



News from Knole

No 84 May 2023

Knole U3A can be found at—<http://www.knoleU3A.org.uk>

Chairman's Notes

The committee is pleased that numbers attending the Monthly Meeting are slowly rising, and are near the pre-Covid level. We have enjoyed some excellent speakers this year, and Harry Reeves - the Speakers' Secretary - admits this is because he now relies on the personal recommendations of Knole members, rather than anonymous lists.

Sadly, some family business requires that Harry moves north and must resign his position with Knole. He will be sorely missed. And, of course, we must find a replacement to keep the programme of talks up to date. If you are interested in taking this on, please talk to the Chairman for more details of what is involved.

This is my own last Newsletter for Knole U3A, before I stand down at the AGM, and I want to say what a privilege it has been to be so closely associated with the organisation since the beginning. Knole has a distinct character as a U3A, possibly because its membership is spread over quite a wide area. Also, the ratio of Study Groups to members is high, 70+ Groups to 400 members, while the range of subjects and activities is impressive and varied.

These last years have been a challenge, but our members have remained loyal and proactive, ready to support any new initiatives of the committee, and steadfast within the established ones. What is notable is the sound of laughter, whether that is in the groups, or at the end of a Monthly Meeting, or on an organised group visit.

Well done everyone!

Magda Sweetland

Magda Sweetland
Chairman Knole U3A
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Timetable for finding new Trustees

THE TREASURER'S ROLE

We are pleased to announce that we have received notifications for both the positions of Chairman and Secretary and, subject to your approval they will be taking up their position after the AGM.

However, we are still looking to fill the position of Treasurer. This one of the most important roles for Knole U3A in order for us to comply with the terms of our Constitution as required by the Charities Commission. Under our Constitution we have to have a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer and without those three main officers we would have no choice but to dissolve Knole U3A.

The role simply is to maintain the financial records, prepare monthly reports for the Committee and prepare yearly accounts for the AGM. You do not need to be a qualified accountant, just good with spreadsheets and able to keep our financial records in order.

The committee is building a strong team to ensure that your U3A can offer the best support for all our members and we would work closely with the Treasurer to provide all the backup required.

Being on a committee can be very rewarding. You are working as part of a team in a shared endeavour. You may be learning new skills or developing skills you already have and it can be very gratifying.

With over 400 members in the Knole U3A we cannot believe there is no-one with the skills to carry out this role. We would therefore appeal to you, to help us find someone to fulfil this important role.

Time is running out. - The Committee

Monthly Meetings

22nd May – Smugglers on Romney Marsh

Our monthly talk on 22 May will be given by Sue Duckworth, a historian, professional tour guide and speaker. The subject is Smugglers on Romney Marsh. Discover the characters involved and where they hid their booty, with local poems and tales.

Monthly Coffee Mornings 11am

(2nd Thursday of the month)

The coffee mornings at Miller and Carter at Riverhead are proving to be very popular. It's a lovely venue and they make us very welcome. We would love to see more members there as it's a really good opportunity to meet up with friends and make new ones. The coffee mornings are not just for new members, although it is an excellent way for new members to be introduced to Knole. Members of the Social team and Committee members endeavour to be there so come along and chat to us, you would be very welcome. Please remember, however, when parking, to enter your car registration number on the screen as you enter the restaurant or you will be charged, otherwise it's free.

GROUP VACANCIES

Genealogy for Beginners 2

Contact: John Phillips

genealogy@knoleu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 1 + 2

Table tennis has vacancies for both the Wednesday Morning 10.00am-12.00am and 1st and 3rd Fridays, 2-4pm, both at Otford Village Memorial Hall. Contact Margaret Thorpe

tabletennis@knoleu3a.org.uk

News from the Groups

Garden Group



We visited Riverhill Himalayan Gardens in April and had a guided tour with their relatively new head gardener, Misako. She talked to us about the history of the house and gardens and reminded us of the programme Country House Rescue and how that was the catalyst for creating what we see today. She told us the programme is still available on YouTube. I watched it and it was lovely to be reminded of what it looked like then and how it looks now. She talked to us about her plans for improvements to the garden. Her passion is trees and she is thrilled at the many varieties of trees at Riverhill. She talked about the difficulties of planting trees for the future and trying to guess how climate change may affect the varieties that will thrive. Her solution is to plan on growing many different species as no one can predict what the climate might be for a mature tree in 100 or even 200 years time.

