

# NEWS BULLETIN

## PLANTING SAFELY FOR EARLY SUMMER

Organic gardener George Lockwood began providing a brilliantly colourful start to the new year with his talk via Zoom on 4 January about plantings for early summer.

Unfortunately technical difficulties cut short the talk but it was to be repeated on 14 January. However, as luck would have it, he had already supplied the full list of nearly 100 plants beforehand and they continued to appear on the Bookham u3a website after the first meeting had to be ended.

Originally intended for the Old Barn Hall, the return of Covid-19 fears had persuaded George that Zoom would be a safer and practical means of relaying his talk.

A full-time gardener, speaker, plantsman and gardening consultant, he had begun explaining when particular plants flowered and what soils and aspects they needed. Fertile, well-drained soil was needed by many species, with a humus ridge, while infertile soil was required for naturally occurring wildflower meadows.

He started including tips



*Above: Garden setting for a range of early flowering plants.*

for year-round colour. He also mentioned the importance of hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds for organic gardening, free of pesticides or insecticides.

He explained that rejecting

harmful chemicals meant benefiting the insect life in our gardens, including the all-important pollinators. This in turn helped plants to survive attacks from pests that would damage them.



*Above: Achillea Red Velvet*



*Left: George Lockwood on You Tube.*

The talk focused on plants flowering from March onwards. George started with Achillea Red Velvet, prolific, still flowering in July and shown bringing a mass of colour to a mixed flower bed (see image on Page 1).

Blue Ajuga Reptans was next, flowering until August, followed by Alchmilla Mollis on whose leaves, raindrops resembled mercury. Then Allium Globemaster, long-lasting for more than two weeks from July and at their best when grown in

clumps of up to seven together like all perennials, and a mass of purple.

Next came Aquilegia Black Barlow, best in full sun or anywhere in springtime. White Astrantia Major flowered in full sun in June and was especially recommended for insects. So was pink Bergenia, available in two versions, and ideal for English ladybirds.

At this point George explained the importance of leaving the yellow ladybird eggs on the flowers so that

the emerging insects could gorge on aphids. He advised watering only the soil itself beneath the flowers to avoid washing away the eggs and doing this in the morning rather than at dusk. This was to assist birds too who needed to feed at that time and would be less conspicuous later in the day.

He then moved on to Bluebells, epitome of springtime, and showed the difference between the native English variety and the invasive Spanish type which needed to be cut back at ground level.

Purple Centaurea Montana flowered from May while yellow Centaurea Corepsis would do so throughout the summer.

Blue Cornflowers thrived in wildflower meadows. Pink Cranesbill grew in sun or shade and well-drained, fertile, and moist soil.

His list of other plants:

- Aquilegia Canadensis
- Astrantia Dark Eyes
- Baptista Australis
- Bartzella Intersectional
- Bowl of Beauty
- Brunnera Jack Frost
- Centaurea Jody
- Centaurea Amethyst
- Cinereum
- Cransbill Samobar
- Daphne Retusa
- Delphiniums



*Left: Osterspurmum is a favourite in many English gardens.*

**Registered Charity No 1036386**

## A HISTORY OF THE MOTORING ORGANISATIONS

Dianthus  
Dicentra  
Doronicum  
Epimedium Niveum  
Eremus  
Erigeon  
Eryngium  
Euphorbia Fireglow  
Euphorbia Myglodies  
Euphorbia Pasturi  
Euphorbia Polychroma  
Forget-Me-Not  
Foxgloves  
Gallardia Aristata  
Geranium Max Frei  
Geum Mrs Bradshaw  
Guara Rosy Jane  
Helebore  
Heliotrope  
Hollyhocks  
Hydrangea  
Imperata  
Iris Sibirica  
Larkspur  
Latris  
Leucanthemum  
Lilum Regale  
Lunaria-Honesty  
Lupins  
Lychnis Maltese Cross  
Lysimachia Beaujolais  
Lythrum  
Miscanthus Flamingo  
Monarda  
Osterspurmum Jacudum  
Papavera  
Peonies  
Peony Laura Dessert  
Pillow Talk  
Polemonium  
Poppies  
Primrose  
Primula Candelabra  
Primula Denticulata  
Primula Vialli  
Pulmonaria

Continued on Page 8.

