



## NEWSLETTER MAY 2026



### Hi History lovers,

At our last meeting Geoffrey Smyth gave a most interesting talk on the History of the Swedish Empire. Our next meeting will be on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30pm at our usual venue Vision Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street, Radlett. We are delighted to tell you that we will have a presentation from one of Radlett's most well-known personalities. Many of you will have computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones, a lot of you will have called into Colin Hill of Radlett Tech (downstairs at the Health Food Shop in Watling Street) for his assistance with any problems. Colin always offers great help to solve these difficulties. Colin will address us with his History of Computers, as he says from the Abacus to what the future holds. It should be a really fascinating talk and not to be missed. As we have built up a bit of a credit we will not be charging for a few meetings so come along for a free afternoon of information about the digital world we are now living in followed by refreshments and a chat with our members. Just a bit of advanced notice for our June meeting on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June where will have a return visit of Dr Ian St John who will be telling us all about the History of the British Raj. Looking forward to seeing you. **Stephen Forman**

### Longer Walks

In April the longer walking group walked from West Ham tube station on the capital ring. We walked to Finsbury Park taking in the Olympic stadium, the Lea river navigation and Abney cemetery - this was about 10 1/2 miles We are not walking in May as I am on holiday!! **Fiona**



**Snooker group** meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at Radlett Members Club 6.15pm. New players always welcome. **Bernard Groden**

### Evening Book Club

Picture a room full of people who love books. People who enjoy each other's company. People who have quite strong opinions about what they do and don't like in a book. People who never usually all agree about the book that's up for discussion. This is what the evening book club is like. Our last book was Long Island by Colm Toibin- it created a mix of opinions from "really great" to "don't know what all the fuss was about" to "could have had a better ending". Our current book is Act of Oblivion by Robert Harris. A totally different genre. Will it also produce 10 different opinions from the 10 people in the group? Probably! **Yvonne Brown.** (If you'd like to join our waiting list, please drop me an -mail )



### Chair Yoga

Our group is now running very successfully, and we all enjoy it immensely, especially the last 10 minutes of relaxation when we all almost fall asleep! Our Group Leader, Santoshni is so good and varies the movements each week so that we do not get bored. She works through the body so that every joint gets moving freely, including our tongues!

We still have some vacancies and we would be delighted to welcome you to our experience. You can email me at [Junemarks@btinternet.com](mailto:Junemarks@btinternet.com) or just come along to the room above the library on Friday mornings at 11 am. Entrance through the library. **June Marks.**

### What the Papers say

This group has now been going for a few months and is enjoyed by lots of u3a members. We are a very friendly group and we try to keep the subjects light and not get too involved in politics. Our members have been speaking up and giving us their views and the discussions become very lively.

Please come and join us on the third Monday of each month from 10.30 till 12 in the room above the library, Entrance is through the door at the side of the library and only £2 to cover cost of room and tea and coffee.

You are all very welcome and you can either email us at [junemarks@btinternet.com](mailto:junemarks@btinternet.com) or just come along. We look forward to seeing you. **June Marks and Jacquie Hyams**

**Quiz Group.** There will not be a quiz on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May due to a large number of our members going to the Schiaparelli exhibition at the V&A on that day.



### From a member of the Shakespeare Reading

#### **Reading books is a Novel Idea.**

At our last meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> we reviewed our latest book Don't Let Him In by Lisa Jewell

All ten of our book group had read and finished it Overall feedback was very positive.

The book was generally considered excellent, with several describing it as an enjoyable and easy read. Two thought it to be a real page-turner, and many said they would be interested in reading more by the author.

9 out of the 10 readers said they would definitely recommend the book, particularly to those who enjoy this genre.

It was also described as engaging and fast-paced and couldn't put it down.

Criticisms noted were that at times, the story was confusing, particularly around character identities and name changes. A few felt parts of the plot were slightly far-fetched and thought one of the main characters should have realised what was happening sooner.

One found the book slightly scary but enjoyed the ending.

One did not like the book and would not recommend it, though this was due to personal dislike of the subject matter rather than the writing itself.

We had an interesting discussion as to when was it acceptable to use online tools to investigate someone and where is the line between ethical intervention and unethical interference when trying to protect a loved one be it friend or family.

#### **Other recommended Books**

Agent Zig Zag by Ben Macintyre.

Fundamentally by Nussaibah Younis.

Real Americans by Rachel Khong.

A Prince and a spy by Rory Clements.

And the Mountains echoed by Khaled Hosseini.

Anthony Hopkins Biography We did ok Kid.

The last Rose of Shanghai by Weina Dai Randel.

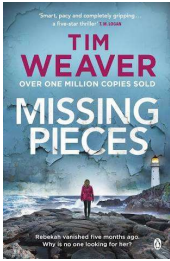
Broken Country by Claire Lesley Hall.

