



Chair Chat October 2017

Thank you to all who attended the New Members Meeting on 25 September. I hope you found it useful and you feel inspired to join or even lead a group. Thanks also to the Group Leaders who joined us in body or on film. We certainly enjoyed the DVDs!

This month sees the Annual General Meeting being held on 12 October and I am sure many of you will attend and take the chance to hear reports from the present committee and hopefully elect a new one for 2017-18. To date several volunteers are still needed. As you will realise it would be difficult to continue without a full committee.

Recently I was interested to read a letter in the Autumn edition of *Third Age Matters* from a lady bemoaning the fact that her U3A has a minority of younger members. She feels that a wider range of interests and attitudes is needed. I felt like replying to her that perhaps she should put herself forward to take on a more active role in running her branch.

In a similar vein I attended a 'Drop In' session for Council workers at Bexley Civic Offices last week to showcase our U3A. Many in attendance were young people (some young enough to be my grandchildren) and they had never heard of U3A but were very interested to hear about it. 'I'll tell my mum, I know she'd be interested' was a common reaction. Now I imagine 'mum' in most cases would be in her fifties and although we probably do not have that many members at that age although they are eligible to join, we certainly have many members who have recently retired so Bexley U3A does have more than a few members in that 'younger' age group. Perhaps some of them need to come forward and lead us into 'a wider range of interests and attitudes'. These are the people we need to help with organisation not only setting up and clearing away at Roberts Hall meetings but also in ensuring the efficient running of our whole branch.

When the AGM is completed the Choir will provide entertainment.

Have a pleasant October and let's hope the weather stays kind to us.

Regards Carole Hunt

Monthly Meetings and Speakers

The main meeting is held on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 2 p.m. (be there by 1.45 pm to get a seat!) at Roberts Hall behind Christ Church, Bexleyheath Broadway.

October 12	AGM and Choir	The Evergreen Revellers
November 9	Joseph Woodcock	Christmas in the Garden
December 14	Christmas Social	Singalong With Tom Carradine

Planting a seed of an idea by a member: Do you have a dog? Would you like to start the Walk and Wag group, socialise your animal and have a chat with another U3A member? All we need is a coordinator, could it be you?

Local Lights

~Your next trip to The Orchard~

Westside Story

2.30pm, Saturday 21st April

(DAODS - an amateur company with professional standards)

Our group rate £18. Absolutely all welcome.

Book and pay at the meeting please. Cheque or cash.

Organiser Carole Alleway

TOWN AND AROUND

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ALL OUTINGS AT YOUR OWN RISK

THERE APPEARS TO BE A MISCONCEPTION THAT OUR OUTINGS ARE ALWAYS FULL. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO COME TO THE MEETINGS YOU MAY PHONE OR E MAIL MAIRE CARR ANY TIME

Monday 23rd October to The Garden Museum. Meet Waterloo main line concourse under the clock at 10.15 then bus. Recently extensively refurbished interesting small museum and gardens. Guided tour around the museum and small gardens. Café, loos. £9.00 or Art Fund members £6.00 (please bring card with you)

Friday 17th November. Backstage at the Royal Opera House. Meet Charing Cross at **11.45** please note time. Backstage guided tour of this wonderful building, however, we may not be able to visit the auditorium if there is a rehearsal in progress. Tour lasts 75mins. £10.50

NO VISIT PLANNED FOR DECEMBER

Wednesday 24th January 2018. Second visit Backstage at the Royal Opera House. Meet Charing Cross at 11.45, please note time. As there is already a waiting list for our November visit we have decided to set up a second visit for January. £10.50.

FULL PAYMENT (PREFERABLY BY CHEQUE MADE OUT TO TOWN AND AROUND) MUST BE MADE AT TIME OF BOOKING. See notices in Roberts Hall for more details. **If you are on the reserve list for a trip please keep day free, or let Maire know as soon as possible if you are unable to come.**

If you have booked a place on an outing and cannot attend please let us know as soon as possible. It is unacceptable to keep other members of the group standing around waiting for you. Please make a note of our Mobile telephone numbers which are printed in the Newsletter so we can be contacted by phone or text even on the day of the visit.

