



Senior Moments

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

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Bookham & District u3a Management Committee October 2022

Chairman: *Chris Middleton*

01372 454107 chairman@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Vice Chairman: *Phil Brown*

01372 579036 vicechairman@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Secretary: *Gillian Arnold*

01372 452046 secretary@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Treasurer: *Chris Pullan*

01372 454582 treasurer@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Membership Secretary: *Liz Looney*

01372 459551 membership@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Groups Co-ordinator: *Mike Farrell*

01372 451797 groups@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Minute Secretary: *Peter G Clarke*

01372 450908 minutes@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Speakers Secretary: *Frank Cross*

01372 450526 speakers@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Webmaster: *Carol Stilwell*

01372 457007 webmaster@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Assistant Webmaster: *Harold Reglar*

01372 452445 webmaster@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Social Events: *Lynn Farrell*

01372 451797 social@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Senior Moments Editor: *Maurice Baker*

01372 372147 seniormoments@bookhamu3a.org.uk

Outings Coordinator: *Vacant*

Co-Opted Members

Theatre Trip Coordinators: *Brian Williams* *Paula Reglar*

01372 457445

Tel: 01372 452445

Bookham and District U3A

Registered Charity No 1036386 u3a Membership No 254/239/93
Registered Address: 156 Lower Road, Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 4AQ
www.bookhamu3a.org.uk

The Committee



Groups Co-ordinator
Mike Farrell
451797



Chairman
Chris Middleton
454107



Vice-Chairman
Phil Brown
579036



Secretary
Gillian Arnold
452046



Treasurer
Chris Pullan
454582



Membership
Secretary
Liz Looney
459551



Webmaster
Carol Stilwell
457007



Theatre Trips
Coordinator
Brian Williams
457445

Editorial

This November edition of Senior Moments follows the October AGM of Bookham u3a and you will find contact details of all the Committee members on page 2.

There are several articles of interest to members and now we shall be printing copies for all members, not to be posted individually, but available for collection at the Old Barn Hall monthly meetings. You can arrange to have your copy collected if you cannot make the meeting.

Contributions in the form of articles for Senior Moments are always welcome and even suggestions for articles if you feel you cannot write the complete story will always be considered. One article in this issue is by Rita Pitcher who died earlier this year. I knew her as a very accomplished artist at the Monday morning Painting Workshop but I have also discovered that she wrote some interesting pieces on subjects of general interest. Last month we published her recollections of growing up in Lambeth during the Second World War when she was a young child and this time there is her piece on a visit to Communist Russia with her family in the mid 1970s that makes most interesting reading.

In the Chairman's report at the AGM he pointed out that a basic principal of the u3a is that all members should be fully participating members of their individual u3a's.

Maurice Baker



Senior Moments Editor
Maurice Baker 372147

Chairman's Commentary

Welcome to the autumn edition of Senior Moments.

During the past 18 months as Chairman, I am sure you have read or heard more than once my encouragement to get involved and volunteer to contribute in a small or large way to our u3a, all in line with the u3a ethos. Why do I keep harping on about this? Well, it's good for you and good for Bookham u3a!

Getting involved can help you make friends, learn new skills and even feel happier and healthier. Giving of your time to benefit our u3a and its members can help protect your mental and physical health, reduce stress, combat depression, keep you mentally stimulated and provide a sense of purpose.

One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to commit to a shared activity together. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, especially if you are new to Bookham. It strengthens your ties with the u3a community and broadens your support network, exposing you to people with common interests. While some members are naturally outgoing others are shy and have a hard time meeting new people. Volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice and develop your social skills, since you are meeting with a group of people with common interests. Once you have momentum, it's easier to branch out and make more friends and contacts.

Getting involved helps counteract the effects of stress, anger, and anxiety. The social contact can have a profound effect on your overall psychological well-being. Nothing relieves stress better than a meaningful connection to another person. Involvement also combats depression as your regular contact with others helps you develop a solid support system, which in turn protects you against depression. It provides a sense of purpose, especially for those who have lost a spouse. It can take your mind off your own worries, keep you mentally stimulated, and add more zest to life.

Volunteering makes you happy since human beings are hard-wired to give to others. The more we give, the happier we feel. This rolls over into increasing self-confidence. You are benefitting the u3a community, which provides a natural sense of accomplishment, of pride and identity. And the better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive view of your life and future goals.