The Great Wide Open by Douglas Kennedy.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 10am to 12 noon , where we will be reviewing our latest book

**Missing Pieces by Tim Weaver,**

Looking forward to seeing any of our book club members who can make it. **Sharon Strong**



#### **Bus Pass Group**

9 Happy Radletteers took the bus today when we went to Stanborough Lakes. The day was sunny and we all enjoyed a lovely walk around the lake before refreshments and the journey home. (see attached pictures)

The next trip is on May 20<sup>th</sup> and will be going to Harpenden with a walk around Rothamsted Park before refreshments. If you are interested please add your name to the sign-up sheet at the next meeting. **Bob Bassey**



**The Canasta Group** is (finally?) up and running. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at the Red Lion from 2 to 4 pm. If you have not yet put your name on the list, please just come along to play on 6 May. It is a very pleasant game and easy to learn. You will be most welcome.

**Sylvia Sugar. (01923852817). Gill Whitfield (07375947822)**

#### **Remarkable Women**

Our April meeting we explored the life, achievements and disappearance of Amelia Earhart, an American aviator and aviation pioneer who became one of the most celebrated figures of early flight, and the first woman to make a non-stop transatlantic flight in 1932. Her disappearance in 1937 over the Pacific Ocean is still a mystery, no wreckage or remains have ever been found. There will be **no meeting in May**, and the next one will be on **Tuesday June 23<sup>rd</sup>**, as I am away on our usual week, and there are no other u3a meetings scheduled for that afternoon. More details nearer the time. **Carmel Byers**

#### **Rummikub**

Our little group of players get together on every other Wednesday at the Red Lion Pub in Radlett. Our next game will be on the 13<sup>th</sup> May.

We are always happy to welcome new players so if you are interested please feel free to phone me on 07917 773111 or email me on [karis532003@yahoo.com](mailto:karis532003@yahoo.com)

## **Music Appreciation**

The group next meets on 18 May 2.30 pm at St John's Church in Gills Hill Lane

David Bagon will be presenting **The Young Mozart (not the one you think).**

*Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart was the youngest child (of six) born to composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his wife Costanza.*

*He was a pianist, conductor and composer of some amazing music.*

David Bagon has prepared a talk about his life story and with excerpts of his music which included, overtures, symphonies, piano concertos and many different duets, and choral works.

Please bring your u3a membership lanyard and £3 for hall-hire and refreshments. (Coins are most appreciated.)

**Edward Cross & Tony Clayden**

*'Regarding the anonymous article about Sleep that appeared in the last edition of the U3a newsletter: I would like to clarify that I am not the author of that piece. However, I am glad to see this topic receiving more attention following my talk on Sleep to the u3a Science & Tech Group last November. I would therefore be happy to share a recap of my original talk with those interested.'*  
Laura

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**It is important when booking an outing to please first check availability with the events organizer and have your name added to their list. This represents a firm commitment to attend this outing and you are expected to pay within a few days. DO NOT MAKE OUR HARD WORKING COMMITTEE HAVE TO CHASE YOU FOR PAYMENT.**

**You will not have a confirmed place on our lists until your payment has been received.**

**We do not automatically offer refunds for any cancellations by our members but if you check with the Event organizer to see if we have a waiting list then we may be able to sell your ticket to someone on that list and we will refund you after receiving the new payment.**

**If we do not have a waiting list then it is up to you to resell your tickets to another u3a member.**

**When paying for outings and events please only pay by payment card (via the website) or by cheque. No cash please.**

**We cannot accept payments direct to the Radlett & District u3a bank account.**

**If you need assistance paying by credit card, to avoid long queues at the monthly meeting, please call Anthea on 01923 85 2274.**

**If you are paying for two members by credit card please show both names on the payments form.**

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

When we organise any of our outings by coach we try to allow sufficient time for you to have a snack or a meal, and whenever possible, we will give advice on where to eat in the locality and recommend you to book in advance. Our committee are now getting many requests to book meals for our members. This is not part of their responsibilities and I cannot ask them to take on extra work. We are not in charge of what you want to do so please make your own arrangements.

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**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ARE SOLD OUT BUT PLEASE ADD YOUR NAMES TO THE WAITING LISTS BY CONTACTING THE COMMITTEE MEMBER AS SHOWN BELOW**

**SCHIAPARELLI** : Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May

Contact: Valerie Gold [valeriegoldu3a@gmail.com](mailto:valeriegoldu3a@gmail.com) 07831 562362

**ESSEX & HERTS AIR AMBULANCE:** Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May

Contact: Sandra Clark [u3asandra@gmail.com](mailto:u3asandra@gmail.com) 07770 467381

**QUEEN ELIZABETH 11: HER LIFE IN STYLE:** Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> June

Contact: Valerie Gold [valeriegoldu3a@gmail.com](mailto:valeriegoldu3a@gmail.com) 07831 562362

**SAVILLE GARDENS/Thames Cruise:**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June

Contact: Christine Essex [christineessexu3a@gmail.com](mailto:christineessexu3a@gmail.com) 01923 85 0154

**HIGH SOCIETY:** Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June

Contact: Joan Altman [joanaltmanu3a@outlook.com](mailto:joanaltmanu3a@outlook.com) 01923 404920