Organiser: Margaret Collins		
Bookings: Maire Carr		
Money: Sabine Wayt		

Visit to Polesden Lacey, Dorking

By Margaret Collins

September is sad month I always think, the end of the summer and the beginning of the dark evenings. So our trip to this wonderful National Trust Property was a chance to shake away the blues, and we certainly did with the added joy that the sun was shining.

a one hour journey took us to this fabulous house, set on a side of a hill, overlooking wonderful parkland and gardens, complete with a ha-ha and long walk. There had been several houses on this land over the centuries the earliest being 1336. A house from 1824 was the core of the remodelled house gifted by Richard McEwan, the beer millionaire, to his illegitimate daughter Margaret Helen Anderson (born 1863) and her husband Ronnie Greville who married in 1891. Richard was a collector of art and artefacts, displayed in the house. Maggie and Ronnie had the wealth and ability to continue collecting some fabulous art, porcelain, furniture and other items which decorated the house when they took up residence in 1906.

We were split into two groups, and our wonderfully entertaining and informative guide took us around the principle ground floor rooms. The low level lighting, although understandable, gave us a few problems seeing the items in the house, but our eyes adjusted and we could see the splendour. The front door led into a galleried hallway, with magnificent staircase. We were told tales of Maggie Greville's lavish house parties, and the royal connections gained through her husband Ronnie. Often house parties would include members of the royal family including Edward VII and not surprisingly Mrs Kepple his mistress, or foreign royalty, Mr and Mrs Churchill, and Maharajas also visited. Duke and Duchess of York had part of their honeymoon here in 1923. She would lay on fabulous French cuisine banquets for her guests, offering them tennis, golf, walks, shooting, and horse riding with suitable instructors hired for the occasion. It was explained that she was like Marmite, some people loved her and others loathed her. She was a well-travelled "Gal" but feisty and domineering. We then walked down a wonderful corridor full of antiques, artworks and sumptuous flower arrangements to the dining room with a huge picture of her father Richard McEwan dominating the room although there were pictures by Lawrence, Rayburn, Lely and other famous artists hung. Back along the corridor to the most glitzy room in the house the Salon, the brief had been that it should be fit enough to entertain a maharajah, so there was gold leaf on the ceilings and walls, and bling was the order of the room. There were lovely little cabinets full of treasures which had been given to her as presents, small jade animals, beautifully enamelled boxes, serious pieces of jewellery, and Chinese porcelain. We went through to the library, leading on to the study with its beautiful views.

Some of us took a garden tour which told us of the development of the extensive gardens, the huge herbaceous border, the remodelling of the rose gardens, the vegetable gardens, and the cut flower gardens. All in immaculate shape as Maggie would have demanded.

After lunch we visited the upper bedrooms, which had a fascinating display of the complicated linkage between the men in her life, her millionaire father, her charming and well connected husband, and her close friend King Edward VII.

Ronnie and Maggie had a big society wedding in 1901 but had no children of their own although lots of god children. Ronnie died aged 42 in 1908 so she was a widow for a long time, but that did not stop her entertaining in her accustomed style. Mrs Greville died in 1942, with much of her fabulous jewellery going to The Queen Mother. The house, contents, and grounds were given to the National Trust in 1951 in memory of Maggie's father and are a very well visited attraction with events going on most of the year. Well worth the visit and enjoyed by all.

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**Executive Committee 2016-17**

|                             |                 |  |                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair                       | Carole Hunt     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Secretary                   | Sandra Goulding |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Treasurer                   | Douglas West    |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Membership / Member records | Dave Potter     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Speakers                    | Terry Moseley   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Group Liaison               | Maureen Wright  |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| E-mail & IT                 | Jo Livingston   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Social Secretary            | Thelma Wilkes   |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Catering                    | Vi King         |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Hall Manager and H&S        | Ron Clayton     |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>NON-COMMITTEE ROLES</b>  |                 |  |                                                                                                                                  |
| Meet & Greet                | Edna Sutton     |  | Please let Edna know of personal events e.g. significant birthdays, anniversaries, condolences, etc. so that she can send cards. |
| Newsletter Editor           | Mary Jupp       |  |                                                                                                                                  |

***Please submit all contributions to November newsletter by  
Midday - Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October Please ensure you have an email acknowledgment from  
me that I have received your contribution! Mary Jupp***