

u3a Knole

learn laugh live



Robins Wood, Cowden taken by Peter Ive

Chairman's message

As I write this, it is May 8th and we are celebrating the 100th birthday of Sir David Attenborough. Like the Queen was, he has probably been a constant throughout all our lives. Watching the special show to celebrate his birthday last night, I was struck by not only the fact that he doesn't look 100 years old but how engaged he was with everything that was going on. After a lifetime of experience, he has never lost the ability to be fascinated and perhaps that tells us something important about positive ageing.

We all know about the importance of exercise, healthy eating and keeping active — and these things certainly matter. But there is growing evidence that curiosity, purpose and social connection also play a powerful role in helping us age well. People who continue learning, exploring ideas and engaging with the world around them often retain a stronger sense of wellbeing and resilience.

Sir David Attenborough embodies this beautifully. His career has not simply been about knowledge; it has been driven by enthusiasm and passion. He has remained open to new discoveries, new technologies and new ways of understanding the natural world. It is astonishing to think that in the last decade he has made and narrated 20 documentaries!

Ageing positively does not mean pretending we are young. It means continuing to engage fully with life at whatever age we are. It means keeping an interest in the world and sharing that enthusiasm with one another.

Perhaps that is one of the great lessons from Sir David Attenborough's remarkable life: never lose your sense of wonder.

At u3a, we celebrate exactly that.

Debbie Magness

Chairman

London Studies 2

The Friends of the City Churches look after some 54 churches in the City vicinity. They are all historic with most being examples of rebuilding post the Great Fire of London 1666. The architect Christopher Wren features prominently. LS2's March outing was a visit to five of them. The weather was kind and 12 of us visited St Mary Woolnoth (where we had coffee), St Mary Abchurch, St Stephen Walbrook (where an organ practice was going on), St Mary Aldermary ,then a trip up in the lift at 1 New Change for a view of St Paul's and finally St Mary le Bow (home of the Great Bell of Bow – part of the oranges and lemons nursery rhyme and which distinguishes an area in which "Cockneys" are said to be born) where the group enjoyed its customary lunch in the appropriate surroundings of the vaulted crypt.



Photos showing the 12 members who joined the day, as well as a rather symbolic representation of the City churches shown as playing cards.

David Gould

London Walks 1

As part of our half day London walk associated with the English Legal system (led by Leslie and Gillian) we took a photo outside The Old Curiosity Shop. Now fully restored, but currently closed, this was constructed in 1567 and is one of London's oldest shops. Built from salvaged ship wood, it survived The Great Fire of London in 1666 and The Blitz! Charles Dickens' novel 'Old Curiosity Shop' is said to be inspired by it. Janet Rapicano





London Walks 2

It was 2017 that this group last walked in the area of St James's. I was certain that I would remember everything I saw, but of course it was not the case. The 2026 walk was led by Rosy & Patsy. This well-heeled West End district is incredibly unspoilt, with so much history: James J Fox cigar merchant 1787; Paxton & Whitfield est 1742, the oldest cheese shop in Britain; Lobb, shoemaker 1886; Truefitt & Hill The world's oldest barbers 1805.



Here the manager delighted in showing us the cabinets that came from the Great Exhibition, today's shop stocks the Apsley range of grooming products.; The Oldest Hat shop in the world, 1676, is Lock & Co.; Berry Bros. & Rudd, 1698, again the oldest in the world wine merchant. Inside sits the shop's famous weighing machine, where the great and good would come to have their mass measured. The ledgers record everyone from Byron and George III to



the Prince Regent, the Aga Khan and William Pitt. Beside the shop runs an alleyway leading to Pickering Place, London's smallest public square and alleged site of the last duel. A really interesting walk with the staff of many of the shops ready to tell us all about the history of the premises.

Linda Dare



Gardening Group

The Gardening Group went to Great Comp, St Mary's Platt and here we are walking around the beautiful gardens. Most of us went home with plants we bought too!