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**THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ALL HAVE SOME AVAILABILITY:**



**A CLASSICAL CONCERT AT THE CADAGON HALL  
LONDON SW1X 9DQ  
ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> JULY 7.30PM**

**LEAVE RADLETT BY COACH 4pm. £38**

**NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - LANDSCAPES IN SOUND**

**RIMMA SUSHANSKAYA CONDUCTING THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENT AN EVENING OF ROMANTIC WORKS BY SMETANA, (VLTAVA), BRUCH AND RACHMANINOV, INCLUDING BRUCH'S VIOLIN CONCERTO WITH SOLOIST COCO TOMITA, AND RACHMANINOV'S GLORIOUS SYMPHONY NO. 2.**

Contact: Sandra Clark

[u3asandra@gmail.com](mailto:u3asandra@gmail.com) 07770 467381

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**BRIGHTON** Come and enjoy a day out at the seaside

**TUESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> JULY DEPART RADLETT 9am. £27.50**

Spend time discovering the many delights of this quintessential British seaside resort.



Contact: Valerie Gold. [valriegoldu3a@gmail.com](mailto:valriegoldu3a@gmail.com) 07831 562362

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**JOIN US AND YOUR FELINE FRIENDS AT  
REGENT'S PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE  
LONDON NW1 4NU  
ON  
THURSDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER**

**LEAVE RADLETT BY COACH 11am (matinee) £59**

A brand-new production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's global sensation *CATS* leaps into the magical outdoor setting of Regent's Park Open Air Theatre.

From Euston station to Victoria Grove, the strays and rebels of London gather under the Jellicle moon in the hope they'll be the chosen one. And each of them asks, because each of them dares, who will it be?

Based on T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, and with a legendary score featuring *Old Deuteronomy*, *Macavity: The Mystery Cat*, *Jellicle Ball* and the chart-topping hit *Memory*, this production of *CATS*, directed and choreographed by Regent's Park Open Air Theatre Artistic Director Drew McOnie (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Brigadoon*), is sure to be one of the theatrical events of 2026.

Contact: Vivien Summers. [events@radlettu3a.org.uk](mailto:events@radlettu3a.org.uk) 01923 856728

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**NEW NEW NEW**

**JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL DINNER IN THE PARK**

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JULY AT 7PM**

**Shenley Park, Radlett Lane, Shenley, Radlett WD7 9DW**

**£37.50**

*YOUR EVENTS & OUTINGS COMMITTEE ARE DELIGHTED TO INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL DINNER IN THE PARK WHILE EATING THE DELICIOUS FOOD WE WILL BE ABLE TO ENJOY LOVELY VIEWS OF THE WOODLAND AND ORCHARD.*

*WE WILL HAVE A WELCOMING GLASS OF SUMMER PIMMS FOLLOWED BY A CHOICE OF MAIN COURSES WHICH WILL ALSO INCLUDE A FISH AND VEGETARIAN OPTION, SALADS, AND TEMPTING DESSERTS.*

Contact: Vivien Summers [events@radlettu3a.org.uk](mailto:events@radlettu3a.org.uk) 01923 856728



AT SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

ON THURSDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

LEAVE RADLETT 11am (Matinee) £74.50

Inspired by Georges Bizet's iconic opera, *The Car Man* delivers one of the most electrifying and instantly recognisable scores in New Adventures'

repertoire. This bold reimagining transforms the familiar 19th-century Spanish cigarette factory into a slick, oil-stained 1950s garage-diner in the American Midwest, where small-town dreams simmer beneath the surface.

When a dangerously handsome and enigmatic stranger rolls into town, passion ignites and lives unravel. Fuelled by heat, desire and raw emotion, the community is hurled into a relentless spiral of greed, lust, betrayal and revenge - making *The Car Man* a thrilling, high-octane dance drama that grips audiences from the first beat to the last.

Contact: Sandra Clark

[u3asandra@gmail.com](mailto:u3asandra@gmail.com)

07770 467381

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AT ALDWYCH THEATRE. LONDON ON THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

LEAVE RADLETT 11.15am £67

IT'S NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1942, AND A SKINNY 27-YEAR-OLD ITALIAN-AMERICAN SINGER IS ABOUT TO STEP ONTO THE STAGE OF NEW YORK CITY'S PARAMOUNT THEATRE AND GIVE A PERFORMANCE THAT WILL CHANGE MUSIC HISTORY. BUT AS FRANK SINATRA'S VOICE CAPTURES A NATION, HIS HEART IS TORN BETWEEN HIS WIFE, NANCY, AND MOVIE

GODDESS, AVA GARDNER. WHEN SCANDAL AND A HOSTILE PRESS SEND HIS CAREER INTO A TAILSPIN, THE YOUNG CROONER FIGHTS BACK AND STAGES THE GREATEST COMEBACK IN SHOW BUSINESS HISTORY.