**Pat Llanwarne of Farnborough u3a's Transport Group talked via Zoom about the formation of the Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Club on 11 January.**

Pat worked for the AA in the 1970s. She started her talk with the late 19th century when motoring was in its infancy. Although majoring on the AA and RAC, she also mentioned an interesting array of other organisations.

The RAC was formed in 1897 as a gentlemen's club and the AA in 1905, initially to warn members about police speed traps when patrols rode bicycles. Later motorcycles, then vans were used and breakdowns were repaired. The familiar AA salute ended as long ago as 1962.

The talk included a section on AA boxes through the ages and a breakdown in Windsor Safari Park.



*Above: The days of the AA salute and the familiar badge both ended long ago. Below: Friendly lions watch RAC patrolmen at work in Windsor Safari Park in the 1960s.*



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**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
WHO'S WHO FOR 2022**



**CHRIS MIDDLETON,  
CHAIRMAN**



**GILLIAN ARNOLD,  
SECRETARY**



**CHRIS PULLAN,  
TREASURER**



**PETER G CLARKE,  
MINUTES SECRETARY**



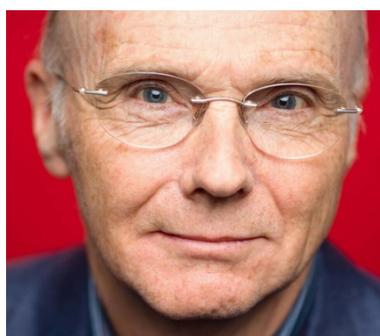
**LIZ LOONEY,  
MEMBERSHIP  
SECRETARY**



**PAM HYDE,  
ASSISTANT  
MEMBERSHIP  
SECRETARY**



**MIKE FARRELL,  
GROUPS COORDINATOR**



**BRIAN WILLIAMS,  
ASSISTANT GROUPS  
COORDINATOR**



**CAROL STILWELL,  
WEBMASTER**



**HAROLD REGLAR,  
ASSISTANT  
WEBMASTER**



**FRANK CROSS,  
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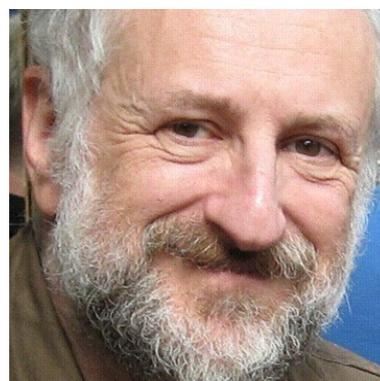
**MICHELLE HOWES,  
ONLINE MEETINGS  
ORGANISER**



**MAURICE BAKER,  
EDITOR  
SENIOR MOMENTS**



**LYNN FARRELL,  
SOCIAL EVENTS**



**TONY MATTHEWS,  
EDITOR  
NEWS BULLETIN**

## **WHY NOT USE THE NEWS BULLETIN TO PROMOTE YOUR OWN U3A GROUP?**

Has your group done something interesting recently? Would other Bookham u3a members be interested in your news? Or do you have vacancies to fill which would help strengthen your group? If so, you can use this monthly News Bulletin to reach our whole membership and attract the attention you need. Try contacting the editor, Tony Matthews, at [newsletter@bookhamu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@bookhamu3a.org.uk). The more we all share, the more we get to know about Bookham u3a and its potential for future growth.

## **LET'S ALL MAKE IT A YEAR TO REMEMBER**

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the u3a movement and the central organisers want to make it a year for everyone to remember. National events are planned throughout the next 12 months including the creation of a 40th anniversary quilt, a

Picnic in the Park in June, and a larger u3a week in September.

Michaela Moody, u3a Vice-Chair and coordinator of the anniversary, said: 'Our anniversary is about looking to the future and what it offers our members.

'We are still relatively unknown despite our 1000+ u3as and nearly 500,000 members. We want the press writing up events like Picnic in the Park and u3a week.'

It will be up to our own Bookham u3a to join in the national initiatives.

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## COMING TALKS IN 2022 - OLD BARN HALL AND VIA ZOOM

**Tuesday, 1 February: June Davey West Horsley Place (Old Barn Hall)**  
June, a guide at West Horsley Place, will speak on its history and its future.