We were also shown the newly renovated rock garden and introduced to one of the garden volunteers who has become very passionate about ferns and, with her encouragement, has done lots of research and training and become quite an expert. They are building a very impressive collection of ferns with his help.

Riverhill is right on our doorstep, it's a stunning garden and if you haven't been for a while I urge you to visit. It's in the Gardeners World 2 for 1 scheme and is also free to visit if you belong to Historic Houses. May is an excellent month to see their beautiful collection of Rhododendrons and Azaleas.

London Studies 1



We had a guided tour of Hall Place Historic House, Bexley, Kent in April.

The visit and tour were excellent. In conjunction with the Curator Kirsty we had Christine, who was our volunteer guide on the day. Highly recommended as a place to visit. Lovely Cafe, Gardens and free parking. What more could you want!! For further information feel free to contact Anne Green.
londonstudies1@knoleu3a.org.uk

MOT 3

In March we had two visits to the Oast, also The Mall Gallery, the Big Band concert at Sevenoaks School, the cinema to see 'Alleluia', and the soup lunch - the last until October. In April we saw the streamed edition of 'Life of Pi' at The Stag, 'Grease' at The Bob Hope Theatre Eltham and went to The Oast and Beefeater. We have some plans in place for May including a cinema visit to see 'The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry', Tunbridge Wells Literary Festival to see the Sheila Hancock and Gyles Brandreth talk, Poulton Wood golf club for Sunday lunch, The Oast to see 'Arsenic and Old Lace' plus Beefeater and possibly 'Imagine the Beatles' at Chiddingstone Castle. We have finally got a date organised for our visit to The Royal Chelsea Hospital on 30th June.

Golf



Why everyone should play GOLF

First and foremost, golf is good exercise and it gets you out in the fresh air. We play golf for fun, but it is also an excellent opportunity to challenge yourself, to improve your game and health.

We play once a month on different local courses, so come and join us and get back to GOLF.

London Studies 7



What a good day we had!

On Tuesday 2 May London Studies 7 visited Middle Temple for a tour and lunch. The tour was interesting with a great guide. We all enjoyed the wonderful food and the good company of all our members. In the afternoon we strolled in the gardens and visited the church.

London Studies 8



We took a long awaited trip to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea at the beginning of April. We had originally attempted the visit back in early 2020 and then COVID struck!

We had an excellent tour given by one of the Pensioners and, for the first time, achieved a full complement of our members. An excellent morning was had by all.

Historic Buildings



We had 2 very interesting recent visits. First was Marble Hill House in Twickenham in April. Home to Henrietta Howard. Second, to the Brunel Tunnel Museum, under the Thames at Rotherhithe, in early May. We were able to go down the shaft that Marc Brunel created to get to the level for digging the tunnel. It's not possible to go into the actual tunnel as it is still used by trains 180 years after it was built. One of the problems of building the tunnel was flooding. In fact, Marc Brunel's son, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was seriously injured in one of the floods. When in the shaft he heard a water pump switching on. This is still needed to keep the tunnel clear of water.

Walking with Dogs

Last month we met on Keston Common in the car park opposite the Greyhound pub. We all headed off down Pondfield Road onto the Common towards the ponds, turning right onto a foot path which takes you through wooded areas of trees that are all so splendid. Information boards have been placed along to help you identify them. That's when it started to rain. But being hardened dog walkers we continued our circular walk. Passing all the lovely gorse bushes, passed Cezars Well and the ponds, looking lovely with ducks and plenty of wild life. Down into Padmill Wood, chatting with some very bedraggled volunteers repairing the railings. Following the stream we met other equally wet dog walkers. Pressing on around and back to the Greyhound for a very pleasant lunch. Amazingly they welcome our dogs there, providing towels to dry them, and doggy treats for all. It's not surprising that one of our lovely 4 legged friends managed unnoticed to escape his lead and go behind the bar to explore more treats. I am sure he will be returning soon!