

# u3a Bromley



## IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Chair	page	4
Annual General Meeting	page	3
Summer Social	page	5
Freda's Group	page	16
Dabble with AI	page	17
<u>Groups information</u>		
Canasta Group	page	6
Curry / Lunch Club	page	8
Walking Tennis Group	page	19
Wider Horizons	page	20

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## Group Liaison Officers (GLOs)

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 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

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2025** **Local Studies**

Tony Harris  
Henry VIII

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2025** **General Meeting**

Stuart Robinson  
Curiosities of the City of London Part II

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2025** **Local Studies**

Siobhan Clarke  
Kensington Palace

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2025** **Annual General Meeting**

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2025** **Local Studies**

David Allen  
Blood, guts and gore Part II

**20<sup>th</sup> May 2025** **General Meeting**

Andy Smith  
Victim to Victory

**3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025** **Local Studies**

Ed Richardson  
Bromley & Sheppards Colleges for retired clergy

**17<sup>th</sup> June 2025** **General Meeting**

Andrew Baker  
The Donald Trump Phenomenon

**15<sup>th</sup> July 2025** **Local Studies**

Nick Dobson  
Swinging London

**All Local Studies and General Meetings are held at**

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

Front cover photo by Francis Kimmins  
Visit to Kew Gardens by the Gardening All Hands Group



# Welcome to Issue 2, March 2025

Dear u3a Community,

We have a packed issue for March. The groups have been very busy and there are some new groups on offer. Whether you're an art enthusiast, a card game lover, a motorcycle aficionado, or someone seeking new social outlets, there's something for everyone!

The launch of the **Friday Canasta Group**, welcomes players of all levels. If you have a passion for card games, this is the perfect chance to be part of the new group.

**Curry Club.** The newly proposed Curry Club offers a chance to meet monthly and indulge in delicious buffets at local restaurants or explore set price menus on weekday evenings. It's an excellent opportunity to connect with fellow members over a shared love for curry.

For those who enjoy tennis but prefer a gentler pace, the **Walking Tennis** sessions at Wickham Park Tennis Club are the perfect fit.

The **Wider Horizons Group** is relaunching this March, offering day trips by public transport to destinations both inside and outside London.

## A Visual Treat

Featured is a photograph taken by Francis Kimmins on the cover page. This beautiful image documents the **Gardening All Hands Group's** visit to Kew Gardens, capturing the essence of the members' love for nature.

Best wishes

**Rashmi  
Editor**

# Contents

Annual General Meeting	3
Message from the Chair	4
General Meeting talk in January	4
Spring / Summer Social	5
Dabble with AI - ChatGPT demystified	17
<b>News from the groups</b>	
Art Appreciation (1)	6
NEW : Canasta Group	6
Computing - Tablets etc (5))	7
Creative Writing (1)	7
Curry Club	8
ELLE (3) Ilford	8
ELLE (3) Manor Park	9
Film Studies (1)	9
Golf Lessons (2)	9
Gardening All Hands Group (4)	10
Gardening Group – Monthly Talks (4)	10
Guitar Group (5)	11
History of Fashion (5)	11
Local Studies (4)	12
Motorcycle Group (1)	12
Outings by Public Transport (4)	12
Photography Group (5)	13
Psychology (3) The Seven Deadly Sins	14
Science & Technology (5)	14
Rambles (2)	15
Social Studies (4)	16
Freda's Group	16
The Wordsmiths (1)	17
Theatre Group (2)	18
Walking Tennis (2)	19
Wider Horizons (4)	20
Wine Enjoyment (2)	20

## u3a Bromley AGM for 2025

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025

u3a Bromley will be holding our AGM for 2025 on Tuesday 15 April at 10.30 am at the **Whitfield Hall, United Reformed Church, Widmore Road, Bromley BR1 1RY** (near the large Boots entrance to the Glades and many Bus Stops).

2. Papers for the Meeting will be sent out to members on email via Beacon and to members without email via hard copy three weeks beforehand.

3. We expect to have Vacancies to fill on the Committee and would love to hear from members who might be interested in coming onto the Committee or who might want to help us in other ways.

