

u3a Bromley



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Peter Browne 1

Mary Garside 2

Carole Blacher 3

Celia Thompson 4

Celia Thompson 5

Interest Group Numbering Explained

Against each group name a single number is given to identify the Group Liaison Officer (GLO) responsible for that group, also shown in the February 2024 Interest Groups Booklet, and to whom you should refer if wishing to start a new group or for further information regarding groups.

Dates for your Diary

1st Sep 2026 Local Studies

Fay Tennet - Part 1
Protecting Politics (Security in the Houses of Parliament)

9th Sep 2026 Bingo Night Wednesday

Details on page 3

15th Sep 2026 General Meeting

Fay Tennet - Part 2
Terrorist Attack at Parliament

3rd Oct 2026 u3a Bromley Promotional Saturday Event

Details on page 20

6th Oct 2026 Local Studies

Tom Hart Dyke
Lullingstone Castle

20th Oct 2026 General Meeting

Guy Bartlett
Concorde - The Time Machine

3rd Nov 2026 Local Studies

Stephen Harmer
Sissinghurst

17th Nov 2026 General Meeting

Tony Harris
Donald Trump

1st Dec 2026 Local Studies

Nick Dobson
The History of Christmas

15th Dec 2026 Christmas Social

All Local Studies (1st Tuesday of the month) and
General Meetings (3rd Tuesday of the month)

are held in the

Whitfield Hall,
United Reformed Church (URC),
20 Widmore Road,
Bromley, BR1 1RY

Time : 10.30am

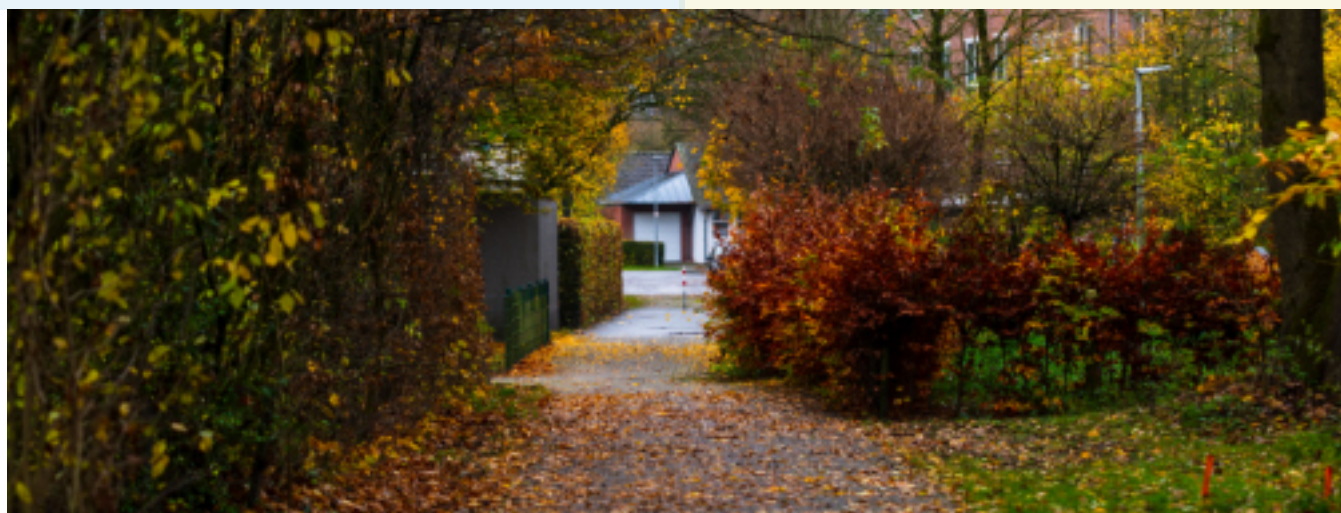
Entry fee:

Local Studies: £3.00, Non-members £5

General Meetings: Members free.

Non-members £5.00, refundable if joining as a member of u3a Bromley.

Front cover photo: Visit to Shoreham.
(Ageing Positively Group)
Photo by Sue Duma



Welcome to Issue 5, September 2026



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2027 u3a Diaries

It's that time of year again. The u3a Diary for 2027 will be available this autumn for us to order, one week to a page with the opposite page containing space for notes. The outer cover is usually a plain colour. It is a slim design, 6" long and 3.5" wide, fitting into a deep pocket or a handbag. On the basis of past years - ordering in batches of 10 and therefore paying for only one lot of postage and

packaging - I expect the approximate price to be about £5.50 per diary.

If you would like a diary, please let me know - by email or phone . By early October, please, so I can place our order in good time and get them out to members. Thank you. As usual I will be taking diary orders at the General Meetings and Local Studies meetings if you prefer that route.

After the order has gone in, I will update people once I have received our Diaries from the Third Age Trust and will confirm the final price per person and collection options.

Many thanks,
Angela
u3a Bromley Secretary



The power of the u3a network

As the newsletter deadline approaches, I rack my brains for something to say, usually falling back on comments about the weather which this summer could fill the entire article! But this morning I was inspired by a bit of serendipity.

In my efforts to get out more, I walked into my local town for breakfast and chose a café I had not used before. There was just one other customer, a lady, sitting alone, as I had intended to do. I have made great efforts to have some sort of interaction whenever I go out, even if only to smile at a stranger I pass in the street, just their returned smile can be a spirit lifter.

I asked if I could join her. Brave, I know, and her reaction was just as mine might have been, we're British after all. She explained she wasn't being rude, but she had her newspaper, hoped I didn't mind. I reassured her, I was not at all offended and sat down at another table.

A few minutes later, she approached me and said "Do I know you, are you Sandy?" Naturally I thought of the u3a and of course she was a member. So, we chatted and she explained that, although a member, she had not been able to do as much as she'd have liked for various reasons. Perhaps because we were u3a members, part of a 'safe place', we exchanged things about our situations we would never have told a stranger. It was good for both of us.

Is there a moral? You would expect me to say, joining the u3a, and that's true, but perhaps just taking a tiny chance now and then could make a huge difference to how you feel for the rest of the day and maybe also for the person you speak to. Why not?

Meeters and Greeters for talks and new members social

The value of having people to meet and greet our members at these meetings cannot be undervalued.

The difference between a new member coming in to a large hall and being ignored or having a friendly welcome can be vital, those first impressions can make all the difference. At our last new members' social, we had the best comment ever, that never had the member been to any event and been made so welcome. Come and be a part of this.

Succession Planning – New Chair THIS WILL BE REPEATED IN EVERY NEWSLETTER.