Finally, getting involved helps you stay physically healthy. Studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality rate than those who do not. Older volunteers tend to walk more, find it easier to cope with everyday tasks, are less likely to develop high blood pressure, and have better thinking skills. It can also lessen symptoms of chronic pain and reduce the risk of heart disease.

There you have it, so what are you waiting for?

Until next time, take care.

Chris Middleton



Croquet news

Our croquet season will be over by the time you read this, cut short amid glorious weather. The Trust are worried about muddy lawns so the sad task of dismantling equipment will have been done. It was just too hot to play on some of the hottest days this summer but we got quite used to playing on brown grass!

The overall croquet group,



Blue skies brown lawns

administered by Martin Pulsford, has 65 members divided into seven playing groups, two groups play Golf Croquet and four play Association Croquet. Each group has a group administrator who runs their group just like any other u3a group. There is also a once weekly group for beginners and improvers.

The croquet picnic in August was well attended, always a fun social event with no pressure to win anything!

The Association croquet tournament was a great success although there were only twelve entries. Martin organised the event, assisted by David Snow. A picnic lunch was a welcome break in the middle of four



Martin gathering the troupes

hours of play. We were especially pleased to see Iden Coleman who joined us for lunch.

Congratulations go to Ray White who followed up his Golf croquet win with this one. Martin presented Ray with his trophy after which David gave a vote of thanks to Martin for organising such an enjoyable day.



Val Shelton has a dilemma but she has plans

Martin has had a humorous exchange with a non croquet player in - Texas. Somehow an email had winged it's way to someone there who has the same name as one of the tournament entrants. He replied and wished us all well for the day. A pity he isn't a croquet player, that would have made a great exchange visit!

Thank you again to the National Trust for facilitating play and for keeping the lawns mowed and seeded, we know it's a constant battle with wildlife. Visitors from far and wide enjoy the lawns as much as we do which must make it all worthwhile.



5 Val Cross



Martin presenting the trophy to Ray

Trudi concentrating



Tournament entrants

To Russia with love? 1975

With trepidation I decided to accompany my husband and son on a trip to Russia during the Cold War.

Being a person endowed with a somewhat vivid imagination, I had a preconceived James Bond 007 idea of what Russia was like.

On arriving at Kiev Airport everyone sailed through customs ALL EXCEPT ME! The rest of my party stood by, watching as I was scrutinised by a uniformed giant for some time. Seeming to have some doubts about something he called over another uniformed giant who also looked at my passport and then at me, vigorously gesticulating and yammering in Russian. I couldn't understand a word. (What was wrong?) A horrifying thought then struck me; they had found me out! On applying for the visas for all of us I couldn't be bothered to send the form all the way to Cambridge where my son was studying so being a bit of an artist I copied his signature. Visions of being sent to the salt mines appeared before my eyes – I was terrified. Finally, they allowed me through the barrier. With as much dignity as my rotund 5ft-nothing frame could muster, I rejoined the rest of my party, muttering to myself “who do they think I am, some defected babushka trying to re-enter the country?” my mind was filled with thoughts.

My mind was filled with thoughts of whether ‘THEY’, and when I say “THEY” I mean “Big Brother”, would spy on me, would follow me and would listen in on me. To find a little old lady sitting night and day at the end of each corridor watching the comings and

goings of everyone didn't set my mind at rest.

The bedroom was very comfortable and attractive but on entering I immediately looked around for where they might have ‘bugged’ it. I just used my lips with no sound to say to my husband “I wonder if THEY are listening in?” I looked in the mirror on the dressing-table and wondered could they see us on the other side in another room. On going to bed I exclaimed out loud “Oh this bedside lamp doesn't work!” . The next night it did. So you can come to your own conclusion as to whether they listened in or not. Anyway, I said “Goodnight Comrade” every night just in case.



Batumi, on the Black Sea coast, was our second resort. Being extremely hot, to keep cool on our first evening we went to sit on the beach. At first there were quite a lot of people doing the same as us, but as the sun went down so they began to disappear. We continued to sit there until two soldiers with guns came



up to us and loudly yammered in Russian to us. We took no notice, hunched our shoulders and said "we English". With that the soldiers marched off down the beach and the next minute a brilliant searchlight illuminated us "Oh Oh we are not welcome here anymore" we skedaddled back to the hotel before we got 'mown down'.

