

Newsletter

Dates for your Diary

2022

- 8th April - Members' Coffee Morning
10.30 at Church on the Heath
- 20th April - Open Morning - **from 11.00**
at The Harlington, Fleet
- Monthly Meetings 2022 - The Harlington, Fleet, talk 11.00 to 12.15, coffee from 10.00**
- 18th May - 'A Long Way From Home'
Speaker - Major Tek Gurung
- 15th June - Dietary Supplements:
valuable purchase or waste of money?
Dr Richard Franklin
- Visits 2022**
- 27th April - British Aerospace Bristol
- 19th May - Hampton Court
- 23rd June - Hatfield House
- 14th July - Windsor Castle Tour
- 1st September - 4 Nights Stay Kynren, Bishop
Auckland
- Rollers Outing 11th May - Blenheim Palace**

Chat from the Chair

I am a self-confessed smartphone addict, to the despair of family and friends. Occasionally the bad habit bears fruit, as it did on March 16th. The news of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's departure from Iran broke just before I welcomed members to the March Monthly Meeting. The feeling of delight transformed the atmosphere in the hall, a welcome relief from other news stories.



Anita Mays, our speaker, talked with passion about being one of the 'Flying Girls', succeeding in a traditionally male dominated world. It was clear that many in the audience had encountered similar attitudes and obstacles.

I was fortunate to work in primary education, where it was unusual to have more than one male colleague, if any. I treasure a letter from Jenny, a former pupil in which she thanked me for showing her 'she was as good as the next man'.

I am sure Jenny would feel at home in Fleet u3a, as we have a good track record of encouraging the involvement of female group leaders and female presenters. Paddy has demonstrated how effective women can be in leadership roles, so the committee door is wide open too.

But I am still a teacher by calling, and we teachers are notorious for being pleased, but never satisfied. So well done everyone: now let's do even better. **See you at Open Morning!**

John

Dear Group Leader,

Open Morning takes place on **Wednesday 20th April 2022** in the Harlington Centre from 11:00 until 12:45. This is the opportunity for all groups to show the general public, friends and fellow u3a members what we do and how much fun we have doing it. It is the first open morning since 2019 so please make an effort to come along. Let Paddy meetings@fleetu3a.org.uk know you are going to be there and will need a display table.

N.B. Group Leaders - Thursday 5th May - Programme Checking by GLs at URCH, 10:30-12:00

THIRD AGE MATTERS – the magazine of the Third Age Trust

Five times a year the Third Age Trust publishes its magazine for members, Third Age Matters. It's designed to tell you more about what's going on in u3as across the country and includes a range of articles and features likely to be of interest to our members. The next edition will include news about the u3a's 40th anniversary including picnic ideas and recipes as well as articles as varied as how to become a puppy raiser for Guide Dogs to the sport of pickleball. There are some very lively letters pages, regular competitions, and a sprinkling of nostalgia.

I'm on the Editorial Board for the magazine and a member of its Management Committee. If you receive the magazine, I'm keen to know what you think about it. Do you read it regularly? If so, what do you like and what would you like to see more of? If you don't usually read it, why doesn't it appeal to you? Please email me at publicity@fleetu3a.org.uk with any thoughts.

If you don't receive the magazine now but would like to, please let us know, by emailing memsec@fleetu3a.org.uk. There's no extra cost to you – the magazine itself is funded by advertising and the postage costs are included in your annual u3a subscription.

Adrian Van Klaveren

CREATIVE WRITING This month's story comes from CW 2. We were all amused by Grania's take on the theme of Power Cut, but it also brought back uncomfortable memories. "When America sneezes, the rest of the world gets pneumonia" - an old saying, but still true.

THE POWERCUT - BY GRANIA EGAN

Sit back and let me tell you a story about a game. A confidence game which is only successful when enough people are willing to put aside their common sense. Everyone who is involved gets taken and then takes someone else.

Take Bill and Jennifer Barnes for instance, our power couple. Fine, upstanding professionals, credit-worthy and locked into the American dream of pushing yourself as far and as fast you can in order to have the better things in life - the latest model car, the beautiful suburban home, but near enough to drive into town each day, to make the money to afford all of the above. And the kids? Well, the best schools for them of course and all the latest gadgets to show everyone who came around, that the Barnes were very well on the way to what is called: making it.