For further information please contact either Sandy Boden or me, Angela Dowling.

4. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM.

Thank you,

**Angela  
u3a Bromley Business Secretary**

# Message from the Chair

Sometimes life throws you a series of curved balls and you feel as if everything about your life has been derailed. From recent experience, I can say that it teaches you to relish everything that you enjoy, not to waste opportunities and to make sure you maintain a network of people who you can reach out to.

My principal reason for joining the u3a was to meet people and now six years on, I can honestly say I am in a different place entirely and I have u3a Bromley to thank for that. It has shown me the value of leading a group, the ideal way to meet like-minded folk. Joining a committee, far from the onerous task many people envisage, is a great way to collaborate with others and see something you might have suggested work and be appreciated.

But I have also learned the hard way that it is vital to share the load and how dangerous it is for an organisation for one person to take on too much, however personally satisfying.

## Help us be more organised

So now we need more people to take on elements of what keeps our u3a running. Maybe people with analysis skills who could look at what we do and identify small roles and help us find the volunteers who could take on those roles.

## Think about joining the committee

How better to help your u3a than to join us on the committee, to make a difference, feel part of a team and have a positive impact on what we do. We are happy to talk to anyone about this without commitment. Just contact me or Angela Dowling.

## New Treasurer

We have had some very positive responses to our plea for a treasurer, thanks to all who responded in true u3a

volunteering spirit. As one person said "I have recently joined the Bromley u3a following my retirement last year and am thoroughly enjoying and participating in the various group activities. I am therefore keen to ensure the continued existence of the Bromley branch by offering my services as the Treasurer"

If there are no volunteers, there is no u3a.

## Outstanding renewals

Have you renewed your membership? If you aren't sure, contact Laury by email.

If you need help to do it, contact Keith Jeremiah by email.

## Looking forward to the AGM, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 10.30 am at the URC (details on page 3)

80 new members have joined us since October last year and new members bring new ideas, energy and enthusiasm. They are essential to keeping our u3a fresh and growing. We hope to see as many as possible at our AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> April, an opportunity to meet the committee and of course have your say.



So, on behalf of all of us on the committee, thanks for continuing to enjoy u3a Bromley.

**Sandy**  
**Chair, u3a Bromley**

## General Meeting talk in January

Our members enjoyed a very interesting talk by our Speaker Simon Mott on his subject "What makes a Super Star".

Simon grew up in Tunbridge Wells, and was a Chartered Surveyor by trade. He turned his favourite pastime, that being a fascination with one of Britain's biggest entertainers, Mantovani, into a wonderful Audio Visual that has seen him touring all over the South East to u3as, WIs, Rotary Clubs and Businesses.

A fascinating talk for our return to the URC in Bromley.

**Shirley Corney**  
**Speaker Secretary**





Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025

## **u3a Bromley Spring/Summer Social**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day.

We will be holding a nostalgic 1940s themed social to celebrate this event at the United Reformed Church on that evening between 7 pm – 9.00 pm.

**BRING YOUR OWN Food, Drink, Gas Mask, Ration Book.**

Tea and coffee will be provided

**DRESS UP** in 1940s outfits

There will be **MUSIC**, dancing and a sing-along, a **QUIZ** and a **RAFFLE**.

*As with the Christmas social, the numbers the hall can accommodate are limited, so booking is essential. Booking will open on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and close on 30<sup>th</sup> April. You will receive an email at that time giving details of how to obtain tickets.*

*Those of you without email can contact Elizabeth Adcock to obtain tickets but please **DO NOT** ring her **BEFORE 3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL** when booking opens.*

If you can play the piano and would like to accompany the sing-along at this event, or are a Vera Lynn impersonator, please contact the events team.



# Art Appreciation (1)

Our January zoom by Graham was on the three Guggenheim Galleries and their collections of mainly modern art. The Guggenheim family is one of the wealthiest in the USA. Famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright designed the New York gallery and it still looks strikingly up to date with concentric concrete rings outside which echo the spirals of the internal curved walls.