As my term of office is coming into its final year, ending at the 2027 AGM, we need people who can take u3a Bromley even further forward.

Would you like to see what's involved by sitting in on meetings, job shadowing and generally getting a feel for the role?

A vice chair would be useful and also be an aid to a potential new chair. Two heads and all that!

Please get in touch with me for a chat, completely without commitment, the earlier the better!

And of course there are other roles that might suit you, so please, think about joining us on the committee!

So, on behalf of all of us on the committee, thanks for continuing to enjoy u3a Bromley and helping to make it a continuing success.



Sandy Boden

chair@u3abromley.org.uk

HELP WANTED WITH SOUND SYSTEM SET UP

First of all, thank you to the people who have come forward in response to our requests for help at the two large Tuesday morning meetings at the United Reformed Church (URC), Whitfield Hall plus some socials. We still need one more person to join the team and be on the rota. If this sounds like something you would be interested in doing, please let me know, or come along on the first or third Tuesday in the month at 09.30am at the URC to meet us and see what's involved. Full training will be given.

Many Thanks,
Angela Dowling



Mamma Mia Singalong at Bromley Little Theatre, 15th July



Thanks to Bromley Little Theatre for providing their wonderful air-conditioned theatre for our Mamma Mia Singalong. After a few technical hitches the film started and at every song the words showed nice and large on the screen. With nearly 90 people in the hall, we nearly drowned out the sound track. At the interval, BLT opened the bar so the second half set off with even more enthusiasm. It was a

genuinely 'feel good' afternoon and several people extended that feeling in the Railway pub afterwards. Not even England losing dampened the evening...

The BLT volunteers made us feel welcome and ensured everything ran perfectly. We hope to persuade BLT to let us use the theatre for similar events in the future.

Sandy Boden



EQUITY RELEASE by Peter Runacres

Peter Runacres, our former Examiner of Accounts has penned the following article for u3a Bromley members who may be thinking of taking out Equity Release on their property.

What is Equity Release ?

Simply put Equity Release is a Loan secured by using your own home as collateral. It is usually taken out on your home when you have paid off any mortgage and your home is unencumbered (free from any debt)

The Loan is sometimes called a "lifetime loan" as no repayments are made on either the Capital or any accrued Interest during your lifetime (see below)

And why do it?

There are many reasons why you may consider taking out this kind of Loan which could include:

Giving money to your children or other relatives or friends and thereby try to avoid Inheritance Tax by living the 7 years after the gift.

By fulfilling any ambitions you have like a world cruise, visiting distant relatives or similar.

So that you have a bit more money in the bank to make life easier if your pension is inadequate to maintain your standard of living.

You have other debts that need to be paid off during your lifetime.

How much could you borrow?

This will depend on the current value of your house and your age, but as a general rule the younger you are the lower the percentage of the value of your house can you borrow. The last thing the lenders want is for the accumulated capital and Interest to exceed the value of your house when you pass away or go into long term care facilities.

Compound Interest:

The interest charge on most, if not all, of these loans is compounded so that Interest is charged on both the capital and any accumulated interest and it is usually compounded monthly

and based on the number of days in each month.

The Interest rises very quickly so for example, if you borrowed £100,000 at 6% then you would owe:

End of year 1: £106,167

End of year 2: £112,716

End of year 3: £119,618

End of year 4: £127,048

End of year 5: £134,884

If you carried on by the end of year 10 you would owe £181,940 nearly twice as much as you borrowed 10 years previously!!

The longer it goes on, it gets higher and higher!

Higher rates of interest make it worse, lower rates of interest not quite so much.

When is the Loan Repaid?

Usually when the first of these events takes place:

You pass away or

You go into long term care facilities (a little respite care is OK and will not trigger repayment)

Be Careful !

The company that has loaned you the money will want to sell your property as soon as possible, after one of the two events shown above occurs, to get the Loan repaid. The contract will state when this will be but remember they will be the ones selling your property and they have no incentive to get the best price just enough to repay the loan (although they have to get the best price in the time available).

DISCLAIMER: Equity Release is extremely complicated.

Always get independent professional advice when

considering Equity Release BEFORE you sign anything. The purpose of this article is to give you some ideas to discuss with your advisor or family. The article is not endorsed by u3a Bromley or any u3a or the Third Age Trust.

Art Appreciation (1)



Hockney: Bigger Trees near Warter

In **June**, we had a really fascinating presentation by Graham on how the Roaring 20s affected art and culture across four countries. In **Germany** the creation of the *Weimar Republic* led to an explosion of very different styles of furniture and art and architecture with geometric designs.

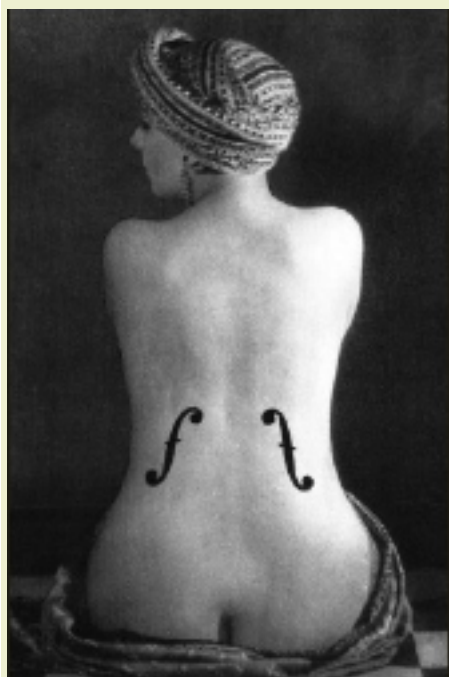
In **London** the Bloomsbury group were still influential with artists like Dora Carrington, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant but by contrast we also had artists

like Lowry. The rise in commercial art with colour printing in magazines, posters and books meant that the graduates of London's new art colleges had many more opportunities. New styles didn't just affect art: fashion changed dramatically during this period. **Paris** began to develop in different directions with artists like Matisse and Picasso and then Surrealism with Man Ray and Dali. A huge exhibition in 1925 led to the rise of art deco with new styles of decorative items for the home and art deco jewellery. Meanwhile **The USA** was going through prohibition which was a major factor in American life in this period. Although their art did not develop in the same way as in Europe, art deco did have a great impact, particularly on decorative items and architecture leading to buildings like the Chrysler building.