It was in Tbilisi (Tiflis) whilst visiting a museum that a female



Russian guide became interested in my son after hearing he was studying classics at Cambridge. She invited him back to see their gold artefacts in the vaults the next day which he accepted. The day after that the guide came to our hotel accompanied by a man who she said was her cousin, supposedly studying medicine. He requested my son, that on returning to England would he obtain books on our most up to date medical research to send to him to help him in his studies. My son was advised by his tutor to ignore their request. Of course, off went my imagination again: did they think my son was a follow-up Burgess and Maclean?

Our last port of call was Moscow, where the only incident was when



we
got up
before
breakfast

to take a cine-film of the Kremlin. Just as we were half way through, one of the uniformed 'giants' approached us with a gun and stood in front of us. My husband whispered "Oh, Oh, looks like trouble", but we just said "Good morning to the 'giant', took his photo and carried on with our filming. The 'giant' just gave us a disdainful stare and marched off again.

I left Russia with happy memories of beautiful churches, magnificent statues, wonderful museums, lovely brides putting their bouquets at the bases of statues of national heroes and its people. Russia is so vast that you meet a different race at every point of call: but when our plane touched down in England I could have wept with joy. Here, if I got lost, I could ask someone the way and understand what they said, or at least read the names of roads in English and not in Russian. Here I could stand on grass verges lining pavements without an angry policeman shouting and waving a baton at me. Here, little old ladies don't have to sweep roads: here, I could buy a pair of socks without going to the black market or joining a mile-long queue, but most of all, oh bliss, I was HOME! This was 007 country and here everyone, yes



everyone, was on MY SIDE.

Rita Pitcher 2000

Bookham u3a Oxford Outing August 2022

Bookham u3a members joined up with some of Horsley u3a to make a successful day trip to Oxford in August this year. Whilst it rained cats and dogs at home, we enjoyed an overcast, warm



Covered Market Oxford

and dry day exploring the city. The prolonged drought throughout the country this summer was very evident en route, with yellowed pasture fields, verges and gardens, trees with browning leaves.

The Oxford city streets and alleyways were not crowded, but busy enough with shoppers, tourists and groups of students, some collecting for charity. The wealthy colleges and civic buildings are of local golden limestone. Many are weathered and worn, embellished with iron railings and vast oak doors, with tempting passages into courtyards and quadrangles beyond. There are many interesting cafes and shops.

On arrival we dispersed to various museums, boat trips, coffee shops and to meet family. Most of us met up, after some time to explore and shop, for a 30 minute guided tour of parts of the original Bodleian Library.

Duke Humfrey, (sic) Duke of Gloucester, brother to Henry V, founded a Library here in an ornately carved and decorated Hall above the Divinity School, completed in 1488 to house his large donation of books and manuscripts. Included, was an earlier collection of Bishop Thomas Cobham comprising chained books and manuscripts which was the earliest library in Europe. Damaged by neglect and purges of Catholic-related manuscripts during Edward VI's reign, the Library was later refurbished and the collection



Guided tour at St Peter's

enlarged by the international eclectic collection donated by Thomas Bodley and opened in 1602 with 2,000 books. In 1610 Bodley made an agreement with the Stationers' Company to put a copy of every book registered with them in the library. So, by 1620 there were 16,000 books in the Library. Its necessary expansion then included a wider group of Bodleian Libraries across Oxford, including the Radcliffe Camera and Weston Library. This

agreement continues today. The Bodleian Libraries are, in the UK, one of six repositories of all published documents. An ornate Benefactor's Register is displayed in the stairwell. It includes Oliver Cromwell not because he donated funds, but because he prevented the Library being damaged during the Civil War and Protectorate Period!



Some of the Group at the Bodleian

The Bodleian Library is in active use as a reference library for any Oxford student and Reader, with access to over 13 million books, magazines and documents. The Divinity School hall, with a beautifully carved and embossed ceiling and walls, is also much used for official academic celebrations, teaching, and both settings are famed as film locations, and the Hall as a wedding venue, for only £15,000!

Some of the group lunched at the Weston Library cafe, within the spacious Blackwell Hall, one of the free exhibition spaces there, currently featuring the King Tutankhamun archive and a bookbinding exhibition. Others visited the Botanical Gardens, Christchurch Meadows where Longhorn cattle graze and there is a flourishing wild flower garden and formal garden with views toward Christ Church; others visited Balliol College and the famous Blackwell's Bookshop-more than once!