**Tuesday, 8 February: Colin Charman The Story of Music Hall (Zoom)**  
Colin from Tenterden u3a will tell how music hall developed, why it was important, the main characters involved, and its legacy.

**Tuesday, 1 March: Alan Jones Look into My Eyes (Old Barn Hall)**  
Alan's truly varied career has included being a hypnotherapist, nurse, and BBC journalist. He will talk about the history and mystery of hypnosis.

**Tuesday, 8 March: Jo Livingston The Volunteer Fire Brigade (Zoom)**  
Jo Livingston of Bexley u3a is the main u3a contact for social history groups. She will speak on the history of the Volunteer Fire Brigade from its origins around 1820 right up to 1938.

**Tuesday, 5 April: Mary Smith A Schoolgirl's War (Old Barn Hall)**  
Mary tells the story of school life in Kent during World War 2, featuring the highly original artwork of a local school art teacher. Her work depicts disrupted schooling, air-raids, doodlebugs, and underground lessons in shelters experienced by so many at the time.

**Tuesday, 3 May: Howard Smith Picture Post (Old Barn Hall)**  
*Picture Post*, the first photo-journalism magazine published by Hulton Press, was selling two million copies a week in the 1940s. In the 1950s, editor Tom Hopkinson detailed post-war life in Britain with a message of the need for regeneration and social reform.

**Tuesday, 7 June: Fran Sandham My Walk across Africa (Old Barn Hall)**  
Author Fran Sandham walked solo across Africa from Namibia's coast to the Indian Ocean near Zanzibar, a 3000-mile trek taking nearly a year.

**Tuesday, 5 July: John Griffiths-Colby Emily Connell's Autograph Book (Old Barn Hall)**  
Emily Connell was a staff nurse at the 3rd Western General Hospital in Cardiff when World War 1 broke out. She kept an autograph book in which her patients drew and wrote messages. This is Part 2 of the story of her own highs and lows and struggles with the system.

**Tuesday, 6 September: Ian Keable The History of Cartoons (Old Barn Hall)**  
Cartoons became standard in *Punch* magazine from the 1840s but Hogarth and Gillray employed satire, caricature, speech bubbles and captions long before then. Masters of the craft have since included John Tenniel, John Leech, David Low, Vicky, Ronald Searle, Heath Robinson, Giles, Gerald Scarfe, Steve Bell and Peter Brookes among others.

## **LOOK OUT FOR THOSE u3a SUBJECT ADVISERS**

u3a has a national network of over 70 subject advisers who provide advice on setting up groups in a particular speciality. They also advise on how to sustain existing groups in need of new ideas or a different approach.

Some subject advisers keep in touch with group convenors through newsletters or blogs. This is useful for sharing suggestions and good practice. Some also organise study days.

They cover a wide range of subjects from American Archaeology to Yoga, with a real mix of academic, practical and leisure activities in between.

The complete list of subject advisers with their contact details can be found in each issue of *Third Age Matters* and they all have a page on the main u3a site where you may find useful links.

## **WELLBEING WITH NATURE**

Wellbeing With Nature u3a subject adviser Susan Collini ([susan@wellbeingwithnature.co.uk](mailto:susan@wellbeingwithnature.co.uk)) says connecting more deeply with the natural world helps us connect more deeply with ourselves.

She advises u3as that would like to set up specialist groups in the field. Through connecting with nature, she says, the senses are engaged, which helps still the whirring, ruminative mind. Just two hours a week has been shown scientifically to be restorative. For older people spending time connecting with nature can also encourage gentle physical activity. This has been shown to speed recovery from illness and even boost the immune system.

Spending time around trees in particular has been shown to reduce stress, lower blood pressure and can help rebalance the emotions. Susan has been involved in running Wellbeing With Nature activities for over six years, and is a practitioner for Forest School, Social Forestry and Mindfulness in a woodland setting.

The role of the group leader should be one of encouraging people to slow down to be able to 'notice', facilitating connection with nature through practical, creative and reflective activities.

Wellbeing With Nature groups need to encourage members to undertake mild to moderate exercise, engage in social interaction, build knowledge and experience of caring for nature, notice nature around them to promote relaxation of mind and body, and contribute to their own wellbeing through 'giving' to something bigger than themselves.