On **1st July** Lesley gave us a lecture on David Hockney, who had died two weeks earlier. He was a very prolific artist who made a deliberate decision not to be pinned down to a single style and his work reflected a range of ideas and influences. We saw some of his early works and his famous Californian paintings but the focus was on his 2012 exhibition at the Royal Academy. This introduced the concept of a number of



works forming a single picture. He also introduced his large scale works, partly influenced by Constable, where he stitched a number of canvases together to form huge immersive works. Many of these reflected his concept of conveying the transformations in nature as the seasons progress and the weather changes. He was also very innovative with media, creating video installations where he would adjust the multiple camera angles so that he could



SURREALISM

Man Ray

Photographer

'Le violon d'Ingres'

Expressionism led to abstract art by artists like *Kandinsky* but when the Nazis came to power this art was banned as degenerate art.



Hockney: Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy 1970 - 1971

draw the image. He produced photo collages and moved on, in later life, to painting works on the iPad. His latest exhibition presents the iPad works he produced in lockdown in Normandy, which are currently exhibited as a giant frieze in a stunning exhibition at the Serpentine gallery.

Lesley Godwin

Forthcoming talks:

16 Sep Zoom	Graham	Surrealism
7 Oct Theatre	Sue Barrett	Frameless Exhibition
21 Oct Zoom	Diana Harte	Marc Chagal - Stained Glass Windows
4 Nov Theatre	Lari Burr	Medieval Illustrations
18 Nov Zoom	Graham	Seascapes
2 Dec Theatre	Graham	Social and Quiz

If you are interested in joining the Art Appreciation Group please email

Climate Change (1) - NEW

Proposed Climate Change group

Dermot McKibbin suggests forming a Climate Change group. Interested members should contact Peter Browne, Group Liaison Officer 1.

Depending on interest, Peter and Dermot will hold a meeting to set up the group.

Contact Peter



Computing: Tablets etc (5)



***Aggravated by
Android?
Exasperated by
email?
Irritated by
your iPhone or
iPad?
Maddened by
your Mac?
Rattled by***

Ringo? Wound up by Windows?

We can probably help. Drop into the Richmal Crompton pub (opposite Bromley South Station) any Thursday or on the 1st or 3rd Monday each month at 10am for friendly patient advice from one (or more) of our team of experienced users. Ideally, let Keith know you are coming beforehand, especially if you might be a bit late. You will find us right at the back of the pub, near the kitchen door.

No charge, though the pub appreciates it if you buy a coffee (other beverages are available).

Contact Keith

Computer Group (4)

Technology is constantly evolving, and there's never been a better time to stay informed, develop new skills, and connect with others who share your interest in computers and digital technology. Our Computer Group welcomes members of all experience levels — from complete beginners to seasoned enthusiasts. One of the highlights of membership is our regular presentation programme, and you'll find something of interest at our meetings.

Our presentations cover a wide range of practical and timely topics. Topics that have been covered this year have been; using CANVA Affinity Publisher in place of MS Publisher, tools for converting PDF files and the present developments in Cloud Computing. For the remainder of 2026, we will be discussing the following:

- **28th Sep 2FA security, Biometrics and using Passkeys as an alternative to passwords.**
- **26th Oct New developments in AI.**
- **23rd Nov Splitting large PDF files, combining multiple PDFs and making big PDF files smaller.**

Each presentation is designed to be informative, practical, and easy to follow. Each month, we also hold an Open Forum, where members can bring their problems, interests and questions.

Membership also offers the chance to meet friendly people who enjoy learning together. We'd love to welcome you to one of our upcoming meetings.

Come along as a guest, experience one of our presentations, and see firsthand what our group has to offer. We meet at Oakley House on the 2nd & 4th Mondays of each month from 10:00 to 12:00.

Join us and discover how enjoyable learning about technology can be.

Contact John by email

Daytime Disco (2)



The disco has been running through the heatwave with the help of six large fans placed around the room so that we don't overheat. Tracks like Heatwave by Martha Reeves and the Vandellas and Summer in the

City by the Lovin' Spoonful featured, along with Surf City by Jan and Dean, and It's Raining Men by the Weather Girls to try and induce rain – it did cloud over that day but no sign of rain! All u3a members are welcome!

**Disco is every Tuesday, 2–3pm
at Bromley Little Theatre
Contact Christine**

Film Studies (5)



A weekly exploration of film history with plenty of fun conversation. It's very interactive, informative and entertaining — a chance to enjoy great films and discover new ways of analysing them. Hopefully you'll come away enjoying films even more, and seeing them in a completely different way... think of it as art history for the 21st century.

We look at everything from editing, camera work, sound and music to film stars, directors and the cinemas of Germany, France and Italy. Silent film also makes an appearance — all accompanied by some terrible jokes

Wednesdays, 10–11.30 am on Zoom

For further details please email me

Gardening - Monthly Talks (4)

2 September – Michael Holland – Zest and the Rest

Michael's talk about oranges, lemons and the citrus family will touch upon world-changing medicinal and technological breakthroughs, tangy tastes, perfumery, religious symbolism and much more.

7 October – Richard Winston – Landscape Photography, a Personal View

Richard will share his photographs of the many and varied landscapes that he has visited around the world.

4 November – Kevin Tooher – Winter Interest in the Garden

Kevin is based in Kent and loves sharing his passion for gardening and helping people to improve their knowledge.

Meetings are held at St. Mark's Church Room, Westmoreland Road, Bromley, at 2.30pm.

A small entrance charge includes tea and biscuits.

NB there is no parking at St Mark's Church.

For further details telephone Sue Goodger



Gardening - All Hands Group (4)

Visit to Court Lodge, Horton Kirby near Sevenoaks

On a rather changeable day in early June, the group shared cars to visit Court Lodge, another National Garden Scheme Garden opened just for our group.

Described as "Beautifully situated on the River Darenth, beyond the old farmyard and C18 dovecote, are gardens evolved over 4 generations.

Mature trees and an elegant lawn lead down to the river. Behind old yew hedges lie a secluded white garden, kitchen garden, a renovated rose walk, and mixed borders. There is a walled Italian Garden and also a wild bank across the river.

Court Lodge is a medieval fortified manor house built on lands granted to Bishop Odo of Bayeux. It is the site of Horton Castle – which was once a stone

moated Norman manor house with a drawbridge and a moat fed by the River Darenth. Little remains of the medieval building but you can still see an upper doorway, 2 small square windows and stone quoins on the external south wall.



Louise Cannon welcomed us and took us round for a preliminary tour to give us the history of the house and gardens. She had opened her garden for the NGS the weekend before so had a marquee and seating ready,

plus a feast of homemade cakes and refreshments. The toilets at the next-door 11th century Church of St Mary the Virgin were available to us but it was worth looking at the church in its own right. Originally known as 'The Little Cathedral in the Valley', it was much bigger than it is now but still has beautiful stained-glass windows.

