



Senior

Moments

The Newsletter of the Bookham & District

University of the Third Age

Issue 72

November

2021

If you want to get involved in Zoom there are full step by step instructions from Chris Middleton on the website, here are the first two pages

1

zoom Installation Instructions

Before starting it is advisable to check that you have an Operating System version equal or later than shown opposite; go to 'Settings' from the bottom LHS Start Button, then 'System', then 'About'. No damage will be done by just looking into Settings.

Windows 10 users should have the latest version because of Microsoft's automatic monthly updating. Other Operating Systems may not be automatically updated.

System requirements

- An internet connection - broadband wired or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE)
- Speakers and a microphone - built-in or USB plug-in or wireless Bluetooth
- A webcam or HD webcam - built-in or USB plug-in
- Or, a HD cam or HD camcorder with video capture card

Supported operating systems

- macOS X with macOS 10.7 or later
- Windows 10
Note: For devices running Windows 10, they must run Windows 10 Home, Pro, or Enterprise. S Mode is not supported.
- Windows 8 or 8.1
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista with SP1 or later
- Windows XP with SP3 or later
- Ubuntu 12.04 or higher
- Mint 17.1 or higher
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6.4 or higher
- Oracle Linux 6.4 or higher
- CentOS 6.4 or higher
- Fedora 21 or higher

2

Use Google to find <https://zoom.us> and click on the Plans & Pricing tab.

This will take you to instruction 3.



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Chris Middleton



Bookham and District U3A

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Editorial

As we slowly move out of the Covid lockdown syndrome changes are coming to Bookham u3a and as you will see on this page there are more Committee members. Some are new in their own right and others in joint positions that are a preparation for taking over a post in the future from a Committee member who is preparing to stand down. Its such a pity with all this progress we still have that very important post of Vice Chairman unfilled. The title is male, but of course the post is open to anyone and we have only had two lady chairs in our 28 year history so it must be high time we had another. The ladies do, after all make up the majority of members.

In this issue once again there are some very interesting articles to read. Who would ever have thought the quiet little village of Chilworth was the centre for the production of gunpowder for over 300 years? And very important it was throughout most of this time as explosives were required not only by the armed forces but also in mining and demolition work.

Most unusually in this issue there is another tribute made to a former member—Sheila Pomfret who organised outings, both near and far right from the start of Bookham u3a until 2016 Sheila Pomfret in her very distinctive way had enormous influence on the u3a and she is well remembered in this issue of Senior Moments.

Maurice Baker



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Chairman's Commentary

Welcome to the autumn edition of Senior Moments.

As I write this, we have had 2 successful in-person meetings in the Barn Hall when attendance increased from 63 to 85 for the October event. Unfortunately, the 85 figure was insufficient to reach the required quorum, so the AGM was deferred to the 2nd November. The COVID-19 protocol helping to keep us all safe seems to have struck the right balance for acceptance by members. We also saw the start of our complementary Zoom based talks which in due course we hope to replace by a single hybrid meeting that brings the Barn Hall and at home audiences together in the same event.

As our u3a opened up after 17 months of COVID restrictions, so we have been establishing the health of our Interest Group portfolio. 10 groups are not returning but that still leaves 77 groups who are either currently active or about to restart. A full list can be downloaded from the Bookham u3a website under the 'Groups' tab. If there is a subject you'd like to know more about but it isn't on the list, then please talk to our Groups Coordinator to see if a new group can be formed.

Returning to the AGM election of the committee and particularly officers, one of the most disappointing aspects of this process is the strong indication that there will not be a vice chairman this year. We live in an area comprising a significantly higher proportion of people (37%) compared with the UK average (22%) who have completed their careers in senior management, administration or professional roles. Whilst not exclusive to these roles, they should have acquired the skills desirable to lead and yet no one is prepared to volunteer for the good of their community.

I will continue without a vice chairman if that is what fate delivers but it may mean that some issues are not addressed. The support that a vice chairman can provide to the overall committee is missing. Of graver concern is what happens when my period of office is over? There will have been no deputising so at the very least, an unprepared chairman or perhaps none at all, so jeopardising the future direction of this u3a. Is this what you want? Until next time, take care.

Chris



Zoom meeting

Bookham u3a's Brand New Monthly News Bulletin

The return of monthly meetings and talks at the Old Barn Hall has coincided with the launch of a brand new monthly News Bulletin for all members using email. With a traditional three-column format and full colour pictures, the Bulletin replaces the former reports after every meeting by Webmaster Harold Reglar.

