



Autumn and Winter Paintings

Brenda Colman, Lin Scofield and Maggie Macbeth Art for All

Newsletter Autumn 2024

Website: www.u3asites.org.uk/portsmouth

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Officers and Committee 2024

Chair	Mandy Richards	07496 009401
Secretary	Fiona Rosen	02392 824 414
Treasurer	Olivia Quinn	07506 145293
Beacon Co-ordinator and Website Manager	Andrew Barrow	07849 678 357
Beacon Assistant	vacancy	
Membership Secretary	Elaine Lawson	07976 930 880
Newsletter Editor	Susan Johnson	02392 669 938
Publicity & Information	vacancy	
Speaker Secretary	Carol-Anne Turner	07767 474792
Social Secretary	vacancy	
Group Co-ordinator	Rosemary Sirett	07540597804



Chair's Letter Autumn 2024

Autumn landscapes with trees and gardens do look particularly beautiful in their colours in October. I'm now writing this in November whilst the leaves are falling. It takes a bit of adjustment to the darker teatimes, especially after each afternoon interest group. Portsmouth u3a continues to prosper and thrive.

We now have a total of twenty-four different interest groups with a twenty fifth group starting in January 2025. Hilary Poley has volunteered to lead a group "Brush up your French" for extra practice in conversation and speaking French. It is hoped this will take some of the pressure off the "French Experience" group run by Susan Johnson and over-subscribed at the moment. Hilary's group will run fortnightly on a Monday afternoon from 2.00pm till 4.00pm. A warm welcome to Christine Courtney-Wells who became a new group leader this Autumn of one of our longest running groups "World of Books" following the retirement of Audrey Thorpe. This is a weekly group on a Monday afternoon. At the recent well-attended New Members Meeting hosted by Elaine Lawson, our Membership Secretary, a member asked when u3as were first started nationally and when did Portsmouth u3a begin. It was 1983 for the national date and 1985 for the Portsmouth u3a. This means that Portsmouth u3a will be 40 years old next October! At the AGM later in November, a number of committee members will be stepping down after their customary three years in role. Rosemary Sirett has been a great Vice-Chair supporting a grateful Chair and bringing loads of excellent ideas and wise thoughts to each committee meeting. She also leaves her responsibilities for the Programme Card and the Website. We are grateful for all her hard work over the past six years. Jean Morgan is also retiring after six years on the committee, first as Treasurer then Beacon administrator. She has steered us through situations with a steady reassuring hand. Andy Barrow now takes over as Beacon Administrator and Website Manager. Jean Barrow leaves us as Publicity and Information Officer. She has designed a good supply of posters for the notice board and has been a willing and keen helper for earlier social events. Thank you, Jean M and Jean B. Pat Janiek stepped down as Minute Secretary this term. It was good to have had her helpful notes and suggestions. Fi Rosen now takes over Pat's role in addition to the formal part of being the Secretary officer. I am also retiring as Chair after the AGM. It has been a real pleasure to represent you

all. I can recommend the role to my successor. It can be very satisfying and fulfilling. I think the u3a is a brilliant organisation. I'm looking forward to the Christmas Lunch at the Royal Maritime Hotel and Club on Tuesday 10th December and the Mince-Pie Social on Monday 16th December at 2.00 pm in the Hub Café both ably organised by Mandy Richards. I hope you all have a very Happy Christmas, a good New Year and continue to learn and laugh into 2025 and onwards.

Barbara Spiegelhalter

Retiring committee members

On behalf of the committee, we would like to thank Pat Janiec, Rosemary Sirett, Jean Barrow, Jean Morgan and Barbara Spiegelhalter for their hard work and dedication to our members. Without their efforts the U3A would not run as smoothly and efficiently as it does. Thank you

Welcome to new members.

New: Fiona Barry, Linda Bewick, Marie Mallon, Andrew Wiltshire. Dennis Hiley & Diane Hiley, Pauline Smith, Jane Haywood, Hayley Bell, Edward Collins, Anne-Marie Blatchford, Mr N Whyley, Sally Delaney and Marianne Green

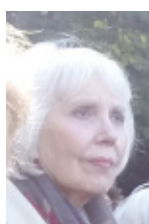
Sadly, we lost 5 of our members this year. Here is a reminder of them in happier times



Joan Curtis



Stuart Olesker



Sylvia Harvey



Peter Evans

no photo available

Sheila Hildreth

Architecture

London has always been an endless source of inspiration and discovery and so it's proved again this autumn, not only for our Architecture group but for the rather more prestigious Royal Institute of British Architects.

An intriguing building on our City of London walk in April started me off on a different journey of discovery. This is the only building in the City designed in the Art Nouveau style, a strange choice for an area where buildings that proclaim wealth, power and status dominate, whereas Art Nouveau uses curves colour and nature to define itself, less masculine, more feminine.



Thee building in question is Bolton House, a retail and restaurant outlet, part of a terrace but standing out with its façade of striking turquoise glazed tiles, elegant columns and windows in the Moorish style. The curvilinear foliage on the tiles makes it soft and seductive, in contrast to the more commanding statements of the bastions of money by which it's surrounded.



Art Nouveau was a surging, popular movement all over Europe for 20 or 30 years so it was an interesting quest to discover other buildings in this style in our capital. This design style was used almost exclusively for retail outlets, places of entertainment or private houses, its feminine aspect making it less suitable for a powerhouse bank or insurance company. The most obvious example in London of a retail outlet in this style are the magnificently decorated Food Halls at Harrods, designed by the very successful designer at the time, William Neatby – but who has heard of him today? This fate has

befallen so many prolific Victorian designers and architects, even though their buildings are famous London landmarks to this day.

Two resplendent pubs, the Fox and Anchor in Farringdon and the Black Friar, unsurprisingly at Blackfriars, feature this endlessly inventive style too – definitely worth the price of a pint to visit. The conventional neo-classical pillars and portico used for so many public buildings can be portentous and daunting, but Art Nouveau's sinuous lines and curves are more inviting and friendly. In the 1890's, the civic authorities in Whitechapel recognised this and invited prominent Art Nouveau architect, Charles Townsend to design 3 public buildings for them, the Bishopsgate Institute to encourage education and study, the Whitechapel Art Gallery and



the Horniman Museum in Forest Hill to expand people's awareness of art and the wonders of the world. The softer look of these buildings' facades entices the public inside without feeling overwhelmed. Charles Townsend was very involved in the socialist movements of the times and was the perfect choice for work of this kind.

