



# Senior



# Moments

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

Issue 64

*November 2019*

A white rectangular sign with a blue 'P' in a white square at the top. Below the 'P' is the text 'Authorised Users Only' and 'See website for details'.





David Middleton walk Barnes to Hammersmith (David Middleton



Garden Group visit to Hill Farm-Liz Looney photo

# Bookham and District U3A

Registered Charity No 103686 U3A Membership No 4/239/93

Registered Address: 20 Church Close Fetcham KT22 9BQ

[www.bookhamu3a.org.uk](http://www.bookhamu3a.org.uk)

## The Committee



Chairman  
Roger Mendham  
01372 459527



Vice-Chairman  
Chris Middleton  
454107



Secretary  
Gillian Arnold  
452046



Treasurer  
Chris Pullan  
454582



Membership  
Secretary  
Pam Hyde  
454734



Minutes  
Secretary  
Peter Clarke  
450908



Groups Co-ordinator  
Mike Farrell  
451797



Assistant Groups  
Coordinator  
David Hyde  
454734



Website co-ord  
Harold Reglar  
452445



Speaker Secretary  
Frank Cross  
450526



Newsletter  
Maurice Baker  
372147



Social Events  
Jan Dicker  
452251

email: [mjbkaber1@mac.com](mailto:mjbkaber1@mac.com)

This autumn issue of Senior Moments has articles by new contributors as well as established favourites, so I recommend you have a good read. In particular, Jan Davies, a new contributor, has a very interesting piece on Modern Art in many of its aspects. Anyone with any knowledge or interest in art should gain much from this piece on an often difficult and sometimes contentious subject. There are small illustrations to help explain the more abstruse aspects of modern art. Jackson Pollock is one of the modern artists I find most difficult to understand and appreciate and while I don't like his work much better than before, I do have a better understanding of it and what he was trying to achieve. I apologise for the very small size of the illustrations in this piece but I had to carry out extensive editing of the text to keep it within 4 pages.

One of the largest groups, Croquet, has its end of 'term' report from Val Cross and Anita Laycock keeps us up to date with the Gardening Group.

Some of the more interesting outings are fully reported and are well worth reading. There is also a report on a new Social History group from Michelle Howes. Finally, there is information on a new History Group lead by Simon Phillips.

*Maurice Baker.*



Cover photo—Acer tree in the car park off Leatherhead High Street



## Chairman's Report

As I reach the halfway stage of my tenure as your Chairman, I would like to share some thoughts with you. When I took over from Lynn Farrell last year I was still a relative newcomer to the U3A and, with hindsight, didn't fully appreciate the importance, influence and impact we have in our community.

During my report to the AGM I used the phrase "our U3A is at the heart of our community" and I firmly believe that is the case. For many of our 600 members the U3A provides a valuable social dimension to life in Bookham. Our monthly meetings and the wide range of special interest groups provide the opportunity to engage with others with similar interests and so new friendships are forged.. This is an important benefit from being part of our U3A.

I have visited a number of the interest groups over the past year. Each one has been different but the common theme has been the enthusiasm of the members and the enjoyment they get from exploring their subjects in areas as diverse as Play Reading and London Walks, Book Reading and Ornithology & Botany. There are many more groups for me to visit and I hope to see as many as possible over the next year.

Our success is built on the contribution made by the many people who work as Group Administrators, Committee Members and event supporters. I would like to encourage members, and particularly those who are recent joiners, to consider joining us and helping build our U3A for the future. If you are interested, please have a chat to me or one of the Committee Members.

The last year has been very successful and I look forward to continued success in the future.



*Roger Mendham*



*The Military chapel at Sandhurst*

## Croquet 2019

There are 76 members of the Croquet Group, playing at Polesden Lacey from Monday to Wednesday. Thursday afternoons are now reserved for any croquet member to use the lawns for play or practice. This year we have two Golf and five Association groups. The Beginners' group has dwindled to two members, mainly because people had other commitments although two did join a Golf group during the season.

The Golf Singles tournament took place on 11th June. Twelve members battled it out over



three rounds, resulting in a tie between Chris Pullan and David Snow who both had won all their three games. Chris was declared the winner as he had conceded slightly fewer hoops.

Our annual picnic with croquet day at Polesden Lacey on July 7th dawned wet after a

long spell of dry and sunny weather, not a good start to what is a lovely social day in our calendar. The rain stopped by lunchtime and seven of us enjoyed a picnic and chat before playing in what turned out to be beautiful afternoon sunshine. Another member turned up so we played separate games of men's and ladies' Golf Croquet then winners played winners. It was all good fun, suffice only to say Angie and I did - ahem - rather well. There were plenty of non-croquet high fives, maybe we'd been watching too much Wimbledon (or maybe that little glass of wine with lunch...) A pity there were so few, it was a fun afternoon in the sun, and we were all delighted when we had a visit from Val and Leslie Shelton who stayed to watch.

Also in July Martin organised the much



contested Inter U3A Golf Croquet Tournament and this year's winner was Horsley U3A, followed by Bookham, Leatherhead, Fetcham and Epsom. Always good to socialise with other U3As on the lawns.