Visit to Borde Hill, Haywards Heath

It was on a hot sunny day in July that the All Hands Gardening group enjoyed a coach trip to Borde Hill Garden near Haywards Heath.

The visit started with a tour given by the head gardener and senior gardener. Both were excellent; enthusiastic and answered our numerous questions well.

We learnt that in 1598 Stephen Borde, the grandson of Henry VIII's private herbalist and physician, rebuilt the picturesque Elizabethan house which sits in the middle of the estate (this is not open to visitors).

The garden, however, has become one of the country's great heritage gardens, with one of the largest collections of champion trees. A champion tree is the largest known



individual of its species, recognised for its exceptional size, height, or ecological and cultural significance.

Set within 383 acres, the garden is designed as a series of garden rooms. I particularly liked the rose garden and the Italian garden. The rose garden, with over 750 fragrant David Austin roses in 100 varieties, was a feast for the senses. The Italian garden, with stunning views over the parkland, boasted a Water Lily-filled lake surrounded by pots filled with Agapanthus and Canna Lilies.

We all thoroughly enjoyed lunch which was a selection of sandwiches, fruit slices and cake in the marquee. Afterwards we had time to wander around the gardens, visit the shop and nursery or have a cup of tea before our return journey.

Marilyn Hardwick

Contact Sandy Boden to go on the member list.

Future Trips

Name	Month/Date	Place	Travel
Sandy Boden	18th September	West Dean Gardens	Coach
Gladys Donovan	October TBA	Brogdale	Coach
Sandy Boden	November	Planning Meeting	St Marks

Golf Lessons (5)

Our next session of Golf Lessons starts on Wednesday 16th September at Chelsfield Golf Centre. These friendly groups are taken by Steve, a Professional at the Centre and are suitable for beginners and improvers.

u3a Bromley Golf dates at Chelsfield

Autumn 2026

Wed 16 Sept

Wed 23 Sept

Wed 30 Sept

Wed 7 Oct

Wed 14 Oct

Texas Scramble and Lunch: Wed 21 Oct

Wed 18 Nov - Drop in

Wed 9 Dec - Drop in

Price £10 per session – max per group 7-8 persons per session.

You will need to book slots.

For further details of sessions and times available please contact Mary Golds.



Guitar Group (5)



Come and have fun, and join my u3a Bromley Guitar Group. We play Baroque, Classical, Folk, Blues, Ragtime and Pop. You must be able to read basic music notation. We meet every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.

I have now started a Concert Performer Group from 1.00pm - 2.00pm. All Guitar Members then continue from 2.00pm-4.15pm.

Venue: Bromley Methodist Church, The Wesley Room, College Road, Bromley BR1 3NS. Car Park Access (North Street) Bromley BR1 1SB. Please contact: Group Leader: Christine Dabrowa

History of Fashion (5)

Owing to water damage in my flat, the History of Fashion Meetings are being held temporarily in Cafe 1917 opposite the URC. There was a good turnout recently for a talk on Marie Antionette, her reputation and her influence on fashion.

There have been two art gallery outings for members of different groups to Philip Mould in Pall Mall and the Weiss Gallery in Jermyn Street.



Do contact me (email below) if you enjoy learning more about historical portraits or if you would like to study the history of fashion.

I am currently organising a tour talking about the Huguenots of Spitalfields.

Laraine Burr



Local Studies (4)

All our meetings are in the **Whitfield Hall, United Reformed Church, 20 Widmore Road, Bromley, BR1 1RY**. They take place on the **first Tuesday of the month**, running from **10:30 am** until **12:00 pm** at the latest. These are Open Meetings, and all members are welcome.

Please note that there is an admission charge of £3, payable by cash or card. Non-members may enter for £5.

Forthcoming meetings:

1 September	Fay Tennet	Protecting Politics (Security in the Houses of Parliament)
6 October	Tom Hart Dyke	Lullingstone Castle
3 November	Stephen Harmer	Sissinghurst
1 December	Nick Dobson	The History of Christmas

Reports on previous meetings:

With apologies for the delay, the report on Kate Boyle's 'History of Trinity House' will be included in the next newsletter.

Steve Woods

For further information, please contact Steve

Outings by Public Transport (4)

The Outings for next few months are listed below:

- 10 Sep** **Valence House** With a history from 1250s, there should be lots to investigate. It was recommended to us by folk in the ELLE group.
We will meet at Bromley South station at 9:30, travel to Herne Hill (9:50) and on to Farringdon (10:20). From here we will take the Elizabeth line to Shadwell followed by a bus journey and a 10min walk. The cost is £15. There are still spaces on this outing.
- 23 Nov** **Peek Frean's Museum. Both visits are now FULL**
For the morning session, we will meet at Bromley South station at 9:30, Victoria at 10am (outside Smiths at Platform 8), take a tube to Westminster, then another to Bermondsey. A 10min walk will get us there for the tour at 11am.
For the afternoon visit, we will meet at **Victoria** (outside Smiths as above) at 12:30pm for a tour at 1:30pm
I will allocate who is on which tour after the summer break.
- 14 Jan** **Salters' Hall.** First licensed in 1394, the **Salters' Company** has its origins in the salt trade of medieval London. We will learn of its history and its function in today's world.
We will meet at Bromley South station at 10:00, change at Herne Hill, 10:27, continue to Farringdon on the Thameslink and then a City + Hammersmith tube to Moorgate. A 5min walk will take us to the Hall in time for an 11:30am tour.
- Early April** **WW2 tunnels at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls.**
Following the superb talk by Mary Smith in July, I have contacted the school for a group booking of these unexpected tunnels. I have asked for the Easter holidays (Mar. 29 – Apr. 9). Once they can confirm dates, I will let you know. The tour will be at 2pm (as we will not make the morning one) but I propose a walk around the town in the late morning followed by lunch and the tour. It is a 2hr tour and has very steep steps down into the tunnels (hand rails on both sides). The cost is £25 including the rail fare (this may come down due to group rail fares).
More details will follow, hopefully in the November issue.

If you are interested in any of the above, please contact me to book your place.

Do not pay until confirmation of a place has been issued as making refunds is not straightforward.

Please pay by Bank Transfer, reference as ObPT Last Name + initial, then inform me when a payment is made.

If this is not practical, please send a cheque payable to **U3A Bromley**
Ann Woollins

Lowe (3) Shoreditch



Our Windrush Line group recently visited Shoreditch Town Hall for a fascinating tour of this iconic and historic building. Built in 1866 and designed by architect Caesar Augustus Long, the hall was constructed on the site of Fuller's Hospital. This is one of the oldest civic buildings in London, a magnificent Grade II listed landmark

Opened in 1897, it stood on the site now occupied by the National Centre for Circus Arts in Hoxton.