The Garden Group had a wonderful, colour filled day at Pashley Manor's tulip festival. We are visiting Nymans on Friday 15 May....you are welcome to join our lovely group. We meet every third Friday in the month if you want to join us. Contact: Julie Stevens email: garden@knoleu3a.org.uk



Half Day Walking Group 4 - Vacancies

In April we had an excellent walk starting in Plaxtol and going via Basted. It was very attractive with varied scenery and the weather was beautiful. Some of the group were faster up the last hill than



others and were rewarded with a well deserved rest in the sun at the top. Lunch at the Papermakers Arms was very good.

We now have vacancies for a few more. We walk on the second Thursday of each month at 10am. contact Brian Kyte for more details if interested: halfwalk4@knoleu3a.org.uk

Pat Lowe and Carol Lin

Recommendation for a local pub The Camden Arms in Pembury serves good food and reasonably priced, also it is an independent pub so not part of a chain so a varied menu.

I'd love to run a caption competition for the pic on the right! LD

Current Affairs - Vacancies

We could use another couple of members. No need to prepare anything. Just join in the debate on Current Matters. Mondays ,monthly, at 1.30 at Christ Church Hall

David Small currentaffairs@knoleu3a.org.uk

Avril Steer arranged a day trip

I arranged a day trip to Broadstairs for various group members in response to the email sent to all via Beacon by Jean Zariffis, 15 people enjoyed their day out via mini-bus. We were fortunate the weather was brilliant. We all strolled along the Promenade. Some stopped for shopping, coffee or ice cream. Then our Mini-Bus collected us to take us to The Yarrow. Our 3 course meal was delicious, no-one complained!



Morellis Italian Gelato Ice Cream shop has been there for over 40yrs plus



Lunch Group 1 - Join our lunch club!

We have been established for over a decade. We meet on the last Thursday of the month and visit local hostelrys for good food and even better conversation. Each month a member chooses the venue and books the table at a pub with plentiful free parking. Everyone pays separately for their meals.

We would welcome new members so, if you are interested, please contact Val Parker on lunch1@knoleu3a.org.uk.

Historic Buildings 1

We visited Apsley House, known as No 1 London. The original house was built by Robert Adam and was bought by the first Duke of Wellington in 1819 after his victory at Waterloo.



He had the house extensively remodelled. It now contains a vast art collection and memorabilia of the Duke, including his sword. (The red one in the photo) There are also items given to the Duke including a Sevres dining set with each item hand painted with a scene from the Duke's life.

Jacque Martin



MOT 3

On Wednesday 4th March we saw the film about Elvis Presley with a lot of previously unseen footage of his younger years and it was very entertaining.

Friday 6th we visited The View which has become a regular outing due to the excellent food and cost and it is a very pleasant venue. The students are pleasant and helpful.

Later that same day we went to a Rock and Roll evening at the Pamoja Hall Sevenoaks School which was raising funds for charity and organised and performed by the pupils.

Tuesday 10th we went to The Oast to see Humble Boy and on 13th we saw the immersive experience of The Last Days of Pompeii at the Excel centre and it was a lovely day out. We had lunch at a nearby restaurant and it was all very good. There was lots of information about Pompeii as well as the experience of the volcano exploding.

Finally on Tuesday 24 March we had a Pie and Pint evening at The Kentish Rifleman (you can have wine or a soft drink instead). This is always on a Tuesday and is very popular so must be booked in advance £15.

On the 3rd of April we went to see the LAMPS production of The Great British Bake off at the E M Forster theatre Tonbridge School and it was excellent. I have never been to one of their performances before but now I know why they are fully booked and will definitely go again. On April 15th we went to The Sevenoaks Society Talk about Otford Palace.

On Saturday 18th we saw We Will Rock You, The Queen musical at The Bob Hope Theatre Eltham performed by The Bromley Players, another really good entertaining show by them.

21st April to Never Say Never and The Oast to see The Good Life.

On 24th April a trip to Shepherds Bush to see the Machu Picchu immersive experience and that was an adventure.

We have more things coming up but that is enough from me for the moment.
Marian O'Boyle

Strollers

On Easter Monday we took advantage of the lovely spring weather and walked around the lake at the Sevenoaks Nature Reserve. It was busy but we all agreed that Kent Wildlife Trust have done a superb job on the long awaited improvements. After our walk we went to the Rose and Crown, Dunton Green for lunch. A very nice way to spend the bank holiday.