The Doubles tournament took place on 12th September; sixteen members entered so every lawn was played on throughout the day with short breaks and a picnic lunch. Two brave beginners, Liz and Carol, took part and enjoyed it, hopefully we'll have even more entrants from groups next year; it really is just fun. Frank Cross with Jenny Jenkins played Nigel Ames and myself in the final which was won by Frank and Jenny, worthy winners!

As ever, thanks must go to Polesden Lacey and the gardening team, to the rota of players who turn out early each week to trundle the white lining machine and to those who help set up the lawns and dismantle at the end of the season. Not only do players enjoy the lawns, visitors to Polesden



are sometimes surprised and pleased to see croquet being played - we answer many questions, the main one being "what are the rules? Not an easy one to answer between turns! I also sometimes wonder what they do with all the photos taken, often with very professional looking equipment. Finally, thanks and appreciation to Martin for keeping our happy band in check with such aplomb. Roll on 2020!



*Val Cross*

## Chocs Away For The Military History Group

It was nostalgia unlimited when we fetched up on the airfield at Biggin Hill. Our target was the recently opened Memorial Museum that tells the story of the RAF Biggin Hill during the Battle of Britain through the personal experiences of those who served there and the community who supported them.

Modern technology coupled with



memorabilia, historic photos and original film footage helped an excellent ex-RAF guide take us back to the summer (August - September) of 1940.

More than a few Group members could remember the drama of that time when Winston Churchill's 'Few' battled with the might of the Luftwaffe in the skies above Surrey and Kent. That the historic outcome was a victory for Fighter Command will never be forgotten and nor should its terrible cost in human life. More than 400 young RAF pilots (average age



20) who never returned are remembered in the St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance around which the museum is now built.

But these grim figures and the courage that so often accompanied them are not exclusive to the flyers. The men and women who formed the ground crew are also remembered for the same reason.

Biggin Hill was a vital control centre throughout the war. And its altitude and strategically important location between London and Nazi occupied Europe ensured it became the most important airfield of the Battle of Britain. As a result it was recognised as the Prime Minister Winston Churchill's 'strongest link'. Unsurprisingly, therefore Biggin Hill quickly became a prime target for the Luftwaffe

and was frequently and heavily attacked by German Bombers. These raids resulted in more deaths and more tales of gallantry on the ground.

We were told that during one particularly heavy raid a local girl, WAAF Sergeant Elizabeth 'Joan' Mortimer left her post in the control centre, grabbed an armful of red flags that must have been close to hand and dashed out onto the runway. The bombardment was at its height but ignoring the fall of bombs and bullets and her safety she managed to place the flags beside each of the bomb craters and unexploded bombs she could find as a warning and a guide for the squadron of Hurricanes overhead when they returned from pursuing the attackers.



Peter Brazier



## O & B Group go on their annual bird ringing trip

I hope that I am not boring those longer standing readers who may have already read a similar article in the past, (I know for a fact that Maurice Baker has done one, for example),



but I felt it worthwhile to mention that we had a particularly good trip on the morning of



Saturday 17th August last.

As usual, we were shown the nets in which the birds are caught and how they are lovingly extracted. Then we watch the procedure progress itself from identifying the species, sexing and ageing it where possible, see a ring put on one of its legs,



have its weight taken and the wing length measured.

It is then released, but not before

we are allowed to take pictures. Sometimes it can be a re-trap, and this is where it can be really interesting, particularly if it had previously been ringed somewhere else. Although it didn't happen this time, we were shown maps of previous successes in the past.



If there is rain or strong winds forecast, then the trip has to be cancelled, but we were fortunate, and from David Middleton's pictures, you will see that we were lucky with a range of species seen. Apart from a good selection of summer visitor warblers were commencing their migration back home -

often to Africa, we were lucky enough to see in the hand a kingfisher and also a greater spotted woodpecker. It seems



such a privilege to see these lovely animals so close, one somehow feels that we are invading their privacy.

Nonetheless, it is an experience that one doesn't forget easily.

*John Dicker*



photos by David Middleton

## Visit to RMA Sandhurst

On the 15th of July, 53 members of our U3A formed up on Lower Shott Car Park for a visit to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The trip was led by our Chairman, himself an 'old boy' of Sandhurst, and he resisted the temptation to form everyone up in three ranks and have an inspection before we boarded the coach for Sandhurst.

The Academy sits in beautiful grounds in Camberley and the drive from the gates takes you past the old Staff College buildings, through the trees and past the lake before the imposing Old College building, with its white



portico comes into view.

Through the Sandhurst Trust we had three guides for our visit, led by Roy Hunter – an outstanding guide, who used his own experience as he briefed us on the background to Sandhurst and how it had changed over the years. Roy is also a Russian interpreter and had some interesting stories about how this was useful in his Army career.

Sandhurst is one of the foremost officer training establishments in the world. It can trace its roots back to the mid 18th century when the then novel idea of actually requiring formal training for Army officers started with the creation of the Royal Military Academy Woolwich.

Over the years there have been many changes with the amalgamation of various training establishments and Sandhurst now provides training for all British Army officers and many officers from countries around the world. It is completely integrated, with female officer cadets undergoing exactly the same training and being tested to exactly the same standards as their male counterparts.

Roy and his fellow guides talked us through the current programme at Sandhurst, starting with 'Ironing board day' – when new cadets arrive, invariably with a mandatory piece of

equipment, an ironing board under their arm.

