

No 87 November 2023

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

Chairmans Report

Dear members,
Open Afternoon

I think we can safely say that our Open Afternoon at the end of September was a great success. The feedback we've had from people was that they really enjoyed the new format, there as certainly a friendly buzz about the room. As you can imagine, it wouldn't have happened without a great deal of hard work. Our Group Contacts pulled out all the stops and worked hard to create all the displays and activities for the afternoon in a very short space of time and we are very grateful. Not only was it an enjoyable event but it has resulted in 42 new members joining Knole since the Open Afternoon!

New members meetings

With so many new members, we have had to hire Holmesdale Bowls club for our new member meetings and so far have offered two dates for new members to come along and meet some of the committee and each other and find out a bit more about what to expect when they join Knole. If you are a new member and you haven't had an invitation then please get in touch with me as we would love to meet you all.

New Groups

Also, as a result of the Open Afternoon, quite a few new groups have been started, more about those elsewhere in this newsletter. Groups are the lifeblood of any u3a, so if you have the germ of an idea or wonder if other members might fancy something that interests you, however niche, just get in touch.

Just a casual chat might be the spark to ignite that fire. We are going to introduce a table at the back of the room at the Monthly meetings where one of the groups support team will be sat, if you have an idea then please come and chat to one of us.

Group Etiquette

Can I make a plea on behalf of all group contacts. One of the most time consuming jobs as a group contact is chasing people who don't reply to emails. I know we are all busy and occasionally we all forget but please help your group contact and reply to emails as soon as you can. All the group contacts give up their time freely to run our groups for us so please do this little thing to help them.

New Year Celebration

The year seems to be flying by, Christmas will soon be with us but we are looking forward to our New Year Celebration which will be held on Monday 15th January. You will all have received your invitations by now. Numbers are limited and I know it will be a popular event so make sure you have applied for your place.

January Monthly Meeting

Please make a note in your diary that the monthly meeting in January will be on the **29th January** and not on the 22nd.

Vacancies and help needed

The u3a is a mutual aid, organisation, everyone who belongs is a volunteer. We all do something to help one another get the most from being a member, it may be planning a walk or a visit, preparing a talk or booking a pub for lunch, we all...

...take our turn. Many hands make light work and we would like some help with tasks that help with the smooth running of Knole. As mentioned in the last newsletter, Harry, our Meetings Co-ordinator is stepping down soon. We need someone to take his place as soon as possible. Harry books the hall for all our meetings and books the speakers so an important role and we would certainly notice if there was no one to do it. It could easily be a shared role and Harry is around at the moment to help with starting out. If you think you could help with this then please get in touch. We are also looking to create a little team that could help with advertising and promoting the benefits of joining u3a.

We are planning ahead and know that next year at the AGM our Treasurer, Richard Clout will definitely be standing down, we are very grateful that he agreed to stay on this year. This is a role we cannot function without and so we shall be looking for a Treasurer to join the committee, could that be you? Do come and talk to us.

Debbie Magness

Chairman Knole u3a

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Monthly Meetings

We have a varied programme of speakers for our Monthly Meetings in the coming year. **Meetings will normally be on the fourth Monday of the month at 2pm, at the Sevenoaks Community Centre** on Cramptons Rd (adjacent to Bat and Ball Station).

There are a few innovations to the programme for this year.

27th November we have **Bob Ogley**, a well known local figure, former editor of the Chronicle, who will speak about the **1987 Great Storm**.

15th January New Year Party

Please note that our January Monthly Meeting is a week later than usual. (We'll need a breather after the excesses of the party!)

29th January Peter Griffiths will return to give us part 2 of his amusing talk about his life in aviation.

Later in the year, at our AGM on 24 June, we hope to have short presentations from some of our Study Groups. Also, for the first time, we aim to hold a meeting on the **22nd July**

More details of Monthly Meetings in future newsletters.