Instead, the new News Bulletin offers all Bookham u3a members and group organisers a chance to convey news, events and changes, as well as talk reports, to the widest possible audience every month. Although the Bulletin will not be printed in hard copy for cost reasons, the idea is that the small number of members without email addresses can be kept informed too by friends and other group members.

The News Bulletin will not affect production of Senior Moments, whose Editor, Maurice Baker, will continue to publish versions every quarter, welcoming contributions.

Whether you are an existing group organiser, want to set one up or just make any suggestions for the benefit of our u3a, please email the Editor of this News Bulletin, Tony Matthews, at newsletter@bookhamu3a.org.uk



Tony Matthews

WELCOME BACK EVERYONE

Bookham Village Day, 30 August 2021

Bookham u3a is back and ready for action after the long hibernation of pandemic lockdowns. With crowds returning to the Old Barn Hall field this summer on Village Day, we emerged from our usual hiding place in the Harrison Room to present a more accessible face to the wider Bookham community. It was harder to set up in the field but well worth it.

Chairman Chris Middleton, social secretary Lynn Farrell and her group organiser husband Mike had an immensely successful day, with the u3a stand attracting crowds of passers-by, many of whom showed real interest in becoming members. We are hopeful these will now begin to trickle in as we meet the pent-up demand among older Bookham residents seeking new friendships after so long.

LOOKING BACK ON LOCKDOWN

Jo Livingston, u3a Living History officer, is promoting a new project to show future generations how we coped with a situation that none of us could ever have imagined.

Looking back on Lockdown, written by u3a members nationwide, is available in two versions. The link <https://tinyurl.com/8zr8kh56>

is readable on a phone or tablet. An attachment can be printed out for a hard copy.

Jo says: 'The book is free and totally anonymous but using place names in the titles of the pieces makes it clear this is a national project.'

The chapter *Saved in Surrey by Technology* will be very familiar to many of us.

OUR 28TH AGM

The 28th AGM of Bookham and District u3a will be held at the Old Barn Hall, 2.30pm Tuesday, 5 October.

See the website for the agenda, election of committee members, minutes of the last AGM on Zoom in April, and an amendment to the constitution to allow for virtual AGMs and SGMs.

Registered Charity No 1036386

This new addition to the website was originally called Newsletter but to avoid confusion with Senior Moments it has now been renamed the News Bulletin—a far more appropriate title since it is published every month with short bullets of topical news for members of Bookham u3a.

Ed

Chilworth Gunpowder Mills

My talk to the Social History Group in September featured the history of the Chilworth Gunpowder Mills. Hidden away in the Surrey hills are the ruins of an industry which dominated the area for over 300

manufacturers on time and many enterprises failed when their owners experienced financial problems. In the 19th century business picked up again and the gunpowder works expanded in this period.

Gunpowder was originally invented in China in the 9th century and is a mix of saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur. Each of these components needs to be ground up before being mixed. There are six separate stages, and each required its own building. The ingredients would be weighed out and mixed in the mixing house. Then in the powder mill the ingredients were mixed



years.

The fast Tillingbourne river attracted industry to Chilworth as the river could be utilised to power water mills. The Domesday Book of 1086 recorded a mill in the area and in later years paper and corn mills were established. In the 16th century the Evelyn family from

with water to minimise the risk of fire and ground together between two vertical mills.

More water was added to form a "mill rake" and this was then compressed in the pressing house. This process made the gunpowder mixture more potent and improved its explosive qualities. The pressed gunpowder was then sieved in the corning house and then in the glazing house. It was then rolled with lead to make it more water resistant. The gunpowder would be taken to the packing house where it was weighed



Wootton set up a gunpowder works as well as the East India Company in 1626.

By the middle of the 17th century the gunpowder works were now being run by private enterprise. Their main customer was the English Government and during the English Civil War the mills supplied the Parliamentarians with gunpowder. However, Governments were not always good in paying the powder



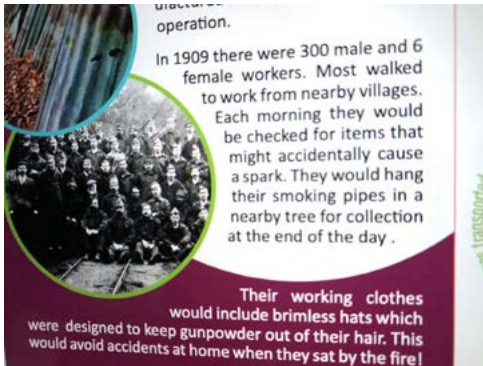


and packed into barrels ready for transport and sale.