The daily routine for the first 6 weeks of, 6am start; running, eating, marching, in the gym, more running, eating, marching, polishing, ironing, being inspected - repeat until exhausted - sleep and then start all over again – hasn't changed over the years.

The course finishes with the Sovereign's Parade and that is the only time the cadets march up the steps of Old College entrance, followed by the Adjutant on his horse, as they formally become Army Officers.

Our tour included the main parts of Old College; the Indian Army Room, museum and the imposing Grand Steps and Portico.



Standing where General Eisenhower gave his pre-D Day address and seeing the magnificent paintings and exhibits in the building gave a powerful sense of history.

The highlight of the tour was visiting the Memorial Chapel, a beautiful church which has memorial plaques recording the over 2,400 Sandhurst trained officers who lost their lives on the Western front in World War I. The majority were young officers and the tranquil chapel is a particularly moving memorial to their sacrifice.

After a quick lunch break and a coach tour of the grounds we bade farewell to our guide and made our way back to Bookham.

It was a very successful trip and the overall impression we gained was of the rigorous nature of the selection process and the whole Sandhurst approach of creating young officers who fully understood the concept of 'Serving to Lead'.

It was so successful we may just make a return trip there next year:

*Roger Mendham*





**The 26th AGM of Bookham and District U3A** was held on Tuesday 1st October 2019 in the Old Barn Hall. The chairman, Roger Mendham welcomed everyone, including new members. Apologies for absence were read out and the minutes of the 25th AGM were accepted and signed. The Chairman then gave his report, saying that our U3A is at the heart of our community. Last year we welcomed 50 new members and we have 86 groups covering a whole range of activities and pastimes. Roger mentioned the excellent talks at the monthly meetings with a wide range of subjects, and stated that financially we are in a healthy position despite an increase in costs, particularly with the new website. A very successful quiz night took place during the year. Roger congratulated the team who had won the Village Week quiz the previous year, for organising this year's competition so efficiently. A highlight of the year had been the Silver Anniversary celebration with the showcase of groups in the afternoon attended by around 400 people, followed by a very enjoyable party in the evening. An outing to Sandhurst had been very popular and more outings are in the pipeline. Roger thanked the members of the Committee for their hard work, in particular Harold Reglar, ably assisted by Martin Hulse, for setting up the new website and membership system. Finally Roger paid tribute to the unsung heroes of our U3A - Margaret New who organises the teas at every meeting, Angie Squires who puts the Senior Moments into envelopes and sorts out their distribution, Diana Jackson who puts together the tea rota, and Pauline and Melvyn Bluck who look after the registration each month, ably assisted by Jenny Caine and Rita Derriman. Finally Roger thanked the members for all their support, in particular the Group Co-ordinators.

The Treasurer then gave his report after which the accounts were formally adopted. Irene Gawne was thanked for her time as the Honorary Examiner and as she has now retired from the role a new Examiner, Paul Hartley, was duly elected.

Three amendments to our Constitution were then explained by Roger as being necessary due to our expanding membership and use of bank electronic transfers. These were voted on and passed.

This was followed by the election of Officers and Committee. The newsletter editor Maurice Baker and the new social secretary Lynn Farrell were included as full committee members following the amendment to the constitution.

The full committee is as follows:

Chairman	Roger Mendham	Vice Chairman	Chris Middleton
Secretary	Gillian Arnold	Treasurer	Chris Pullan
Membership Sec.	Pam Hyde	Groups Co-ord.	Mike Farrell
Speakers Sec.	Frank Cross	Website Co-ord.	Harold Reglar
Minutes Sec.	Peter Clarke	Asst. Groups Co-ord.	David Hyde
Newsletter	Maurice Baker	Social Sec.	Lynn Farrell



Roger Mendham



Chris Middleton



Gillian Arnold



Chris Pullan



Pam Hyde



Peter Clarke



Mike Farrell



Frank Cross



Harold Reglar



David Hyde



Maurice Baker



Lynn Farrell

## Social History Group Visit to Little Holland House,

40 Beeches Avenue, Carshalton – 9th September 2019

Little Holland House is an Arts and Crafts style house built in 1904 by Frank Dickinson. (1874-1961). He was a self taught artist and designer who was inspired by the writings of John Ruskin and William Morris to create a house filled with handcrafted art in traditional styles and materials. The interior features paintings, furniture, metalwork, friezes, and materials all of which were created by Frank.



Painting by Dickinson 1956

Not only did Frank design the house, he built it by hand. This was perhaps partly because the philosophy of Ruskin and Morris favoured handcrafted work by artisans, but equally, because he lacked the money to hire someone to build it for him! He drew his inspiration by studying trade journals and built the house and its furniture with the help of his two brothers and a hired workman.

Frank and his wife Florence lived at Little Holland House from the time of their marriage in 1904 until his death in 1961. Florence continued to live there until she went into a care home in 1972 when their son Gerard put the house on the market to pay for her care. It was bought by the London Borough of Sutton who restored it and opened it as a museum two years later. It is listed Grade II\* for its heritage value. The house is open on the first Sunday of every month from 11am to 5pm.

As you go through a wider than usual front door you enter a square hall with no stairs but as you go into the living room, unbeknowingly you

pass under them. These are of an imaginative design that turns left as you go into the room to go up between the interior and exterior walls, so they cannot be seen from the room.

