

Senior Moments

The Newsletter of the Bookham & District
University of the Third Age

Issue 77

2023

February

Can

Spring

be far

behind?

Bookham & District u3a Management Committee October 2022

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Editorial

Whilst deep in winter with probably more really cold weather yet to come there are signs of Spring already and Bookham is getting back to something closer to the time before the pandemic.

Senior Moments is again being printed so that every household can have a copy but you will have to collect it from the monthly meeting in the Old Barn Hall or make some other arrangement. Copies will be available at each monthly meeting.

As most members know we don't usually have obituaries in Senior Moments but there are exceptions when a member dies who has been an important contributor to Bookham u3a such a person was Jill Godfrey who was one of that distinguished group who founded this group back in the early 1990s.

I hope you enjoy reading the contributed articles in this February issue of Senior Moments.

Maurice Baker



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Chairman's Commentary

Welcome to the Winter edition of Senior Moments.

I don't know about you, but I do find January and February the most dismal months of the year, often because it's cold, wet and the days have not really lengthened that much since Christmas. Only as we get towards the end of February do I put a spring in my step as early signs of the actual Spring emerge.

Whilst there's no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing for a winter walk, we spend much of these months indoors and only venture outside for essential trips and the occasional walk if the weather starts out by looking 'OK'. This is a time, more so than in the summer, for indoor activities, hobbies and a time to look after each other. We can't always see into our neighbours houses, but it would be really good to make the effort to talk to them, make sure they are alright and see if they would like an errand done.

This is where our u3a should come into its own. We are a community of generally like-minded people, albeit with many differing characteristics and interests. Key principles of the u3a movement include self-help and mutual aid, so we really should be looking out for our friends and neighbours. There was a magazine article recently about Frome in Somerset where a local GP has encouraged compassion with a community-based spirit which provides joined-up support for the practical (shopping, looking after pets, cooking, cleaning) as well as the fun (choir, walking groups, craft clubs and men's and women's sheds – spaces for talking whilst making) that GPs and nurses could point their patients towards under the banner of social prescribing. In the past 9 years the results have been profound with significant improvements in the community's health, so much so that Frome is now held up as proof of the power of social connection.

It was good to find that there is a Frome u3a, somewhat smaller than ours in Bookham, but nevertheless providing opportunity to 'Learn, Laugh, Live' through social connection within the community.

Until next time, take care.

Chris Middleton





Photos from David Middleton walks



Regent's Canal and museum trip

On a sunny day in late August, the London Walking Group enjoyed a narrowboat trip, towpath walk and visit to the London canal museum. By train to Vauxhall, we took a scenic bus ride through London, passing some notable landmarks, historic and ultra-modern buildings, and statues including Still Water, a bronze horse-head sculpture by Surrey-based artist Nic Fiddian-Green. The tallest free-standing bronze sculpture in London, at 33ft high, this stood near Marble Arch for 10 years before being relocated to Park Lane near Hyde Park last year. It will look familiar to anyone using the A3 who has looked left just before the Esher turnoff – by the same artist, made in his studio in Godalming, this one is called Horse of the South.



In 2021 a version of Still Water (above) was installed in Wisley Gardens, where it will stay for 2 years.

We caught our first glimpse of the canal from our tea-stop in Sheldon Square, near Paddington Basin.



From there, it was a short stroll to Little Venice where the Grand Union Canal from Birmingham meets London's Regent's Canal. Victorian poet Robert Browning named it Little Venice, and Browning's Pool is an ideal spot to sit and watch the colourful boats drift by – traditionally known as 'gongoozling'!



Here we were given the best seats on Jason, a 116-year-old working narrowboat that used to carry 20 tons of cargo, pulled by a single horse. From the excellent live commentary, we learned all about Regent's canal, its key role in transporting goods and raw materials before the railways took over, and what life was like for those living and working on the canals.



Our 45-minute trip took us through Maida Hill tunnel, where boatmen used to lie on a plank across the front of the boat and push the boat along with their feet on the side walls, past the Blow Up bridge where a boat carrying gunpowder exploded in 1874, landing 300 yards away! The bridge was destroyed, people were killed and animals escaped from the zoo, but the canal was cleared and made operational again in FIVE days!!