Martin Slatter, a member of Bookham U3A and alumnus of St Peter's College had kindly organised a guided tour of the College buildings and grounds for us later in the afternoon. One of the younger colleges (founded in 1929), with 300 undergraduates and 100 postgraduates, it has a mix of architectural styles, Georgian, Gothic and Modern, built around a series of quadrangles, gradually enlarged since the time Martin was in residence, with a further new building for student accommodation under way now on an adjacent site. The College incorporates the former St Peter's parish church in its grounds, which is in constant use by students and staff, especially the choir and organ scholars. The grounds are beautifully tended and include the oldest fruiting mulberry tree in Oxford that has boughs tenderly supported on props. A garden sculpture commemorating "continuity" was installed at the end of the Covid lockdown periods. Sarah, our alumna guide from the College Development office, and Martin described the life for students at St Peter's vividly and with enthusiasm. Evading the midnight curfew of the 1950s by climbing in over the back wall, has now been replaced by free 24 hour-access to the College! Martin has since told me that as well as being known for its friendliness and rowing and sports facilities, St. Peter's has recently risen in the Norrington table of academic achievement to 4th in 2020 and 13th in 2021, which has placed them in an unprecedented spot in the top academically achieving Oxford Colleges for the past 3 years - perhaps a point to mention to family interested in coming to Oxford!

With just time for one more cup of tea, we then set off for home.

Viv Bignell

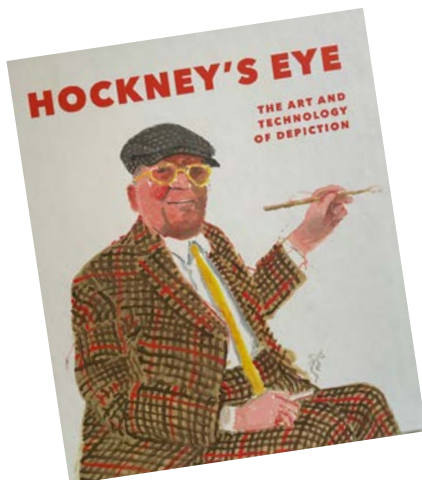


Hockney's Eye exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Cambridge

There have been many Hockney exhibitions all over the world in recent years and I have been to a good few of them, mostly in London but also in San Francisco and Amsterdam and now this latest one in



the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge that I consider to be one of the best. I don't like all of Hockney's painting but he is so often trying something new and frequently making you think again about important aspects of art. This exhibition shows his work, painted, sketched, iPad digital and photography in the



beautiful galleries at the Fitzwilliam alongside the work of many artists throughout the ages so that you see his pictures next to works by many artists and this, I find, is always a most interesting way to look at pictures because you not only see Hockney's work but you get a better understanding of the work of the great masters of the past. The exhibition is only on until the end of August 2022 but the accompanying book with the same title is well worth getting for anyone who is interested in art and it explains very clearly most of what is on show in the galleries. I would almost go so far as to say it should be compulsory reading for any art student and indeed anyone with a wish to understand art in many of its established ways. Both the exhibition and the book go to some lengths to explain Hockney's quite rightful concern with perspective in all its forms and developments in both Western and Eastern art.

His interest and concern with photography, both its usefulness and limitation in one eyed viewing, is explained. There was a new light on the work of William Fox Talbert who in 1839

produced the first permanent image in an adapted camera obscura, partly because he was frustrated at not being able to sketch the image produced accurately enough. To quote both the exhibition



Camera Lucida,—basically a lens and mirror on a stick. It enables the artist to position the eyes nose and mouth accurately, necessary to achieve a good likeness.



and the book, it was through failed attempts to use the camera lucida that he persisted with the camera. "William Henry Fox Talbot, whose artistic humiliation in the face of accomplishments of his sister and wife precipitated his quest to 'fix' the camera images in what became known as photographs".

Hockney's work with the iPhone and iPad throws new light on



iPad painting by moonlight

their use in producing hand made pictures where he not only points out the advantage of making a picture without having to use any messy pigments or watercolours but as

an artist always wanting to sketch anywhere and at anytime. He found he could sketch in the moonlight on his iPad to produce some of the images he made in his Normandy residence.