The tiles on the fireplace, which faces you as you go into the Living Room, were a wedding present from the Doulton factory in Lambeth where Frank worked when he built the house. The hand beaten copper frieze of a landscape depicting a setting sun is by Frank over which is a copy of his painting of Turner's 'Rome from Mount Aventine' with Watts's

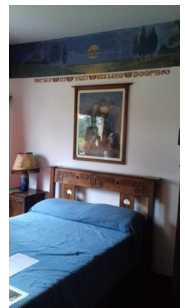
'Eve Tempted and 'Eve Repentant' on either side.



In the Sitting Room the panelling, the three chairs, the lamp stand and shade, the folding cake stand and sewing box were all made by Frank.

The theme of the main bedroom is 'Sleep' where Frank painted the colours of blue and green on the frieze which surrounds the room. The colour scheme is continued in the curtains where Florence embroidered Morris-like motifs of trees and leaves.

The quotation under the frieze is from 'The Spanish Student' by Longfellow. The painting is Watts's 'Hope' and the carving on the bed head is from Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner'. Our visit concluded with tea and cakes.  
Jenny Dennison





## Vegetable Gardening

Liz kindly hosted our June meeting. We looked round her garden admiring her flowers, fruit and vegetables. It was nice to see all her tomatoes growing in the greenhouse and noted she covered many of her vegetables with fleece to keep out the dreaded pests.

In July we visited Lee's lovely garden. She



has worked hard over the last few years transforming her garden into a truly magical and relaxing space. We were all captivated by how much she has achieved. The old summer house was knocked down to reveal a lovely old brick wall at the end of her garden. This is now a seating area with plenty of pots full of shrubs, bonsai and alpines. Sculptures and mirrors add more interest around the garden. Re-using paving, raised beds full of shrubs and flowers along with a rose arbour are a testament to Lee's artistic flair.

She had a plentiful supply of salad crops in the spring and early summer grown in raised planters. Lee talked to us about a HOTBIN, a



Hot Composter which takes not only garden waste but also vegetable peelings and cooked food.

We finished the morning with scones, jam

and clotted cream along with carrot cake. Three of us then went to the Horticultural Show at the Tithe Barn to look at the exhibits and enjoy more tea and cake! Here we met Michelle who had entered a few exhibits and won 1st Prize for the Ugliest Vegetable and Mange Tout peas.

Our thanks were given to Brian and Liz who once again hosted our very enjoyable summer barbecue. The weather was perfect with delicious food and good company. The garden looked splendid with many areas of interest - the Mediterranean



garden, air raid shelter; greenhouse, vegetables and fruit. A tree yet to be named was bought at Village Day. And what fun they had placing pebble stones round one of the trees to create a little seating area.

In September we welcomed Jane and Stephen to our Group who joined us on our visit to Randalls Allotments (Cobham Garden Club). This site was open for the first time under the National Gardens Scheme. We joined the tour led by one of the very knowledgeable owners of the plots. He shows very successfully at the local show and no wonder with his giant dahlias, parsnips and carrots grown in raised wooden boxes. We learned how they make use of recycling materials and growing unusual vegetables, fruit and salad items from different countries.

The Greenfingers Shop was open selling plants, garden sundries, composts, recycled tools and second-hand books. Membership is £5 per year and the shop is open between 11-2 on Saturdays. We enjoyed tea and cake and agreed that this allotment site was 'Cobham's Hidden Secret'.

Anita Laycock

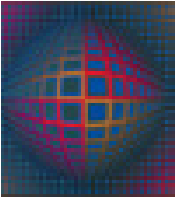
## How to Survive Modern Art!

Modern art can be bizarre or baffling, it can be frivolous or fascinating. Sometimes it can be pretentious or puzzling and pointless. But modern art can also be stimulating, thought provoking, absorbing and exciting.



So . . . why did things change? Once photography was invented in the late 1830's, what was the point of artists trying to copy the real world?

People started to buy photographs and not paintings. So many artists did something different. They began to experiment, they spoke to each other about their ideas. Those with similar thoughts formed movements because groups of artists were often taken more seriously than individuals.



Different concepts and materials were used and old conventions were cast aside. From the start modern art was misunderstood, criticised and disapproval was the most common reaction. For years people had believed

that for art to be good it had to be beautiful. Its appearance was more important than its purpose or meaning. But now Art was no

longer about trying to create beauty but experimenting with the representations of feelings, thoughts and ideas.

Art changed completely in 20th century. With the birth of Modernism, a rapid succession of "isms" followed, movements which rejected naturalism and classical traditions. Instead they experimented with technique and form. There were the

Fauvists with their wild use of colour, German Expressionists with distorted shapes and rugged brushwork. Cubism was an attempt

to show shifting viewpoints. Futurism added speed and movement to Cubism, while abstract art ignored subject matter to the point where it no longer existed. In Russia Suprematists and

Constructivists were in favour of geometry. Dadaists and Surrealists (The Pipe) explored the unconscious. However, not everyone rejected realistic art – there were figurative artists in the US and Europe, while in Mexico

huge murals were created. Art movements formed, broke up and altered as artists' aims changed. So during an artist's life time he could have painted in several styles. Gradually the idea of art changed and is valued for its purpose and meaning as well its beauty. All quite daunting!!!! I found a very informative book which suggests ways of looking at modern art in order to have more of an appreciation. This is by posing questions.