We also passed through Regent's Park and London Zoo, and pretty Primrose Hill. We observed two working boats delivering fuel supplies to moored narrowboats, and noted the scored lines on bridge corners, where tow-ropes had worn grooves as generations of horses turned the corner onto the wider towpath.



As we approached Camden Town, we passed a floating Chinese restaurant, and Pirate's castle where children were enjoying a canoeing lesson. As well as learning boating skills here, children can join a floating classroom on a canal barge we saw on our journey.



Disembarking at bustling Camden Town, we made our way past the locks and onto the tow path which we followed for half an hour, past modern boats and buildings, and people enjoying waterside picnics, jogging and cycling.



Using the towpath for leisure pursuit is a modern idea. London canals used to be considered dirty and unsightly and were hidden away, with towpath access restricted to boatmen and their horses. Hence why some people are surprised to learn that there is a canal through London – it's largely hidden from view.



Up to 50,000 people live on the water throughout Britain, including 10,000 on London's canals. Some of their houseboats looked very inviting.



More luxurious but equally unusual accommodation beside the canal includes Gasholders London, an innovative apartment block near Kings Cross, constructed within a set of telescopic gas containers.



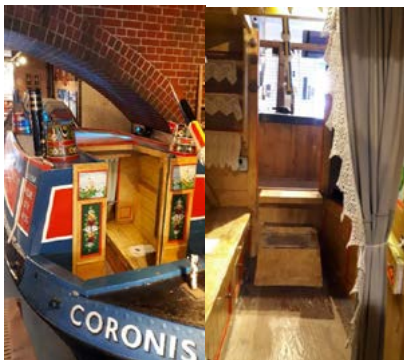
Passing through the attractive open spaces at Coal Drops yard and Camley Street natural park, we soon reached the London Canal Museum.



The museum welcomed us with an introductory talk from a trustee, before we settled down with tea and biscuits to watch some old films of the canal during the 1920s and 1930s.



Housed in a former ice warehouse built in 1863 for Carlo Gatti, the famous ice cream maker, the museum features the history of the ice trade and ice cream as well as the canals. With displays over 2 floors, we also saw the ramp the horses used, and peered into an old ice well, before catching a glimpse into the life of a boat-working family in a narrow boat cabin.



We enjoyed browsing the many information boards and learning about the history of canals, the construction of the network, the lives of the workers, the cargoes, horses and how canals work.



We also learnt the story of the ice industry in London, with the canals providing a vital distribution network for ice imported from Norway by ship and sent to fishmongers, restaurants, mortuaries and domestic customers in the days before refrigeration.



Finally we treated ourselves to a British-made ice cream, sitting on the terrace overlooking the small canal basin used by Carlo Gatti and the ice trade, a fitting end to a memorable day out on Regent's canal.



By Michelle Howes
London Walking Group



Have you discovered UV curing plastic?

This new, to me, clear liquid plastic that can be used as an adhesive as well as construction items first came to my notice in a pen sized holder with the plastic contained in a squeezable pen shaped container and after application a small UV (Ultra Violet) light is used to cure the liquid into a very hard and stable plastic. It's ideal for mending such things as reading glasses shafts and all the breakable parts that belong to these ever increasing items many of us need with advancing years. When I mend small or indeed any items I always leave the mended item on a window ledge overnight so that they receive a strong dose of



UV light when the sun rises. A problem in using the resin is that it is very fluid, but I have found if you give it a few seconds exposure to UV light it will become more viscous. Unfortunately, there is no precision here and if you over harden there is no way to reverse the action. I have seen video clips of the resin being hardened by UV light as it leaves the applicator but I fear this is too close to solidifying the plastic on the dispenser so that nothing more will come out of the pen.

As well as using the Bondic applicator I bought on the internet a 60g bottle of UV resin and a torch with a UV light setting. This has meant I can tackle much larger jobs and there is talk on the web about making whole constructions with this UV hardening resin. It is far easier to use than superglue because it stays fluid until it receives UV light and for the most part that light can be kept under strict control and only applied when you are ready for it. I have also read that it can be used under water, but I have yet to try that.

All in all, a little bit of new technology that can be really useful in all manner of ways.