During the tour, we visited the Council Chambers, Vestry Hall, a large committee room, one of the meeting rooms, the stunning Victorian Auditorium on the top floor and, down in the basement, Ditch 8 — all unique and impressive spaces that are ideal venues for a wide range of events.

Whilst seated in the grand hall, our guide, Susanna, shared key moments from the building's remarkable history and outlined specific dates from when the hall opened to present day.

- **1866** – Grand opening of Shoreditch Town Hall
- **1888** – The inquest for Mary Jane Kelly, a victim of Jack the Ripper, was held there.
- **1904** – A major fire damaged the building
- **1907** – The hall reopened following remodelling by architect William G Hunt
- **1965** – End of its civic role
- **1955–1975** – The famous boxing era
- **1990s** – Cultural revival of the venue
- **2004** – Restoration and transformation into a leading arts and performance venue



It was a thoroughly enjoyable and educational visit and Susanna was a very engaging speaker who gave us a deeper appreciation of the history and continuing importance of this remarkable London landmark.

On leaving we made our way to the even more impressive Grade I listed St Leonard's church dating from 1740. Unfortunately it was not open and even the coffee van in the attractive gardens was closed but, amused by its name, the group adopted a suitable pose for a photograph in front of it before heading home.



Shirley Corney

situated in the heart of one of the capital's most vibrant areas. Today it serves as a top cultural venue, hosting live events, performances and community activities.

Its inspiring motto, "*More Light, More Power*," is emblazoned on the crest gates and within the stained-glass windows of the hall. Adopted in 1900, the motto celebrated Shoreditch's pioneering refuse destructor — a groundbreaking waste-burning facility that generated electricity.



Lowe (3) Hoxton

Once part of the Metropolitan borough of Shoreditch, Hoxton was our next stop in the East End of London. An area of two halves – South Hoxton is a bustling commercial area tied to the Shoreditch nightlife and Tech scene, home to trendy bars, art galleries, restaurants and media offices. The station is located in the north, a quieter, residential and community-focused area dominated by post-war housing estates, green spaces and local community hubs.

Hoxton is the only new station to have been built on this line and the platform is situated on the Kingsland Viaduc. The entrance is in Geffrye Street, behind the Museum of the Home. Before its refurbishment and rebranding in 2019 it was known as the Geffrye Museum in honour of Sir Robert Geffrye in whose 18th century, now Grade I listed, almshouses the exhibits are located. On leaving the station, some of



Almshouses from the front

also modern spaces reflecting the diverse lived experiences of East London Communities. Seen from the rear, the building is unimpressive but the original almshouses opened up on to a beautifully laid out gardens and were built in a symmetrical, English Baroque style. It is possible to book tours of the Almshouses but we, unfortunately, missed out on this.

On leaving, a short walk around the area brought us to St Mary's Secret Garden. This describes itself as 'a little pocket of wilderness tucked away in Hackney'. It is run by local volunteers and offering "hands-on experiences in growing things" to everyone to improve physical and mental wellbeing. The garden itself was peaceful but from next door we could hear the excited shouts of children – not a school but Pearson Street Adventure playground, which offers a free drop-in play and youth club service for local young people aged 6-16. It offers a range of activities and the children were obviously enjoying taking full advantage of them. It is open from 10.30 to 5.30 in the school holidays.

Carole Blacher



Station entrance/exit

the group were seduced by the amazing cakes and pastries on offer in the Cremer café next to the museum. Others availed themselves of the beverages and cakes on offer at the van just outside the entrance and sat in the Museum's *Gardens Through Time* at the rear of the building enjoying the sunshine before entering. The *Rooms Through Time* section recreates living rooms that show changing styles, interior design, and domestic habits across the centuries. There are



Rear of the Museum seen from station platform



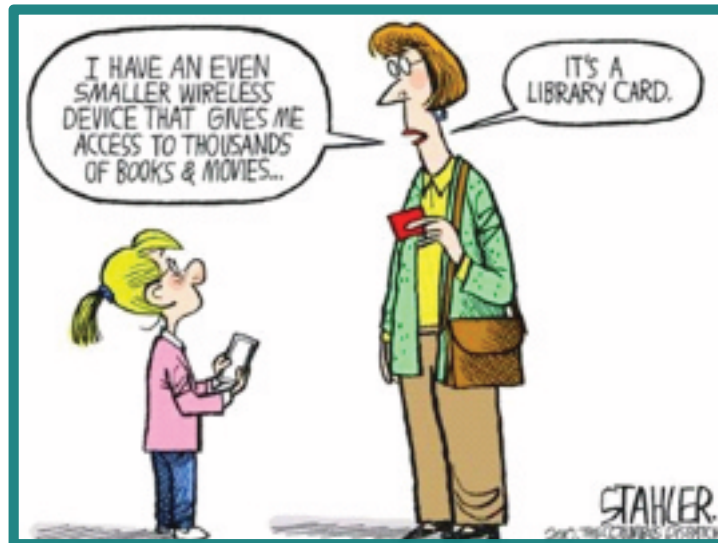
Shhhh! St Mary's Secret Garden

Psychology (3) - Smartphones and Cyberbullying

The Global Mind Health Project (GMHP) identified smartphones as a potential cause of the decline in mental health and wellbeing among young people. Ofcom suggests that almost a quarter of children from 5-7 years own a smartphone and by the age of 12 this rises to over 80%. Research carried out by GMHP suggests that the younger the age at which a smartphone is acquired, the more likely it is to have a negative effect on the users as they move into their teens and twenties. Many schools have banned the use of these devices during school time, recognising the deleterious effect they can have on academic performance and the maintenance of discipline. Governments in several countries have banned, or are planning to ban social media use by under 16's, including our own one and our discussion suggested that many older people would be in favour of this.

Incredible pieces of technology, smartphones have become invaluable in societies, providing a ready means of communication as well as access to study tools and online information,

built-in calendars and reminders to help manage school tasks and daily duties. However late-night messaging and scrolling can disrupt sleep and cause tiredness as well as being a constant



source of distraction during the day. Social media platforms employ algorithms which are designed to keep users engaged, in some cases to the point of obsession. Young people may also be subjected to cyberbullying which is both relentless and inescapable, and can follow victims into

their homes and personal spaces. This can lead to the development of negative feelings - anger, sadness, disillusionment and distrust - as well as anxiety and depression. The general opinion within the group was supportive of a government ban which, although doubtless unpopular with many school age children, would still allow them access to many of the advantages of the smartphone while protecting vulnerable young minds and supporting their wellbeing.