But today who has heard of Townsend or Neatby? Or so many other successful architects of the 19th century who produced the landmarks of London that constitute its

landscape. Another of these forgotten names is Sir Horace Jones whose life's work for London as its chief Architect and Surveyor produced several buildings which speak to us of traditional London, one of which must have the most celebrated silhouette in Britain, after St Paul's, Tower Bridge. It's so much a part of our consciousness of London that we feel it's been there forever but it actually only opened in 1894, after Jones' death in 1887, without even an acknowledgement of Jones' concept and design on the commemorative plaque which only mentions the engineer, John Wolfe Barry.

Apart from Tower Bridge, Jones also designed London's 3 world famous food markets - Billingsgate for fish, elegantly Venetian in style, Smithfield for meat and Leadenhall for poultry, these both in extravagant, exuberant Art Nouveau style, revelling in a riot of Victorian cast ironwork.

Horace Jones is a largely forgotten name to most but not now to the Portsmouth architecture group, I hope.

Our third meeting coincided with the annual announcement of the most sought-after RIBA Stirling Prize for Architecture. Often contentious in its final 6 nominations, 4 out of the 6



were London-centric buildings and the choice was made almost impossible by selecting, at one end of the spectrum, the massive Elizabeth Line Crossrail Project and, at the other end, the conversion of several small farm buildings into 5 holiday rentals for the disabled and young people with mental health or addiction problems. The 4 other nominations were: the huge Kings Cross Masterplan, the refurbishment of the National Portrait Gallery, the conversion of the Brutalist Park Hill Estate in Sheffield and a modest terrace of domestic homes in Hackney.



All deserving of recognition in their different ways and all waving their green credentials, but it was impossible to compare like with like. In the past, huge structures by celebrated names have won but, more recently, smaller projects providing residential housing have found favour. Every year we have our own in-class vote and this year there was strong approval for the farm conversion and the terrace housing but also a lobby for the Elizabeth Line.

The evening following our meeting, the winner was announced with full razzamatazz, the Elizabeth Line! It's a truly astonishing achievement with staggering statistics and workforces and, I think, the worthy and inevitable winner.

For more information contact: Gilly Zeffertt 07845 849752



The Music Discovery Group

The Music Discovery Group - amazingly now in its fourth year - continues to thrive. Average attendance hovers around 12, which I think makes the group popular enough to continue. As ever the emphasis of the group is on 'discovery' rather than the more academic 'appreciation'.

The group is a broad church, not in the least academic and no genre of music is banned or even mildly frowned upon. Recent sessions, inspired by my five-week 'working holiday' in the United States, have included including music as diverse as music by Burl Ives and (the unrelated) Charles Ives.



There was something for everyone in that range! We are also having some slightly more 'academic' sessions in which we will explore the evolution of a musical genre, beginning with the rich seam of material that is 'the symphony'. From its Baroque origins to its present-day incarnation there have been, and will be, wonderful tuneful examples for

the group to enjoy. Mark Twain once said that reports of his death had been greatly exaggerated; the same can be said of the symphony, whose demise has been predicted for at least a century, yet still it lives on. And hopefully, rather like our summer gathering, we will have a Christmas gathering at some disreputable watering-hole in Southsea. And before I forget I would like to publicly record my deep debt to Gilly Zeffert for running sessions when I am away and for sharing her huge knowledge of music with me and the group. I now well on the way to enjoying jazz. Thank you, Gilly!

For more information contact: Andrew Barrow 07849 678 357



French Experience

We continue with a look at French culture and not just the language; different members of the class share their experiences in France. Ian Pike astounded us by counting a tale of how he saw Brigitte Bardot dancing on the table in a bar when he was a young sailor. It seems she liked a man in uniform! On a more serious note, we looked at the history of the “tricoteuses” Those formidable French women who knitted beside the guillotine. What we hadn’t realised was

that they were the same women who had marched on Versailles to complain to the King about soaring prices and shortages (sound familiar?) They were later banned from the revolutionary council so took up knitting by the guillotine as a type of protest. They knitted the Phrygian caps which were a symbol of liberty and used as mascots in the Paris Olympics.



We also looked at the Veuve Clicquot brand. Veuve in French means widow and this formidable woman was widowed when she was only 27 and took on the business, even though Napoleon had decreed that women couldn’t

own businesses. She brought in rosé champagne and designed the label and the cork. The label shows an anchor for strength and prosperity and there is a comet on the top of the cork as there was a comet in 1811 so she released a comet brand champagne. A woman who knew all about branding and marketing before it was a thing! The brand now sells 22 million bottles a year.

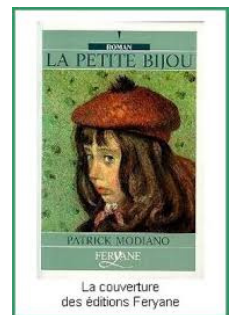
Jim and Maggie often provide videos of various parts of France which always brighten up the lesson. A new lower level conversation class will be starting up on January 25th. Watch this space.

For more information contact : Susan Johnson 02392 669938

FRENCH READING GROUP, Mondays

IT’S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS!

And another newsletter is upon us. What can I tell you? We are a small, friendly group, who enjoy reading French literature, including novels, poetry, articles from French papers and magazines – in fact, anything we can get our hands on that could be interesting. It has become almost impossible to buy French newspapers since Brexit. However, as you would expect, many of us go to France, and a tradition has evolved of bringing newspapers and magazines back to stimulate the group. We also read articles online.



This term we have been reading an intriguing novel by Patrick Modiano, “La Petite Bijou”. Apparently, he is famed for “autofiction”, a blend of autobiography and historical fiction; he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2014. This novel concerns the emotional journey of a young girl, and, with its reflection on the past, loyalties, memory and loss, perhaps it, too, was cathartic for him in some way. We should probably read more of his books, and each of us, I know, finds inspiration to read a wide variety of French texts in our spare time.



Our literary spectrum includes poetry from Prevert to Victor Hugo, Baudelaire and others. We like a challenge, so we have read Collette and Balzac. Short stories figure frequently, and their enjoyment is more concentrated, since they can be completed in one sitting! We also read French plays, such as L'Allouette by Jean Anouilh, about Joan of Arc.

We enjoy discussions about our reading, and will have an interesting, and often provocative exchange of views, occasionally heated, but always amicable! As you would expect, we are very democratic, and we all take part in decisions about our French experience. We take turns reading out loud, and often read a chunk at home between meetings to speed things up.

I was unable to attend the first meeting this term, and so was our deputy, Richard. Fortunately, Juliet (what a lovely French-sounding name!) was able to take the lead, and an interesting time was had by all. Juliet writes about her session, below. She started, by commenting on the music at the Paralympics, which she attended:



"I noticed lots of familiar tunes in use, especially one that everyone seemed to know, but me, 'Aux champs Elysees". It was a big hit in translation for Joe Dassin in 1969. I then used an article from Le Monde recounting the life story of Rosario Marcia-Gandloff, a competitor at the Barcelona Olympics in 1922. She held the French record over 10,000 metres for 20 years. She has since renewed her running skills, and, although now almost blind, she came agonizingly close to a medal – 4th place in the marathon. We finished with a short story, a frightening tale of how easily racism goes unchallenged in our midst. We all recognised how it can seem so much politer to ignore social unpleasantness, than to speak out."