Maurice Baker



Bookham u3a Military History Group

The final meeting took place on 22nd November - a rather sad day for the remaining members, some of whom had been present at the inception of the Group in February 2007. Membership had dwindled

military topics, some about their own experiences of military life, several of these in action during WW2 and later. In addition to these we have had some excellent presentations by professional military personnel external to the Group. Among the most memorable was Major General



Members at the Normandy memorial 2011

significantly during the COVID lockdown and typical turnout during 2022 had been about 17 members. Margaret Adam had done her utmost to keep the Group mobilised but attendance had dwindled so much by August that we decided that the Group should close.

The Group had started under the leadership of John Chadwick and, following the first few meetings at a member's house, several were held at Turville Court. Soon after that the Group expanded considerably and moved to the St Nicolas Pastoral Centre, where the meetings had been held very successfully for many years.

Many members have given presentations on their favourite

Julian Thompson who had been the Brigadier leading 3 Commando Brigade into Port Stanley during the Falklands War. Another was Air Commodore Charles Clarke,



Margaret & Julian Thompson

President of the RAF ExPoW Association, who told us about his experiences as a PoW, including those on 'The Long Walk' west from Stalag Luft III.

Margaret organised many very interesting visits including those to Normandy (2011), Flanders (2012), Duxford, Biggin Hill, Tangmere, Middle Wallop and elsewhere. When John



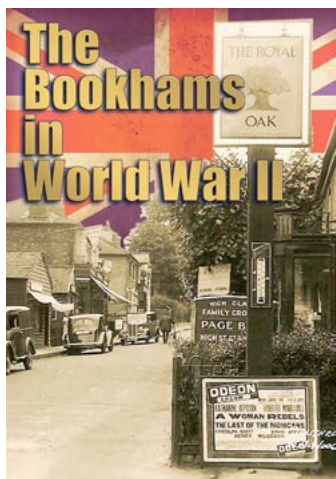
Members at the Flanders memorial 2012

In 2012 several members of the Group undertook detailed research into the impact of WW2 on the Bookhams. As a result a 118 page book with many photographs and maps and was published in cooperation with the Leatherhead & District Local History Society.

Chadwick became unable to lead the Group Margaret took over the leadership.

Following a presentation given by Mike Smith on American Military Pinks and the Special Relationship, Margaret was thanked sincerely by the members and presented with a large flowering pot plant and a bottle of good wine.

Peter Clarke



Bookham in WWI I



U3A Book Group 2 Average Voting Scores 2022

Title		Author	
The Midnight Library (2020)		Matt Haig	
Style	Content	Good Read	Range
7.2	7.0	7.3	6-8
The Color Purple (1983)		Alice Walker	
6.9	7.4	8.1	5-9
Everyone Brave Is Forgiven (2016)		Chris Cleave	
6.9	6.6	6.4	4-9
Anxious People (2019)		Fredrik Backman	
4.9	5.4	5.4	0-9
On Chesil Beach (2007)		Ian McEwan	
7.8	7.2	7.1	4-9
Want You Gone (2017)		Chris Brookmyre	
6.4	6.8	6.7	4-9
Olive Kitteridge (2008)		Elizabeth Strout	
6.4	5.3	5.3	2-9
Shuggie Bain (2020)		Douglas Stuart	
8.1	8.6	8.2	3-10
The Girl With the Louding Voice (2020)		Abi Dare	
8	7.6	8.3	7-9
The Giver of Stars (2019)		Jojo Moyes	
5.1	6.4	6	0-8

The books we read this year included a time-travelling novel, a thriller and several historical novels with a wide variety of settings: Horseback Librarians in Kentucky in the 1930s, London and Malta in World War 2, the American South between the wars, England in the 1960s and Glasgow in the 1980s. There were no non-fiction books this year.

The most popular book, The Girl With the Louding Voice, received very consistent votes. Set in 21st Century Nigeria, it was narrated by Adunni who was sold by her father at age 14 to become the third wife



of an older man. After running away to Lagos she was mistreated in the household where she was employed as a housemaid. We liked this book partly because it taught us a lot about life in Nigeria, such as polygamy, human trafficking, corruption, the attitudes towards women, superstitions about pregnancy, and extreme Christian views. We also liked the evocative descriptions and the characterisations which helped us imagine life there and made us care about Adunni. Some of us felt that there were a few inconsistencies in the plot but we all wanted to find out what happened next. Despite the serious issues and sad ends for some of the characters the novel ended on a positive note because of Adunni's resilience and eventual success at escaping her lot through education.

