit to The Museum of Brands, Notting Hill**

This is a real fun museum where some 12,000 cartons, bottles, cans, posters, periodicals, toys and games make up the Robert Opie collection of advertising from the past 200 years. Our group moved through a fascinating time-line of tunnels lined with display cases of items dating back to Victorian times. It was great to remember many articles from our own lifetimes that many of us had long since forgotten. There were plenty of “oohs and aahs” over the toy section as we recalled our childhood playthings and, moving on, those of our children and even grandchildren. Opie has been a lifelong collector, starting with a wrapper from a packet of Munchies (remember these?) in 1963 when he was 16 years old. The museum shows only part of his hoard! Well worth the visit as well as refreshments afterwards in the museum café.

### **3 May 2017 – Charlton House Tour and Cream Tea**

A delightful visit to this unique Jacobean house built in 1607 -1612 of decorated, red brick and situated just a few miles from Bexley. Surrounded by extensive land, the house was built by the Crown for Sir Adam Norton and his Royal charge, Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I. Sir Adam was his tutor but sadly, the young Prince died just as the house was completed. Over the years, subsequent noblemen owned the house. Our guide told us some fascinating stories, including those of ghosts and tragedies, as she escorted us around. We were very lucky that all the rooms were empty that day, as most are generally for community use. We could therefore view every room. The large hall is typically Jacobean with dark wood panelling covering the walls. Much of this was also apparent in other parts of the house along with decorative windows, ornate ceilings and extraordinary fireplaces. The house is now often used for wedding ceremonies. After the tour, we were taken to a long, upstairs room where tea was set out for us – scones, cream, jam and pots of tea. Our visit to Charlton House is certainly one to remember.

### **2 October 2017 – HMS Wellington**

A blustery day that did not deter our enjoyment of HMD Wellington, moored by Temple stairs on the River Thames. This ship entered service as a Patrol sloop in 1935 and was engaged in patrolling in the British controlled islands in the South Pacific. She had a crew of 107 besides her senior officers. In 1939, the Wellington was ordered home to serve in escorting convoys in the Western approaches. An excellent exhibition on board was pointed out to us by the Midshipman who gave us a tour and talk. He pointed out that Wellington was instrumental in saving the lives of many passengers and crew of merchant ships that had been torpedoed by U-boats in the Atlantic. She was also used in the evacuation at Dunkirk. There are several displays showing the ship's work during wartime. In 1948, after being rescued by the Honourable Company of Midshipman she was taken to her current berth at Victoria Embankment. She was converted into a floating Livery Hall with a wide, carved staircase and a spacious room for functions. The ship is also home to the Wellington Trust that ensures her preservation. There are a few small offices below deck and a corridor lined with photos of patrons – including some of the Royal family. The enthusiastic master Midshipman gave us a very interesting talk and this was a most interesting visit.

## Book Reviews

From Carole: One August Night by Victoria Hislop

I read this in two days, which should give you some idea of my interest.

It is the sequel to Hislop's very first novel *The Island* published in 2006. Both are set in the village of Plaki on the island of Crete, a stone's throw away from the island of Spinalonga where there had been a leper colony for many years. One August night in 1957 the return of cured patients and the final closing of the colony are marred by a moment of violence which has long ranging consequences for many of the people who live in the village, especially those introduced to the reader in *The Island*. Reviews describe it as 'a dramatic story of love, betrayal and allegiances' and 'of redemption and forgiveness'. I can agree with this. It certainly was gripping. However, I do have some reservations. Hislop is a master of description, and her settings always transport me. She certainly evokes the island of Crete and the now deserted Spinalonga that I remember visiting 30 years ago. The book took me straight back to the white villages, the very blue sea and the sunshine so that was just what I wanted and needed. However, she is not so strong in this novel at characterisation so I needed to re-read *The Island* in order to get a fuller picture of the characters and their back stories. All of the characters could have been described in more detail. I am not so sure it is a standalone novel and I do not think it is as powerful as many of her other novels, but her love for Greece shines through and I enjoyed reading it.

From Jenny: The Binding by Bridget Collins

Emmett Farmer is a binder's apprentice. His job is to hand craft beautiful books and, within each, to capture something unique and extraordinary: a memory.

If you have something you want to forget or a secret to hide, he can bind it and you will never have to remember the pain it caused. In a vault under his mentor's workshop, row upon row of books and secrets are meticulously stored and recorded. Then one day Emmet makes an astonishing discovery: one of the volumes has his name on it. I loved the way the book was written.

From Hilary: The Cabin by Jorn Lier Horst

This is a slightly more gentle Scandinavian crime story set in current day Norway.

Chief Inspector Wisting is asked to investigate how a very large sum of money is found in a recently deceased politician's holiday home - hence the title of the book. This leads to an investigation of a 15-year-old robbery and a man's disappearance. I liked the way the book was written; also the characters. It kept me guessing.

The author has written at least 2 more books featuring Wisting, so I will read those as well.

From Maureen: A Place called Winter by Patrick Gale.

Some of the story is based on the author's own great-grandfather, Harry Cane - one of two brothers from a wealthy business family living in London. He married and had one child (Patrick's grandmother). After losing some of his money in a bad investment he suddenly disappeared off to the Canadian prairies to begin farming at a place called Winter - although he had absolutely no knowledge of working on the land or any other type of work either.

Looking back at his grandmother's collection of old letters and a brief memoir, it appeared to Patrick Gale that Harry had left under a cloud - disowned by his family who made no attempt to contact him after he left. From this information he has woven a novel around Harry having to leave England after an affair with a male actor and made to disappear for his own good and to prevent a family scandal. His exploits in the opening up of Canada at the beginning of the 1900s make great reading, as well as the descriptions of the land.

Later in the novel there is reference to World War 1 and the devastation caused by the Spanish flu.. Harry's personal life, as a homosexual, is sensitively portrayed. The Sunday Times describes the book as "Written in prose of beautiful lucidity, tender tale of loss and love". There is also a lovely photo of Harry Cane at the end of the story where he looks to be in his early twenties. Great book.

From Norma: Strange Flowers by Donal Ryan

Ryan is a new author to me, although evidently he has been on the long list for the Booker Prize twice. The book is set in Ireland in the 1970s, when a girl called Moll leaves home and nothing is heard from her for years afterwards. Nothing is ever the same for her parents after that and they have to come to terms with situations they have never encountered before. Reviews online call it “a beautifully poetic and lyrical bittersweet multigenerational family drama” which makes it sound better than it actually is. The story is interesting but the way it is written detracted from the enjoyment for me. The characters, especially Moll, are weak and insubstantial, and if it had been a longer book I might not have persevered to the end.

#### Executive Committee 2019- 2020

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

All contributions for **November** newsletter to be submitted by

**Midday Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.**

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

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