As you can see, few subjects are off-limits. At the time of writing, we have yet to decide what we will be doing next term, but you can be sure it will all be enjoyable, and sometimes challenging.

For more information contact: Jane Helliwell 07778 484974

German Studies

This term we continued our tour of the regions (Länder) researching lesser known or unusual facts about each. One group member introduced each region with her "visual aids" – homemade flags of the coats of arms, and explaining the heraldic "message" of each one.



The final two sessions featured quite a lot about food. There is the annual Oktoberfest in Munich. The history of the Oktoberfest really boils down to a single wedding, one that has been celebrated for 200 years now, that of the marriage of Prince Ludwig to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen in 1810. The festivities lasted nearly a week, and the happy couple decided that the same type of festival should be continued annually. Today, Oktoberfest is "the largest festival in the world", with more than 6 million visitors expected every year.



Pretzels figure large in German culture and cuisine. The pretzel has a long history that can be traced back to early Christianity in Europe:

traditionally, they are made with just a few simple ingredients, but there are many variations in size, texture and flavour of this classic snack, from soft fluffy ones to crispy salty ones.



However, a great emblem of German food is the **Wurst** - the sausage. Wurst, like beer, defines Germany's cities and regions, each sausage with its own ingredients, and particular traditions. Nowadays there is also the universally popular Currywurst, developed almost by accident by a street-food stall holder in Berlin not long after the end of WW11: she mixed curry powder with tomato or Worcester sauce from British soldiers, and spread it on grilled pork sausage and it was an instant hit! The Deutsches Currywurst Museum estimates that 800 million currywursts are eaten every year in Germany, 70 million in Berlin alone!

Talk of the wurst reminds me of one of those staple jokes of teachers of English as a foreign language trying to impart the vagaries of our language: in German there is a verb, bekommen, which means to have or get, but looks and sounds very much our verb to become. The joke goes like this: a German tourist, first time in England, fairly limited English, is in a restaurant waiting for his food order, and finally calls out to a passing waiter "Waiter, waiter, when shall I become a German sausage?"

Our new topic is German cinema – history, films by German directors, films about Germany, film versions of German books : watch this space!

For more information contact: Hilary Nicklin 02392 297 867



Beginners Spanish

We are building up knowledge of verbs and basic conversation skills. One of our members was able to use this when on holiday in Spain conversing with Spanish people. We have welcomed new members recently who are joining in well with the Group. We spend

time attempting to converse in Spanish at every meeting and are building up confidence and making good progress. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people affected by the recent floods in Spain. With those who have lost loved ones and had homes and businesses destroyed.

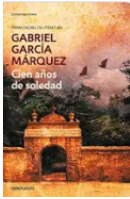


For more information contact: Howard Parsons 07784 760947

Spanish

We started the term with the traditional topic of "What did you do during the holidays" This gave everyone a chance to speak and use the past tenses. We now have a course book, but we also continue to follow the stories of two Mexican cousins with videos showing snippets of life in Mexico. We discovered that Shakespeare and Cervantes died on the





same day which is an odd coincidence. Staying with the theme of literature we listened to a strange story about the man who had his first edition of Cien Años de Soledad stolen. This book is the most famous in the Spanish speaking world. This man had originally found a copy in a second-hand bookshop and then got to know the author and had it signed. He then lent it to an exhibition where it was stolen. As it was a national treasure the police made a supreme effort and got it back. It is now in a museum.

One thing the Mexicans do know how to celebrate is their version of Halloween El Dia de Los Muertos (The Day of the Dead.) This day is a celebration of the lives of those who have died. Very colourful and with skulls made of sugar which may seem gruesome to us but are intended to show death can be sweet rather than bitter. As you can see, we have an eclectic mix of topics in the class so if you have some Spanish and would like to give as a go just contact me.

For more information contact: Susan Johnson 02392 669 938



Art Appreciation

In an attempt to keep summer going we started the term with the Valencian painter Sorolla. His depiction of the sun kissed beaches of Spain gave us a warm glow. He was very popular in the States and has huge murals there depicting life in Spain to remind the immigrants of their culture. There is

a Sorolla museum in Madrid which has been converted from his home there. Not so well known outside of Spain but well worth a visit.

As the National Gallery has a temporary exhibition of Van Gogh's works, we had a look at this ever-popular artist. However, in his lifetime he only sold one painting. Now they go for millions of pounds. This was the only painting sold in his lifetime. He had a varied career before he settled in art and was a supply teacher in Ramsgate for a while. There



are no end of self-portraits of Van Gogh and it is suggested that he did this as he couldn't afford to pay for models so painting himself from his reflection in the mirror. The famous image of the bandages ear actually shows the wrong ear as it was a mirror image.

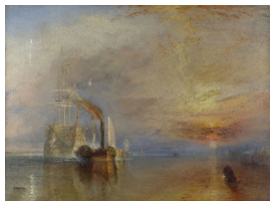


Our next trip was to Japan. The Impressionists and Van Gogh were influenced by Japan. It was just starting to open up after 200 years of isolation. The west first became aware of Japanese woodblock prints from the paper that was used to wrap the china

that was imported from Japan. Gradually this style of art became more and more popular. Japonisme was quite the trend! Even Gilbert and Sullivan got in on the act with the Mikado. Ever wonder where Monet got his inspiration from?



Elaine Lawson took on one of the sessions with Fred Elwell's work. An artist most of us had never heard of but he was a prolific and talented artist who could turn his hand to anything from portraits to still lifes. He won prizes from a young age and his father sent him to Antwerp to continue his studies. After this painting of a little boy in his sailor suit he vowed never to work with children again



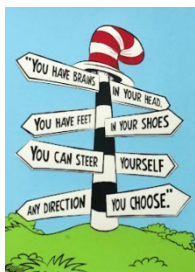
We moved on to that superstar Turner and the slightly bizarre Turner prize and the even more bizarre turnip prize. You might be lucky to have a copy of Turner's "Fighting Temeraire" in your pocket. Have you ever looked closely at a £20 note? The first banknote designed by a woman and featuring an artist. Have a closer look next time you have one in your possession.

To round off the term we looked at Norman Rockwell who illustrated life in the States in the early part of the 20th century. He worked for the Saturday Post for over 50 years. His paintings often contain humour and his Four Freedoms series helped raise millions for the Americans to fight the Second World War. He is also credited with shaping the way Americans saw Christmas and was on the front cover of the Saturday Post for years for their Christmas edition.