Unexpected materials - made with paper cut outs. One of Matisse's last and largest pieces in his final series of works known as cut outs.

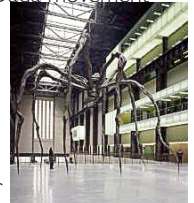


Heart surgery left him in a wheelchair in 1941 he could no longer stand at an easel so he turned to decoupage. Aged 84 he was ill in bed so he instructed assistants to paint the paper, which he then tore and cut in various shapes. He had two little jokes going on here – one was the size and colour of it in comparison to a real tiny brown snail and the other was a tiny cut out shape of a snail on top of the lilac shape. He was a fauvist.

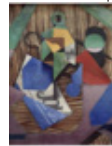


Duchamp was part of the Dada movement

and wanted to use readymade artwork – "a work of art without an artist to make it". Duchamp's reason for this piece is that he was irritated with the arrogance of the art world and wanted to shock. Max Ernst said 'Dada has never



claimed to have anything to do with art. If the public confuses the two, that is no fault of ours'. Made of steel, the reason being that it is huge and carries the weight of marble eggs. Huge because it had to fill the turbine hall. Maman was made for the opening of Tate Modern in May 2000 as part of Bourgeois's commission for the Turbine Hall. It represents a female spider carrying her white marble eggs beneath her. Bourgeois said 'The spider is an ode to my mother. She was my best friend. Like a spider, my mother was a weaver . . . Like spiders, my mother was very clever. Spiders are friendly presences that eat mosquitoes. We know that mosquitoes spread diseases and are therefore unwanted, so, spiders are helpful and protective—just like my mother.'



An ambiguous title means the artist was



exploring an idea rather than a particular scene or subject



In this Juan Gris painted intersecting angular planes. Many of these have fake wood grain, perhaps of a wooden table top but denying any sense of perspective. A few letters, an outline and hint of local colour indicate the identity of the objects. The overlapping planes may represent visual memories of different views you've seen before of the objects.

Cubism

Franz Marc was part of the Expressionist movement in Germany. The artwork represented emotions rather than an object. This depicts violence and is a premonition of World War I that Marc experienced living in Germany. The brutality to the animals at this moment reflected



what the oncoming war would do to the people of the world. The destruction, the chaos, and the sadness sums up the outcome of the future war. The last third of the painting was damaged in a fire in

1916 and was later restored by his friend, Paul Klee using old photographs. He added a brownish tint to the paint to show where he'd worked.

In "Dynamism of a Car", a Futurist classic, Luigi Russolo attempts to convey the idea of motion by the apparent compression of sound waves in front of the car. The picture is strikingly similar to Physics textbook pictures illustrating the Doppler effect. The painter uses the aggressiveness of colour to create a framework that assists dynamism and speed, resuming the car as a subject and a symbol of innovation.



effect. The painter uses the aggressiveness of colour to create a framework that assists dynamism and speed, resuming the car as a subject and a symbol of innovation.

An ambiguous title means the artist was exploring an idea rather than a particular scene or subject. An abstract with a very ambiguous title allowing Kandinsky to explore an idea! The main theme, which is an oval form intersected by an irregular rectangle, is seen at the centre surrounded by the vortex of colours and forms. By means of examining records and some of his other works art



historians decided that this is a combination of the Resurrection, the Judgment Day, the Flood and the Garden of Eden.

Constructivism was an artistic and architectural philosophy that originated

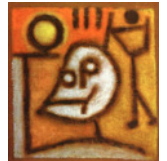
in Russia beginning in 1913 by Vladimir Tatlin. This was a rejection of the idea that art should be devoid of any practical function. He wanted 'to construct' art. The movement was in favour of art to serve the social and political ideology of the state. eg posters.

The Suprematism Movement was developed in 1915 by the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich to promote 'the supremacy of pure feeling'. It was a geometric style of pure abstraction that promoted a mystical approach to art, in contrast with Constructivism, the major Russian art movement of the 20th Century, whose art served the ideology of the state.



This was commenting on something that was happening at the time. The Russian Revolution 1905-1907  
Futurism

When renowned Belgian surrealist Rene Magritte was a child, he watched his mother suffer from what may have been today described as depression. She repeatedly tried to commit suicide and eventually succeeded. Her body was found in a river and it is said that her face was wrapped up in the fabric of her skirt. If this is true and Magritte saw his mother or heard the tale, then it could explain the strange fixation Magritte had on fabric-covered people such as this and others of a similar theme. It has also been suggested by some that his fascination with this style came from the interest many of his contemporaries had in the novel and film character Fantômas, who wore fabric draped over his face to disguise his identity.