Almost as popular was the Booker Prize winner Shuggie Bain, a semi-autobiographical novel about a young boy, Shuggie, having to cope with his alcoholic mother, Agnes, and being teased about his posh and effeminate ways in a mining area of Glasgow in the 1980s. It raised many issues, including alcoholism, religious rivalry,



when it was

written in the 1980s, which might be why it won the Pulitzer Prize and was made into a film.

homosexuality, poverty, loss of self-esteem among men after pit and shipbuilding closures in the 1980s, and the effect on family relationships. These issues were dealt with in a confined area with a small number of main characters explored in depth. Though the content was grim there was some humour in it and the love and human spirit shown made it less depressing. Most of us were really drawn in by the characters, willing Agnes to say no to a drink and feeling Shuggie's disappointment when nothing changed. Characters we might cross the road to avoid in real life were portrayed fully enough to show their aspirations and strengths as well as their weaknesses and degradation.

The Color Purple, set in the Southern States between the wars, was also popular because it raised interesting issues and provoked discussion about racism, the treatment of women and the role of religion. We could imagine how shocking and groundbreaking it was to explore female assertiveness and lesbianism

We started the year with our usual 10 members but during the year two people left so for the first time in many years we now have 1 vacancy. We meet once a month on the second Thursday afternoon in each other's houses. As we borrow sets of books from the library there is no need to buy books. If you think you might be interested please contact Anne Eagle for more information.

Anne Eagle





Photos from David Middleton walks

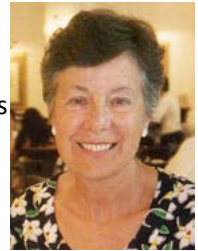


OBITUARY

JILL GODFREY

Jill Godfrey, one of the earliest U3A members in Bookham, died peacefully in her sleep at Dene Place Care Home in West Horsley on 4 December 2022.

Jill attended the first meeting (at the Barn Hall, Great Bookham) where it was discussed whether to set up U3A in Bookham. Recent history has shown that the vote to set up U3A in Bookham was an outstanding success and for many years Jill was actively involved in a number of U3A groups. Among the groups she was part of were Art Appreciation, Book Group and at least two walking groups including the London Walks group as she was always an active rambler. In recent years, with the Covid pandemic and her failing health, she was able to do far less, but she always valued the part that U3A played in her retirement.



Jill moved to Bookham from North London in the 1960s, along with her young family, after her husband, Brian (also a U3A member), was posted to the National Radiation Protection Board at the The Royal Marsden Hospital in Sutton.

In her working life, Jill worked as a dietitian in various London hospitals, mainly at UCH, and was involved in the development of stomach stapling as a way of tackling weight issues.



Photograph taken to mark the 20th anniversary of the opening of Bookham u3a

The County Club

In November the Social History Group held a meeting where members gave a ten-minute presentation on a topic of their choice.

I gave a talk on the County Club which is situated next to Holy Trinity Church in Guildford.

Hilary and I stumbled on this hidden gem whilst visiting Guildford during Heritage Weekend last year. We were passing and were beckoned in! We had a great time looking round and we must have made a

built by Joseph Pickstone in 1800, was a gentleman's residence, as domestic properties were a feature of the High Street until the early 20th Century. The County Club was formed in 1882 and began with 120 members in January which had risen to 150 by the end of the year.

Charles Dodgson's nephew was a member recorded in 1905 which accounts for the number of Lewis Carroll references around the Club. There are four suites available to hire namely The Abbot, The Wodehouse, The Doric and The Carroll which can be used boardroom or theatre style.



good impression as they offered to sponsor us to join!

The original County Club building

By 1946 there were 106 lady members, but they could not use the library, front doors or front staircase but had to use the tradesmen's entrance. Whilst there

was full waiter service in the Dining Room for the gentlemen, ladies were expected to go to the kitchen hatch to collect their food from the chef, and of course, dine in a separate room.

In 1947, an average day saw 16 morning

membership, with younger members and a higher profile for women.

In 2001 Jane Derbyshire became the first female chairman, taking over from Richard Middlehurst. She had previously been a member for almost



coffees, 20 lunches and 10 afternoon teas served. When gin measures were reduced by the government during continued rationing, the Club Manager was invited to resign when he took it upon himself to serve even shorter measures.