For more information contact: Susan Johnson 02392 669 938

Armchair travel



"Souvenirs and photos"...of such things are memories made! As leader of the Armchair Travel interest group, I am very proud that my hope for as many u3a members as possible to contribute to the topics chosen for discussion has been fulfilled.

This term, at our first meeting we cruised down rivers and around the Mediterranean, with input from several of the group, ably led by Mandy and Rosemary in my absence, whilst I travelled "for real" visiting family in New Jersey USA. At the next meeting we were very grateful to Quentin, who shared memories of working for IBM in New York and more rural New York State, and a train journey from Chicago to the Mexican border, and to Mandy who described a visit to Washington DC. Meanwhile Andy and I had many stories to tell of our 5 week stay with our son and his wife, our 21 month old granddaughter and new-born baby grandson in Jersey City. Strictly speaking, this was not a "holiday" but, as the New Jersey resident, sitting in front of us on the light railway, turned round and, philosophically, said to us one day, "a tourist is anyone who is currently not in their home town"!



Meeting monthly, and it being a short term, our third and final meeting will encourage us to recall travels at Christmas, featuring amongst other destinations Singapore, Oman, Denmark and, closer to home Dorset and Berkshire.



We hope more members will join us at Armchair Travel Meetings in 2025, to listen to other's stories or share some of their own!

And, to adapt a phrase heard on television on Saturday evenings!

KEEP TRAVELLING!

For more information contact: Jean Barrow 07746 233 496

History

During the Autumn Term the History Group looked at Portsmouth and Hampshire during the European Wars and Conflicts of the 18th and 19th centuries and during the Tudor Era.

Portsmouth's sheltered harbour in The Solent behind the Isle of Wight has long been a safe haven for The Navy and although the city's chief claim to fame is as the home of the Royal Navy it was also, for several centuries, a great army garrison town with more than half a dozen barracks, housing over 6,000 men.

In September we looked at the army barracks that had been in Portsmouth and what they are being used for today. Up until the Napoleonic wars it was commonplace to billet soldiers in hotels, inns and private houses which in a garrison town such as Portsmouth, meant the populace were constantly being asked to support the army. In 1792 the army started to think about building barracks. At first converting existing buildings but eventually new barracks were being built.



Barracks were built in Southsea - Clarence Barracks , Cambridge Barracks and Victoria Barracks.

The new Clarence Barracks built in 1880 housed six garrison battalions of the Royal Artillery. It was demolished in 1967 and all that remains today are the Officers' Quarters, which now house the City Museum and Art Gallery,

Cambridge barracks were created by converting some warehouses into military accommodation in 1825. They were later extended to create accommodation for regiments in transit to operations overseas, for example the Crimean War. The Officers' quarters were built, fronting on to the High Street

A former Lord Mayor of Portsmouth left instructions, in his Will, for a school to be built and The Portsmouth Grammar School moved into the newly acquired and restored Officers Quarters in 1967.

Victoria Barracks were built in 1880 on the edge of Southsea, consisting of a pair of long barrack ranges, linked by arcades at either end to form a narrow quadrangle. The first unit to arrive was the 1st Battalion, the South Lancashire Regiment. The barracks were demolished in 1967, and the site is now the housing development of Pembroke Gardens. The gate to the barracks still remains in place.

Colewort Barracks were originally the oldest barracks in the country, built near Landport Gate in the Gunwharf area in 1680. It was a garrison hospital for sick and wounded

soldiers. The Garrison Hospital was converted into a barracks in 1718. The complex came to be known as Colewort Barracks because of the type of wild cabbage that grew in the area. In 1820 the Barracks were described as “a noble structure”

After WW1 Colewort Barracks fell into disrepair and were demolished in the 1920 to make way for Portsmouth Power Station. The Power station was demolished in 1982. The area today is a carpark opposite the Isle Wight Car Ferry Terminal



Eastney Barracks were built to protect the Eastern approach to the harbour. It was the headquarters for the Royal Marines Artillery, who moved from Fort Cumberland in 1867. At the time the barracks were called ‘*the best and most complete barracks of the post-Crimean War period*’. The Barracks remained the Royal Marines Corps Headquarters until 1995, when it was sold and converted to private housing.

The Officers Mess remained as the Royal Marines Museum. The museum closed in 2016 and this stunning building along the seafront is set to be converted into a 5* hotel.

In the North of the city the Hilsea Barracks were built to protect the northern approach to Portsea Island.. Built on land owned by the Gatcombe Estate only Gatcombe House, which had been the Officers’ Quarters remains and now houses local business offices .

Milldam Barracks were built on part of the reclaimed ground between Old Portsmouth and Portsea and served the Royal Engineers.

The name Milldam refers to a mill pond which extended across a large area and was used to drive a tidal mill of medieval origin. This was where flour was produced for the Royal Navy. The barracks were decommissioned in 1969. the buildings today are used by Portsmouth University and Milldam House is now the Register Office



In 1888 Gunwharf was a military establishment split into two halves. The Army took over the northern section and the Navy the southern. It remained divided until the First World War when, in 1915, the two halves were re-united under the Admiralty. It continued as a naval base, during WWII specialising in mine warfare, until it was decommissioned in 1986.

Portsmouth City Council wanted the land to be used to develop the prosperity of the city. HMS Vernon and The Vulcan building, dating from 1804, now form part of Gunwharf Quays a mixed-use regeneration scheme comprising retail, restaurants, housing, and the landmark Spinnaker Tower.

In October we began to look at the Tudors and their role in the development of Portsmouth and Hampshire. This was in preparation for Dominic Fontana’s visit on 12th November when he will be talking about Henry VIII, The Mary Rose and The Battle of the

Solent as depicted in the Cowdray Print.

The Tudors were descendants of Edward III from his third son John of Guant, through his marriage to his mistress and third wife Katherine Swynford they were on the Lancastrian side during the Wars of the Roses.



Margaret Beaufort was a significant figure at this time. She was the great granddaughter of John of Guant and was at court during the Yorkist reign of Edward IV. She had sent her son Henry to France with his uncle for protection. When Edward IV died, Henry returned to defeat Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth and take the crown. Henry VII then married Edward's eldest daughter Elizabeth of York joining the Lancastrian Red Rose and the Yorkist White Rose, thereby ending The Wars of the Roses.