The Tillingbourne valley was a large area enabling

Chilworth level crossing

the different workshops to be spread out over a large area. This was an important safety measure. They were separated by large clumps of trees which meant



that if there was an explosion in one building it was far less likely to spread causing massive destruction. Sadly, accidents did occur depriving many families of their breadwinner.

The raw materials for making gunpowder were brought into Chilworth in barges on the river, and barrels of gunpowder were transported away from Chilworth in the same way. I have recently discovered that three of my Russell ancestors in Guildford were Bargemen and this will be the subject of my next talk in September.

The most substantial remains of the gunpowder works are the buildings from the late 19th century. The introduction of steam power in the 1850s allowed the gunpowder works to expand significantly. In 1885 the Sharp family who had owned the works since 1819, sold to the newly formed Chilworth Gunpowder Company, which raised £100,000 worth of

shares.

The First World War brought demand for

explosives and Chilworth became an enormous part of the war effort manufacturing cordite. Cordite is a family of smokeless propellants developed and produced to replace gunpowder as a military propellant.

Around 400 people were employed at the site. Along with a local printing works the owners of the gunpowder works funded the Greshambury Institute at Chilworth, where workers could attend art and science classes.

Chilworth was an important site for safety measures. It was discovered that building banks of earth close to the buildings where gunpowder was being made helped to contain explosions and prevent other buildings from being endangered. These banks were strengthened with corrugated iron and can still be seen today. This innovation became known as the "Chilworth mounds".

The demand for explosives decreased after the end of the First World War and the Company was closed in 1920. Some of the buildings were demolished and others fell into ruin.

Today the site is a scheduled monument and efforts have been made to preserve the remaining ruins. Groups of volunteers are maintaining the site by coppicing trees and clearing the undergrowth, so the ruins are more visible. Guildford Borough Council manage the site and is open to the public. Our group is hoping to visit next year.

Anita Laycock

Garden visit to Longbarn garden Sevenoaks Weald

went to Longbarn with friends on a private group visit. There were 15 of us making this visit and we were charged £15 each including coffee and cake. The visit was mid September on a beautiful warm sunny day.

about the history of the house and garden. It was interesting to learn that the owner has four part time gardeners each with their own gardening speciality and her total help amounts to the equivalent of seven days each week.

Longbarn is the first garden designed by Vita Sackville West and her husband Harold Nicolson. Vita and her



It was easy to find the garden and parking was at the church car park nearby. The garden is entered through a wooden gate with a trellis work panel. We walked through a small courtyard and then on into a box-edged white garden planted with white roses then on to the brick terrace by the house.

Our garden visit began with a talk by the owner



husband arrived in 1915. Vita and Harold moved to Sissinghurst in 1930 and then let out Longbarn to a succession of tenants. Sydney Bernstein was one tenant and so the house was used to entertain people such as Charlie Chaplin. Later it was the home of Charles Lindbergh and his wife Anne Morrow.

It is now about 4 acres in size and privately owned. The current owners bought the house and garden in 2007 and have rebuild some of the structures in the garden. The garden is on Kentish clay on a southeastern

“This is a beautiful garden and I recommend a group visit”



slope. As a consequence of the clay Vita Sackville West quickly realised that nothing would grow well in those conditions so much of the garden is built into raised beds. In places these are designed with brick edges probably with the guidance of Sir Edwin Lutyens who gave them some assistance in 1925. As the garden slopes away from the East side of the house it allows for wonderful views



of the descending terraces and also to the Kentish Weald to one side.

The dominant view is of a row of drum shaped clipped yews that were planted by Vita Sackville West and were very small at the time but have now grown into mature trees. The current owner says that although the garden

was designed to allow for East West vistas there are not in fact straight lines in the garden everything is slightly off square. The main part of the house is 14th century and the Longbarn addition was built in the 16th century and brought from a local farm.