In 1947 a Lady's Secretary was appointed who, at the next meeting of the Committee, presented a list of complaints from the lady members of the Club. They were ignored and female membership of the Club declined sharply.

In 1999 the Chairman of the day introduced measures to make the Club more progressive by expanding the

25 years.

Today the Club continues its function for which it was founded, a social club where professionals of all shades and political opinion can meet. The Club also takes an active role in community life in Guildford and Surrey, works with business and the Council, and raises money for good causes. This includes an annual charity golf day.

And how much is it to join? Annual Membership is £275 with a Spouse Membership costing £150 a year.

Anita Laycock



Study Days at the Yehudi Menuhin Hall

Have you ever been to a Study Day at the Yehudi Menuhin Hall? It's in the school grounds of the Yehudi Menuhin School that was setup in the 1960s by the famous violinist and it has produced many well known musicians over the years, including Nigel Kennedy, Nicola Benedetti and Alina Ibragimova to name but a few.

on the speaker and he was very good, we covered the history of maths during the day from 9.30 to 4pm with a break for coffee in the morning a tea in the afternoon. Lunch is not provided but there is plenty of space for one's own picnic meal, inside when its wet and cold and outside on the lawn on warmer days.

There is plenty of car parking and it is quite a delightful place to be.



Yehudi Menuhin Hall with the memorial Plaque for

The school itself is out of bounds to participants at the Surrey Study Days but you can meet people from other u3a's

The Study Days are always on a Friday from 9.30 to 4pm about once a month through the winter and there are spring and summer meetings as well.

All manner of subjects are covered including art and sciences. A recent Study Day was on Maths and my wife Kathleen said she was not really interested but I said it all depends



Inside the hall with Paul Atterbury of Antiques Road Show November 2021

We have been to many excellent Study Days and increased our knowledge of all manner of subjects.

Maurice Baker



A SHAGGY DOG STORY

A man walked to the doorway with a distinctive gait. He opened the distinctive gate and walked along the path knowing that a dreadful fate awaited him. The dreadful fete, with its colourful stalls, was laid out on the lawns of a country house. Being a local man, he was invited on to the rostrum to take a bow. The bough, which was a gnarled and grey, was from a beech. The beach was at a nearby cove where the bough had been found washed up on the shore. He was not sure what to say or what to do with the gift; was this a nightmare he was seeing before his eyes?

The knight mare was a large horse, clad in mock armour, and the knight sat astride with his lance. Lance was his son, a strapping lad, whose hair was brown. The brown hare was a pet kept in an enclosure in their garden. The knight, the local squire dressed up, was a kindly man but with a cold manner. The cold manor was an Elizabethan house standing in its own grounds, thrown out from the coffee pot by the kitchen maid over many years.

The manor had a pretty garden with many flower beds. The beds were of box-spring construction where the flowers laid in comfort. What they laid, I do not know; not eggs like hens I don't expect.

Strolling round the garden, another man walked up to a nearby fence. He tried to sell jewellery he'd stolen from the house to the fence. However, he was caught and appeared in court where the jewellery --- oops! ---jury found him guilty.

That is the end of this shaggy dog tail --- oops!--- tale.

David King (Jan. 2023)



Bookham u3a future events

The table below shows upcoming meetings open to all members. For more information on these meetings please refer to the Bookham u3a website. You will need to be logged in to see the additional information.

Group events are shown either on the appropriate group page or on the Diary page.

07 Feb 2023	14:30 Dr Geoffrey Mead - "Scattered Squalor - Downland Homes"	Old Barn Hall
07 Mar 2023	14:30 DrPaul Robbins - "Great British Eccentrics" 1 hr	Old Barn Hall
21 Mar 2023	08:30 Day Trip to Chichester	8 hr approx Chichester
04 Apr 2023	14:30 Keith Harmon - Dowsing	1 hr Old Barn Hall

Study Days at Yehudi Menuhin School

Fri Feb 17th	Amelia B. Edwards: The Great Forgotten Victorian Egyptologist Presented by Clive Barham Carter, Lecturer with the Arts Society Places will be available in the hall or for on-line viewing
Fri Mar 17th	A Study Day on Poetry Presented by Steven Fowler, James Haddow & Roger McGough Places will be available in the hall or for on-line viewing

Bookable on line surreyu3astudyday@btinternet.com