Bilbao Guggenheim was designed by Frank Gehry and is another striking shiny building with a massive seated flower-covered dog outside created by Jeff Koons, which keeps the gardeners busy!

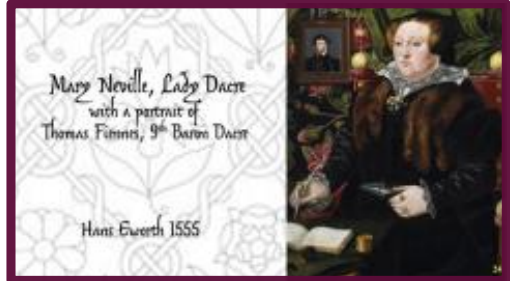
in 1949 Peggy Guggenheim purchased the Venice gallery, which is a modernised unfinished Venetian palace, originally commissioned in 1749, with only a ground floor completed.

We are fortunate that such wealth has given us all access to art by famous artists, too many to name. We viewed many images by artists such as Lichtenstein, Pollock, Rothko and Kandinsky.

Laraine Burr, who has a lifelong fascination with portraits, recently gave a talk about Portraiture in England 1500-1620. Our understanding is hampered by lack of information, as paintings were rarely signed and the name of the sitter often added much later. We have centuries worth of incorrect assumptions and sometimes deliberate deceptions to navigate.

Recent examination of several panel paintings using the latest technology is bringing exciting information to light. Dendrochronology gives us the earliest date of the panel and with powerful magnification, ultraviolet light, x-rays and infrared reflectology experts can analyse each layer of paint and method of working.

New research and the cleaning and conservation of these portraits give us a window into the lives of the wealthy at the dawn of the Modern Age.



**Future dates:**

- 5 March Royal River – Art of The Thames
- 19 March Paul Cezanne
- 2 April The Northern Renaissance
- Summer**
- 23 April Women Painters
- 7 May Elisabeth Frink
- 21 May The Bloomsbury Group in Berwick Church
- Alphonse Mucha
- 4 June Embroidery past and present
- 18 June 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris
- 2 July Social and Quiz

- |               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| Lesley Godwin | Churchill |
| Graham Taylor | Zoom      |
| Graham Taylor | Churchill |
| Graham Taylor | Zoom      |
| Anne Jones    | Churchill |
| Diana Harte   | Zoom      |
| Graham Taylor | Zoom      |
| Ann Woollins  | Churchill |
| Graham Taylor | Zoom      |
| Graham Taylor | Churchill |

## New : Canasta Group



### Friday Canasta Group Engaging Minds Through Card Play

Do you enjoy card games and would you like to join a brand new u3a Bromley group playing Canasta?

This is an exciting opportunity to be part of this new group.

All members welcome, players of all levels, as well as those new to the game.

Members willing to host the meeting at their home would be particularly welcome!

For further details please contact Sonia Case

## 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 in  
to 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 (07946 389  
573) 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 you buying a coffee  
(other beverages are available).

**Contact Keith on 07946 389 573**

## Creative Writing (1)

### Cold ..... but a wonderful sight.

Freezing gloved fingers  
wrapped around mugs of hot  
chocolate,  
Hats pulled down firmly over  
cold ears,  
Thick festive scarves over and  
around necks  
Children with parents huddled  
round the firepit that contains....  
A host of toasting  
marshmallows.  
'Wait your turn!' shouts the man  
in charge, 'enough for  
everyone.'

We pass quickly by the small eager  
crowd  
following the illuminated  
pathways.  
Sparkling fairy lights overhead,  
together with soft music  
from the lighted trees along the  
way.  
Archways festooned with lights  
Changeable coloured lamps  
floating in the lake.  
Down some lighted steps, also  
using our torches  
Guided by the helpers.  
'Careful now. Steep steps. Use  
the handrails.'  
Trees light up in blues, greens  
and mauves in front of the café.  
Time for more hot chocolate and  
sticky buns.  
'Can we come next year?' ask  
the children

**Liz Crossingham**



### Brrrr!

1.  
Said the Chancellor, "I've got to  
show  
That financially I'm in the know,  
Some people may think that I'm  
cruel  
When I stop their allowance for  
fuel,  
So for the old folk I hope it won't  
snow!"