So when is enough, enough? Because you can only acquire so much, right? Wrong, in the case of the Barnes. Each month the weighty pay checks rolled in, for both Bill and Jennifer worked. What to do with all the money? They were advised to get into property. Several of their city friends were reaping the rewards of doing so, why not them? Don't want to miss out, do we?

So, from Chicago to Tampa Florida, the Barnes property portfolio was born. They were simply buying up properties that were for sale, or in foreclosure. This was a relatively new word to them. People who no longer could afford their mortgage, were ordered to hand their homes back to the bank for them, in turn, to sell, in order to get their money back.

Sight unseen and no survey, the Barnes began to buy. Never once did it cross their mind as to why properties were beginning to flood onto the market. The strategy was simple, buy it, rent it out for a while and then sell at a profit. And, once they got onto this treadmill, it was hard to slow it down. But in 2006, the great unwinding began. The folks who worked in the factories, the utility companies, the schools, began to lose their jobs. Firms were pulling out of places similar to where the Barnes had bought their properties.

You don't have to be Einstein to work out that, if there are no jobs, there is no money coming in. You have to eat, and so slowly people begin to fall back on paying their rent and people like the Barnes saw their monthly balance dwindling. If they had lifted their eyes for a moment, they would have realised that many parts of America were falling into decline. Misdirected investment and non-sensical construction meant that the companies and institutions who provided the jobs slowly upped sticks and moved elsewhere.

So what of people like the Barnes? They had been what we call the players and were now the played. The game had changed direction. And the friends who had told them to get into the housing market, never returned to the subject. Pride, I suppose. Depending on how far they had been invested in the game, they would have their own problems in salvaging what was left. Maintaining the outward appearance of pretending that all is well, is hard to say the least.

One day, the Barnes drove down to look at some of the properties they still owned but were trying desperately to get rid of. In Vasco County what they saw was stunning. The property developer had stopped midway on a project because he had run out of money. Incomplete pavements, half made roads, weeds growing up between driveways. Street upon street with houses and no occupants. Three yellowing copies of the local newspaper lay on a half-made front lawn. It was a ghost town, and this sight was the rude awakening. This couldn't be their America.

Today, if I introduced you to the Barnes, you would see Bill working as a community officer; he long ago lost his banking job and Jennifer works at a nursery. The kids go to the local school, no fees you see. Their house is long gone. And their much coveted power in the housing game long extinguished. For a while they lived with his mother. Now they rent a three-bedroom apartment and are happier than they have been in a long, long time.

We still have vacancies if anyone would like to have a go at Creative Writing

Beverley Carpenter

Making Greetings Cards Groups A and B

We've made cards using art deco style die cuts, circles, stencils, embossing folders and zentangle as well as shaker cards and more. Being able to meet in person whilst still maintaining a social distance and with limited sharing of equipment (and sanitising) has enabled us to exchange ideas as well as see what others make. We are all learning new ways of doing things, not just when making cards, but in adapting what tools, equipment and supplies we already have available rather than just popping out to buy something we might only use once. Over half way through the year and we've been able to meet for our scheduled session. We have continued to record and upload the demonstrations so that any group member unable to attend can view them and make similar cards using the "kits of parts" supplied to them. It is also making an extensive video record that we can refer back to in the future. We look forward to continuing to meet and to exploring more techniques that can be used for making cards.

When planning the year we did so in a way that, should we go into lockdown/self isolation again either nationally or individually, we would be able continue to enjoy making cards together. Thankfully that part of the plan has remained largely untested! We are still being careful, opening windows, socially distancing, masks etc even as restrictions are eased. We are all aware of how easy it would be to spread infections and continue to take every precaution necessary to keep members safe and well.