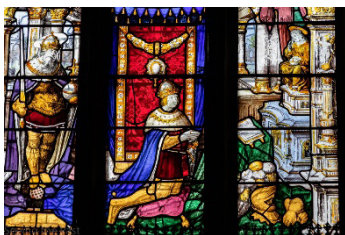


In Portsmouth the Navy grew under Henry VII, he built the first dry dock in the world, and he built The Square Tower to protect the harbour. Henry VIII continued his father's work by creating the Royal Navy. He also enhanced the Round Tower and put a chain across the harbour, it could be raised and lowered to protect the harbour from invasion. He also created the area now known as the Hot Walls

After the dissolution of the monasteries England was threatened with invasion and Henry VIII built a string of Castle defenses along the Solent including Hurst Castle, Calshot Castle and Southsea Castle. It was from Southsea Castle that Henry watched the Battle of the Solent and the sinking of the Mary Rose,



The Tudors also enjoyed showing themselves to their public, going on Royal Progresses every year with their court and visiting their subjects. Henry VII rode with his eldest son Arthur to meet Catherine of Aragon for the first time at Doggersfield House near Fleet. Arthur unfortunately died soon after his marriage and Catherine later married his brother Henry VIII.



When many of the Abbeys were demolished, during the reformation, fine houses were built by Henry's favoured courtiers. Henry visited houses at Titchfield, Netley, and Beaulieu all near to the hunting grounds of the New Forest.

There were Royal Progresses to The Vyne, near Alton, built by his Lord Chancellor and where you can see the beautiful stained glass windows depicting Henry, his wife Catherine of Aragon and Margaret, Henry's sister. He visited Basing House with Anne Boleyn and Elvetham House, where he met his third wife Jane Seymour for the first time.

Winchester Cathedral was the chosen venue for the marriage of Henry's daughter, Mary I, to Philip of Spain in 1554 It was a lavish affair. After the ceremony 140 people dined on thirty dishes served on gold and silver plates while musicians played. The chair where Mary sat during her wedding ceremony is still preserved in the cathedral.

The Tudor monarchs encouraged exploration and trade, and Southampton was one of the ports that benefited. Elizabeth 1 visited Southampton three times in 1560,1569 and



1591. Her last visit was on a grand scale when she brought the whole court with her. It is thought that some of them would have stayed in Tudor House.

Today Tudor House is a museum, and it is part of the Hampshire Tudor Trail which can be followed across Hampshire and includes The Mary Rose Museum.

At the end of October, the History Group were able to visit the Portsmouth History Centre in the Central Library. We were given a fascinating tour and talk by the City Archivist, and we were able to look at some of the many artifacts they look after including Photographs, Maps and Personal Papers.

There was a lot of interest in this visit and I'm hoping we will be able to arrange further dates. It has been a busy term so far and I look forward to welcoming you to future History meetings.

For more information contact: Rosemary Sirett 07540597804

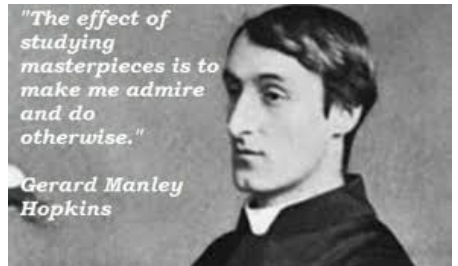
POETRY and POETRY & DRAMA Groups, Wednesday & Thursday

The Journey Continues:

A splendid coming we had of it,
Just the best choice of plays and poems
For our journey, and such a journey:
The ways deep, the content sharp –
The very best of times!

(Apologies to Eliot, and perhaps Dickens!)

So, how do I back up these claims? First of all, look at where we've been: we've tinkered with "Dalliances", we've despaired at "Climate Change" and looked aghast at "Rubbish". Feeling desperate, a session of our favourite poems relaxed us. Then, there are our regular "Free Choice" interludes – which, of course, range far wider than just our favourites, and are often far from relaxing: we may choose something that has always puzzled us, or that we love, but have never quite understood! Memorable examples include Gerard Manley Hopkins, e e cummings, and, believe it or not, the often challenging rhythms of Thomas Hardy.



Sessions concentrating on particular poets also feature regularly: we have looked at Hardy, Robert Frost and Laurie Lee (of "Cider with Rosie" fame). A statistician could have fun with our changing trends, as regulars come and go. Intruding on the scene at the moment are e e cummings, Housman, Wendy Cope and U E Fanthorpe. Women poets, indeed, feature strongly, both as regulars, and as newcomers. Two new local women poets known to members of our group have also made their mark: Wendy Stickley, and Kitty Waldren. An American black female poet I have discovered recently, Nikki Giovanni, has beguiled

me with her collected poems from 1968 – 2020. They read rather like an autobiographical journey, reflecting on race politics, relationships and her favourite people/artists.

Great art, of course, always manages to resonate universally, and we love to find topical relevance in our discourse. One of our new female poets, Denise Levertov, tells us, in her poem, “The Task”, that “...god is in the wilderness now.” You don’t have to be religious to see what she is getting at! Relationships are always topical, and Kitty Waldren’s ruthlessly unsparring critique of a new relationship, and how it unravels, is a guilty pleasure!

For more information contact: J.M. Floyd Pattison 07778 484968

Writing Group

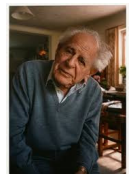
We meet monthly on a Thursday afternoon from 2.00 till 3.30. We carry our cups of tea and coffee carefully into Room 3 at the start because we don’t have a coffee break. This might interrupt our creative impulses which sometimes need to be coaxed into action. This term we have benefitted from some new ideas from a new member. We started with a title “Old Friends” to produce an introductory first draft of a narrative when we returned the following month. Some of us then continued for 15 minutes to write the next stage of another writer’s beginning of the action story. Would it be tragic? Would it be funny? Let’s hope it wouldn’t be boring. (Although we don’t go in for that sort of criticism) The monthly gap increases the suspense in anticipating the next moves. What will happen to these fictional beings? We still have time and space for memoir writing, diaries from way back and non-fiction writing. If you think you might like to join us, you would be very welcome.



For more information contact: Barbara Spiegelhalter 07966 219764

Philosophy

We’ve suffered the loss of a couple of members this term and look forward to welcoming any persons with absolutely nothing better to do on a Friday afternoon. I’m pleased to say that such a happy (?) event has already been hinted at by an old friend.

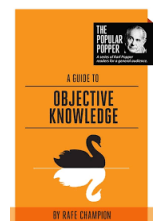


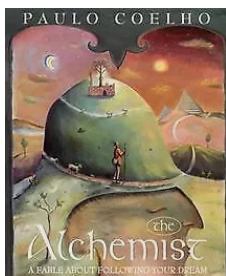
The subject of the next half-term’s meetings is Sir Karl Popper, the renowned philosopher of Science. Strange to tell he was the topic of my first talk in 2011. I intend to show the work I produced for those introductory sessions. It made a bit of change of gear from Alain De Botton.