But it did!!

2.  
Always remember  
At the end of November  
When the North winds blow  
Followed by snow,  
In Winter it's best  
To wear a vest!

**Peter Smith**

### Brrrr!

The snow it snowed and the  
wind it blowed  
And the frost it froze my nose  
and toes.  
I shook and shivered  
As on the ice I slithered  
wondering why  
The cold seems colder as we  
grow older.  
Pavements like glaciers  
Seen through rheumy eyes  
Causing unsure footed  
geriatrics to capsize  
Over they go  
One, two, three,  
A broken hip, a bleeding lip  
A bruised and swollen knee.  
And the wondrous world of  
white that once  
With eager anticipation  
Filled our head  
Now suffuses it with dread

**Carole Blacher**

## Curry Club

### DO YOU ENJOY CURRY?

My idea is to meet perhaps monthly and take advantage of any local restaurants doing buffets on a Sunday and/or one of the set price menus that are available on weekday evenings. I'd love to know what people think of this idea. Obviously I'd need to know in advance who was coming and book places at the restaurant. A second idea would be for a pub night, perhaps fortnightly, in one of the local pubs. Folk wouldn't need to book in but could just turn up if they're at a loose end. Just don't leave me sitting in the Richmal Compton like Johnny no-mates! If these ideas appeal, or if anyone has any other suggestions, please contact Diane and we could start as early as next month.



## ELLE (3) Ilford

The ELLE group had not met since October 2024's trip to Manor Park but, having visited 32 of the 41 stations, we are now on the last leg towards Shenfield.



We met at Ilford, so I was looking forward to this with much anticipation as it is my home town. The department store, Bodgers, which was opposite the station, has now gone, having closed down in 2018; Fairheads which was a few doors along had already disappeared having shut its doors in 2008.

Also gone was my favourite tavern, the Cranbrook, where I misspent much of my youth during their regular "happy hour(s)". In its place is a pub called the Crown. We continued walking up Cranbrook Road past many unfamiliar shops and the Ilford Grand Hotel until we reached my beloved Valentine's

Park where I spent much of my halcyon days during the long, hot summer months.



After a refreshment break in the park cafe, we headed to Valentine's Mansions which in my day was used as council offices. It has been there since the 1690s and was built for Elizabeth Tillotson and her family after the death of her husband, the Archbishop of Canterbury. It has changed hands many times since. The last resident, Sarah Ingleby, died in 1906 and the council acquired it in 1912. After standing empty for nearly 15 years it was restored and reopened in 2009. It is now open to the public on certain days of the year, as well as for weddings, wakes etc. While we were there a school trip arrived to be shown round the building and learn about how people lived in the past. The house also has a range of well-kept gardens as well as a

lake with a variety of swans, ducks and geese.

We then headed to Gants Hill station to finish our journey and make our various routes back home. What nostalgia! I commuted at that station every day for years! It has been voted one of the most beautiful stations on the underground network with its art deco design. It was designed by Charles Holden who apparently based it on the Moscow metro during the 1930s.

It certainly was a trip down memory lane for me and I recommend a visit to Valentine's Park and House to other u3a members and groups.

### Sheila Lucas





## ELLE (3) Manor Park

Manor Park, in the London Borough of Newham is situated between Forest Gate and Ilford, doesn't sound like the most promising location for a walk in the countryside.

But it seems to be home to various cemeteries and borders on Wanstead Flats to the North, the enormous City of London Cemetery and Ilford Golf Course. The smaller Manor Park Cemetery is adjacent to the station so this is where we went first. Then we crossed the southern section of Wanstead Flats to Alexandra lake. Here we found a variety of ducks, geese and other water birds swimming happily in the sparkling water on the lookout for any human passers by who might have some food for them. Although this is discouraged there were plenty of visitors willing to oblige. Wandering around the lake to the car park and

exit on to Aldersbrook Road, it was only a short walk to the peaceful and elegant City of London Cemetery and Crematorium. Designed by William Haywood in the 1850's it was opened to take the overflow from city cemeteries which were bursting at the seams. His mausoleum and statue is located just inside the main entrance as, conveniently, is the Poppy café/restaurant. We stopped in its outdoor garden for coffee and a bite to eat. A pleasant and relaxing short break in the sunshine before exploring the spacious, beautifully maintained cemetery. It incorporates a chapel and a church as well as two crematoria – a modern and a traditional one – catacombs and a columbarium.