FEATURING OVER TWENTY CLASSIC HITS, INCLUDING "THAT'S LIFE", "ONE FOR MY BABY", "THE BEST IS YET TO COME" AND "I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING", SINATRA: THE MUSICAL IS THE MOST REVEALING PORTRAIT EVER TOLD ABOUT THE LEGENDARY SINGER.

Contact: Joan Altman

[joanaltman3a@outlook.com](mailto:joanaltman3a@outlook.com)

01923 404920

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### Thinking About Volunteering?

Volunteering - it might be the best thing you do this year

Retirement is a funny thing. At first, it feels like a holiday... and then one morning you realise you've watched the news twice, finished the crossword, and it's only 10.30am. If that sounds familiar, volunteering could be just the thing to add a little spark (and structure) back into your week.

Volunteering isn't about filling time for the sake of it. It's about staying connected, feeling useful, and doing something that genuinely makes you feel good. And the benefits? They're pretty impressive.

Why volunteering is good for you

- Better mental wellbeing – Older volunteers report lower levels of stress, anxiety and low mood. Helping others gives a sense of purpose, and that's a wonderful thing at any age.
- Stronger social connections – Volunteering is a great way to meet people and reduce loneliness. Regular social contact is also linked to better memory and brain health.
- A confidence boost – Your life experience, skills and common sense are hugely valued. It's nice to be reminded how much you still have to offer.

The physical benefits (no Lycra required)

- Gentle movement – From walking, chatting, gardening or helping at events, volunteering keeps you active without feeling like exercise.

- Better overall health – Even light activity helps joints stay flexible and energy levels up. Many volunteers say they simply feel more “themselves” again.

A renewed sense of purpose

- A reason to get up and get going – Knowing someone is expecting you makes the day feel meaningful.
- Something new to enjoy – You might discover a new interest, revive an old hobby, or try something you never had time for before.

If you're worried about mobility or energy levels, don't be. There's something for everyone:

- Prefer something quieter? Try telephone befriending from home.
- Love a chat? Reception or group host roles are always needed.
- Enjoy the outdoors? Parkrun volunteers are famous for their enthusiasm and cheering skills.

Ready to give it a go?

If you'd like a few ideas to get you going, these are just a starting point — there are plenty more:

- *Age UK* – A wide range of roles, including befriending, community support and fundraising (often with flexible time commitments).
- *Royal Voluntary Service* – Friendly volunteering in local communities and hospitals, from patient support to community activities.
- *Citizens Advice* – Volunteering as an advisor, admin helper, receptionist or trustee, helping people navigate everyday problems.
- *British Red Cross* – A variety of community roles, such as supporting people after hospital discharge or helping with mobility and transport services.
- *Grandmentors* pair older adults with young people leaving care. A steady listening ear and a bit of encouragement from someone who's “been there” can be genuinely life-changing.

The organisations mentioned above are just a starting point. There are many other ways to volunteer locally, including opportunities with hospitals, GP practices, schools, libraries, community groups and neighbourhood charities. Often, it's simply a case of asking what help is needed — and choosing something that feels comfortable and enjoyable. Check out <https://radlett.u3asite.uk/volunteering/> where you will several very worthwhile causes refer to including: *Schoolreaders*, *Mencap*, *Keech Hospice* and *Radlett Centre Theatre* to mention just a few.

And of course, much closer to home, *Radlett U3A* itself is always looking for additional willing hands. Helping behind the U3A scenes try *The Really Useful Group* called *RUGS*, being a *Group Administrator* or even a *Group Leader*. Every contribution — large or small — helps keep our U3A thriving and there's no pressure to over-commit.

Whatever path you choose, even a little time, given occasionally, can make a real difference to others and to yourself. So why not take a gentle first step this week?

And who knows — you might even have fun. (Almost guaranteed.) **From our monthly contributor.**

### **For those of you that enjoy the Purcell school Christmas concert.....**

*The Purcell School proudly announces a very special event to celebrate the retirement of Head of Composition, Alison Cox.*

*The evening on Wedss 8<sup>th</sup> July will start off at 6pm with Q&A session: A History of The Purcell School, led by Principal Paul Bambrough and featuring three of our longest serving members of staff sharing insights and stories about the school.*

*After some light refreshments please join us for Alison Cox's final Composition Concert, before her retirement at the end of this academic year. 38 Composition alumni and staff have each written a one or two minute piece based on 'Sumer is Icumen In', whose manuscript is the oldest known musical round. Each piece will be performed by students from The Purcell School.*

*For further details and to book tickets, please click here: <https://connect.purcell-school.org/events/view/sumer-is-icumen-in>*

*Tickets are free of charge but donations are welcome.*



### **April fool responses.....Glen received my easter egg for being first responder.**

I was driving up Shenley Hill at night before it suddenly dawned on me that the April fool has to be the one about testing members for their walking ability when putting their name down for an outing. Better late than never!! We were certainly fooled considering we're on the events committee and it never came up.

Walking tests? How about timed toilet breaks? **YES, HAPPY APRIL FOOLS TO YOU TOO!**

It's April 1st - checking walking speed!!!! I'm afraid I've only just read through your newsletter but didn't want to wait until next April before commenting:

Surely, testing our walking!