Popper is generally associated with the principle of falsification as the means of advancing Science as opposed to the positivist proposal of verification. His work contains much more profound aspects that I hope to touch on. One case in point is his work on the evolution of knowledge, another his take on ‘Objective Knowledge’. (His 1972 publication.)

Reading Popper informed my very alternative approach to teaching!!

For more information contact: Tony Stutters 07739 832 774





World of Books

Our first book of the Autumn term was called *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho,

it appears that Paulo Coelho is a very acclaimed author and has written many books which I must admit I have not read so this was a first for me and I think most of the group.

The book outlines a young man's search for himself, he sells his flock of sheep, leaves his homeland and travels to strange lands, on the pretext of looking for treasure, but the treasure he actually finds is in himself and where he came from.

The story outlines many beliefs held by others about the spiritual nature of the world in which we live and how our lives are all intertwined with not only each other but with nature and the world around us, and how decisions we make can impact not only on ourselves but on others and the wider environment which surrounds us.

A book with a very spiritual thread which runs through the entire story, I have to admit I was very disappointed with the ending the book demanded something more enlightened than what it was given.

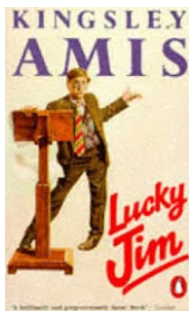
Our second book was *Five Quarters of the Orange* by Joanne Harris who also wrote *Chocolat*. *Five Quarters of the Orange* outlines the experiences of three siblings growing up in France during the German Occupation. How their interactions with each other and others in the village determine their future and of those around them. Secrets kept can be dangerous and when a slight to one person can result in the effect of a pebble in the pond and the ripples that fan out from this one small act can have profound effects on the future.



It also outlines the effect of 'be careful what you wish for it might come true' and have consequences that you could not have imagined, also it outlines the dangers of taking people at face value and not looking deeper into the person you think you might know, only to find they are not what they seem.

A very enjoyable book, especially for those who love good food and cooking some of the receipts outlined in the book are a bit special.

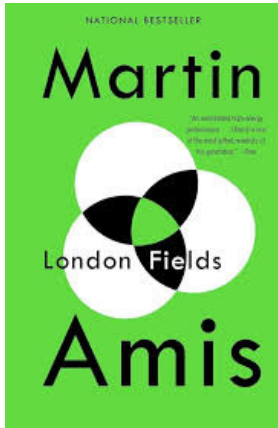
For more information contact : Christine Courtney-Wells 02392 297723



Pelham Book Group

Our monthly Zoom sessions have had a wide range of books to discuss over the summer prompting mixed reactions from our members.

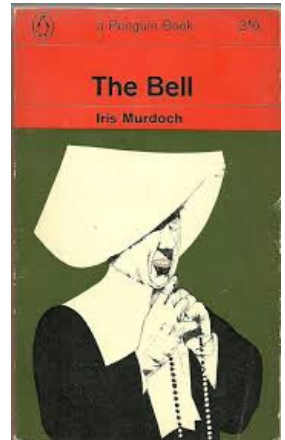
Our first, "*Lucky Jim*" by Kingsley Amis, published 1954, caused much disagreement. We concluded it should be read as a satire set very firmly in post-war England with its comic antihero, Jim Dixon, struggling to secure an academic position at a new red brick university amid social and romantic set backs. Some of us took it far too seriously, missing the



potential for comedy and entertainment in the book labelled “the funniest book of the second half of C20th writing” by Christopher Hitchens.

By chance, the next book was by his son, Martin Amis, “London Fields”, published 1989, “a blackly comic murder mystery”. Most of us found this an uncomfortable, confusing read with unpleasant characters set in a depressing London of 1999 with a global crisis as background. A rather negative response although there may have been aspects to applaud and enjoy.

Our next novel, “The Bell” by Iris Murdoch, published 1958, met with general approval. A lay



community of social misfits live at Imber Court next to Imber Abbey, home to an enclosed order of nuns separated by a lake. After centuries a new bell is to be hung with much pomp and ceremony in the Abbey. However, the old bell, subject of a legend that it flew from the bell tower into the lake after a nun broke her vows receiving a lover, has been found. An ingenious plan is evolved by two errant characters to resurrect the old bell to everyone’s amazement. It does go wrong at great cost. The characters are well drawn allowing the reader to share their struggles as events and relationships develop. This is the second Iris Murdoch novel we have enjoyed, and we plan to read more.



Then there was “Do Not Say We Have Nothing” by Madeleine Thien, published in Canada in 2016 which proved a challenging read for us all. Some gave up whilst some struggled to finish. The simple beginning of a Chinese refugee fleeing the Tiananmen Square repercussions to live with distant relations in Canada spreads into various subplots that span generations yet ultimately connect. These are set against four main eras of China’s violent revolutionary history not necessarily told chronologically with flash backs and a constant presence of the “Book of Records”. To this add the unusual names of the main characters, their relationships, their obsessions with music: playing and composing, and the nuances of translation, the novel

becomes almost too complex to follow. Those who did manage to finish it found the passages describing the persecution, brutality and bloodshed of the revolutionary history too horrifying to contemplate. If you want to know more about this and its impact on the ordinary population this book is worthy of perseverance.

What a relief is our last book of the season! Maggie O’Farrell’s “Instructions for a Heatwave”, published in 2013 but set in the 1976 heatwave, mostly in London. This

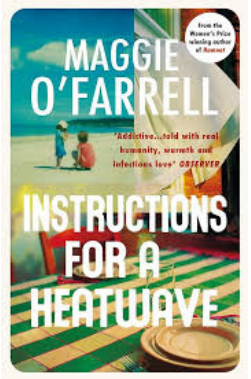
contemporary novelist can certainly write a novel impossible to put down. A family crisis brings the mercurial, opinionated mother and her three adult siblings together. O'Farrell details their lives and psychology as all struggle to make sense of the situation with their secrets and resentments from childhood finally being resolved. These revelations are suitably unexpected. The authentically drawn characters and compelling narrative make this novel highly recommended.

I do hope you might be encouraged to sample some of these titles or authors. I am sure you will have your own views on what constitutes a good read.

Our group is currently full. Many thanks as ever to Maggie Macbeth and Havant Library for facilitating our books, plus Maggie and Barbara Braithwaite for stepping in to run Zoom and the session in my absence. Happy, enjoyable, rewarding reading.

For more information contact: Judith Wise tel: 07530854969. judewise1@googlemail.com

Art for All



Maggie MacBeth
Great Frigatebird



Galina Miller
A familiar face?