John Constable

Constable used optical aids, such as a concave mirror, to render his drawings of clouds more accurate said David Hockney

David Hockney



Joiners—Game of Scrabble

On perspective Hockney has commented 'Renaissance European perspective has a vanishing point...a view from sitting still. It is not the way you usually see landscape; you are always moving through it. If you put in a vanishing point anywhere, it means you've stopped. In a way, you're hardly there.'



Are we (really) ready for a world without oil?

Wherever you look or whatever you read, it is clear that the world needs to move away from fossil fuels if it is to avoid the worst of climate change.

burning of oil and gas clearly contributes to global warming, campaigners appear to be closing their minds in the rigorous pursuit of reduced greenhouse gas emissions to all the other uses that oil and gas provide humanity. Is this a short-sighted view that would take the



Whilst there are some who challenge this thinking, the majority appear to be accepting the theories based on global warming evidence to date and the damage to our environment, both of which threaten the very existence of the human race if unchecked. There may be some short term change of direction as the world responds to Russian aggression in the Ukraine but the long term objective remains in place.

So, it is no surprise that campaigners want to see oil and gas production scaled back and they argue vigorously against any new oil and gas developments. The roadmap published by the International Energy Agency (at the end of this article) gives you an idea of what may happen; the detail may change but the direction is clear.

Whilst it is now recognised that the

human race back to a pre-industrial lifestyle?

There is no suggestion that we do anything but reduce our reliance on oil and gas for transport and heating, but by turning off the tap completely, is that a step too far?

Let's look at the uses of oil and gas, which can be grouped into the following categories:

The energy mix to support some of these uses may very well change from oil to a renewable source. This is already happening with transport as electric vehicles take to the roads. Biofuels and electric powered flight are currently in the early stages of development, whilst ships with hybrid electric propulsion are already at sea.

This leaves industry and non-combusted purposes for oil. Let's take a closer look

at some of these uses.

Plastics & Manufacturing



Whether it is the toothbrush you use every day, the contact lenses you wear, your running shoes, or your favourite clothing, nearly everything is derived from or manufactured using oil products in one way or another.

Plastic is the durable and long-lasting substance that is derived directly from petroleum and life without this single element would be drastically different from what it is today.



Moreover, the medical field would look far different than it currently does, as a significantly large number of medical and operational products are derived from plastic; plastic is used in latex gloves, syringes, sterilised packaging

and also contributes to the surgical components used in hip, joint and heart operations.

You see plastic in abundance today and because it is now considered a biological hazard when improperly disposed of, there is increasing demand to reuse and recycle plastics. Many, if not all of us support this trend for the good of our environment. However, demand would increase exponentially accompanied by increasing prices if there were no oil feedstock available for new plastic production. This could be needed when recycled material alone does not create the required quality.

The cosmetic industry will be rocked, since almost every cosmetic item (in composition as well as packaging) requires oil and oil-derived products.

“Plastic is the durable and long-lasting substance that is derived directly from petroleum and life without this single element would be drastically different from what it is today”.

Food Supply

Mass production of food, preservation of food products and packaging is possible because of oil and its numerous by-products.

The heavy machinery that farmers use to sow, harvest and clean the crops, the pesticides and fertilizers they use to make these crops healthier and high yielding all depend on oil.

The packaging and preservation industry depends abundantly on oil derived products; food that is grown in a world without oil would be more prone to decomposition. There would be no means of preservation or of widespread distribution, which means that every person would be put into a position of fending for themselves and producing food locally.