April fool's joke is the u3a members walking test of 3 miles per hour.

I think your speed test proposal is a great idea but limited. It may be more useful to conduct the test on cobbles as this is often a hazard. I really wanted to make a further suggestion, to offer anyone that fails, a speed awareness course to be undertaken

with a physiotherapist. Otherwise a ban would be harsh. Perhaps the test could be expanded to anyone who wants to get around the walking test by using a motorised two-wheel scooter.

Thanks for giving me a giggle this morning re the walking assessment. Great April fool. Am I right?

Slow walker Oi Vay very good april fool

Thanks for the newsletter. What an excellent decision to test everyone's walking ability. Perhaps you will have to test them for a sense of humour too 🤔 🤔 🤔

Wondering how many complaints you will get with people not realising the date.

Great newsletter as usual Adrienne....especially the April fool!

Thanks for keeping us on our toes! April fool spoof. Walking speed tests

Loving the April fool!!'

Not sure how many of our members can walk 3miles an hour - maybe 3 hours for a mile but great April fool!

Thank you to all who responded and if you didn't get it or it worried you IT WAS A JOKE!!!!

I'm a bit late but just had to thank you for the above piece in the Newsletter!! Had such a chuckle and of course realised straight away when you started with how slow people walk .....! It was really amusing so thank you for that! 😊 😊

Is this for real or is it an April Fool -

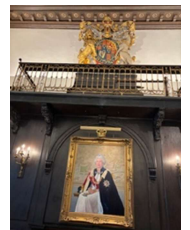
Good morning. No way am I taking a walking test!!

That sounds like a good idea to me, sign me up !

Where do I have to go for my speed assessment. You didn't say in the newsletter. Do I have to go every month. You didn't make it clear.



On 24th March, 24 members joined a group outing to visit **Apothecaries Hall**. The visit was particularly memorable for 2 members, who fondly remembered being presented with their certificates of qualification, albeit in optics rather than pharmacy. We travelled by Thameslink to City Thameslink, then a short walk took us to the entrance. The building may lack the grandeur of other Livery Companies but more than makes up for this in the beauty of its architecture.

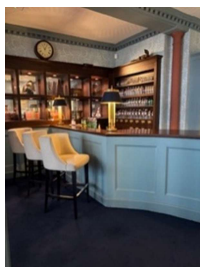


We were shown around by a very informative past Master who explained that

the site has belonged to the Apothecaries since 1623. The original building was destroyed in the Great Fire of London and was rebuilt between 1668-1671 making it one of the oldest surviving Livery halls in London.

It features the impressive Great Hall which is used for ceremonies, banquets and examinations. It includes portraits, wood panelling and historic furnishings. We were also shown the Court room and the historic Laboratory spaces where medicines were once prepared.

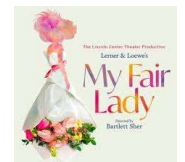
There is a quiet courtyard, which is rare in central London. It still hosts medical lectures, exams, ceremonial events and professional meetings. The feedback from the group was one of general enjoyment and satisfaction. **Peter Brent**



## Tour of Theatre Royal Drury Lane



We have just returned from a great day out visiting the oldest continuously used theatre in the world. Excellently organised and led by Sandra Clark it was truly a tour to be remembered. Most of the u3a tours are always a nice day out with great company as well as interesting places to visit. However, this particular tour was exceptional. The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane was originally built in 1663 and initially called King's Playhouse as it received a Royal Charter by King Charles 21\*. We met our guide,



Victoria Jeffreys on the steps into the theatre. Victoria, who is also an actress, took us through the theatre in a whistle stop tour of 90 minutes which showed the true beauty of this Grade 1 listed building, the oldest theatre site in London. Victoria was remarkable, her explanations were delivered in real acting phraseology with illustrations from famous actors of the past. She first explained the two sides of the theatre, the King's side and the Prince's side. This became the names after an almighty argument between King George 3<sup>rd</sup> and his son the Prince Regent. After this row the King and his son had to sit in separate halves of the auditorium. The seats in each half bear the crest of either the King or the Prince. Since

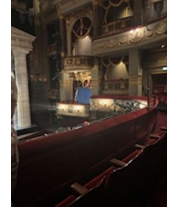


2019 the theatre has been under renovation, and the results are really amazing. Victoria, our guide, took us through the magnificent entrance halls which had amazing paintings, worthy of any art gallery, and also fantastic wall frescos of famous shows like My Fair Lady, Oklahoma, Carousel, Show Boat and many more. We also visited the bars and refreshment rooms which are open to the public on selected times that do not interfere with the productions. She also explained the history of the theatre from the early days of the orange-seller actress, Nell Gwynn who became in her own words "the protestant whore" of King Charles 2", one of his favourite mistresses. It was King Charles 2nd who inspired the theatre to be a show place for musical theatre. She continued through the time when David Garrick was the inspiration of Lond on theatre. Victoria also told us about



the famous ghosts of Drury Lane. Especially the ghost who makes his presence felt with a number of actors, who on forgetting their lines in a performance felt a mysterious tap on the shoulder which immediately brought the missing lines back into the actors' memory!