Background knowledge of the artist helps to understand Klee's shift in style. Around 1937, Klee's line became much heavier and his colours more basic. In 1935 he had been diagnosed with the fatal disease scleroderma (affecting internal organs), and it is probable that he simplified his approach so he could work more rapidly, aware that time was short. He died of heart failure at the age of 42. The title of this work is the name of a 1974 song by the Jamaican



reggae musician Bob Marley that entreats a female listener not to be sad, as a tribute to the murdered London teenager Stephen Lawrence and the subsequent mishandled police investigation. 1998 Turner Prize winner Ofili painted a woman crying. A collaged image of Stephen Lawrence's face appears in each of her tears, with the words 'R.I.P. Stephen Lawrence'. The background is painted with a mixture of pale green and bright yellow, criss-crossed by conjoined sequences of circles that each contain concentric rings and are gathered to form the rough outlines of diamond shapes. Layered among these are dotted lines punctuated by black heart shapes that appear at the centre of each of the diamonds. Running in four horizontal lines across the canvas, the words 'RIP Stephen Lawrence 1974–1993', barely visible in phosphorescent paint (but clearer in dark conditions) appear very faintly underneath its top layer, with the dates at the bottom completely obscured by the shoulders of the woman. Ofili was inspired by the dignity of Stephen's mother, Doreen Lawrence, in the face of her personal tragedy but he also wanted the painting to be a general portrayal of sadness and grief. By experimenting with



materials such as elephant dung, he created unexpected contrasts and textures. The canvas measures 8ft high by 6ft wide, and is displayed leaning against the gallery wall, supported by two dried, varnished lumps of elephant dung. A third lump forms the pendant of the necklace. Map pins on the lower two lumps spell out the painting's title. *Sensationalism*

Made for an occasion and a purpose (with recycled materials) to make a comment on the state of our world. It attempts to recreate more than 7,000 objects which have been lost forever. Some were looted from the Iraq Museum in 2003, while others were destroyed at archaeological sites across the country during the Iraq War. This winged bull

and protective deity, the Lamassu, guarded the entrance to Nergal Gate of Nineveh (near modern day Mosul) from c700 BC until it was destroyed by Daesh in 2015. The reconstructions in The Invisible Enemy project are made from recycled packaging from Middle Eastern foodstuffs. The Lamassu is made from 10,500 empty Iraqi date syrup cans. This represents a once-renowned industry now decimated by war.

The inscription is written in Cuneiform, one of the earliest systems of writing, on the side of the Lamassu reads:



"Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, had the inner and outer wall of Ninevah built anew and raised as high as mountains."

Left to chance? This painting was created in 1947 by the American abstract artist Jackson Pollock. *Alchemy* is one of his earliest poured paintings, using a revolutionary technique. After studying the empty canvas, he used his entire body to draw in paint. By pouring streams of watered down commercial paint onto the canvas from a can with the aid of a stick, Pollock made traditional easel painting obsolete. He often tacked the unstretched canvas onto the floor in an approach he likened to that of the Navajo Indian sandpainters, explaining that "on the floor I am more at ease. I feel nearer; more a part of the painting. . . ." Notions of chance are given full expression in his poured paintings, in which line no longer makes recognisable shapes, but charts the movements of the artist's body. As the line thins and thickens it speeds and slows, its appearance modified by chance behaviour of the paint such as bleeding, pooling, or blistering. He is best known for pioneering action painting, this vigorous method of dripping paint onto canvas laid out on the floor. The paint was poured by hand or applied using a syringe, handled 'like a giant fountain pen'—Nick name=Jack the dripper

**You don't have to like modern art to appreciate it!**

Look for colour; texture, elements and ideas behind the work. You might not like the way it looks, but you might be interested in the thoughts behind it.

In the USA in the 1960s Lichtenstein began producing massive comic-style pictures,





meticulously painting thousands of giant dots across the canvas. (Maybe harping back to Seurat?) The paintings demonstrate that comic strip art is not as simple as it looks, with dramatic compositions and bold colours. Lichtenstein



said, 'One of the things a cartoon does is to express violent emotion in a completely mechanical and removed style'.

**Pop Art**

This painting, the title of which is German for 'dead sea', was made during the first half of the Second World War. A comment on the horrors and futility of war. It was inspired by a wrecked aircraft dump at Cowley in Oxfordshire. Nash based the image on photographs he took there. The artist described the sight: 'The thing looked to me suddenly, like a great inundating sea ... the breakers rearing up and crashing on the plain. ... nothing moves, it is not water or even ice, it is something static and dead.' He created an unsettling atmosphere by setting the scene at night and including a solitary owl in flight. British Avant Garde

**There is never just one interpretation of a work of art.**

Look carefully and think about what you see, your own response is as valid as anyone else's.

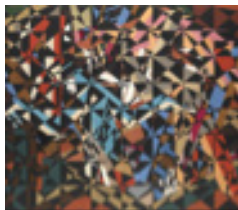
**Try to view it with an open mind.**

What do you think? There has been much speculation on the symbolism of this picture. It is one of a series of sparsely populated



landscapes from the 1930s. In contrast to the sunlit and specific outer world of sea and cliffs, the dreamlike foreground represents a timeless and nameless

inner space. The watches clearly allude to time passing, memory, and decay. The softness of the timepieces, however, renders them unreliable. Psychological analysis suggests the limp watch may symbolise the return to a state of fluidity of the period of time before birth. Other critics have interpreted it as expressing a fear of impotence – Dalí's sexual anxieties are well documented.