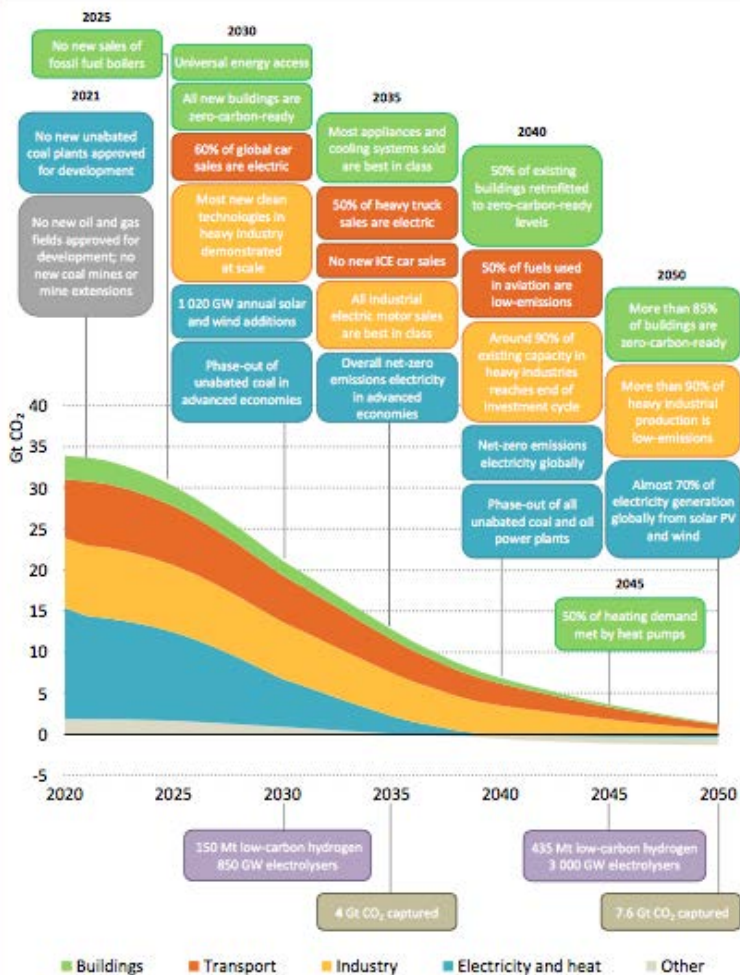
Without chemical (oil-based) pesticides and fertilizers, farmers would have to

rely on organic farming practices, which are indeed favoured in some situations though they tend to increase costs. Solely going organic could push prices up significantly and force us to adapt to different types of meals, depending on the seasons.

Higher food prices have already pushed many to rethink the amount of food being wasted, and in a world without oil, we would have to save every meal portion in order to be economical.

International Energy Agency

Key milestones in the pathway to net zero





So much of our food is plastic wrapped, easy to see and well protected

Conclusion

From transportation and medical necessities to food production and much more, oil has become an inexorable part of our daily lives. One thing is for certain – life would be much more challenging if oil production were to cease completely!

Necessity will be the mother of invention to overcome some of the challenges to replacing oil as a feedstock, but will it be achieved in time?

Chris Middleton



Clandon House

On the afternoon of 29 April 2015, a fire started in the house's basement and quickly spread to the roof. At 4.09pm, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service received an emergency call, and the fire was subsequently attended by a total of 16 fire engines and more than 80 personnel. While fire fighters tackled the blaze, National Trust volunteers were joined by conservators in salvaging furniture and works of art. Items were first stored on the lawns then placed in bubble wrap and sent to a local storage unit. After the fire around 600 "significant items" were rescued. The Fire and Rescue service remained at the property for a further ten days until the fire had been fully extinguished and then began an investigation into the cause of the fire.

A significant number of items were salvaged, but the house was left "essentially a shell" according to Dame Helen Ghosh, Director General of the National Trust, with the roof, ceilings and floors having fallen into the basement, leaving just one room intact. One of the footballs kicked across no-man's land on the first day of the Battle of the Somme in 1916 was among the thousands of historic items destroyed, but the six Victoria Crosses thought to have been destroyed were replicas – the originals were held in a bank vault. Although some paintings and furniture were rescued by staff, many tapestries and some items of porcelain were heavily damaged. A large portrait of Richard Onslow, 1st Baron Onslow who was Speaker of the House of Commons in the early 18th century, was saved after being cut from its frame. An official investigation concluded that the fire was probably caused by a fault on an electrical distribution board in the basement.



In January 2016, the National Trust announced that a number of the principal rooms were going to be restored to the original 18th-century designs, and the "less architecturally significant" upper floors were to be fully modernised for holding exhibitions, events and performances. The cost of the restoration work is being funded by an insurance payout estimated at £65 million. A spokesman for the Trust said it would also be asking supporters for donations to cover any shortfall in the budget.

Rupert Onslow, the 8th Earl of Onslow who owns and manages Clandon Park (Seat of the Earls of Onslow), whose family were the last private owners of Clandon House, criticised the decision to build "a replica" of the house, saying the money might be better spent on adding properties in need of genuine conservation to the National Trust's collection as opposed to creating a replica of Clandon House. The Earl said, "Clandon is lost. It's a ruin now. It decayed instantly. If the National Trust wants a replica, let them build it somewhere else." He also said that the last thing he wanted was a "Vulgar mock-Georgian footballers' wives house." However, the trust said the insurance policy did not allow it to spend the money elsewhere, and it could only be spent at Clandon. The Georgian Group welcomed the decision, calling the fire a national tragedy, and lending support for the restoration project, but reversed its position in September 2017 when the shortlist of design teams being considered for the restoration and their initial proposals, were revealed.