On a sunny day this is a lovely walk and should any members wish to retrace our steps, please email me and I will be happy share our map.

**Carole Blacher**



### Film Studies (1)



Our film studies class is thriving, we have around ten attendees each week, on zoom, 10 am -11:30 am. New members are welcome, no previous knowledge required, only a liking for movies.

We look at film history, different aspects of how to understand a film, all sorts. .... We've looked at things like sound, colour, stars, finance, German film of the 20s, Russian film, Italian film of the 40s, British cinema of the 60s and much more! We watch lots of clips, and have interesting discussions .....

**We meet on Wednesdays,  
10.00 am - 11.30 am.**

**For further details please email me.**

### Golf Lessons (2)

Our current session of Golf Lessons at Chelsfield Golf Centre is under way but there are still 4 more dates available:

**Wed 5<sup>th</sup> March**

**Wed 12<sup>th</sup> March**

**Wed 19<sup>th</sup> March**

**Wed 26<sup>th</sup> March**

Followed by a **Texas Scramble on Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> April**

The next session of 6 Golf Lessons will commence in May

These friendly groups are taken by Steve, a professional at the Centre, and are suitable for beginners and improvers.

For further details please contact Mary Golds.



## Gardening All Hands Group (4)



### Lunch at the New Inn in Hayes

We always hold the All Hands Christmas lunch in January. Firstly, because January is not a month to venture into gardens, not even for the keenest gardener and secondly, we canny gardeners avoid Christmas prices, so we can save our pennies to buy more plants!

This year we were made very welcome at the New Inn in Hayes and had a very sociable lunch as the pictures show.

### Visit to Kew 10<sup>th</sup> Feb: Orchids inspired by the beauty of Peru

On a cold February Monday, members of the Hands-on Gardening group embarked on a journey into the vibrant

and exotic landscapes of Peru. Equipped with Freedom Passes and Oyster cards, our intrepid gardeners made their way to the stunning displays of Peruvian Orchids at the Princess of Wales Glasshouse in Kew Gardens, West London.

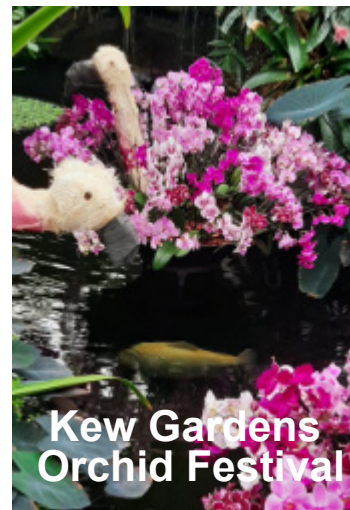
Peru, renowned for its extraordinary range of plants and animals, boasts a stunning range of landscapes, from deserts and rain forests to towering mountains and deep valleys. Home to over 3,000 orchid species, many of which are unique to the region, Peru is a haven for these delicate plants. They usually thrive as epiphytes—growing on other plants, drawing moisture and nutrients from the air and rainfall.

The tropical warmth of the Kew glasshouse quickly defrosted the group and we were immersed in the festival atmosphere including the music, bird song and insect noises that South America is so famous for. As we admired the spectacular colours, shapes and sizes of the orchid displays, a film show described Kew's vital conservation efforts, as their plant collectors work with local communities to preserve Peruvian plants.

Previous orchid exhibitions at Kew have celebrated countries such as Brazil, India, Thailand, Costa Rica, and Cameroon, with last year's focus on Madagascar. The exhibition was greatly enjoyed by the group who look forward to more tropical expeditions in West London in the future.