## **EXPLORING WORLD FAITHS ONLINE**

Webinars exploring world religions will be held this year, organised by u3a subject adviser Peter Rookes. ([pjrookes@gmail.com](mailto:pjrookes@gmail.com)).

They will operate from Birmingham where over 40% of the population now belong to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities with various religions.

Peter is often asked how to start an Exploring World Faiths group. Some people seek chronological origins of religions. Others deal with topics like naming ceremonies, marriage, death, creation, or an afterlife.

Over the past three years the Birmingham u3a World Faiths group has held discussions and arranged visits to a range of religious buildings, including schools and community centres. In less diverse areas such as mid-Surrey, there would be greater reliance on printed materials and online resources.

National Interfaith Week takes place every year in November. This aims to strengthen relations at all levels; increase awareness of distinct communities in the UK; and increase understanding between religious groups and the rest of the population.

## A CENTURY OF SWING AT DORKING HALLS

Fans of swing and jazz music have a rare opportunity to experience an entire century of the sound this month at Dorking Halls on Sunday 30 January, starting 2.30pm.

Len Phillips' 17-piece Swing Orchestra is currently touring parts of the UK, showcasing *100 Years of Big Bands* from Louis Armstrong's New Orleans and the Paul Whiteman Orchestra onwards.

The concert shows how the music developed and changed over that time. It covers the golden age of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller, right through to today's tracks of Michael Bublé and Harry Connick Jr.

Homage is paid to great big band singers such as Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole and Peggy Lee along the way.

Heard regularly on BBC Radio 2 and Jazz FM, the Len Phillips Swing Orchestra is said to be Britain's most popular big band. Its lockdown live-stream series attracted over 100,000 views and included the very first streamed big band concert from London's iconic Abbey Road Studios.

In the *Mail on Sunday*, David Mellor described

RAZZLE DAZZLE PRODUCTIONS LTD PRESENTS  
"THE PERFECT INGREDIENTS FOR A SUPERB AFTERNOON OF MUSIC"  
EASTBOURNE HERALD

100 YEARS of  
**BIG BANDS**  
LEN PHILLIPS SWING ORCHESTRA

**MATTHEW FORD**  
JOHN WILSON ORCHESTRA, BBC PROMS

**NICOLA EMMANUELLE**  
WEST END'S RAT PACK: LIVE FROM LAS VEGAS

PAUL WHITEMAN, BENNY GOODMAN, GLENN MILLER,  
DUKE ELLINGTON, COUNT BASIE, NAT "KING" COLE,  
FRANK SINATRA, ELLA FITZGERALD, PEGGY LEE,  
TED HEATH, MICHAEL BUBLÉ

DORKING HALLS | 2:30PM SUNDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022  
dorkinghalls.co.uk 01306 881717

WWW.LPSWINGORCHESTRA.COM

singer Matthew Ford as 'the archetypal crooner in the mould of Sinatra and Crosby'. He is perhaps best known for his work with the John Wilson Orchestra, including six appearances at the BBC Proms.

Playing the part of Ella Fitzgerald in the West End show *The Rat Pack: Live From Las Vegas*, Nicola Emmanuelle is said to be one of the most outstanding singers in Britain today.

See website:

[www.lpswingorchestra.com](http://www.lpswingorchestra.com)

## SUMMER PLANTS

Continued from Page 3.

Red Astilbe  
Salvia Hotlips  
Salvia Mystic  
Salvia Tubular Bells  
Sanguisorba Atriplex Scabiosa  
Senetti  
Spires  
Stachys Humm  
Stachys Macrantha  
Sunflower Solarflash  
Tanacetum  
Thalictrum  
Tithonia  
Triteleia Anthriscus  
Trolius  
Valeriana  
Viola Odorata  
Wallflowers

## SURREY u3a NETWORK UP AND COMING STUDY DAYS

Surrey's u3a study days returned in September with Dr Geoffrey Mead's presentation on *Landscapes of South-East England* kicking off the new schedule.

The study days now follow the same Covid-secure arrangements used for the Summer Festival run by the Menuhin School in June and July. Most of the speakers scheduled earlier now have new dates.

Study days are open to all u3a members and guests are very welcome. They are held in the Yehudi Menuhin Hall at Stoke d'Abernon, starting with registration from 9.30am and running from 10am to 4pm.