Brenda Colman
Landscape



Lois Saunders
Autumn Leaves



Lynn Timms
Birthday Card

For more information contact: Brenda Colman 07342 976 255

Needles and Pins Group

Previously known as Patchwork and Quilting this group now encompasses knitting, crochet and all aspects of sewing and needlework. We can provide two new sewing machines, also an iron and ironing board for use within the group.

If you are a “knitter” or a “sewing-bee” or interested in starting a new hobby come and join us. A warm welcome awaits you from this very friendly group.

Carol Jones Group Member

For more information contact: Penny Scipio 02392 832 500



Cardigan for premature baby
Jean Bancroft



Two examples of Iris Folding
Heather Lewis



Rag doll
Penny Scipio



Fiona Brown
Piglet



Lynn Timms
Animal
creations



Penny Scipio
hat



Science and Technology

The group continued to function although with reduced numbers. Subjects were varied and not easy to forecast as usual. Mr Musk continued to make lots of noise, and this will increase now that he is working with the new President of the USA. The Tesla is beginning to suffer from the many

other competitive models. We looked at available electric cars and the infrastructure needed to use them both in Portsmouth and the UK. Most agreed it was an impossible task and could understand the manufacturers that were making the jump to hydrogen and fuel cells. Back in the days when we started the Group the biggest lithium batteries could only power a laptop or was it a netbook? Now we have large batteries in standby mode able to power a town of reasonable size when needed. Technology moves at such a pace it is difficult to keep up with it. Peter Evans and Brian Greener started the group at the encouragement on the then Chair Freda Forcey and we used the New Scientist magazine as a template for study and criticism. The New Scientist has changed since then and is only half as big with more pictures than text. Climate change was not fully understood and consequently not planned for. Now we have flood defences going up in Portsmouth and Southsea costing over 160 million. We no longer need to use a magazine; the media seems full of Science with TV's Jim and Brian and Alice and ... I could mention at least another dozen. Medical science has expanded so that we have to use AI and large powerful computers to use the masses of data collected. But there is still room for common sense like the proposal to make all hospital meals vegan and plant based. This would not only be beneficial for health but also lead to a drop in CO₂ emissions of 30% and save the NHS in England up to £19 bn a year. Surely that is something worth looking at! See you at our next session on alternate Thursdays at 2pm



For more information contact: Brian Greener 02392863381



Religion, Spirituality and Life

We continue to enjoy meeting together to discuss anything connected to Religion, Spirituality and life. This term began with me finally making good on a hitherto unfulfilled promise. I had long resisted leading a session on scientology, the so called religion founded in 1954 by Ron Hubbard in the USA, about which I knew very little. I say "so called" because it is not recognised as a 'religion' in several countries, including France and Germany.

Having taken the plunge and learnt what little I could about scientology, we all enjoyed a most fruitful discussion on what constitutes a religion. It got us thinking about the sometimes complex relationship between the founder of a religion, and the religion itself. So we compared Ron Hubbard with Jesus.

It also got us thinking about the significance of mystery in religion. Many aspects of our lives focus on solving mysteries, turning our emotional reactions into knowledge. And yet, do we want to leave all mystery and wonder out of our lives.

On Friday 8th November, we shall be exploring the concept of, and the significance of 'light,' in religion. We shall explore a little of the physics of light. It has no mass but it still has speed and momentum? How is that possible? It is also such a powerful metaphor in



Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Come and join us if you are even remotely interested in anything connected to Religion, Spirituality and Life.

For more information contact: John Strain 07834 637 744

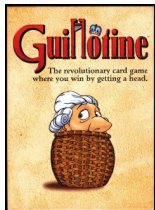
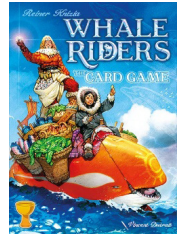


Mahjong is a tile-based game that was developed in the 19th century in China and has spread throughout the world since the early 20th century. It is played by four players. The game is played with a set of 144 tiles based on Chinese characters and symbols. Help will be given to beginners. **Mah Jong** still takes place Friday mornings. Come along and give it a go. **For more information contact: John Hall on 02392 732980**



Board Games

The new year began with both a record attendance and a record number of tables playing the games, enabling three games to take place simultaneously during the group's first meeting. Both Rummikub and Scrabble were played with the Scrabblers also playing Boggle after completing their game. The other table played Whale Riders, the Card Game followed by Love Letter, the former involved Inuits last minute shopping for vital supplies before the long winter set in whereas the latter game represented suitors vying with one another to ensure that their letter was safely delivered to a princess via various members of the palace retinue, this game produced a particularly tight finish.



During the second meeting the attendance was slightly lower enabling two tables of games taking place, again a competitive game of Rummikub was enjoyed whereas on the other table Guillotine, a card game, took place, the premise being that players were executioners during the French revolution vying with one another each day to behead the most unpopular members of the nobility, maybe not the most tasteful of subjects but a fun game which brought about a great deal of hilarity, so

reader do take care who you sit next to in The Hub!

In the most recent group meeting there were again two tables of players with Rummikub being the popular choice of one table whilst the other indulged in New York Slice, in which the players were chefs preparing pizzas of differing toppings and slicing them up into slices for all the players to select one slice each, with the slicing chef receiving the final slice, the challenge being where to make the slicing cuts to ensure that oneself received a reasonable slice, very tricky, but once more the game had a very tight finish.



This term has not gone the way I envisaged during the summer break, I would like to thank the members of the group for their support and assistance in setting up the tables and chairs and the fetching and carrying games and to my deputy, Barbara Spiegelhalter, for leading the Rummikub games. I would also like to thank the members of the Portsmouth u3a for their offers of help, support, friendship, kind words and encouragement during a very trying few months. Thank you All

Tony Valvona 02392 822641



Film Club Starts at 1:45

Wed 22nd Jan - "Widow Clicquot" 2023

Widow Clicquot is a 2023 internationally co-produced drama film, directed by Thomas Napper, from a screenplay by Erin Dignam and Christopher Monger based on the book *The Widow Clicquot* by Tilar J. Mazzeo. It stars Haley Bennett, Tom Sturridge, Sam Riley, Anson Boon, Leo Suter, Ben Miles, and Natasha O’Keeffe. The story behind the Veuve Clicquot champagne family and business that began in the late 18th century. Widowed at the age of only 27 this remarkable woman went on to develop a hugely successful business at a time when Napoleon had made it illegal for women to run businesses



Wed 26th Feb - "Amazing Grace" 2006

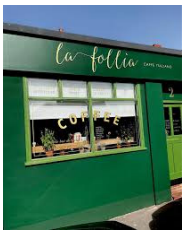
Directed by Michael Apted. With Ioan Gruffudd, Romola Garai, Benedict Cumberbatch, Albert Finney. Encouraged by his friends, wife and mentor, William Wilberforce, an ambitious British Member of Parliament, takes up the decades-long fight against the dangerous issue of the slave trade.