Carole Blacher

Mamma Mia Singalong at Bromley Little Theatre, 15th July



Rambles (2)



Shoreham

These are our walks for September and October 2026, a mixture of London, town, and country. Email me if you need to join the distribution list for our circular "Pathways" which often contains more details and enables you to receive last minute information of changes, additions, or cancellations; similarly email me if you wish to be removed from the list.

For new rambles, full information will be in "Pathways", but guidance in brief is:-

Ramblers are responsible for their own **safety** both in country & town, and their own fitness to complete the walk; Use suitable **footwear** and **dress** for the weather, plus a **drink**; No dogs please.

New Walk Leaders are always wanted even just for an occasional walk a year.

The Walks

NB On Central London and some Town walks, numbers are limited so contact the Walk Leader to book your place, and if booking by email, ensure your booking is confirmed by them. Other Suburban and Country walks do not need to be booked – just turn up on the day.

Wed. 09 Sept. 2026 – Richmond Riverside circular

Meet by 10:35 at Waterloo Station under the clock, and we take the **10.48 train to Richmond**. We walk along the north/west bank to Marble Hill Park for Cafe or picnic lunch. Then, crossing the Thames via the Hammerton foot ferry (£2 charge), we return to Richmond via St. Peters Church, Petersham. Five miles; No need to book, just turn up.

Leader: Alan Canham –

Thurs. 17 Sept. 2026 - Cudham Circular

Meet at 10.30 at Cudham Recreation Ground Car Park (50 m SE of Blacksmiths Arms) near Church of St Peter & St Paul for a 5 mile walk via Downe Village, mostly footpaths but some hills. Recommend a walking stick and suitable shoes. There will be an opportunity for lunch at the Blacksmiths Arms after the walk. No need to book in advance.

Leader: Robin Burnhams

Wed. 23 Sept. 2026 – St Paul's circular

Meet at 10.45am at St Paul's Underground station at the top of Exit 2 for a 2 mile circular walk with over 20 points of interest. There are toilets half way round.

NB: Contact the Walk Leader to book your place. Please book by email if at all possible.

Leader: Graham Haynes

Tues. 29 Sept. 2026 – Margate to Broadstairs

Meet by 09.45 at Bromley South station for the **09.57 train to Margate**, arriving at 11.22. Purchase a return ticket to Broadstairs. Take advantage of cheaper tickets by using Railcard, Advance or GroupSave. This is a mostly flat walk of about 6 miles, following the Viking Coastal Trail, with views over the Channel, walking mostly along the cliff top path and passing through 7 Bays. Brief refreshment break at Joss Bay where there are facilities – please bring a snack. There are plenty of cafes, pubs and restaurants at the finish. We return from Broadstairs station. No need to book with Kevin.

Leader: Kevin MacNamara

Wed. 07 Oct. 2026 – High St Kensington circular

Meet at 10.45 inside High St Kensington tube station (outside Cafe Nero) for a 2 hr walk around one of the most expensive areas in the UK. The walk will include historic and memorable buildings as well as parks and gardens. Kensington High St tube is on the Circle Line, and the District Line from Earl's Court. Also on bus route No. 9 from Charing Cross station.

NB: Contact the Walk Leader to book your place.

Leader: Marie Blakeley

Wed. 14 Oct. 2026 – Keston circular via Nash

Meet at 10.30 outside the Greyhound pub on Keston Village Green for a 5 mile circular walk with 1 stile and 1 slight incline. There are pubs and cafes in Keston for refreshments after the walk. Buses 146 and 246 from Bromley stop at the green. No need to book.

Leader: Kate Irwin

Thurs. 22 Oct. 2026 – Rochester

("Bridges, bi-planes and a hero from Bermondsey")

Meet at 10:10 at Bromley South station to catch the 10:27, due into Rochester at 10:53. From Rochester station we'll visit the main sights (Cathedral, Castle, Guildhall, Restoration House, Dickens' Chalet) as well as some lesser-known ones – some of which are hinted at in the walk title. This walk is **bookable-only**. See the Margate-Broadstairs walk for cheaper rail ticket notes.

The circular walk is about 1.5 miles, and takes 2 hours with one short steepish climb and one flight of steps (down) – but there's a step-free route available. Toilets are at the station and in one other place. There are plenty of cafes in Rochester at the end of the walk.

NB: Contact the Walk Leader to book your place.

Leader: Richard Martin

Wed. 28 Oct. 2026 – Bough Beech circular

At the time of submission for the Bromley u3a Newsletter, this walk is still in the planning stage so the details will be our circular, "Pathways".

Peter Wood –

Rambles Group Co-ordinator



Shoreham

Science & Technology (5)

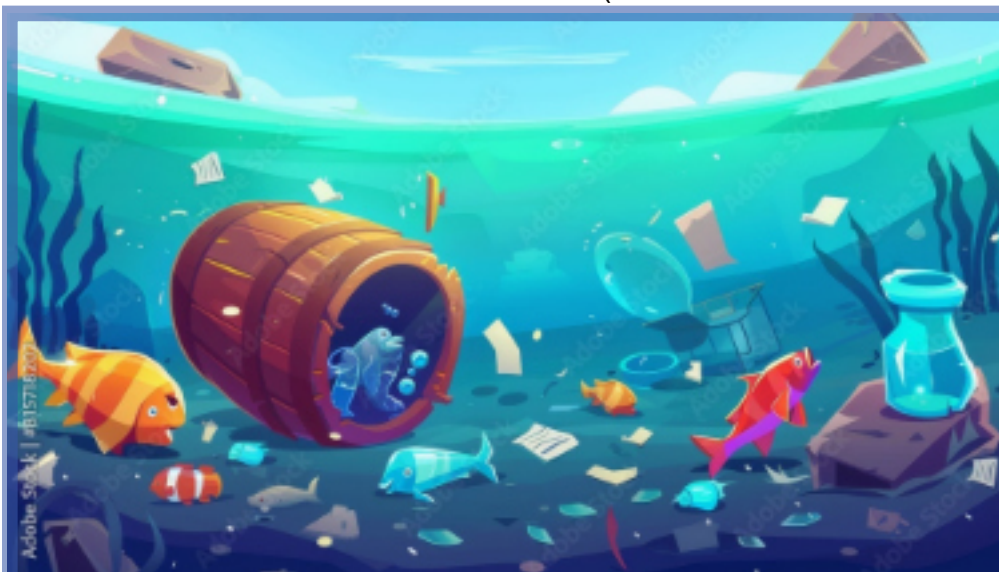
Doctor Dolittle: talking to the animals

The whimsical title Roger Marshall gave to his talk at Science & Technology's June meeting, relates to animal communication. All animals communicate: thousands of years before traffic noise became a constant hum, the earliest humans, living at a time much closer to nature, were surrounded by the sounds of creatures – the screeching of crows, the howling of dogs and wolves, the clouds of songbirds, buzzing of insects, chattering monkeys and so on. Even at night, hooting owls, crickets and cicadas chirruping, foxes crying, roaring carnivores, all filled the air. Some sounds are urgent, some insignificant, there could be warnings of predators nearby, of food location, declarations of status and territory, mating calls or just social greetings announcing their presence. Moreover, these rich and varied

explodes the idea: animals do not have human-like language because they have no need to. "Nothing about the behaviour of wolves or dolphins or even humpbacks, gives any indication that having a language like ours would be useful to them".