What do you think? Even the title does not make it easy for anyone to interpret this. At first glance it is a kaleidoscope of shapes but it is based on a real

scene of dockers working in the hold of a ship. A deep blue ladder in the lower right of the picture connects the hold with the deck above: a hand holds one of the lower rungs. In the centre left in lighter blue and white, one of the dockworkers is seen, wearing a hat, stretching his arms across the canvas. This mosaic-like image represents the East End of London or the 'steel city' Bomberg said he lived in. He has left visible the squaring-up grid, used to accurately enlarge the preliminary drawing. He has then used this geometrical framework to dissolve the subject of the picture into dynamic angular facets. Vorticism

So to recap, this is the list of questions to ask yourself when confronted with some the unusual, bizarre and sometimes weird artworks we see today!

1. *What is it made with?*

*Has the artist used conventional or unexpected materials? Is there a reason for this?*

2. *Does the title give you a clue?*

3. *When was it made?*

a) *Did it belong to a particular movement?*

b) *Or was it commenting on something happening at the time?*

4. *Who made it? Background knowledge of the artist helps to understand the reasoning behind the work.*

5. *How was it made?*

a) *Was it for a purpose or occasion?*

b) *Did the artist plan it or leave it much to chance?*

6. *Do you like it?*

*Look for colour, texture, elements and ideas behind the work.*

*You might interested in the thoughts behind it.*

7. *There is never just one interpretation of a work of art.*

*Look carefully and think about what you see; your own response is as valid as anyone else's.*

**Try to view it with an open mind.**

From a talk to the Art Appreciation Group 3 by Jan Davies



## Social History 2

We had a lively and interesting meeting in August, with seven members giving us a glimpse into completely different but equally fascinating aspects of social history, prompted by a historic object or record.

Stephanie brought a series of school certificates from Victorian times when school had just been made compulsory for 5 - 10 year olds (although some parents took children out of school at younger ages to work for the family business or earn money for the family). The certificates were awarded for achieving each successive grade in Arithmetic, Reading and Writing, and were very special documents, being printed in colour with decorative pictures and official signatures. Stephanie described the key aspects of Victorian education, and compared it with her own primary school in the early 1940s - which was inevitably affected by the war, including the school being destroyed in a bomb attack. Stephanie's main concern at that time was that she'd lent the teacher her prized copy of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and feared it had been destroyed, but it was later returned to her with only the cover damaged.

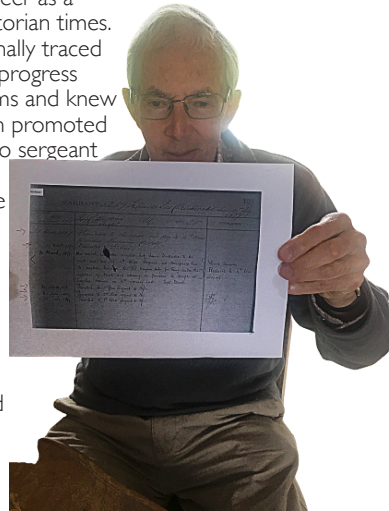
Martin M produced a carving fork used by his grandfather in his speciality butchers, a 'beef and ham' shop. The carving knife had been sharpened so many times, it had worn thin and been destroyed, but the fork was still in good condition. The Marriott's shop was by Chiswick Park station, and the butcher's wife made sandwiches which were sold to the commuters heading off to work in central London. She also kept the books, as

the butcher, whilst being skilled in his work, was not very literate.

Jean brought a beautiful intricately decorated ladies' watch on a chain, that had belonged to her great grandmother and been passed down to her. Jean had researched her family tree and was able to tell us about its original owner. Her father remembered the watch fondly and was anxious that it may have been lost or stolen, so he was very pleased when it was found amongst his ex-wife's possessions (he had given it to her in happier days) and he could pass it on to his daughter. Jean had it repaired (the work costing far more than the watch's market value) and it now keeps perfect time and is a delightful and useful heirloom.

Martin P told us about his great grandfather's career as a policeman in Victorian times. Martin had originally traced the policeman's progress from census forms and knew that he had been promoted from constable to sergeant to inspector.

Luckily, the police station where he worked now has a museum, and a voluntary archivist was able to find and send Martin a detailed record of his ancestor's police service record. It proved quite revealing, with misdemeanours as well as promotions being recorded. In his early years he was reprimanded several times for being drunk on duty or poor behaviour in the mess room, and his pay was docked. Worse was to come when he had attained a senior rank as detective inspector then was demoted back to sergeant for drunkenness and letting a prisoner escape! But he completed full service in the police



force and was later listed in the census as a police pensioner.

Jim's historic object was a 'lapping tool' (not pictured) used by his father-in-law who was a drum maker. The tool is used to tuck the parchment that makes the skin of the drum under a hoop to keep it taut. Jim's father-in-law had worked for Henry Potter, the leading company making military drums. His photo had featured in a newspaper article about these drums and how they were made, one of two such articles from the 1940s and 1950s which Jim brought along to show us. The drums were made of brass and the sides tied with rope plaited in distinguishable patterns. Each regiment's drums were colourfully decorated with finely painted regimental emblems. The drum maker's initials were written inside each drum, alongside the manufacturer's name Potter, and visible through a little peep-hole so that any quality concerns could be fed back to the individual responsible. Jim and his wife had been able to source one of her father's drums from France, to add to the part-finished one they already had, and they are looking for a third drum to complete their collection.