Following the successful experience so many people had during the pandemic of attending events virtually, the organisers have decided to offer Zoom attendance too so that members can view the study days from home if they prefer.

The fees from February 2022, including coffee/tea and biscuits, are £12 for members and £15 for guests and £5 for virtual attendance. Attendees should bring a packed lunch and prior booking is necessary.

Click on any study day link at the website [www.u3asites.org.uk](http://www.u3asites.org.uk) for a programme and booking form. You can use the on-line form on the [Contact](#) page to send a message to John Kennedy, Booking Secretary.

If you would like to comment on the organisation or content of the study day or would like to offer ideas for the future please use the [Feedback Form](#) and send it to John Kennedy as an email attachment or fill in the same form which will be available at the study days and hand it to any member of the committee.

The list of [study day titles](#) over 15 seasons is given, together with a poster of a [typical study day](#). When study day hand-outs or presentations are available for download they will be mounted for a period of at least three months.

Surrey Network treats your privacy rights seriously and its [Privacy Policy](#) can be found by following the link. [History of Study Days](#).

Please contact Surrey Network Chairman, Caroline Sawers, on 01483 560590.

Coming up are the following study days:

18 February

*A Passion for Drawing*

Presenter: Colin Wiggins

Drawing is the foundation stone of western art. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century artists used drawing to try out rough ideas before arriving at their final compositions. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, artists like Leonardo and Michelangelo produced finely wrought drawings as artworks in their own right. Rembrandt's contemporaries carried sketchbooks to catch fleeting moments or record landscapes. More recently drawing became a medium for personal expression. This continues today among artists like David Hockney and Tracey Emin.

18 March

*The Art and Objects of the Mughal Emperors c. 1550-1650*

Presenter: Dr Ursula Weekes

22 April

*Illuminated Manuscripts of the Medieval Period*

Presenter: Imogen Corrigan

20 May

*Talks on Science: Colour, Electronic Music, Poisons & Dying*

Presenters: Andrew Hanson of NPL and Dr Kathryn Harkup

17 June

*Understanding Turner: The Man, His Life & His Work*

Presenter: Professor Maria Chester

**YOUR OPTIONS FOR GROUP MEETINGS**

CODE	GROUP NAME	WEEK IN MONTH	DAY	TIME
His12	<a href="#">3E London</a>	Fourth	Wednesday	AM
Art06	<a href="#">Architectural History</a>	Fourth	Thursday	PM
Art01	<a href="#">Art Appreciation 1</a>	Second	Thursday	PM
Art02	<a href="#">Art Appreciation 2</a>	Third	Monday	PM
Art05	<a href="#">Art Appreciation 3</a>	Third	Tuesday	PM
Bee01	<a href="#">Beer Appreciation</a>	Second	Wednesday	PM
Eng07	<a href="#">Book Reading 1</a>	First	Thursday	PM
Eng08	<a href="#">Book Reading 2</a>	Second	Thursday	PM
Eng12	<a href="#">Book Reading 3</a>	Third	Tuesday	PM
Eng10	<a href="#">Book Reading 4</a>	Second	Tuesday	AM
Bri01	<a href="#">Bridge 1</a>	Weekly	Monday	AM
Bri03	<a href="#">Bridge 3</a>	Weekly	Monday	AM
Bri04	<a href="#">Bridge 4</a>	Weekly	Tuesday	AM
Bri05	<a href="#">Bridge 5</a>	Weekly	Thursday	AM
Bri06	<a href="#">Bridge 6</a>	Weekly	Friday	AM
Bri07	<a href="#">Bridge 7</a>	Weekly	Thursday	AM
Bri0x	<a href="#">Bridge All Groups</a>	When Required	N/A	AM
Bri08	<a href="#">Bridge Beginners and Improvers</a>	Weekly	Wednesday	AM
Can01	<a href="#">Canasta 1</a>	Second + Fourth	Wednesday	PM
Can02	<a href="#">Canasta 2</a>	Second	Tuesday	PM
Cra07	<a href="#">Card Making</a>	Last	Thursday	PM
IT03	<a href="#">Computing Workshop</a>	Second	Thursday	AM
Cra01	<a href="#">Crafts</a>	First + Third	Tuesday	AM
Cra08	<a href="#">Creative Embroidery</a>	First	Monday	AM
Eng03	<a href="#">Creative Writing</a>	Every Other	Friday	AM
Cro01	<a href="#">Croquet (April to Oct)</a>	Various	Various	AM
CA01	<a href="#">Current Affairs</a>	Second	Wednesday	PM
Cyc01	<a href="#">Cycling</a>	First + Third	Friday	AM
Wal03	<a href="#">Easy Rambling</a>	Second + Fourth	Tuesday	AM
His10	<a href="#">Family History</a>	Third	Monday	AM
Cra06	<a href="#">Flower Arranging</a>	First	Thursday	AM
Fre04	<a href="#">French Back to Basics 2</a>	Second + Fourth	Thursday	AM
Fre01	<a href="#">French Conversation 1</a>	Second + Fourth	Wednesday	AM
Gar03	<a href="#">Gardening 02</a>	Second	Wednesday	PM
His22	<a href="#">History</a>	Second + Fourth	Wednesday	PM
Mus06	<a href="#">Intro To Classical Music</a>	Fourth	Wednesday	PM
Dan01	<a href="#">Line Dancing</a>	Weekly	Wednesday	PM
Dan02	<a href="#">Line Dancing Beginners</a>	Weekly	Wednesday	PM
His11	<a href="#">London Walks</a>	Third	Wednesday	AM
His13	<a href="#">London Walks 3</a>	Third	Thursday	AM
His15	<a href="#">London Walks 4</a>	First	Thursday	AM
His17	<a href="#">London Walks 5</a>	Third	Friday	AM
His18	<a href="#">London Walks 6</a>	Third	Thursday	AM
His19	<a href="#">London Walks 7</a>	Third	Wednesday	AM
Mah01	<a href="#">Mah-jong</a>	Weekly	Friday	PM