Wed 26th Mar- "A Room with a View" 1985, starring Maggie Smith in a supporting role plus a wonderful cast.



A Room with a View is a 1908 novel by English writer E. M. Forster, about a young woman in the restrained culture of Edwardian-era England. Set in Italy and England, the story is both a romance and a humorous critique of English society at the beginning of the 20th century.

All starting at 1.45 pm



The Walking Group

We rounded off the Summer Term with a walk up Harting Hill on a very hot day. After coffee in La Follia , an Italian cafe in Harting recommended by Tom Parker Bowles in his restaurant review column in the papers, we headed off uphill. It was very challenging especially in the heat, but there were lovely views along the way. We needed a few stops to catch our breath and found a slightly shorter route back. Thank goodness for the cool cafe where we retreated for a lovely lunch. We all gave it the thumbs up for food and service. A lovely village and eatery, there are also a couple of pubs should you need anything stronger. I promised the group a shorter, easier walk next time, so we drove over to Petersfield on another lovely, sunny day. We had coffee in the cafe by the lake and then walked around the lake. We walked on into the town and had a walk around the Physic Garden, always a lovely little respite from the noise of the traffic and





an oasis of calm. We then went on to the Petersfield Museum for lunch in the courtyard cafe before visiting the exhibition on Peggy Guggenheim. She lived in these parts between the wars and there were many photos and paintings of this time. Our most recent walk was from Emsworth to Westbourne

passing some lovely old houses with a stream in the gardens. We followed the stream for a while and then crossed fields until we arrived at a farm with Alpacas and a cafe. It was a gorgeous day, the only one that week so we sat in the sun with drinks. Carried on into Westbourne for lunch in a cafe in the town square. Very nice lunch and good prices. I feel duty bound to report back to you on all the good eating and drinking places that we find, who knows, I might be offered a job as a restaurant critic!!

We hope to get out on another walk before Christmas, Join us in the New Year.

For more information contact: Jackie Forsyth 02392 666 680



Social Secretary report

The summer now seems a long time ago especially as Autumn is settling in. It was good to see so many of you taking part in the various activities we provided in the summer break.

The delicious cream tea went down a treat, but I am still unsure whether it is jam or cream first on a scone! The weather for the picnic was perfect and we had a lovely spot

under a huge tree. It was nice to meet others away from the Hub and enjoy a range of conversations. Thanks to those who generously brought food to share. Our last foodie event was lunch at the Keppel's Head. This was met with mixed reviews in terms of cold dishes, tough lamb and long queues at the bar, however I am led to believe that the lemon posset was the dish of the day! The free tea/coffee went down well and the staff were very accommodating.



Back in the Hub we had arranged for three events to take place. The board games had to be cancelled because of illness but thankfully our games master is well on the mend. The quiz was a roaring success and the winning team was the smallest team, perhaps they were able to agree with each other more readily than the larger groups! Who knew we had so many competitive people amongst us! Our final event was a screening of 'Wonka'

which is the origin story of Willie Wonka. I will never be able to erase from my memory the sight of Hugh Grant in orange paint and coiffured hair playing an Oompa Loompa with relish.

Now my thoughts turn to Christmas. By the time you read this the deadline for signing up for the lunch at the Royal Maritime Hotel will have passed and I hope to see lots of you there. The mince pie event will be in the Hub on Monday 16th December from 2.00pm. Look out for more social events in 2025.

Season's greetings from Mandy Richards **Mandy Richards 07496 009401**

Speakers' Programme

General Meeting - Tuesday 17th September



At our September General Meeting, we welcomed Gareth Edwards, Learning and Outreach Officer from the Portsmouth History and Archive Centre. He brought along some amazing items from the Archive which members were able to touch and examine - something which really brought history to life! Amongst these was a City of Portsmouth Passenger Transport Department Lost Property Register dating from World War II, bearing a sticker which stated that it 'Must be protected in the event of enemy attack', and which listed, amongst other items of lost property, a lady's bathing cap, a baby carrier and various pairs of false teeth.

It was fascinating to learn that the Archive never stops - for example, it now contains campaign leaflets from each political party in the City at the recent General Election!

The centre is free to use and it is there for all of us, with full public access. These are 'our' Archives.

If you have never been there, you really should do so!



Peter Rann Archivist Kings Theatre

We welcomed Peter Rann, Archivist from the Kings Theatre, to speak to us on 'A Brief History of Pantomime'. The pantomime at the Kings this year is Dick Whittington.

Peter explained that pantomime started in Italy, spread through France, and then reached England in the 1600s. In the 1800s Joseph Grimaldi brought pantomime very much into the form we know today, with its well-known phrases such as 'it's behind you!'. Grimaldi was, in fact, the first ever Pantomime Dame in 1812.

The phrase for achieving success used between actors is, 'Break a leg', they will never say 'Good luck'. The stage must never be left dark, so what is known as the 'ghost light' is always left on. This is because the theatre's ghost might like to perform at night, or else they will curse the theatre.

No actor will ever mention William Shakespeare's 'Scottish Play'. There was a death during the first ever production in 1606 and a lot of supernatural language is used in the play. Some superstitions are stranger than others:

There must be no peacock feathers on stage because they contain the Evil Eye and actors must never apply make-up with a rabbit's foot.

The last line of a play must never be said before the opening night - which can cause some problems for actors when suddenly faced with this line on that night for the first time! The Green Room in a theatre must never be painted green, which is an unlucky colour. In some pantomime productions of Robin Hood, Robin and his Merry Men therefore often wear red.



A show must never open on a Friday. Nobody must put shoes or hats on dressing room furniture, no-one must ever knit in the wings. Nobody can wear new make-up on the opening night, and it must never be said that a theatre is 'closed', as this may invoke the Plague.

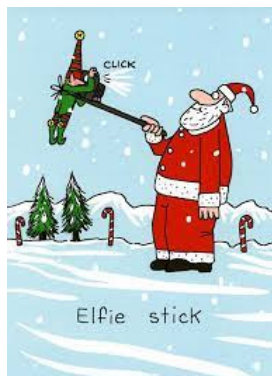
Peter showed us a photo of some of the actors from the past, including Vest Tilley who is a great aunt of Carol Powell

It was a really fascinating talk and we all learned so much from Peter. Oh yes we did!!!

Fi Rosen

Speaker Secretary Carol-Anne Turner

Just for fun – some seasonal jokes



Santa has a senior moment





Principles of the u3a Movement

- The u3a Movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

The Third Age Principle

- Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full-time employment has ceased.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.
- The Self-help Learning Principle
- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire, by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

The Mutual Aid Principle

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.