Thanks to Christine for keeping us all on track and making cards. **Liz Holness & Jennie Phillips (Group Leaders)**



Ballroom Dancing - New Beginners Class

I am the group leader for Ballroom Dancing 5 - Beyond Beginners (C) which is held on Tuesday afternoon at 2:45pm at Crookham Memorial Hall. Due to class numbers dropping we have the opportunity to change the class to a Beginners level class from the start of the new term. If you are interested in joining please contact me on 01252 202333 or ljcranham@hotmail.com

Lucinda Cranham

Wanted a Webmaster

Our current webmaster is due to retire by the end of this u3a year, having then completed 3 years in the role. We would very much like to hear from members who would like to take on the task, which includes keeping the website, our u3a's shop window, up-to-date and interesting. There will also be opportunities to update and refresh the site to reflect new developments.

It need not be a very demanding role and no great special technical knowledge is required other than familiarity in working with computers would be useful. Experience of working with websites would be useful but not strictly essential as full introductory briefings will be given. It might help you to know that our website is hosted on the Wix platform, and was specially created for us by a previous member. If you think you might be interested, or for further information, please contact - webmaster@fleetu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meeting

Wow! What wonderful speaker we had last Wednesday at the March Monthly Meeting. Anita Mays took us on a whirlwind tour of the world of aviation by telling us about her fascinating career as a failed air hostess but obviously an extremely successful pilot. A very fortunate 150 members were present to enjoy her enthralling presentation illustrated with many fascinating photographs of her adventures over at least four decades in aviation history. Several members told me it was the best presentation they had ever heard.

I did pass on the audience's appreciation to Anita and you will be pleased to know that I have booked her to return to us in the summer of 2023. She will talk to us again on a different topic drawn from her extensive repertoire.

The Monthly meeting team were out in force again making everyone feel welcome at the Harlington in the foyer and small hall before the talk. There were several members coming along for the first time last week so we hope to see them again soon. As you know, we welcome guests to the Monthly Meetings and we are developing a good record for convincing them to join Fleet U3A. The Book and Jig-saw swap table had some lively business. We are pleased that everyone remembered to take away the same number of books and jigsaws that they brought along as we have no storage space for unwanted items.

As you know, some members asked if there could be a collection for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. I am delighted to tell you that I sent £250 to the Disasters Emergency Committee after the meeting.

In April there will be no Monthly meeting because it will be our Open Morning on April 20th. This is one of the liveliest days of the U3A year. It is when we show off all the myriad of topics that we enjoy. We show them to each other but more importantly to the people of Fleet. Please come along to see the displays put on by our groups and group leaders; have a chat about what they do in their groups and discover many more opportunities for you to have fun as a member of Fleet U3A. See you soon,

Paddy Powell

Craft Get Together 'n' Knit - All Ready For Easter

Ladies from the Craft Get Together 'n' Knit (1st Friday afternoon of the month) and two other volunteer crafters have been busy producing items on an Easter Theme to donate to Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Shop in Fleet. When on display, before the March Monthly meeting, £16.80 was raised which is going to Phyllis Tuckwell along with the rabbits and chicks.

Any member wishing to join the group will very welcome. Please contact Jackie.cresswell@ntlworld.com



Strollers

It is with sadness that I write to tell you that Gill Bye, one of our founder members, has passed away. We will all miss Gill, always positive and determined that as our numbers grew, we should learn each other's names. To that end she brought label holders for us to put our names inside. The problem has been remembering to wear them!!! We will make renewed effort to display our labels, as without them, we just don't remember each other! Thank you, Gill, be at peace.

Spring strolls have been lovely around the pond. Rita regularly brings oats to feed the ducks. It's always interesting to watch the gulls chase off the ducks, the Egyptian duck chase off anything, the swans being too choosy to eat, preferring only to bend their graceful long neck, to scoop up a drink with the odd oat included as a bonus.

However, what a treat last feeding time proved to be. Usual stop, Rita sprinkles the oats. No action until wow, the big, open mouth surfaced and swallowed. It was swiftly followed by more, ugly, gaping mouths. The ducks had no chance. We were watching what we think are carp, large, hungry and plentiful.....quite fascinating.

Our strolls are always different, yes, we stroll the same route, but we always find something interesting and varied to see.

Spring has definitely sprung and strollers revel in nature in the raw. Bye for now,

Jenny Teagle

The Wine Appreciation Group (WAG).