In 2022 the National Trust stated Clandon House will be conserved as a ruin rather than restored to its Palladian glory and this will allow visitors to see the raw power and beauty of the original building.

My EV VW ID.3 progress

I am still very much enjoying my electric VW ID.3. It's a real pleasure to drive in every way and the only drawback to going electric for many people is the infrastructure throughout the whole of the UK is just nowhere near what it will need to be by the time the whole country is supposed to stop buying petrol and diesel around 2030.

While charging your car at home is very satisfying it's out on long distance travel, that is anything beyond the range of the car battery you are driving. The range of the VW ID.3 is good at 260 miles but is not good enough for a good deal of driving around the country. I go to Oxford fairly often that is under 70 miles but when we visit my daughter in Cheshire I can get there in one full charge but the return journey presents a real problem. It took 11 hours to complete the journey last September because although every service station on the motorways have charge points, and they are free, the problems then begin; while there are two



Driving my VW ID.3 in Piccadilly London

cables on each charge point there is only sufficient power to the point so that two cars cannot be charged at the same time! They are also very slow, at least 45 minutes to get an 80% charge to your car battery and sometimes this is

not even accurately recorded so that when you get back on the motorway you can find you have not much more charge than when you stopped to fill up. To crown it all after a 45 minute stop at a PodPoint in High Wycombe railway station I received a letter two weeks later saying I had parked without buying a ticket and consequently there would be a £40 fee to pay. I did get this withdrawn on appeal, but it was yet another annoyance in trying to use public charge points.

A recent Which report has shown how bad the current situation is with public electric charging. It appears that most electric car manufacturers have completely ignored public charging with the exception of Tesla who put in their charging infrastructure before introducing their cars, but this has meant that Tesla charging points are exclusively for Tesla vehicles although there is talk of that changing so that all EVs will be able to use the Tesla charge points.

Public charge points do not allow payment by current credit and debit charge cards - and of course you can't pay by cash, you have to apply for yet another card to carry with you. This absurd system must be changed and updated as a matter of urgency before electric cars are used in much larger numbers by all of us.

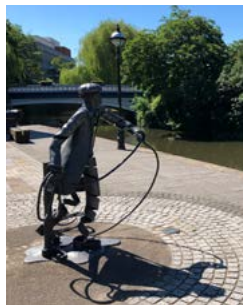
However, an advantage of EVs is that they do not have to pay the congestion charge going into London and as a consequence I have been driving into London more frequently than I have for nearly 40 years. In my later full time working days I used to drive and park my car at Wimbledon then take public transport for the remainder of the journey but this is no longer necessary. These days of course I don't drive in or out of London in the rush hour.

Maurice Baker

The Wey Navigation

My talk to the Social History Group in September featured the history and the life of bargemen on the Wey Navigation.

While researching my last talk about the Chilworth Gunpowder Mills I was surprised to learn that some of my maternal ancestors worked as Bargemen on the Wey Navigation. Charles Russell married Mary Seager in St Nicholas Church, Guildford in 1831.



They lived in Park Street, Guildford and had 13 children. His occupation on their baptism certificates alternates between Corn & Coal Labourer and Bargeman. This is quite common as they picked up work as it became available.

His brother Hugh appeared on the 1861 census on the Barge 'Hope' moored at Guildford. He had two men on board and is listed as 'Captain'. He was carrying Gunpowder & C? (corn, cordite or chalk?). He must have been travelling between Chilworth and London possibly the arsenal at Woolwich to drop off the gunpowder as he married twice, both to London girls.

The Surrey History had a copy letter dated 28th February 1842 from William Mills, William Watkins, Hugh Russell, Thomas Haslett and Charles Russell, bargemen on the Navigation, to J.C. Dawkins complaining about the freight charges they have to pay while employees of the Navigation do not.

Their father, John Russell also a bargeman was born in Godalming where an extension to the canal from

Guildford was built and opened in 1764.

In 1635 Sir Richard Weston of Sutton Place applied for a commission from the King for improving the navigation of the River Wey. He had a strong personal interest in canals, for his low-lying lands at Sutton Place were continually being flooded and with limited flood control he built the first lock on the river at Stoke, a mile upstream from his home.