Scientific studies on animal communication have shifted from observing instinctual cues to mapping complex vocalisations, gestural dialects and interspecies interactions, often using AI to uncover patterns beyond human perception. Roger rounded off his talk discussing Project CETI (Cetacean Translation Initiative) and how

the many types of whales communicate in entirely different ways and at different frequencies. Thanks to the application of advanced machine learning and state-of-the-art robotics we can listen to a



I tell you what: if humans ever manage to communicate with us they won't like to hear what we think about them destroying the environment

sounds are clearly intentional, suggesting an intelligence separate from our own and, in some species, degrees of empathy. BBC presenter, Chris Packham, in his new series, **Evolution**, demonstrated a group of elephants romping noisily in a river, describing it as joyous!

While all animals communicate, some have more to say than others and differences are driven by evolutionary pressures. Vocal communication entails investment in time and energy and a behaviour that wastes energy is not conserved in evolution. It follows that those species who develop complex social interaction gain an survival advantage. Rather than viewing animal communication as a parallel to human language, a prototype that can be improved with time and teaching, behavioural traits always adapt and adjust to specific species' needs and ecological niches. Cambridge zoologist and world-leading expert on animal vocal communication, Dr Arik Kershenbaum, instead

repertoire of songs, clicks and whistles from blue whales, fin and sperm whales and humpback whales, along with non-verbal, loud percussive surface slapping and theatrical breaching - jumping out of and crashing back into the water!

Traditionally, humans were assumed superior – the pinnacle of God's creation – while animals were provided for man's benefit, soulless, mindless and expendable. Even Enlightenment philosophers dismissed them because their version of rationality could not be detected. Utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) argued that an animal's capacity for suffering, not reasoning, gives it a moral claim to humane treatment. He famously stated: "*The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?*". This principle laid foundational groundwork for modern animal advocacy and the potential for securing legal rights.

Brenda McCormack

Theatre Group (2)

The group meets at Bromley Little Theatre in North Street Bromley on the second Thursday afternoon of the month at 2.15pm for a 2.30pm start. We have a varied programme of speakers each month and visits and outings to local and West End Theatres as well as visits to other places of theatrical interest. Payment for meetings is £10 to cover the meetings at Bromley Little Theatre. Payment can be made by BACS, as long as Mary Garside is notified, or by cash at a meeting. One-off guest visits are £2 per meeting. We are pleased to be developing our links with Bromley Little Theatre and attend many of their excellent productions. Booking in advance for meetings is helpful. We attend monthly Saturday matinees at Bromley Little Theatre, all welcome. Please let Mary Garside know if you would like to receive emails about trips and outings and our meetings or have any other queries about the group.

Mary Garside

3 Sep	Tour of theatre Royal Drury Lane	Fully booked
8 Oct	Ian Bevan	The London Coliseum
12 Nov	Peter Martin	History of Bromley Little Theatre
10 Dec	Jane Lee Redman and friend	Musical entertainment

THE BOY WHO HARNESSSED THE WIND Soho Place Theatre 04 June 2026



This musical is based on the extraordinary true story of how 13-year-old William Kamkwamba saved his village in Malawi from the effects of drought by building a windmill that was used to produce electricity to run a pump to provide water. He did this by using bits and pieces he found at a scrap yard! Soho Place is a small 'in the round' theatre and on this occasion our group was in the front row, so, as the actors treated the audience as if they were extras playing villagers, we felt very involved in the proceedings.

From the get-go the energy was incredible, the colour, music and sounds of Africa transported us to this dry, poverty stricken area as we watched this young lad trying to convince his sceptical family and friends that he could build a windmill and consequently save the village from starvation. This idea originally stemmed from his curiosity about how the dynamo on his dad's bike worked! The climax was watching the windmill being put together on stage and seeing William climb up to start it up, Such a spectacular moment.

Another play worthy of a standing ovation and enjoyed very much by theatre group members who attended.

Pat Ward

THE UNFRIEND Bromley Little Theatre 06 June 2026



First of all, I want to make a general comment about the productions at BLT. However good the actors might be it must make it easier for them that the set designs, lighting, sound, special effects etc., etc., are always so good. For instance, in this production there is a scene at the beginning on the deck of a cruise ship. This can only last 5 or 10 minutes, for only 9 performances, but nevertheless the set is immaculate.

To me, *The Unfriend* is reminiscent of the Whitehall farces of the 1950s and 1960s. An English couple befriend an American woman on a cruise, are manipulated into giving her their email address and, when they are back home, are inundated with correspondence and eventually agree to her coming to stay with them. They are also having to deal with an annoying neighbour and two teenage children, an uncommunicative son who spends most of his time in his room and a daughter who thinks everyone but herself is selfish and the whole world is against her. Just as the visitor is about to arrive, they discover her father, a couple of husbands and others have died under mysterious circumstances and she is suspected of their murder. Chaos ensues, plus lots of laughs along the way.

Whether it be emotionally draining drama as in a recent production, *The Son*, or hilarious comedy like *The Unfriend*, BLT accept its challenge and present us with an excellent performance.

38 theatre group members attended the matinee and are enjoying the refurbishments at the theatre with the new lift and stairs.

Pat Ward

Theatre Group (2)

SWITZERLAND, A BAR SHOW
Bromley Little Theatre
Saturday 20 June 2026



Bromley Little Theatre not only has a play in the main theatre every month, running for just over a week, it also has a monthly "bar" show in the area where people congregate before the main shows. These are always very intimate and now it has started having a matinee for these shows too, as well as an earlier evening performance on the Sunday.

A smallish number from theatre group attended this powerful performance for the Saturday matinee. It is a production with just 2 actors and was fully booked. Pauline Amour played the literary titan, Patricia Highsmith, after she had retired to Switzerland and Josh Young played her visitor, Edward Ridgeway. We were seated right by the action, and it was very well acted with a great deal of emotion and energy.