**Continued overleaf****Registered Charity No 1036386**

**YOUR OPTIONS FOR GROUP MEETINGS continued**

CODE	GROUP NAME	WEEK IN MONTH	DAY	TIME
Mah01	<a href="#">Mah-jong</a>	Weekly	Friday	PM
Met01	<a href="#">Metal Detecting</a>	Second + Fourth	Wednesday	PM
His08	<a href="#">Military History</a>	Fourth	Tuesday	PM
Wal04	<a href="#">Morning Hikes</a>	Second	Wednesday	AM
Sci06	<a href="#">Ornithology &amp; Botany</a>	Second	Tuesday	PM
Art04	<a href="#">Painting Workshop</a>	Weekly	Monday	AM
Per01	<a href="#">Phoenix Entertainment</a>	Weekly	Thursday	PM
Pho01	<a href="#">Photography</a>	Fourth	Wednesday	AM
Eng11	<a href="#">Play Reading</a>	Fourth	Monday	PM
Eng01	<a href="#">Poetry Appreciation</a>	Second	Wednesday	PM
zz01	<a href="#">Qigong</a>	Weekly	Monday	PM
Sci01	<a href="#">Science &amp; Technology 1</a>	Second	Thursday	AM
Sci02	<a href="#">Science &amp; Technology 2</a>	Fourth	Thursday	PM
Sci03	<a href="#">Science &amp; Technology 3</a>	Third	Wednesday	PM
His16	<a href="#">Social History</a>	Second	Monday	AM
His20	<a href="#">Social History 2</a>	First	Monday	PM
Spa02	<a href="#">Spanish Group 2-Basic</a>	First + Third	Monday	PM
Ten01	<a href="#">Table Tennis</a>	Weekly	Monday	PM
TC01	<a href="#">Tai Chi 1</a>	Weekly	Thursday	AM
TC02	<a href="#">Tai Chi 2</a>	When Required	N/A	AM
The01	<a href="#">Theatre Interest</a>	When Required	Various	PM
Tra01	<a href="#">Travel Experiences</a>	Third	Tuesday	PM
Mus11	<a href="#">Ukulele (Beginners)</a>	First + Second	Thursday	AM
Gar02	<a href="#">Vegetable Gardening</a>	Second	Saturday	AM
Wal02	<a href="#">Walking 12km</a>	First	Friday	AM
Wal01	<a href="#">Walking 7km</a>	Second + Fourth	Friday	AM
Win01	<a href="#">Wine Appreciation 1</a>	Various	N/A	PM
Win02	<a href="#">Wine Appreciation 2</a>	Fourth	Wednesday	PM
Win03	<a href="#">Wine Appreciation 3</a>	Second	Tuesday	PM
Win04	<a href="#">Wine Appreciation 4</a>	Third	Monday	PM
Win05	<a href="#">Wine Appreciation 5</a>	Fourth	Monday	PM
Win06	<a href="#">Wine Appreciation 6</a>	When Required	N/A	PM