As we walked round the garden we noticed there was a grape vine laden with grapes growing on the outside of Longbarn house. Further on when we moved off the brick paved terrace into the rose garden. There were still a few roses in flower but as it was September the main period for roses were over. We then walked on into the orchard area and we were absolutely amazed to see the number of apples and pears on the trees. We walked on past the pond area and then into the vegetable garden area



where there is a greenhouse. It was very interesting here to see the raised beds where the produce is grown. The beetroots in our chocolate and beetroot cake at coffee were from this garden.

Walking on from the vegetable garden we went into the area where the borders are crammed with plants and in September there were a large number still in flower making a beautiful display.

We moved on to the dry area which is backed by a wall and the plants are grown in gravel and also in pots. There were some very interesting short alliums in flower and Tulbaghia. After this we wondered around the garden revisiting any areas we particularly wanted to look at.

This is a beautiful garden and I recommend a group visit.

Judith Witter

Croquet Group

Mallets have been swung on the croquet lawn at Polesden Lacey for the first time in almost two years by the time you read this and sadly will also have been put away for the winter. We are very grateful



Setting out the Lawns

to the National Trust team at Polesden for their help and cooperation after a difficult time. They have supplied us with new storage facilities which eliminates the need for our members to enter their non public areas and the



New Bisques!

problems of white lining the lawns have been overcome.

It was a damp day but with little rain on 28th June when Martin and a team met at Polesden to set out the lawns for croquet. Not quite as simple as it sounds but after all the measuring was done it was slightly easier this year due to the rain which made the ground soft enough to hammer in the hoops without too much effort. We would like to thank u3a members from Horsley,



Martin and Brian Discuss Tactics

Leatherhead and Ashted who also helped when the call was put out for volunteers. The lawns at the beginning of the season made play, shall we say challenging, but as the season has gone on they have improved beyond measure, despite rabbits still not understanding that this particular grass should be a no go area for them. Thanks also to Ken for the amazing sets of bisques he made and donated to the group, much smarter than the old ones strewn about (picture attached, sitting on one of the smart new boxes). There's a law that says just as the season finishes the lawns are playing really well, our thanks and appreciation to the diligent ground staff.

It was wonderful to meet again in the lovely surroundings of the croquet lawns, surely the best setting

of any in England, where visitors are often surprised and intrigued to see croquet being played. We didn't have our usual picnic and tournaments this year but hopefully next year we'll get back into the swing of things and make them happen. Meantime those who hold trophies, enjoy them on the shelf for a while longer but don't lose them! Occasionally we're asked about a group for



Some of Rosemary's Group



Who put that ball there? Rosemary & Liz

beginners so look out for any announcements in a future edition of Senior Moments, on the notice boards at monthly meetings and on the website.

However, how many seasons will this last? It's been

said before but it's now getting urgent; our lynchpin Martin is wishing to retire and is hoping to guide someone to eventually take over from him. There is a committee of croquet members who share roles so much help is there. As with all



Gordon and Chris call Martin for advice

groups someone in overall charge is essential and without one there will be no more u3a croquet. You are invited to ring Martin without obligation if you would like to know more about the role.

Val Cross



It's Not All Glamour!

Walking the Barnes Trail

Back in September, 14 members of London Walks 4 took the train to Barnes Bridge station for a short but varied 2½ mile walk along pavements, footpaths and across common land following the Barnes Trail in west London. The trail is circular and follows trail discs



set into the ground to help display the history and evolution of what some still consider to be a village.

Being circular it doesn't matter where you start, so we started with a morning coffee at the Orange Pekoe just round the corner from the station. There our leaders for the day, Chris & Benita, told us about the pavement discs and also the 9 oar shaped plaques spread along the route which describe different aspects of Barnes.

Suitably refreshed we moved along the western boundary between Barnes and Mortlake which used to be a market garden area called Westfields until a property developer built streets of terraced cottages, corner shops, beer houses and shops. The shops have largely disappeared to be replaced by beauty parlours and artisan studios or converted into desirable bijou accommodation.

A sharp left turn before a railway level crossing took us along the narrow Railway Side where former railway cottages have been repurposed as desirable properties looking onto allotments. They are all that are left of the Westfield market gardens, which once was damp and suitable for growing liquorice. Today you can find a typical mix of garden vegetables in various stages of growth. A couple of hundred yards along brought us to The Idle Hour, a really tiny pub which suffered the fate of many such hostelries and is now closed. Its old name

of The Manor Arms can still be seen above the front window of what is now just 62 Railway Side.