We meet in the evening in members' houses and currently have about sixteen members and a small waiting list. Due to the limitations of each member's house the existing group is unable to increase in size and hence the waiting list is unlikely



to reduce. Therefore, the WAG is hoping to expand by creating a second group, meeting on another night, with members from the waiting list new members. We are looking for additional interest

so that those on the waiting list when joined by other members could create the new second group; we have plans so that the new group could be up and running at the start of the next u3a year if sufficient interest is expressed. We will have a table at the group event in April, so please come to see us there or alternatively please contact us directly using the details in the u3a booklet.

m.kennett-brown@virgin.net or *Ivan Cresswell*
Ivand.cresswell@virginmedia.com

Fleet U3A Website

Keep up to date with all our activities,
news, events, visits and monthly

Meetings on our website

www.fleetu3a.org.uk

Rollers Visit to Blenheim Palace

Wednesday May 11th



Depart 8.30am from Cody Sports and Social Club, Old Ively Road Farnborough GU14 0LP and departing Blenheim at 4.30 pm approx.

Booking is by email to bu18dwy@gmail.com

Cost **£42**

An accessible coach NOT a double decker bus!!

Cost includes entry to the Palace, Park and Gardens.

Please park nose to tail by old Tennis Court at Cody. Payment in full at the time of booking, cheques made payable to **fleet u3a**. Driver's tip is not included.



Jenny Teagle

Visits Update

Can I please ask all members, new and established, to read the visits section in the programme booklet. This clearly states that visits are USUALLY sold two months in advance of the visit, but there are exceptions' usually overnight stays and if we need to secure tickets for a booking.

We do NOT, take phone calls or email bookings in fairness to all those that attend the appropriate meeting booking date in person, but we do hold a list so. IF there are spaces after the meeting, we will inform you that you have a place and when and how to pay the leader of that visit.

Being on an interest list does NOT ensure you have a booking. Waiting lists are also kept for fully booked visits. Please be considerate and call us 9am-5pm Monday – Friday ONLY, emails are preferable.

We do our utmost to keep you informed by announcements at the month meetings and in our Newsletter and most importantly on the u3a web site, which is the quickest way to access all updated u3a messages and news.

These last few months have been extremely difficult for our volunteer team to plan visits, as many of you know, because of venues not confirming until the last moment.

Our interest lists for the proposed theatre trips were in part, successful. Working 'Sister Act' in January more details will be given when they become available. Sonning Mill 'Top Hat' is **only on sale until 11.00am at the U3A Open Day 20th April** as we haven't secured our minimum number, this is in danger of being cancelled.

Sunday October 30th Ray Clooney comedy 'Funny Money' at Sonning Mill, has a very full interest list, so be in the front of the que at **11.00am on 20th April, Open Day**, to book your place.

We still have a few places for; Hampton Court and the Artisan Fair Saturday May 14th; Hatfield House Thursday 23rd June; Windsor Thursday 14th July **booking** in May.

Kynren is a not to be missed open air event, depicting 2,000 years of history, which is for a 4 night stay in Middlesbrough 1st September. Look at the web site for a wonderful video.

As we are all aware, costs are rising for almost everything and will continue to rise. We are doing our best to maintain visits that are affordable and fun. Unlike tour companies we are not profit making, but we do have to ensure the cost are covered, hence minimum numbers. Thank you to everyone that supports our visits, and we look forward to seeing on our trips.

Carole Matthews

Pilates - Caroline is back! We hope to restart Tuesday classes after the Easter break, then run as will be listed in the new programme booklet from September. Anyone interested in starting on Tuesdays please email Chris Porter on pilates@fleetu3a.org.uk

Double Knitting Wool Needed

Do you have some Double Knitting wool, or Baby Wool, lying around unused and needing someone to turn it into something useful.

I know of several people who knit dolls that the police use when interviewing children, premature baby bonnets, and all manner of similar things. As they knit through TV, journeys etc. like madame Defarge, of guillotine fame, they go through copious bundles of wool.

If you have some that they can use please let me know and I will collect. You can also bring it along to the Monthly Meetings. Thank you. **Sandy, Editor**

COMMITTEE EMAILS



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**PLEASE AVOID TELEPHONING MEMBERS
BEFORE 9 a.m. OR AFTER 5 p.m.**