

Chairman's Message

YULETIDE GREETINGS TO EVERYONE

Winter has arrived with a vengeance, high winds and rain causing extensive flooding in our country lanes causing hazardous driving for many of us.

As a result, much to my great disappointment, I was forced to cancel on the morning our trip to the Dickensian celebrations at Rochester due to the festival being cancelled because of the bad weather conditions. I am extremely sorry but it was out of my hands.

Moving onto a much happier note the Christmas Party, which is on the 18th December, is progressing nicely. We will be entertained by the Songsters Choir to put us in the party spirit. *Please make sure you bring cash as we will be having a raffle.*

We still have a few tickets so if you would like to come please email me in the next few days on maureenyoung@live.co.uk. I hope you all enjoyed last month's meeting. I was pleased to see that it was very well attended. Martyn Harrison entertained us with his wonderful singing and anecdotes of his life as an opera singer. He was excellent.

At next month's meeting, our first in the New Year, Tony Harris will be returning on Wednesday 29th January to talk about the Titanic disaster, a very sad event. From past experience Tony Harris is a very interesting and informative speaker, so please come along and support our monthly social meetings.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Maureen

BRIAN SWIFT

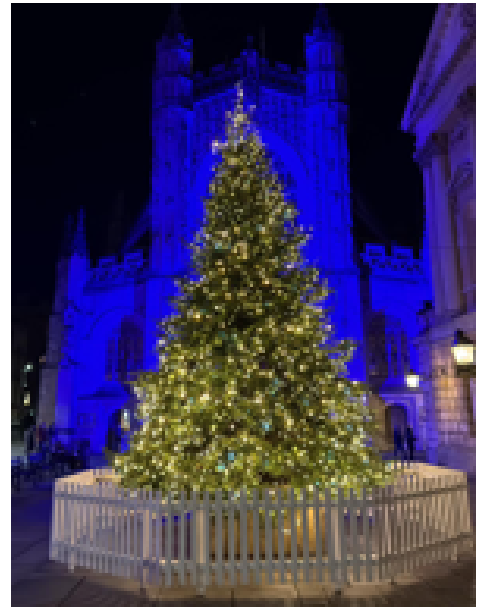
I had the privilege of attending our friend Brian Swift's funeral, along with his family, friends and many U3A members on the 26th of November.

Thankfully the sun shone and to say it was a full house is an understatement. A true tribute to a great life, well lived.

It is the nature of U3A that we meet in our third age, when we appear to be 'slowing down.' However, we all have an interesting past.

Who knew that Brian received a bravery award from Kent Police, making a citizen's arrest after spotting a burglar up to no good one night in Sundridge! He was always a good citizen with a strong commitment to his community.

Brian literally travelled the world. After moving on from his successful career at Wolfe Garage in Westerham he became a tour guide, leading groups to some of the most interesting and sometimes most challenging places on every continent.



We heard about his experience in New Zealand at the time of the Christchurch earthquake. His calm and assured guidance enabled all of his group to return safely to the UK, minus their possessions and passports!

Always a Kent man and reaching 'retirement' age, he threw himself into founding Edenbridge U3A.

He took on various roles; Group Co-ordinator, new member Co-ordinator and used his past experience to become Business Secretary. Amongst the committee commitments he enjoyed a full gamut of groups and many of you may have benefitted from his Bridge skills and wine knowledge!

Brian embraced the philosophy of the U3A. Always eager to share his knowledge whilst learning from others.

He was the perfect example of a U3A member, making the very most of his life in his later years and will be sorely missed by many.

Our love goes to Lynn and all the family at such a sad time.

Best wishes

Fiona Dashwood.

U3A LONDON STUDIES GROUP 1

FOUNDLING MUSEUM VISIT

It was a beautiful sunny day as we set off for our monthly visit to London. On this occasion we were going to visit the Foundling Museum, but not before having our coffees just off Brunswick Square.

We had a guide booked for 11.30 and our tour was to last an hour. There were 17 in our group (3 who couldn't make it in the end). On entering the venue one couldn't help feeling a warmth, which drew you in to what became eager anticipation of what was to come. We were not disappointed. Our Tour Guide was excellent and managed to pack so much into our visit as well as highlight areas we might like to revisit after our tour or on another occasion, as there was so much to see and absorb. Having said that, it is not an enormous place by any means.

We covered how the need for a Foundling Hospital was realized by its Founder Thomas Coram (1668-1751) and the difficulties he sustained in gaining recognition and support for the appalling conditions children faced in London. With the help of the artist William Hogarth and the composer George Frideric Handel, Coram's vision became a reality. The Foundling Hospital was transformed over time into the UK's first public art gallery and one of London's most fashionable venues.

One of the more poignant moments for me was seeing and hearing about the 'hazelnut'.

Having enjoyed our visit to the Foundling Museum we were ready for lunch and all headed off to The Marquis of Cornwallis Pub (another story for another time).

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Prior to going on this visit the option was available to visit either in person or via the internet our local Edenbridge Museum to find out about the Foundling Hospital as it was known. John Warde of Squerries in Westerham was an Inspector for the Foundling Hospital (the word hospital did not mean as in the medical/illness sense but in that of hospitality, a safe haven for children/babies to stay and be cared for.

John Warde was instrumental in obtaining local women from Edenbridge and nearby areas to come forward to work as wet-nurses to foundling babies.

Isobel Lanyon



Christmas visit to Covent Garden and the Royal Opera House

Our Group enjoyed a marvellous visit to this iconic London building occupying over four acres in Covent Garden. Our expert guide covered the history and fascinating, complex interface of how it all works while we watched the professional young male dancers, all supreme athletes, doing their morning precision workouts. Dancers need to learn the choreography and can be rehearsing up to three ballets at one time. We saw the astonishing system of backstage scenery movements and two 40-ton sound screens designed to bounce back the sound of opera productions into the auditorium (no microphones needed). The Rolls Royce designed wagon system can change the entire stage floor in 40 seconds or an entire scenery and set in 20 minutes.

Our group was unusually privileged to get up close to the costumes for current opera and ballet productions including the exquisite pieces for Cinderella. The visit concluded with a short rehearsal of a winter snow scene from La

Boheme before we emerged into the Covent Garden Piazza Christmas festivities and seasonal treats.

The photo shows us on 'The Bridge of Aspiration' linking the Royal Ballet School to the main Royal Opera House.

Pam Gascoyne

FROM THE EDITOR

Sian Hiller, Chief Officer of Edenbridge & Westerham Citizens Advice has asked me to forward a poster explaining the new Household Support Fund scheme from KCC (see next page).

Thank you for all your contributions, if you would like anything to be included in next month's newsletter please email newsletter@edenbridgeu3a.co.uk

Sandra Gentry



Are you a pensioner ‘just missing out’ on the Winter Fuel Allowance because you aren’t entitled to Pension Credit ?

KCC have a new Household Support Fund targeting pensioners who are **not** entitled to Pension Credit.

Are you aged 66 or over and have a total annual household income of less than £40,000 and savings of less than £1,000

You could be entitled to a voucher worth £200 to help with energy and/or food costs.

Go to the KCC website to apply yourself:

www.kent.gov.uk/householdsupportfund

Or contact your local Citizens Advice to make an appointment to check your eligibility and apply on your behalf.

Don't forget that you can contact your local Citizens Advice in many different ways:

Ring our free Adviceline on 0808 278 7962 (option 4)
Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 4pm

Call into one of our drop in sessions at the Eden Centre
Monday to Thursday 10am to 3pm

Email us anytime at enquiries@edenbridgecab.cabnet.org.uk