Under the railway bridge and through some 1930s housing brought us to the southern edge of Barnes Green which is the focal point of the village. We returned there later. Straying off the tarmac path was unwise as we were reminded of the low-lying area. The grass may look good for playing but it was boggy even after a long dry spell of weather. So, taking the two sides of a triangle we reached the Beverley Brook which rises in Worcester Park and joins the Thames at Barn Elms. Once polluted with sewage, management improvements are now creating a better environment for wildlife. Across the small bridge and we entered Barnes Common which is a mix of woodland, scrubland and acid grassland all combining to form a local nature reserve. We never could explain the short trunked oak trees which seemed to be sinking into the ground. Nevertheless, they were a suitable place for our picnic lunch before making a slight detour from the trail.



We ventured towards the overgrown Old Barnes Cemetery. This has the dubious distinction of being the only London cemetery falling into the 'completely derelict' category. Some might say there was a haunting atmosphere which but for the daylight and occasional glimpses of the sun might have put more caution into our exploration. We never found the best-known grave of Ebenezer Cobb Morley (1831 - 1924) who is regarded as the father of The Football Association. We saw a lot of decay and as we left, we came across some of the eight service personnel graves which are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Our visit to this evocative place clearly left its mark as more than one

of our group spent the evening at home after the walk finding out more about this ghostly cemetery

Back on the trail, we absorbed some local history. Barnes was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as a distinct village in the north-east corner of Surrey. The Manor of Barnes was owned by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral, with its manor house at Barn Elms. With the completion of Hammersmith Bridge in 1827 and the coming of the railway in 1846, Barnes became part of the London metropolis, but the village still retains much of its historic character.

At the corner of the Barn Elms recreation ground sits the Red Lion pub. Records show that the Red Lion was an established small thatched pub with a stable by 1718. It burnt down in 1836 and was replaced with the current building. Lions are a theme of many Barnes houses too; legend has it that a builder ordered 100 lions to embellish his newly built houses and 1,000 arrived. Just a bit further along we came to the site of Byfield House, the 17th century residence of a former Governor of St Helena. The current building was built as Byfield Hall in 1906 and has been a cinema and a theatre; Charles Laughton, John Gielgud and Claude Rains first trod the boards there. In 1966 it became a famous recording studio where the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Queen, Jimi Hendrix, David Bowie, Madonna, Massive Attack and many more recorded albums. U2 were the last to record there before it was sold in 2009. It has now reverted to its former use and re-opened as the Olympic Cinema in



A disastrous fire in 1978 destroyed the Victorian and Edwardian additions but some of the original structure remains with traces of wall paintings dating from the 12th century and the 15th century tower. They now form an integral part of the re-built and re-vitalised church, designed by prize-winning architect Edward Cullinan and re-hallowed in 1984. The end result is an impressive place of worship which left its mark on many of us.

As we got nearer to closing the circle of this trail, we arrived back at Barnes Green and its main feature, the pond. Today it is a peaceful place to sit and watch the world go by or feed the ducks, but well into the 19th century it was just the village pond, where cows stopped for a drink and horses and carts were driven in to clean up after a muddy trip along the unmade roads. At the top of Barnes High Street we came across some grand private houses from the 18th century whose view at the time was perhaps marred by the cattle trough opposite. The trough had been given to the village as compensation when horses and carts had to cease using the pond for cleaning.

Further down the High Street is the 18th century Coach and Horses pub which if it had only been located about half-way around our walk would have provided a suitable hostelry for lunch. Finally, as the River Thames came into view with Barnes Bridge in the distance, we discovered the wall mounted blue plaques commemorating the one time residences of composer Gustav Holst and Dame Ninette de Valois, founder of the Royal Ballet.

A short climb up a slope brought us back to Barnes Bridge Station for our return journey to Bookham and the satisfaction of another enjoyable day learning a bit more about London.

Chris Middel

late 2013.

Almost next door is the redeveloped parish church of St Mary. A church has existed on this site since c.1100 making it the oldest building in Barnes.