Lesley Mitchinson. strollers@knoleu3a.org.uk

MOT2

After a flurry of visits at the start of the year February and March were very quiet although we still held our monthly meetings.

At the beginning of April we joined a mixed group of Knole members and travelled to Broadstairs by minibus. We had time for a short walk around and a coffee before having lunch at the Yarrow Hotel. The weather was beautiful and our meals were delicious.

The following week four of us went to the Ideal Home Show at Olympia, it was the first visit in probably over 30/35 years for us all. A second group were fortunate to find ourselves at the RAF Club, Piccadilly, for afternoon tea. I think we felt rather grand. Little Pinkies Up!

Lesley Mitchinson. mot2@knoleu3a.org.uk



Why Men's Meet-Ups Matter

Regular meet-ups give men something they often miss: connection, conversation, and a chance to share experiences without pressure. As we get older, friendship circles shrink and it becomes easier to feel isolated — even when life is busy.

Talking with other men has real benefits: lower stress, better mood, earlier help-seeking, and a stronger sense of belonging. Whether it's over coffee, a walk, photography, somewhere interesting or beautiful, the simple act of showing up makes a difference.

This month we visited the amazingly peaceful Friary in Aylesford, followed by a few beers in the Malling Jug in West Malling, where we tasted various beers and lagers all at a cost of £3.50 per pint. They even supplied take away beers in cartons for the drivers.



Small conversations can boost confidence, wellbeing, and community.

Join in — it's good for you.

Don't stay at home feeling lonely. Contact me: Bryan Rawlins at groups@knoleu3a.org.uk.



Pickleball

I am pleased to let you know that we now have 2 established pickleball groups, one on Tuesday morning and one in the afternoon on Thursday. My sincere thanks go to Neil Pritchard for his help in setting these groups up

and for being their contact for the future. Being new groups there is still room for more members to join.

Pickleball is becoming the fastest growing ball sport in the UK and I can see why it is so attractive to older players. It's FUN.

Contact: Bryan Rawlins at groups@knoleu3a.org.uk

London Studies 1



On a sunny day in late April, London Studies One visited the Seven Dials district, near Covent Garden, London.

We explored the history and origins of the unusual monument and road design of the surrounding area. We visited the Donmar Warehouse Theatre, a small not-for-profit theatre in a converted warehouse where the manager gave us an impromptu talk about the opening night and press event for the play 'Mass'. From here we stopped to look at the 130ft concrete

frieze above the old Odeon in Shaftesbury Avenue. The frieze depicts 'Drama through the Ages'. We had great fun finding different theatrical presentations throughout history - including Punch and Judy! We then visited Neal's Yard, now a famous and picturesque courtyard – home of Neal's Yard Remedies. The group photo was taken here.



The Seven Dials Food Hall was opened in 2019 and is a place not to be missed. It is housed in the former banana and cucumber warehouse. Here you can see the world's first rotating cheese belt which is like a sushi conveyor belt.

The tour ended in the courtyard of the Guinness Open Gate Brewery which was opened in December 2025 by King Charles. In the courtyard is a 'pint and pie' mobile van – a possible lunch stop?

At the end members could decide whether to lunch in the food hall, the Brewery or a local café – almost too much choice!

Lesley Allum-jolly

Birdwatching Group

Our April trip was to Rye Harbour. 11 of us made it to this lovely reserve run by the East Sussex Wildlife Trust. The day was cool but no wind or rain and we saw a remarkable 25 different species from 3 separate hides and a circular walk around the lake. These included Redshank, Linnet, Ringed Plover, Egyptian Goose, Mallard, Avocet, Golden Plover, Greylag Goose, Dunlin, Oystercatcher, Little Egret, Cormorant, Skylark, Tufted Duck, Meadow Pipit, Coot, Herring Gull and Lesser Black Backed Gull, Turnstone, Great Crested Grebe, and a whole flock of Sandwich Terns. A great day was had by all! We especially enjoyed the coffee and pastries in the well run Visitors Centre before we set off where we had mistakenly reported on arrival having seen a Redpoll, only to have to go back after a long debate over coffee and correct it to a Linnet, much to the amusement of the staff who keep the daily records of all unusual sightings!



