



Christmas ramblings from your Chair

By the time you read this, Christmas will have been and gone and we'll be looking to see what 2024 has in store.

Hopefully, Thames Water will keep the water flowing from our taps. We take water, power and so much more for granted. As we enter our third age, disruption to these vital services, together with our own health needs are less easy to accommodate. However, I know from speaking to members that people look out for one another. That's what community is all about. But we must all keep the pressure on to ensure we get the refund Thames Water are contractually obliged to give us.

I was pleased to see so many at our December meeting where, after an excellent talk, we kick started Christmas with mince pies and carols led by Wayne's Singing for Fun group. It was a very happy afternoon.

The following week Mike Jones held his first MOTO (members on their own) meeting and we were excited by the response. Over twenty people attended, with several more expressing their interest but unable to attend the first meeting. I hope Mike's group goes from strength to strength in 2024.

I attended my first canasta lesson in December and was grateful for the patience and support of my fellow players. My partner and I enjoyed some beginner's luck too.

I'm writing this on Christmas Eve surrounded by unwrapped presents, lost glue and challenging sellotape, by this time tomorrow the presents will have all been unwrapped!

My 2023 Highlights, - being elected Chairman! New groups and group leaders, enthusiastic committee members, trip to Bletchley and change of name to Milford and Godalming U3a.

Our name change has been approved by the Charity Commission and formally acknowledged by the Third Age Trust.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy new year
Lisa



Milford and District u3a Monthly Newsletter



January 2024

The Monthly Friday Talk 12th January 2024 2.00pm

'The Life & Crimes of Agent Zigzag' By Paul Barwick

.....One December night in 1942, a Nazi parachutist landed in a Cambridgeshire field.....

The True Wartime Story of Eddie Chapman: Agent Zigzag: Lover, Betrayer, Hero, Spy - dashing and louche, courageous and unpredictable. Spies, Lies and Deception. A true story of WWII.

Talk, tea, coffee, cake and conversation
£2.00

Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust – Her statement in the Central u3a Newsletter in December 2023

'A number of members have queried a statement I made at the recent AGM about the criteria for being a member of the u3a. At the AGM, I made it clear that **we do not have – and never have had – any lower age limit: that the u3a is open to all who have the time to fully participate.**

The decision not to have a lower age limit was taken by an AGM of the Trust in the 1980s and has never formally been discussed since.'



Our Monthly Meeting on 8th December was a celebratory event with:

- The Talk - 'Working with the Ghosts of Hampton Court.'
- A wonderful performance by Wayne Richardson's 'Milford u3a Singers' and finally,
- Festive Christmas Refreshments, laid out with lighted candles and party crackers.
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The Milford Village Hall was full of Christmas Cheer.



Review: Monthly Friday Talk, 'Working with the Ghosts of Hampton Court'



Sarah Slater was the speaker who gave us our Christmas Talk on the 8th December.

Sarah guides visitors at Hampton Court. She was dressed in a beautiful, black silk 17th Century Style silk dress which she had made herself, and in which she appears to the public visitors as a mourning widow. *'A lady would traditionally mourn the death of her husband for two years and one day. The husband for his wife, only a few weeks before he had to replace her to care for their children.'*

Sarah explained that **ghosts** are nebulous images (vague, formless humans who were in purgatory), part of the Catholic doctrine on restless spirits. **Hauntings** were surges of energy which appeared as sudden icy coldness or cold wind.

Cardinal Wolsey, Chancellor to Henry VIII in 1515, transformed a country house into a grand building where he hoped to host monarchs from all over Europe. He was so successful, that when he had created a palace fit for a king, Henry VIII took the palace for himself.

The principal ghost has been named as Catherine Howard who was executed for adultery and treason after a year of marriage as Henry's fifth wife. Catherine's wraithlike ghost is heard to run, screaming, along the landing towards the King's chapel to plead with him when she heard her sentence, but Henry had left the palace and Catherine was beheaded in the Tower of London.



Sightings of ghosts have been claimed, and cold hauntings have been experienced. The Round Tower in particular, has been credited with ghostly hauntings and the constant sound of a turning spinning-wheel

In 1689 William III and Mary II took the throne together. They appointed Sir Christopher Wren to re-design Hampton Court as a new baroque palace, and part of the Tudor Palace was demolished to make way for the new late 17th Century building.