The play was written by Joanna Murray Smith and is a psychological thriller with an unexpected ending. It delves into the complexities that shaped both Highsmith's life and her work. A film is also being made of this work, starring Helen Mirren as Highsmith, so it would be interesting to compare this with BLT's production which was well directed by Joshua George Lawson and Jane Lobb.

Another very worthwhile trip despite the very hot weather.

Mary Garside

LES MISÉRABLES
Sondheim Theatre
25 June 2026



On a very hot day it was very good to sit in the cool Sondheim Theatre to watch a very good version of *Les Misérables*. Ian McIntosh as Jean Varjean, Oliver Saville as Javert played their parts particularly well. The rest of the cast were very enthusiastic in their roles, particularly

in the Tavern scene, very lively and colourful. All the cast had very good voices and costumes.

Set in the early 19th century, it tells of story of a French convict's journey to redemption after being released from 19 years prison for stealing a loaf of bread. He is desperate and steals silver from a Bishop who shows him great mercy. Because of this, he breaks his parole, changes his name and vows to be honest. He becomes wealthy and adopts an orphan, Cosette. Javert, the Police inspector, pursues Valjean over the decades. Cosette meets a student, Marius and falls in love, The plot leads to Paris, where they are caught up in the revolutionary events of the time. A group of young people attempt to overthrow the government from a street barricade. During the siege, Javert is captured as a spy but Valjean lets him go free. He also rescues Marius and unites him with Cosette. Troubled Javert throws himself into the Seine. Before passing away, Valjean confesses his criminal past to Cosette and Marius so as not to burden their future. Spirits of Cosette's mother and those who died at the barricade come to take Valjean to heaven.

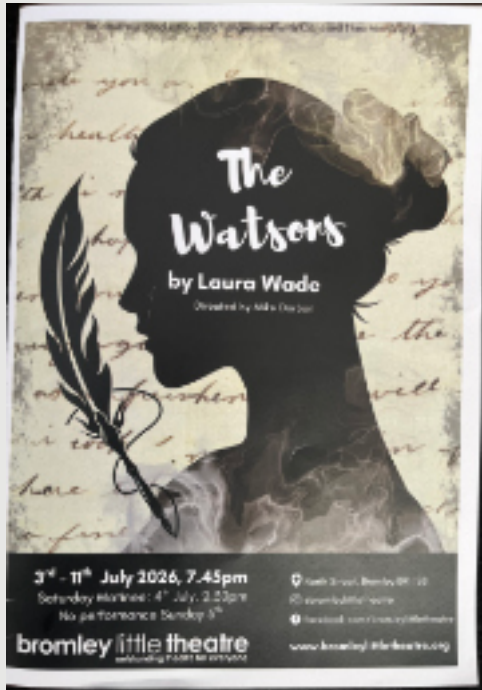
The scenery was very clever and the barricade particularly good. The ending very moving.

There was a standing ovation from everyone at the end.

Paula Howard

Theatre Group (2)

THE WATSONS Bromley Little Theatre 04 July 2026



I love Jane Austen and her prose is superb, so it was no surprise to me that, as she left an unfinished novel, someone would be asked to finish it and turn it into a play. The brilliant Laura Wade stepped up and *The Watsons* was born. The play opens with a bed, in which the snoring old Mr Watson is suitably arranged. Gradually, a cast of characters that any aficionado of Miss Austen's work would recognise appears. The set was simple: panelled walls and a few pieces of furniture that set the scene beautifully. The music was excellent, though I thought it too loud at the beginning, impinging on the young ladies' opening dialogue. There was dancing, well executed, and, despite the heat in the auditorium, the dialogue and delivery held my interest.

Sadly, for me, when the maid became the playwright and upset the apple cart by telling the Watsons, the Osbornes, the Edwards et al that they were merely characters in a play that she was still writing, the whole piece fell apart. Naturally, the actors wanted to choose what happened to them and Ms Wade was left in limbo, in modern dress, her phone taken by the youngest member of the cast, and we were treated to modern dancing, a house phone ringing with Napoleon Bonaparte on the line and suddenly the bed became the barricades and war broke out. It was a clever idea but, in spite of the excellent direction, acting, costumes, lighting, and sound, for me it didn't work. Rest in peace, Miss Austen.

Nikki Packham

SINATRA, THE MUSICAL Aldwych Theatre 21 July 2026



32 members of Bromley and Beckenham u3as attended this new musical about Frank Sinatra. It starts on New Year's Eve 1942 a skinny 27-year-old Italian-American singer is about to step onto the stage of New York City's Paramount Theatre and give a performance that will change music history. But as Frank Sinatra's voice captures a nation, his heart is torn between his wife, Nancy, and movie goddess Ava Gardner. When scandal and a hostile press send his



career into a tailspin, the young crooner fights back and stages the greatest comeback in show business history.

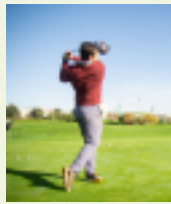
Brought to the stage by the two-time Tony winning writer Joe DiPetro, the show has over 20

classic hits. Joel Harper-Jackson plays Sinatra and is joined by Ana Villafane as Ava and Phoebe Panaretos as his first wife, Nancy. Also worth a mention is Felicity Walton as Little Nancy.

Members of the group really enjoyed the show and felt it brought back lots of memories. I felt it truly came alive at the end when New York New York was sung. All in all, it was an enjoyable afternoon in a cool theatre

Mary Garside

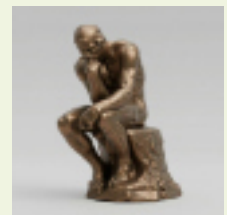
u3a Bromley Promotional Event 3rd October at the United Reform Church 11am – 3pm



Golf



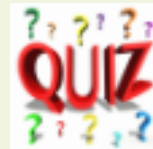
Rambling



Philosophy



Guitar Group



Quiz Events



Pub Visits



Local Outings



Garden Visits



London Outings

Members and Group Leaders may remember the event we held last year at the URC. It was such a success that we are doing it again, and emails have already gone out.

u3a Bromley as a whole — along with individual groups (some featured on this page) — will be showcasing what we do, and we want to make the event as enjoyable as possible. Please encourage friends who may be thinking of joining to come along, and spread the word on social media if you can.

New members who join at the event pay only £25, which covers membership right through to the end of 2027 — a real bargain.

HELP WANTED!

We're looking for anyone with social media experience who could help us make better use of our Facebook page and ensure this event is well publicised. If you can offer guidance or support, please let Sandy know at: chair@u3abromley.org.uk



Science



Singing



Coach Trips



Curry Club