Electric Vehicles

I'm still very much enjoying my electric car in fact I would go so far as to say its the best car I have ever had. Up until I took possession of the VW ID3 all electric car, I had been driving VW Golfs for a number of years and the ID3 is to some extent modelled on the



My VW ID.3

Golf but it is far superior. There is more room inside and with the very heavy battery under the whole of the floor of the car it makes the vehicle very stable and comfortable to drive. The car weighs a hefty 1.8



The view from the driver's seat

tonnes but the electric motor is very efficient and responsive. There is no gear box system, it can be set to drive either forward or backwards. I have read the internal combustion engine has 20,000 moving parts but the electric car motor has 20. Servicing is a simple matter and there are never any oil changes. It reads all the road signs and speed limits so that all you do as the driver is steer the thing. I remember years ago I resisted buying an automatic car because I thought a manual shift would keep me far more alert. Some years ago a friend of mine fell asleep at the wheel of his car, it crashed into a tree and he was killed. Now I have much less fear of falling asleep at the wheel on long trips because I get much less tired, I can move my feet around instead of having one foot positioned on the accelerator and after all, steering and directing the car where you want it to go is much the same as you have to do all the time as you move about whatever you are doing.

tonnes but the electric motor is very efficient and responsive. There is no gear box system, it can be set to drive either forward or backwards. I have

The home charging works very well. In my petrol days I found that I filled the car locally on most occasions. Now with an electric car its much more local and I just plug it into the wall socket I had fitted and every time I drive off in a fully powered car. On long distances it is a very different matter: There are charging stations in every motorway service area and they are free of charge. The problems arise when you try to use them. Each charger has two access cables but only one car can be charged at a time because there is insufficient power to charge two cars at once! The charging rate is very slow and not what you want when you stop on a long drive. Not all of them work. I was at a charging point at High Wycombe railway station and spent nearly an hour trying to charge the car and when I eventually got through on the help line I was told "That unit has been out of service for three days". As I drove on the battery state became alarmingly low but the car monitor screen warned me to find a charging station, it also very helpfully indicated where the charging stations closest to me were situated and very helpfully directed me to a high power one at Beaconsfield where I charged the car half full in under 30 minutes for a cost of £12. In future on any long drives I shall only look out for high powered chargers whenever I need to charge the battery.

Recently I was in a long line of traffic in Bookham assuming it was one of the many roadwork hold ups until I found as I was getting near to the head of the queue I realized I was in a line for petrol! Mind you if the present petrol crisis results in drivers switching to EVs there will be many very long lines of cars waiting to use the relatively few charging points because the infrastructure is just not there and certainly not ready for a big increase in electric cars on our roads.

Because EVs can drive into London without having to pay the congestion charge I have driven into central London four times to go to the theatre and visit art galleries. Before this I hadn't driven into central London for over forty years.

My son, who has driven a Tesla for many years was quite right: it's not a car at all but a computer on wheels.

Maurice Baker

Bankside Walk (Southwark)

On 7th October we (LWG4) covered our second walk around the Southwark area although with time travel constraints. Frank Cross organised this walk to cover familiar ground but with new places to see. We took the train to Waterloo and then on to London Bridge Station



followed by walking through the old medical areas. This covered St Thomas' Street where the old St Thomas' Hospital used to be before moving to make way for London Bridge Station, the Old Operating Theatre in St Thomas Church and Guy's Hospital. In Guy's we had our coffee in the new splendid Science Gallery followed by a visit to their Chapel.

Moving on we joined Borough High Street, past the Market and down little alleyways to see where the old inns and taverns used to be, including the galleried George Inn where we had our lunch. After lunch, we joined a 'Liberty' in the old days a lawless area then full of the poor, thieves and rogues and known as 'The Mint'. In Red Cross Way we walked past a pretty RC Garden and arrived at Cross Bones Graveyard. Here the guide explained that over



15,000 bodies were buried in unconsecrated ground. Many of them were prostitutes from the local brothels. Next door to the Graveyard the Museum of London is carrying out a dig before a new building is started and the boarding outside shows pictures of the current finds. Next stop was the Hop Exchange a fine building with galleried floors. It no longer sells hops from Kent and around the world but their trading floor was empty except for a Lola-Ford racing car. On the way home we hurriedly walked along the South Bank to Waterloo passing the various plaques showing the original sites of the Globe and Rose Theatres and also the unfinished replica of the Rose Theatre. A thoroughly enjoyable day out.