Fortunately, they ran out of money and the demolition was stopped. So, we can still enjoy Visiting Wolsey's beautiful Tudor palace: It was truly, fit for a king.

In 1838, Queen Victoria opened the Palace to the public. Since then the private rooms of the Palace have been occupied as Grace and Favour apartments, and in 1942 Lady Baden Powell, leader of the Girl Guide Movement lived there. This apartment had twelve bedrooms and a roof garden, but the mods and cons were not always adequate.

Pam



Our Singing for Fun Group swept into the room at the end of the Talk.

'Singing For Fun' - Milford u3a Singers.

I lost count of the number of carols they sang for us at this festive Monthly Meeting. All their songs were sung with enthusiasm and beautiful sound.

With Wayne's direction, the group evidently enjoy creating the music. They performed for two hours with feeling and respect for the words and the stories they told us in song.



They impressed with a song in Latin, 'Tollite Hostias' ('Bring forth your offerings') This, Wayne tells me, is the last movement of Charles Camille Saint Saens' 'Oratorio de Noel' (Christmas Story).



Later at 6.00pm, the group would be singing songs and carols again at The Clockhouse, Milford.

They took part in four events in that week. On Saturday, 2nd December, they were singing with The Hart Male Voice Choir as guests for their show at Holy Trinity Church, Guildford, raising funds for the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care.



On the 8th, as well as singing for us at the Monthly Meeting of our u3a as reported here, they sang again at the Clockhouse in the evening. The next day, they led the singing at the Mayor of Waverley's Civic Carol Service at St John's Church, Farncombe. As Wayne said, they were Bizzy! Bizzy! Bizzy!

Their final performance for this year was at Chichester Hall, Witley. This is their 'home' venue and they will resume their sessions there on 9th January 2024. Then they will be preparing for Easter.

Wayne says, that any member of the u3a is welcome to join them at any time.

Wayne Richardson
wayne-richardson@milford-u3a.org.uk

Refreshment Time



The Grand Finale, as the audience stood up, the Refreshment tables, already prepared and delightfully decorated with lighted candles and crackers and full of extra especially good Christmas food.

This December Monthly Meeting put us all in the mood to start our own preparations for Christmas.



WANTED! A new Editor for the Newsletter

I don't want the Newsletter to close, because I think its task is communication. Like the Monthly Talks, it helps to keep our scattered Groups in touch, and it reaches members who cannot get to the Monthly Meetings.

Many thanks to all of you who have contributed to making it interesting and relevant. Making contact monthly, with members of our u3a has been very rewarding for me, but tempus fugit and I want to see the Newsletter settled with a new enthusiast.

*We have about 500 members of our u3a branch. Somewhere among us is another member who would enjoy producing the Newsletter. **Where are you?***

*Email me, **very soon please**, if you would like to know more about the job with the idea of taking over. It really is the best job.*

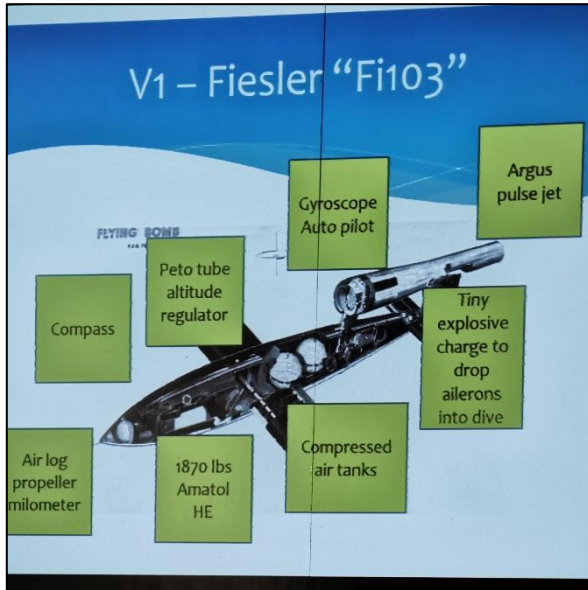
The new editor will want to present the Newsletter as he/she wishes. There is no prescribed template, the present one, or help to make a new one would be available if required.

Pam
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GROUPS

Military History Group

Our military history group meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 2.00 pm for a couple of hours in St John's Church Hall, Milford. The group has been running successfully for several



years, previously led for many of them by the late Frank Green who is greatly missed; it is now led by the very knowledgeable and experienced Peter Stevenson.