Festive Celebrations

It has been decided this year to make it a New Year Celebration again, and it will be held on **Monday 15th January 2024.**

We are planning a big change with this event as we are going to use a Catering firm for the first time rather than ask Members to provide the food and help with the washing up!

You should all have received an invitation by email, containing details.

Please note forms and payment should be returned to: Wendy Willsher by Thursday 30th.November.



Monthly Coffee Mornings

(2nd Thursday of the month)

The coffee mornings are held at the Miller and Carter at Riverhead. 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.

Groups News

London Walks 2



We have had a busy year so far and a few train strikes stopping us going to London, but we still met up, just for a local walk. The walks have included A Graffiti walk, Docklands, Hampstead, Wapping, Charing X to St Bride's, Highgate and a walking treasure hunt in Sevenoaks on a strike day.

One of the highlights was to see The Strand Lane 'Roman Baths' (see pic) situated underneath Kings College Norfolk Building. A pre-arranged appointment with the gov.Parks dept. someone came and unlocked the door. It was established around 2012 that it wasn't constructed as a Roman bath but as a feeder system for an elaborate fountain! Dating back to early 17C. During its complicated history it has been used for cold water bathing.

Many of our walks come from a set of books 'Hidden Walks of London.

London Studies 1



Last month the group visited The Charterhouse, London which is a historic complex of buildings in Farringdon, dating back to the 14th century. It was originally built as a Carthusian priory. Following the priory's dissolution in 1537 it was rebuilt from 1545 onwards to become one of the great courtyard houses of Tudor London. In 1611 the property was bought by a businessman, Thomas Sutton, who established a school for the young and almshouse for the old. The almshouse remains in occupation while the school was relocated in 1872 to Godalming, Surrey.

The visit was well attended by the group who enjoyed the experience of seeing fragments from the monastic period but mainly gaining a vivid impression of the type of large rambling 16th century mansion that once existed all around London.

Theatre Group

The Theatre Group had a very positive outcome at the Open Afternoon in September when 16 members signed up to join the group. Fourteen of those have taken the next step and will join us at our next meeting on 7th November, when we will discuss productions we might wish to see in the New Year.

At our September meeting it was decided we would like to see Noel Coward's comedy, 'Private Lives', starring Nigel Havers and Patricia Hodge. We went to see this at The Ambassadors Theatre in October. We had good, but not very comfortable, seats in the dress circle with a good view of the very bright set.

Needless to say the performance was very slick and we all enjoyed the afternoon.

In December we will go to the Garrick Theatre to see 'Hamnet', who was the son of William Shakespeare.

Birdwatching



The picture is from our trip to Tudeley Woods in May this year. Unfortunately, the weather defeated us in October when we were due to visit Cliffe Pools nr Rochester. The RSPB reserve there is formed from some flooded clay pits which were filled with river dredgings from the Medway estuary, which are now overgrown with sea aster. There are also some very scarce saline lagoons which create a particularly rich biodiverse habitat that attracts a wide variety of waterfowl in winter including Red-necked and Slavonian Grebes. Plus many cormorants roost there and Bewick swans are occasionally seen, although...

...they prefer to graze on the marshes. Tufted Ducks Pochard and Common Goldeneye are regular visitors, and little Egrets feed on the reserve too. Sadly we missed all this, but will return in due course.

This months trip is to Dungeness RSPB nature reserve where we often see a wide variety of species as they migrate between continents. I'll report back on our sightings next month weather permitting!

Golf



Why do I Play golf in the Winter ?

I like to carry on playing golf in the winter for lots of reasons, but the main reason is to keep active. The winter months tend to be a season for overindulgence and a good round of golf helps to work off those calories.

I like winter golf because the course, the car park and even the bar is quieter. There tends to be a slower pace about the place so that you go at your own pace without being held up or rushed.

The winter months give me a chance to try out different things, like the new clubs I am hoping to get for Christmas.