She also explained the terminology of theatrical phrases like "breaking a leg" which derived from the hydraulics that moved the stages which were supported on "legs". The tour continued through the wonderful auditorium now redesigned to give more leg room and the circles brought nearer to the stage. We then went under the stage, and Victoria explained the



history of the stage hydraulics from ancient water hydraulics to state-of-the-art electronic engineering which can make various sections of the huge stage, rise and lower as well as angle independently of each section.

Truly a visit to remember, thanks again to Sandra and a special thanks to our guide, Victoria. **Stephen Forman**

17 of us met up at the **Museum of Brands** in Ladbrooke Grove for a really interesting outing.

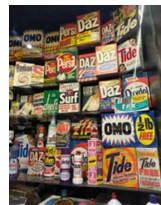
We started with an informative talk about the consumer revolution from Caroline who explained that the museum has 12,000 to 13,000 exhibits collected by one man, Robert Opie. He is now over 80 and started collecting when he was 16 when he noticed that the packaging of Snax and Munchies had changed. There are over half a million items in the collection.



The museum is compact and full of items, with packaging through the years, from washing powders to the most beautiful biscuit tins and so, so much more. How many times did I hear 'I had one of those', 'Mum used that', 'We played that game'. It really was a walk down memory lane with several our members commenting how much they enjoyed the day.

On a personal note, Peter & I were absolutely delighted and pretty overwhelmed to see a Mr Chatterbox radio which our company had made in the early 80s in one of the showcases with other novelty radios.

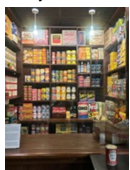
The staff were very kind and helpful, and we were told that they open the museum especially for those suffering from Alzheimer's and related problems to encourage them to remember and speak of their memories. **Joan A**



**Thank you to the Events Committee.....**What a super outing we had to the **Brands Museum in Ladbrooke Grove** - an absolute treat. A unique, Aladdin's cave of retro design and memories. Imagine walking through a corridor full from floor to ceiling with the packaging from treats and games that we knew as children and the household items that were in our parents' kitchen. Almost everyone brought a wave of nostalgia.



Every corner you turn in the Time Tunnel the displays include packaging, toys, magazines, and advertisements arranged by decade. Discover what shoppers have bought for the last 200 years and surround yourself in the classic designs, vintage adverts and retro stylings that fill the museum. The Museum of



Brands isn't just about logos or advertising—it's a social history museum disguised as a collection of packaging, tracing how everyday life in Britain has changed through the products people buy and use.

We had an incredibly full and concise talk on the history of the place by a very well-versed volunteer who was quite passionate about the place- a chronological walkthrough of British consumer life from **Victorian times to today**. The Museum began out of Robert Opie's lifelong interest in everyday



objects—especially packaging and advertising that most people throw away. He began collecting as a teenager in the 1960s, aiming to document how ordinary products reflect social change.

His collection first gained public attention in 1975 at the Victoria and Albert Museum. He later opened a permanent site in 1984 as the Museum of Advertising and Packaging. As the collection expanded, the museum evolved beyond marketing history into a broader record of British life, covering themes like wartime rationing, postwar consumerism, and modern branding.



After closing its earlier site in 2001, it reopened as a charity in 2002 and finally moved to Ladbrooke Grove in 2015. Today, its core exhibit—the Time Tunnel—presents over a century of social history through everyday products, showing how culture, technology, and shopping habits have changed over the last two hundred years. **Do go if you have not been. Adrienne**



**Another triumph for the Events Committee** – the Blue Check annual quiz (I am not saying this because I was on the winning table). It is always enjoyable, great camaraderie, doesn't matter who you sit with, discussion or disagreement over the answers, good food and great fun. **Adrienne**



*A big shout for Vivienne and her team-[ Just when we thought quizzes couldn't get better Last night topped them all. Great fun, great food, great company and we came second. Thank you all so much for your hard work. **Eleanor & Gerry.***

**Group leaders' tea – save the date – Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July**



**Friday morning 8.30 and the coach is outside Gails for the group of members going on our first holiday abroad. I went down with Cathy to see them off and there was an air of anticipation and they were all looking forward to the experience, Rouen, Honfleur and Monet's Garden in Giverny. Weather looked very encouraging and we wished them all a safe and good holiday and waved them off. Came home feeling quite sad that I wasn't going with and can't wait to hear about it. First picture from Rouen but hopefully more about it next time .....**

**TV CRITICS TERRI AND BRIAN .....**

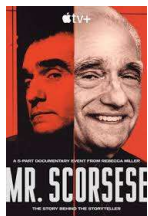


As we loved 1923 and Yellowstone we thought we'd take a look at the latest Taylor Sheridan series called **The Madison** on Paramount+ starring Michelle Pfeiffer and Kurt Russell. Michelle plays Stacy Clyburn and Kurt is Preston Clyburn, an affluent city-based couple, and the six-part series is split between New York and the Madison River Valley in Montana. After a plane crash in episode 1, Preston dies along with his brother, and so Stacy and her family travel to Montana to mourn their loss and re-evaluate their lives. Preston is still in each episode in the manner of flashbacks, and as in all of Sheridan's writing there is plenty of great interaction between all the family with a great script. This new series also shows beautiful views and scenes of the Montana area.