The Kew Orchid Festival runs between February 1 and March 2, 2025.

### Frances Kimmins



Kew Gardens Orchid Festival



Visit to Kew Gardens

### 2025 Outing Destinations, exact dates TBA

March	Holland Park/Design Museum
April	Pashley Manor
May	Leonardslee Lakes & Garden
June	Hever Castle
July	Chiswick House & Gardens
August	Sarah Raven, East Sussex
September	Great Comp, Claygate Cross TN15 8QS
October	Franciscan Gardens, Canterbury
November	Next planning meeting

## Gardening Group – Monthly Talks (4)

In February our speaker was unable to come and so we had a talk instead about Beth Chatto's Garden. A group of us from the All Hands Gardening Group had visited it in 2023 and it was lovely to be able to share our experience and to show many pictures of this beautiful garden.



### Future Talks

#### Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March – Caroline Halfpenny – The Gardens of Cornwall

Caroline will introduce us to some of the interesting gardens of Cornwall.

#### Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April - Stephen Harmer – Sissinghurst Castle.

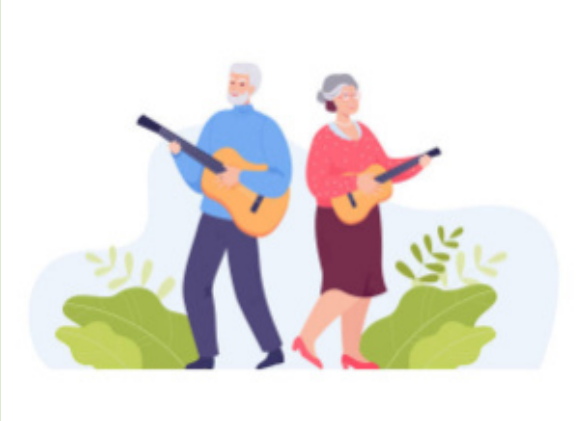
Garden historian Stephen will tell us about Virginia Wolf's famous Arts and Crafts garden.

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 contact **Sue Goodger**

## Guitar Group (5)



Come and have fun and join our 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.  
Time: 2.00 - 4.00pm.

Venue: The Wesley Room,  
Bromley Methodist Church,  
College Road,  
Bromley BR1 3NS.

Please contact Christine Dabrowa for more information.

## History of Fashion (5)

2025 began with a talk on Jewellery through the Ages. I managed to cast images from my PC to the TV and zoom in on the fine details in portraits. We followed this with a visit to the Jewellery Gallery at the V&A - 2 floors of beautifully displayed world class jewellery. Some of us stayed for a fashion tour.

February marked a year since our introductory meeting. Seven of the original members made it and seven enthusiastic ladies have joined during the year. The theme was Tudor Portraits and Genevieve, who had heard my talk on Art Appreciation, gave a full account of English Portraiture 1500-1620 and how it was different from later eras. We then squeezed up to watch a couple of relevant videos before looking at books. Members wanted to have some more small study sessions and repeat gallery visits.

The March meeting will be about Children through the Ages and I am looking forward to showing some fascinating portraits.

**Laraine Burr**



**Watching videos from Sotheby's and the Holburne Museum**



**Ready for the Jewellery Gallery at the V&A**



**The Canning Jewel, Renaissance style enameled gold with baroque pearl, diamonds and rubies**



**Three Young Girls by Follower of William Larkin c1620**

## Local Studies (4)

Please note that 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 noon** at the latest.  
 These are Open Meetings, and all members are welcome.

Forthcoming meetings:

<b>4 March</b>	<b>Tony Harris</b>	<b>Henry VIII</b>
<b>1 April</b>	<b>Siobhan Clarke</b>	<b>Kensington Palace</b>
<b>6 May</b>	<b>David Allen</b>	<b>Blood, guts and gore Part II</b>
<b>3 June</b>	<b>Ed Richardson</b>	<b>Bromley &amp; Sheppards Colleges for retired clergy</b>

For further information, please contact Steve Woods.