But above all else it is a chance to stay social with my friends, to enjoy a drink in the bar and a laugh with people I like.

So wrap up warm and keep on playing. You too will love it.

New Groups

Following the success of our Open Afternoon we had requests to set up **10 new groups** and I can now report on their progress so far.

Bridge for Beginners – This is up and running with 12 members. It is being held weekly on Tuesday mornings at the Indoor Bowls club in Hollybush Lane.

The Computer Group - will meet on the 3rd Monday of each month at the Bell in Kemsing and will concentrate on Smartphones and Laptops using Microsoft. Whilst we can adopt the principle of "blind leading the blind", we could do with more help with any members with expertise in either of those.

Knitting and Crafting – This group is holding its inaugural meeting will decide on where and when to hold their regular meetings and will set out their plans for the future and which charities to support.

Play Reading – This has arranged its first meeting which will be held in the afternoon on the 13th November in the Sevenoaks Library. They would like to find a few more members to join them.

Croquet – We have arranged a taster day with a local club in Aylesford, but as their season finishes this month, we have decided to leave this until the spring at the start of their new season.

Paddleboarding – we have so far 3 people interested in having a paddleboarding experience, but again we will leave this until warmer weather next year.

Spanish for beginners – Marion Hollands is offering to teach you some Spanish for beginners

and is prepared to host this as an open group with other U3A groups and we are speaking to Sevenoaks to see if we can get more interest.

Films – We are planning on starting a second group. I have been passed a list of 8 interested and I will be contacting them to set up an inaugural get together.

Shorter Walks – This is being set up for those who can't manage 5m or half days.

Gardening Group – We would like to set up a new group for anyone interested in gardening, for ideas, tips and practical gardening at home and visiting official gardens for us to admire, and get further ideas. New members are needed to get this started.

Astronomy – This is still just an idea at this stage and we are trying to see if we can get more interest in this topic.

We don't need leaders for these groups, we just need someone to be the group contact.

Running the groups should be shared among everyone so that being the Contact is just that and it should not be a burden.

If you are interested in any of these new groups, please contact me and I will pass on your details to

the appropriate Group contact.

Bryan Rawlins

groups@knoleu3a.org

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Shared Groups

Europe Today

The Sevenoaks Europe Today Group would like to invite Knole members with an interest in all things European to join our discussion group. This group studies issues by individual countries or common themes across Europe as a whole. The themes for each year are agreed at a Summer Lunch and recent topics have included Russian Gas and Oil supplies to Europe, The History of Muslim Spain, Lost Kingdoms of Europe, Trade post Brexit and the Opera Houses of Europe.

Meetings are held on the second Friday of the month, for eight months of the year, at 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon in members houses by agreement.

If you are interested in joining us please contact John Harris on 01732 461744 or at europa@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Groups with Vacancies

London Studies 5

We usually meet on the 4th.Thursday of the month, and have visited many interesting places over the years...

Museum of Brands and Advertising, Apothecary Hall, NT Fenton House, Whitechapel Bell Foundry, Docklands Museum, Middle Temple, and various back-stage tours of London Theatres.

We have our annual Planning Meeting in December.

If you would like to join our merry group.

contact: Delma Moore

'londonstudies5@knoleu3a.org.uk

Spanish for Beginners

A chance to learn a new language. Maybe useful for your holidays.

Contact: Marion Hollands

01474.873433

Vacancies :-

Treasurer

Richard Clout is stepping down next year and we need a new Treasurer. If you know of anyone suitable.

Meetings Co-ordinator

Harry Reeves will be stepping down as Meetings Co-ordinator in the next few months, and we need to appoint a replacement. We have all meetings booked up to June of next year, and we hope a successor will take over, whilst there is no urgency about future bookings, and Harry is still here to support him or her and have an extended handover.

Contact: Debbie Magness

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chairman@knoleu3a.org.uk

Deadline for next edition:-

January 17th.2024