We watched **ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER**, the Oscar winning film on Sky starring Leonardo di Caprio as Jim (later known as Bob) Parker, a washed-up former revolutionary in a heavily armed activist cell that attacks migrant prisons on the Mexican border. Then sixteen years later he has become messed up with drugs and drink while trying to bring up his daughter, Willa, played by Chase Infiniti, who is smart and focused and instructed in martial arts by her sensei, played by Benicio del Toro. The story really begins when his enemy resurfaces, played brilliantly by Sean Penn. It's a frenetic but very well directed film with a lovely side story about a father and daughter's love, and we enjoyed it although it WAS rather over the top and quite violent in parts!

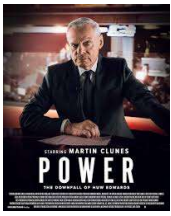


The five part documentary on Apple TV called **MR SCORSESE** is all about the life and career of the legendary filmmaker Martin Scorsese. It features rare archival footage and also interviews with collaborators including Robert de Nero, Steven Spielberg, Leonardo DiCaprio, Isabella Rossellini and Daniel Day-Lewis. It shows excerpts from his numerous films, many of which we'd never heard of and begins with his early life until the present time. He's a complex man who has obviously been a brilliant director, delving into each script and project with a fine-toothed comb, and putting his heart and soul into everything he has achieved. Very interesting.



**IMPERFECT WOMEN** is an eight-part series on Apple TV that shatters the lives of three women in a decades-long friendship when one of them is murdered. As the investigation unravels so does the truth about how even the closest of friendships may not be what they seem. The series stars Elisabeth Moss, Kerry Washington and Kate Mara as Mary, Eleanor and Nancy the three friends and reveals the secrets of their pasts, and there are many revelations and twists in the tale.





**POWER: THE DOWNFALL OF HUW EDWARDS** on Channel 5 looked like a difficult watch but we thought we'd have a look at the factual drama. It focused on the story about how Huw groomed a naive and vulnerable 17 year-old boy that they called "Ryan", who was persuaded to send him personal pictures of himself, meet in hotel rooms and have long phone conversations, in exchange for money. The boy descended into a life of drugs and drink, (although apparently he has since become clean and carried on with his life). It's worth seeing for Martin Clunes' brilliant visual and physical resemblance to Huw, and it was well acted by all and showed just one part of the disgraced newsreader and presenter's shameful fall from grace.



**SECRETS OF THE BEES** is on Nat Geo Wild or Disney and is in two parts. It's absolutely fascinating as explorer Bertie Gregory uncovers the hidden world of bees, revealing their vital role in pollinating the world's food and their astonishing intelligence. Special cameras document one hive over three years, showing a 20,000+ bee species' hidden world. The cinematography is incredible and we learnt so much about bees that we had no idea of before. Well worth seeing.



**THE OTHER BENNET SISTER**, a ten-part (30 mins. each) series on BBC1. is based on the book by Janice Hadlow which has been widely praised as a compelling, emotional and worthy Jane Austen-inspired novel. The first two episodes detail the events of Pride & Prejudice from the point of view of Mary Bennet, the overlooked, plainer and bookish sister from the large Bennet family. The rest of the story follows Mary as she travels to London and the Lake District on a journey of self-discovery and romance. Ella Bruccoleri plays Mary and her parents are played by Richard E. Grant and Ruth Jones. It is well acted by all throughout, and we enjoyed it as it's delightful and heartwarming with a satisfactory ending.

Then there's **YOUNG SHERLOCK** on Amazon Prime featuring Hero Fiennes Tiffin (his uncle is Ralph Fiennes) as 19 year-old Sherlock Holmes and also starring his other uncle, Joseph Fiennes, as his father Silas Holmes! It was developed by Peter Harness and Guy Ritchie, (who also directs a few of the episodes). It also stars Natascha McElhone as his mother. It is a real "caper" in the Guy Ritchie style, with terrific 1870's clothes and locations, and is a convoluted story with a fast pace. We thought it was pretty good.



Lastly there is **ROOFMAN**, a film we watched on Sky, which is a biographical drama starring Channing Tatum as Jeffrey Manchester, a real life thief known for cutting through roofs of McDonalds restaurants and robbing them. The movie follows Manchester's escape from prison and his subsequent undetected life living in a hidden space in a Toys R Us store. He adopts a new identity and gets involved with, and falls in love with, an employee and member of a local church, played by Kristin Dunst, beginning a relationship which is unlikely and risky. Being true we really enjoyed it and the real characters in the story are shown at the end which made it even more interesting.