**SOUTH EAST FORUM SUMMER SCHOOL 2022**

The South East Forum Summer School, held at the University of Chichester, had to be cancelled in 2020 and 2021 but will be running in 2022 from Monday, 20 June until Thursday, 23 June. Booking is now open. Go to the Surrey Network website at <http://www.u3asites.org.uk> for more detail.

The picture (right) shows u3a members at the reception in the chapel at a previous event.



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## THE SECRET OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

TONY MATTHEWS presented a revelatory talk about mid-Surrey's greatest composer and past resident to Bookham u3a's two Social History Groups, first during lockdown in March last year and again this month. Here is a small part of it.

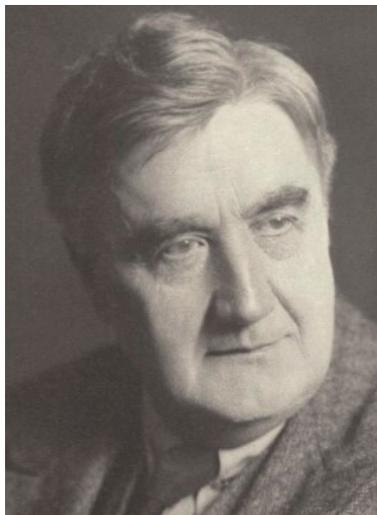
England has produced some great composers over the past three centuries. Handel, arguably the greatest of them all, was of course German but largely worked in this country. Of the home-grown crop I would single out seven: Elgar, Walton, Holst, Britten, Purcell, Delius and mid-Surrey's very own Ralph Vaughan Williams.

He is credited with breaking the ties that had linked English musical composition with German traditions over the previous two centuries. He turned to English folk song as a source and his concert works such as *The Lark Ascending* and *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* are among the most popular of all British musical compositions. His oeuvre over 60 years included nine symphonies, hymns, folk-song arrangements, large-scale choral pieces, operas, ballets and chamber music.

He was also among the most famous of all former residents of today's Mole Valley district. Although born in Gloucestershire on 12 October 1872, he was brought up at Leith Hill Place and later became a Dorking resident. His statue stands today outside Dorking Halls, a giant figure perpetually conducting a notional orchestra.

The Leatherhead & District Local History Society has a collection of oral history interviews dating back to the late 1970s. Sadly of course they could not include the composer himself who died in 1958 but among them is a recording of Elizabeth Watson, a former professional soprano and clarinettist who knew him personally very well indeed.

Interviewed at her home in Headley in



2002, she turned out to be exceptionally interesting because of her musical career and a strong habit of name dropping.

Among the distinguished figures who had featured in her life, Ralph Vaughan Williams held a particular position as a friend in the early 1930s and remained in touch years later.

Furthermore she revealed a little-known secret about him. By 1933 when they first met he was already a national icon, over 60 years old and had written many of his most famous works. Yet Elizabeth - then just 18 and a budding soprano as well as a clarinettist - discovered he was a total flop at playing her chosen instrument. She tried to teach him but he proved completely hopeless.

Elizabeth had already embarked on a musical career under her maiden name of Darbyshire, playing the clarinet as well as performing in choral work as a soprano. In 1933 she was living with her family at a house in Rose Hill, Dorking.

Her parents were professional cellists who had studied in Germany under a famous teacher. Her father taught the cello in Sussex where she was born in 1915 and by the time the family moved to Dorking, she had spent years at school in Switzerland before attending the Royal College of Music to be trained as an opera singer. Her choice of the clarinet as an additional musical activity was then unusual for a girl.