There are currently around 25 enthusiastic members in the group who share their interests by giving talks to the group on the topics they have studied, or from direct family experiences they wish to share. The subjects covered are varied and range from military campaign strategies, battlefield tactics, family history and family records about military service, and the armed forces reaching over many periods in history. On the day of my visit to the group in November, I learned something of the history of the rocket and that rocket fuel was made from potatoes and oxygen - you can't get much greener than that!!! On occasions the group also enjoy visits to local historical sites of interest.

The topics of the next two upcoming talks are:

January - the role of Shetland and communications with Norwegian Resistance in World War 2.

February - a member's father serving with the 5th Wiltshire Battalion from Normandy in June 1944 through France, Netherlands and Germany, winning the MM and sustaining injuries on the way.

New members are welcome! If you are interested in joining this 'fascinating facts' group, please contact Peter on: peter-stevenson@milford-u3a.org.uk

Sue Allen

Gardeners Group



The Gardeners Group Christmas Competition was a Christmas Door Wreath or a Table Decoration.

There was a very healthy response. No room to show all the entries here.



The celebratory feast after the voting included a delicious homemade Christmas cake made by one of the members.

New Group

Zoom Time Group

Fridays - Fortnightly 11.00am – 12.00 noon.



Dates by arrangement.

If you would like to practise using ZOOM for a session or two, for experience, this group would suit you.

You don't have to have zoom on your computer: I will be sending the link to you from my laptop. You only need to Click on a blue link like the one below, it's almost the same as using an email.

Please email me or phone, so that I can send the link to your email address. Contact: 01252 702075 or pam-brown@milford-u3a.org.uk

New Group

MOTO Group

Mike Jones' new Group held its first meeting in the Clockhouse café in Chapel Lane, Milford on 14th December. It was very successful, with twenty members taking part. This Group will meet monthly on the second Thursday from 10.00 – 12 noon

Contact: Lynne_mike@tiscali.co.uk

Exploring Great Choral Music



This group of around twenty members meets on every fourth Tuesday of the month from 2pm until 4pm at the Masonic Hall in Godalming and is led and facilitated by John Bawden.

John's background is steeped in music, and he has been singing all his life. He was a member of Guildford Cathedral Choir, and then sang as a freelance with many other choirs, notably Winchester Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. For many years he was Associate Conductor of Godalming Choral Society, and Musical Director of Fareham Philharmonic Choir. His programme notes are regularly used by choral societies all over the world.

We are fortunate and privileged to have John in our midst to share his knowledge as he has led musical interest groups for Milford and Godalming U3A for many years and these have included series on the Orchestra, Symphony and Concerto as well as the current Exploring Great Choral Music.

Each month the Group explores two composers: on the day I visited them, they were discovering, perhaps a lesser known (at least to me) British Composer, Gerald Finzi, a most characteristically English composer. The group listened to his beautiful Christmas piece, In Terra Pax (Peace on Earth).

Around halfway through the afternoon and after a short 'natural break', when you would need to take your own refreshments should you require anything, their attention turned to Handel's Messiah.

There seems to be little or nothing that John doesn't know about the composers or indeed their style of composing; it was an extremely enjoyable, stimulating and enlightening afternoon, amply illustrated with slides and videos.

At the conclusion of the afternoon, the group adjourned to the hostelry across the road for some liquid refreshment and friendly socialising.

Some forthcoming composers under the spotlight are:

Rachmaninov & Monteverdi; Vaughan Williams & Holst; Mendelssohn & Brahms; Bach (he gets an afternoon to himself!!); Puccini & Walton

If you are interested in joining the 'Exploring Great Choral Music' group, please contact John Bawden on john-bawden@milford-u3a.org.uk
Sue Allen

Tennis Group

Meeting throughout the year on
Tuesdays 10.00am - 1200 noon



'After attempting to play tennis on a very wet morning we then gathered for our Christmas party.'

Eileen Macdonald

Eileen-macdonald@milford-u3a.org.uk

February Newsletter

The Closing date for the **February Newsletter** is **Thursday 25th January**. I am engaged then in much checking, and numerous technical activities, and I like to give Bob or Lavinia a courteous amount of time to post it onto Beacon to send it round to all our members for the **1st of February**.

Pam

newsletter@milford-u3a.org.uk



2024

Happy New Year to all our members