Our trip in May was to Northward Hill, one of the smaller RSPB reserves near Rochester. It was a pleasant sunny day and the views across the river and the marshes were lovely and clear. We usually make this trip in May as it is a great time of year to hear Cuckoos and Nightingales. Both of which obliged us with their song, although they are impossible to see! In fact a great deal of the visit was listening rather than watching Birds! 9 of us made the trip this time and collectively accumulated a list of 31 Bird Species either seen or heard.

They were as follows:- House Martin, Chiffchaff, Song Thrush, Blackcap, Blackbird, Jackdaw, Wren, Robin, Greenfinch, Whitethroat, Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Little Egret, Crow, Shelduck, Lapwing, Nightingale, Cuckoo, Heron, Marsh Harrier, Mallard, Whinchat, Dunnock, Sedge Warbler, Oystercatcher, Egyptian Goose, Green Woodpecker, Cetti's Warbler, Jay and Chaffinch. Oh and a Pheasant on the lane back to the road! So 32 species then!



One of the highlights was seeing a pair of Marsh Harriers engaging in aerial combat. We couldn't decide whether it was over some prey or defending a nest, but it was a serious scrap!

We also saw some fabulous butterflies and some bushes badly affected by Spindle tree moth caterpillars!

It was disappointing to see the pond by the only hide has

almost completely dried up - presumably as a result of the recent drought, although it has been getting shallower over the last few years. Nevertheless we all had a lovely day. Ann Windiate



Change of contact for Table Tennis 1

Margaret Thorpe has moved away, the person taking over is Neil Pritchard this has been updated on the website but not the handbook as yet. Please use the same contact as tabletennis@knoleu3a.org.uk

Meetings: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 10.00am – 12.00

Knole u3a Website

Do you use it? Can you easily find what you are looking for?

Please send pictures for the home page, obtaining permission from the people in the picture before sending.

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General Meetings

Bat and Ball Community Centre, Crampton's Road, Sevenoaks TN14 5DN
between 2.00 and 4.00pm.

List of Speakers for 2026.

May 18th: James Baird - Medical Detection Dogs. James will be bringing his dog.
As we have permission for him to do this from hall management.

“Medical Detection Dogs was founded by Dr Claire Guest OBE in 2008. Claire had always believed in the extraordinary ability of dogs to use their noses to detect diseases and the charity trains dogs to detect cancers, neurological diseases such as Parkinson's and bacterial and viral infections with accuracy levels significantly higher than existing medical tests.

The charity also trains dogs to serve as alert assistance dogs for people who have conditions which can cause sudden and unexpected episodes, such as fits, comas or collapse. The dogs are able to warn the person in time to allow them to take medication or find a safe place to sit or lie as appropriate.”

June 22: AGM

July 27th: u3a member - The Cutty Sark Past and Present

August: No meeting

September 24: Open Meeting.

October 26 Health & Wellbeing and details of the Health and Wellbeing roadshow.

Sally Salter, a Health & Wellbeing Coach will be talking to Knole U3A in October 2026 on health, wellbeing and ageing well.

Health & Wellbeing event on **Thursday 14th May 10am-4pm The Stag Theatre Sevenoaks.**
A FREE event organised by Sevenoaks Primary Care Trust.

Here is a list of the full list of confirmed speakers -

<https://sevenoakspcn.gpweb.org.uk/news/events/health-wellbeing-roadshow-14th-may-2026>

.Any Facebook users, can follow their events or helpful community information via -
<https://www.facebook.com/7oakspcn>

If you can't make it on 14 or 18 May try Edenbridge Aging Well Clinic

For more information: www.kentcht.nhs.uk/edenbridge-aging-well

The Next Newsletter

Copy Date: 10 July 2026 newsletter@knoleu3a.org.uk

Copy for the Newsletter need not just be from the group contacts, anyone is welcome to contribute, copy date for the next issue is always mentioned at the end of each issue.

It's the 10th of the alternate months e.g. 10 September, 10 November etc.