The family's next door neighbour at Rose Hill was a composer, David Moule Evans, a friend of famous musical figures including Malcolm Sargent, Michael Tippett and Ralph Vaughan Williams. One day he



*Top: The White Gates, near Westcott, where Vaughan Williams lived for some 20 years and where he failed to learn how to play the clarinet. Above: The composer in later years with his second wife and former mistress Ursula.*

called in and asked if she would consider taking on a pupil keen to learn the clarinet. She assumed he meant a small boy but was told the prospective pupil had broken his leg and wanted a diversion. The next day she got a letter from Vaughan Williams.

At the appointed time she went to his house, The White Gates in Nutcombe Lane just off the Westcott Road. He had just moved to Dorking from London.

Elizabeth said: ‘There was this enormous man sprawled on a small sofa with a grey shawl draped all over him. He seemed very nice.’ They soon became close friends but as soon as she started trying to teach him how to play the clarinet it became obvious that it was a lost cause.

She said: ‘He was hopeless. He had false teeth for one thing, not much good, and he had no idea. He had

these very long slender fingers. To be any kind of clarinet player - or any wind instrument - you need good fat pads to fill it in.’

He showed little sign of discomfort at this inadequacy and gave it up after his broken leg healed. But before that the weekly lessons became an important part of their weekly routines. After his leg recovered she continued going to his home to play tennis with him. He had a big garden and was a very good player.

The years passed and Elizabeth’s musical career as a soprano took off. Other famous people she came to know included economist John Maynard Keynes whose Russian wife Lydia Lipokova was a choreographer; violinist and music director Ralph Nicholson; and Evelyn Rothwell, oboist and wife of conductor Sir John Barbirolli.

Vaughan Williams lived at The White Gates until 1953, for 13 years in a ménage a trois with his disabled wife Adeline and mistress Ursula, a war widow. He composed many great works there.

After the war Elizabeth performed many times on BBC radio and he wrote to her. He married Ursula after Adeline’s death in 1951. He was 80, she was 41.

He died 26 August 1958 aged 86. The house was demolished in the 1960s and a bungalow of the same name replaced it. The surrounding view remained little changed.

## **SITUATIONS VACANT**

Please contact Chris Middleton at [chairman@bookhamu3a.org.uk](mailto:chairman@bookhamu3a.org.uk) or call him on 01372 454107 for more information on any of the roles below.

### **OUTINGS COORDINATOR**

Do you like visiting country houses, gardens or venturing further afield for group holidays? We need someone to organise such events for the benefit of fellow u3a members. If you rise to the challenge you will be given support and guidance by other members of the Committee to make the events happen. If this feels too much, then why not share the role with friends so that you each only arrange a few visits each year?

### **THEATRE VISITS COORDINATOR**

Performers and audiences alike have missed live theatre during the past 18 months. Please help us get back to enjoying good entertainment again by identifying potential shows for u3a group visits in Surrey, Sussex or London's West End. But we also need someone to organise the travel arrangements. If you are willing to fill this role, other Committee members will support and guide you. If you don't want to go on a particular theatre trip, then why not share the role with friends and select the performances of your choice?

### **HYBRID MEETING TECHNICAL COORDINATOR**

After the current temporary period of separate live meetings at the Old Barn Hall and those via Zoom, we are looking to reunite our u3a at monthly meetings that can be attended both in person and from home via Zoom. We are looking for someone willing to learn how to run this new form of meeting.

Shared practice guidance is available from the London Region of u3as. You will begin by helping to define the different meeting scenarios with their associated technical requirements and equipment. Following extensive testing, you will manage the hybrid meetings each month with support from the Committee. You will be responsible for:

- \*Managing the audio and video streams from within the Old Barn Hall.
- \*Managing attendees via Zoom to include their joining, questions and muting as necessary any unintended audio.
- \*Ensuring that those at home and the hall audience are visible to each other and can feel part of the same event.
- \*Toggling between the speaker and audience in Zoom as appropriate to provide the best experience for all attendees.

### **VICE-CHAIRMAN**

A Vice-Chairman is needed who will deputise for the Chairman and be able to fill that role when the current period of office expires. The Chairman has the following roles:

- Maintain the objectives/purposes of the u3a.
- Preserve order at meetings and ensure that the correct procedure is followed and the agenda covered
- Guide discussions in a positive manner while allowing different points to be expressed
- Encourage audience participation in discussion and decision-making
- Draw discussions to a conclusion and summarise for audience votes where required.
- Ensure decisions are followed through.