Michelle passed round her great-grandfather's



folding stereoscopic viewer (around 100 years old), with a selection of stereo photo cards belonging to her grandfather and dating from around 1955. These were all views of Clovelly with its steep cobbled street, donkeys and quay, and were examples of the 300 sets of slides produced by Vistascreen and available as souvenirs at tourist resorts. Such slides feature two photos taken from slightly different angles and, when looking through the viewer, they pop into 3D almost giving the impression of being there. Such images were very popular with Victorians of all classes - Queen Victoria had a large collection, every middle class household owned a viewer and a stack of cards,

and they were also available at the library or for the poor to view at fairs. Michelle showed pictures of the many variations in style of viewers, from the ornate to the merely functional, and ranging from whole pieces of furniture to portable viewers that folded flat. Queen guitarist and astrophysicist Brian May has been an avid collector since childhood when he had a Weetabix viewer for the free slides that came in the cereal packets. He revived the London Stereoscopic Company and has exhibited his collection at the Tate Britain, published books on the subject, and even designed a 3D stereoscopic viewer for use with mobile phones, so that everyone can enjoy the same sense of wonder and immersion in photos as our ancestors did 150 years ago!

Jackie showed us a lovely Royal Doulton vase, one of a pair that her grandfather had bought for her grandmother. Amazingly, both vases had survived undamaged when the family's house was completely demolished by a parachute bomb during the war. Her father, 14 at the time, had dug them out of the wreckage and they held a special place in her family's memories of that terrible night. It was in May 1941, the last month of the Blitz, and while the



rest of his family spent the night in their Anderson shelter; Jackie's grandfather chose to sleep in the house. By a stroke of luck, he had got up during the night as the dog was barking, so when the bomb hit he was downstairs and partly protected by door jamb. Nevertheless he sustained very serious injuries and was hospitalised for months. The rest of the family felt the force of the blast, and some of their neighbours in the adjoining shelter were killed. The family were then homeless and had lost all their possessions except these two special vases. This moving talk was a sober reminder of the horrendous impact of the war and of the resilience of the people who lived through such disaster, picked up their lives and carried on.





## London Walks 3

In April it was the 100th 3E London Walk. The group started in February 2010 and in most years have done a walk in London every month except December. On our first walk was from Waterloo to London Bridge, so I decided it was time to do it again but this time in reverse order and a different route.

We saw some of the old

Bankside' available from Surrey Libraries and you can download the map from the Metro Publications website.

There were four of us there from the original walk: myself, Ann Darkins, Barbara Denore and Joan Street and 12 newer members.



favourites: Marshalsea Prison, Red Cross Gardens (where the photo was taken), The Hop Exchange, Winchester Palace, the replica of The Golden Hinde at St Mary Overie Dock and more and some new things such as the Cross Bones Graveyard and the site of the original Globe Theatre.

For anyone interested in doing the walk it's from 'London's Hidden Walks, Volume 1 by Stephen Millar – Walk 9 Southwark &

The first walk was on a damp showery day and so was the 100th, not ideal for photos but we did see the sun in the afternoon! How much longer can we keep going? I have still got loads of ideas for new walks so it will certainly be for the foreseeable future.

Kathy Gothard



## what3words

Whilst walking in Norbury Park John and I came across a man needing medical attention. So what do you do? – phone 999, but how do you tell the emergency services where you are? In the middle of nowhere is pretty difficult to describe! However, whilst John was on the phone, two young ladies came along and we started talking about our whereabouts and we then remembered recently reading about the ‘what3words’ app. One lady then downloaded it onto her phone and lo and behold 3 words appeared. These were then given to the ambulance service on the phone and within a quarter of an hour help arrived.

So if you walk out in the countryside, do download this app - you never know when you might need it!

Jan Dicker



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## Out & About with Bookham U3A

OUTINGS & THEATRE VISITS

### The new arrangements for organising outings in Bookham U3A

Individual members are now expected to come forward to arrange "one off" trips and a number of members have arranged some very good outings.

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### U3A SURREY NETWORK STUDY DAYS

Fri Nov 15th

The UK in a Changing Europe Dr Simon Usherwood, Department of Politics, University of Surrey

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### New History Group for Bookham U3A

A new History group is now underway. We meet on the second & fourth Wednesdays of the month at 2.30 for a talk, tea and chat. Initial numbers are quite small so we are keen to meet other like-minded people who may wish they had learned a bit more history while they were at school, so long ago.

Our initial interests lie in Romans, early English, Greeks, Egyptians and Classical civilisations generally. But we are keen to explore later periods. Whilst presenting at the meetings is not required, the talks each time are by members of the group. So wherever your interests lie, whether it is from reading historical novels, visiting historic countries or sites or even from real knowledge, please come and join us and perhaps share your historical interest with us. The group is led by Simon Phillips and if you would like to know more please contact Simon now and arrange to come along for a taster session.

Simon Phillips, Tel no: 01372 458063

Email: [SimonJFPhillips@BTinternet.com](mailto:SimonJFPhillips@BTinternet.com)

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## U3A Tuesday Monthly Meetings

03 Dec 2019 Jonathon Jones, A Christmas Carol

07 Jan 2020 Gill Caldwell, The Grange

04 Feb 2020 Phil Holt talking about Donald Campbell





*Military History Group (David Middleton photo)*



*David Middleton walking Group London to Hampton Court (David Middleton photo)*