His later elaborate plans to make the river navigable to the Thames received a check during the Civil War but despite royalist sympathies he was able to get an Act passed in 1651 which provided for the building of the Navigation.

The Navigation was finished swiftly, the 12 locks between Guildford and the Thames being completed by 1653 but almost immediately inefficient administration plunged the Navigation into financial difficulties.



Portrait of Sir Richard Weston, attributed to Cornelis de Neve, c. 1630

After Richard Weston's death it was his unfortunate son George who was involved in the bitter accusations of inefficiency and dishonesty. George Weston was obliged to sell the family shares and then found himself in prison for debts contracted by his father. The disputes dragged on for 20 years and only in 1671 was a second Act passed which put affairs in order and so followed the Navigation's prosperity.

Although Guildford was worried about the number of poverty-stricken

bargemen in the early days, by the 19th century a memoir by John Mason contains a nostalgic picture of the bargemen. They actually looked like a different race from the townsmen, he thought – trim and sailor-like in dress and self-respecting in their habits.

William Stevens became a lockkeeper at Triggs Lock in 1812 and gradually assumed a more powerful role in its management. By the 1890s the Wey Navigation was being run by William and his sons.

At the end of the 1890s the Edwards family came to live at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford. Wharf Cottage was built in 1894 for their family. They came to repair barges after fulfilling the same role on the Kennet & Avon canal. They were 'headhunted' by the Stevens family as they were considered the best barge repairers available.

A later owner installed a balcony so he could watch cricket matches at the neighbouring Surrey County Cricket ground. Since 1964 it has served as the National Trust office for managing the Wey Navigation.



View from the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre

Dapdune Wharf is a wonderful place to explore and the Visitor Centre has exhibits on the history of the Wey Navigation. A barge named Reliance is moored in permanent dry dock, and the other dubbed Perseverance is moored

in the water and awaits restoration.

Last summer I visited Dapdune with Hilary and my mother Betty. We enjoyed looking round the boats, the old stores and sheds, the smithy and steam chest. We ended our tour with a lovely cup of tea and delicious cake and biscuits.



Hilary and Betty onboard 'Reliance'

After the First World War barges would only travel to Dapdune for maintenance or repairs but rarely carry commercial loads to or from the town. Licence and mooring fees from pleasure boating provided some income but from the late 1950s it was becoming difficult to balance the books.

In 1964 Harry Stevens offered the Wey Navigation to the National Trust. In 1968 the Godalming Navigation also passed to them. For the first time both Navigations were under a single ownership.

Today the National Trust manages the navigation as a leisure service. It is run within the guidelines of the Navigation Acts and the principles of the Trust.

Anita Laycock



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.

Tuesday, 1 November: Neil Hanson Ghostwriting

Author Neil Hanson has led an extraordinary life but as a professional ghost-writer of over 60 published books, he has also worked with a remarkably diverse collection of fascinating people. His clients include household names, among them an American showbiz legend, England's most famous cricketer; a famous actor; one of Britain's most decorated soldiers and an England football manager. Others include SAS men, fast-jet pilots, explorers and adventurers, a treasure diver; a kidnap negotiator; a hugely successful businessman, a spy, a notorious gangster; an around the world walker; a submariner; a maxillofacial surgeon and many more.

Tuesday, 6 December: Jacques Arnold The House of Windsor

Jacques Arnold, author of the Royal Houses of Europe series of genealogical books, draws on a lifetime interest initially encouraged by Lord Mountbatten when Jacques was a school-boy 40 years ago. He is now one of Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenants of Kent. He will provide a wealth of interesting anecdotes, drawing on European history with all its dramas and personal triumphs and tragedies.

Tuesday, 3 January Sarah Walker Walking with the Ghosts of Hampton Court Palace

We will walk in the footsteps of kings and queens where history happened, from Henry VIII through to George II; see the magnificent State Apartments of both the Tudor and Baroque palace, Tudor kitchens, wine cellars, and of course the beautiful gardens including the Maze, Great Vine and Tennis Courts.

Study Days at Yehudi Menhuin School

Fri Nov 18th Industrial Archaeology at Fifty

Presented by Professor David Perrett & Professor Martin Adams

Places are available in the hall or for on-line viewing and booking is open

Bookable on line surreyu3astudyday@btinternet.com