David Middleton

Sheila Pomfret

When Sheila, who had worked tirelessly for our U3A, resigned from her Outings Organiser post in 2016, the retiring Chairman, at the 23rd AGM, paid special tribute to Sheila, who had organised outings and holidays for many years and who had been persuaded to take a well earned rest – and a presentation was made on behalf of the Committee. In the edition of our newsletter following that AGM our new Chairman also paid similar tribute to Sheila – a long standing member of the Committee who had worked so hard over so many years

I can only say that these small tributes barely



In Crete with Sheila

scratch the surface of what Sheila did, in particular, for our U3A – Bookham & District U3A which was founded in 1993.

I joined on Day One and I am member no. 57. Sheila was member 252 – joining somewhat later than me with Vic joining still later at no. 321. – but I don't know the actual dates. I think we've got over 500 members now. (I think I actually said ...over 700 but was getting confused between Membership Number and number of members).

Sheila took over as Social Secretary in 2000 and for 16 years delivered, for us, the members, the most amazing programme of theatre visits – regularly to the theatre at Woking, but also many visits to London theatres - the National, the Globe etc. ..to Christmas concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. Oh how we miss her:

Not content with theatre visits we had days out

to places of interest – “stately homes” with lovely gardens – or sometimes just the gardens. And then we had holidays (study) tours, some in England but over the years, many abroad.



To give a little early example – what went in the (I think) the Spring newsletter in 2002

Outings July - Sept 2002

21 July Chelsea Physic Garden; 24 July The Ghost Train



(Woking) matinee; 21 Aug My One and Only – London Matinee; 11 Sept Sing in the Rain (not sure if this was Woking or Chichester). 25 Sept The play that I wrote – Woking; 10 Oct Madame Butterfly, Woking (Northern Ballet not Opera.

And in the same issue “I am researching ideas for excursions and holidays for next year – hopefully to Prague, perhaps to Italy (Sorrento Ischia) or another Garden Tour or maybe Arles Avignon)...”

Joan here provided me with a list of holidays Sheila organised starting in May 2002 with Lisbon & finishing in Plymouth in 2016.

Over the years we went to several parts of France, to Malta and Gozo, several parts of Spain, to Prague, to Belgium and the Ardennes, S W Ireland, Krakow, Vienna, Crete, Sorrento, Sicily, Puglia, a Baltic cruise, Bassano and palladian Villas,



Ruth Blood



Sheila's daughter Emma



some pre-journey area, to add to by expert we all return interesting and

Nothing was meticulously were forged... ignored or left member would holiday and it

a bunch of people who all know each other. But with Sheila around, with Vic quietly offering support, newcomers were immediately made very welcome.

What more can I say – the amount of work Sheila put in doing all this organising, was amazing and I think she belonged to many U3A groups as well. The amount of pleasure her hard work gave the rest of us was immeasurable.

Ruth Blood

to the Floriade, to Slovenia and Croatia... and Plymouth.

Sheila described her role as follows "Sheila Pomfret – Visits and Travel Coordinator for Bookham, Fetcham and other Local U3A's. Having joined U3A with the intent of increasing my knowledge of music, languages and art, I soon found myself organising visits to places featured in topics covered at our group meetings. Days out locally and across the Channel developed into longer stays. I try to make sure that itineraries include plenty of opportunities to satisfy our varied "cultural" interests, and I really do enjoy doing research on the chosen the information supplied local guides. Hopefully home having enjoyed an companionable holiday". left to chance. Every detail planned. Firm friendships And nobody was ever on their own. Often a new come on a day out or a can be daunting to confront





Group activities photossupplied by David Middleton

When we all joined the U3A, we made a commitment to uphold the guiding principles of the U3A movement, one of which is to recognise that we are a self-help group in which volunteering is essential for the organisation to function.

We now have a need for new volunteers to support the committee in running our activities. A number of the current committee are retiring soon, having served for several years. So we need some new committee members to continue offering the range of activities you all enjoy and potentially to contribute new ideas.

Could you make a bigger contribution to our U3A? If so, please let any member of the committee know. Alternatively, do you know another member who you think could do a good job on the committee?

We have potential vacancies across a variety of roles on the committee and some positions are more urgent than others. So please talk to any member of the committee to find out more as we try and match your interests and skills with the roles. Role descriptions are on our website.

If you are concerned about the level of commitment required, please talk to any committee member so that they can describe their experience.

Our contact details are on the website and in this Senior Moments.

From your Management Committee