Happy watching all. Terri & Brian

## DINGBATS

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09	10	11	12

## ARTS CORNER MAY 2026.

From Sandy

**RAMSES AND THE PHARAOH'S GOLD @ NEON @ Battersea Power Station**



See <https://ramsestheexhibition.co.uk/london/#intro>

180 priceless treasure s on loan from the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities on display until Summer 2026. Buy tickets online.

More influential than Tutankhamun, though far less mythologised, King Ramses II, widely known as Ramses the Great, ruled Egypt for nearly 67 years. 3,000 years later and he still remains one of history's most iconic pharaohs. Known for his extensive monument-building, military strategy and diplomacy, and a vast dynasty of more than 100 children and living to the age of 90, this exhibition invites you to witness the power of a reign and explore the

rise of a ruler who sought not only to command an empire, but to secure his immortality for millennia to come.

We found the exhibition too crowded, interesting but not outstanding maybe because we have seen similar artefacts in our time, not least at the British Museum and the Tutankhamun exhibition. In our opinion the curation and presentation were a

little lacklustre and the audio guide narrated in part by Dan Snow was not particularly easy to navigate. Just our opinion of course and that said we were there for about 2 hours.

The whole new area is well worth a visit especially as you can now travel direct arriving at the Power Station tube station via the Northern Line, changing at Kennington. Prepare for a few minutes' walk from the station. Loads of shops in the mall inside the Power Station although mainly luxe brands with a number of food outlets. We ate in the Food Court where you are seated and can then choose from several different food styles tasty food and good service.

We will return when the weather is warmer and we can explore the area further – the Chimney Lift (paid for) for the views, walk by the river, cinema and theatre too plus many restaurants and more outside the Power Station itself.



## SOMERSET HOUSE

### Sony World Photography Awards Exhibition 2026

The Sony World Photography Awards 2026 exhibition returns to Somerset House. **Hurry if interested as it closes on 4 May.**

The world-class photography exhibition is back. Offering an insight into the artists working in the medium today, the Sony World Photography Awards bring the best images from the past year to the West and East Wings of Somerset House.

See <https://www.somersetthouse.org.uk/whats-on/sony-world-photography-awards-exhibition-2026>

60+ Concessions/Disabled £14 Free carer Companion ticket Art Pass holders £9

### SOMERSET HOUSE Historical highlights tour – 1 hour Site-wide Costs £12

Have you ever wondered what Somerset House was built for and what has taken place within this Grade 1 listed building over the years?

Have you ever asked why Somerset House is located on this particular bend on the River Thames or its part in the naval history of the country?

Have you ever considered how its identity today as a home for cultural innovation resonates with a rich history of art, science and pioneering figures who have shaped our society?

See <https://www.somersetthouse.org.uk/whats-on/historical-highlights-tour> This sounds like fun and we will definitely do it at some point. A walk down The Strand from Charing Cross Station direct via Edgware Station.

### **The Radlett & District u3a May 2026 meeting will be held at the Bushey Metropolitan Sports Venue on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May at 10am when our speaker will be Paul Barwick talking about the Libyan Embassy Siege and the murder of PC Yvonne Fletcher.**

Paul is a local speaker from Oxhey Village. He spent a career in the police Service in London in many different roles including uniform and plain clothes. Paul was focused on organised criminal networks and crimes of violence before acquiring a national role in Counter Terrorism and Security. He retired in 2019 to set up a company offering real life espionage tours in Central London, focused on the infamous incidents and characters that make London a capital of world espionage.

It would be appreciated if you would ensure that your mobile is switched off, or on quiet mode, during the event as mobile phones ringing is very distracting for the presenters and very disrespectful to them !!.

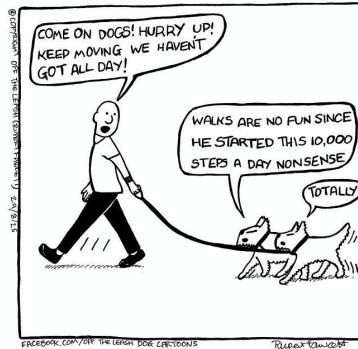
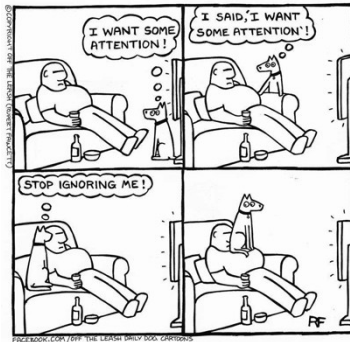
If you live in Hertfordshire you now need an epass to go to a recycling centre - link is

<https://www.epassrecyclingcentres.hertfordshire.gov.uk/>

Dingbat answers

1. Frank Sinatra
2. Too Big To Ignore
3. Dominoes
4. The Musketeers
5. Business Before Pleasure
6. A Little On The Large Side
7. Running Away From Home
8. 99.9
9. Making A Monkey Out Of Him
10. Lightweight
11. A Grave Error
12. Take From The Rich & Give To The Poor

Cartoons for doggie lovers.....



Beautiful bluebells this year – enjoy the sights of Spring