## Motorcycle Group (1)

### CALLING ALL BIKERS (hairy or otherwise!)

As organiser of the u3a motorcycle group, we have had an informal planning meeting, and I'd like to mention our future plans...

At the moment, we have a merry band of four of us, but we'd like to enlist more people!

We envisage monthly rides out on the third Thursday of the month, probably something like 10 am - 5 pm, which will be of a length around 50 - 80 miles, and usually involving tea, cake and chatting and sedate pootling through the pleasant Kent countryside, mostly on A and B roads. Anyone is welcome with any bike, whether 125cc commuter, Vintage classic or

1000cc superbike. I know it's the u3a, but we won't ask to see your birth certificate or if you're actually over 60! If you have any pals / spouses / grannies etc who aren't in the u3a, we are happy to see them too! Friends and relatives of members are welcome. I find biking is more enjoyable in company, and there is usually a real feeling of camaraderie.

We shall recommence our trips in April, unless there is a sudden mild spell in March. But I won't be holding my breath for that!

We have been discussing the possibility of a long weekend away on the bikes e.g. to Wales or Somerset, possibly in July. That's something to think about. Nothing planned yet but it might be fun!

**For more information, contact John Lough**

## Outings by Public Transport (4)

The Outings for these next few months are listed below:

- 17 Mar **Alexander Fleming's Museum** Fleming discovered the antibiotic penicillin at St Mary's Hospital in 1928, a breakthrough that revolutionised medicine and earned him a Nobel Prize. Come and see his laboratory and the apparatus he used. We leave Bromley South station at 9:30am to reach Victoria at 10:05. If you wish to meet me there, please let me know. A bus ride and a short walk take us to the museum on Praed Street. Our tour begins at 11am. **Please note, there are a lot of stairs. This outing is now FULL** but you can join a waiting list; I've never had an outing yet when someone didn't need to pull out. The cost is £5.
- 15 May **Wandle Industrial Museum.** This museum looks at all the different industries that once lined the River Wandle. One of them was the Textile industry and we will have the joy of block printing our own fabric (the fabric is provided). We will travel from Bromley South station (12:30 pm) to Beckenham Junction (12:40 pm). Take a tram to Mitcham Junction (1:30 pm) followed by a bus to Lower Green. A 2 min walk takes us to the museum ready for our tour at 2 pm. Please let me know where you wish to meet us. The cost is £5. A packed lunch will be needed or an early one!
- 22 Jul **Old Operating Theatre.** This is the only 19<sup>th</sup> century operating theatre in Europe, once part of the original St. Thomas' hospital. It was re-discovered in 1956 and has been restored. We will have a 90 minutes tour followed by free time to explore the herb gallery. We will meet at London bridge station at 10 am. A short walk takes us to the museum. The cost is £20. If we have 20 people a refund of £5 will be coming your way.

Ann Woollins

## Photography Group (5)

### AN IMAGE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Just visit any interesting or scenic sites and you will find scores of people using their mobile phones to take pictures. "We photographers" initially spurned the idea of taking such low quality images, but now, as phones can produce superb photographs, I wonder about having to carry around a bulky conventional camera to obtain good pictures.

Members of The Camera Club, now renamed The Photography Group, are tending to more frequently use these modern marvels, and we would love to have new members to join us, where they can show us what they can produce.

However, here are a few pictures, taken with my conventional camera, to show what we demonstrate to other club members at our meetings. It becomes an

interesting and rewarding hobby. Even if you do not possess a conventional camera, why not join us and prove that phones are now the image makers of the future?

We accept all qualities of picture, they do not have to be perfect (my little fox's body is a bit out of focus) and lots of help is available to any member who would like it.

We meet at Oakley House on Bromley Common on one Monday morning per month for interesting talks, usually on various subjects to do with past and present photography, and on Zoom to show of our pictures on given themes on alternate Tuesday mornings, to chat about themed photos we share with each other.

See the u3a Bromley website or email Norman Watson.

**Alan Davis**



**Brief encounter, Nymans Gardens**



**Young visitor**



**Flower Seller, Romania**



**The New Forest**

## Psychology (3) The Seven Deadly Sins

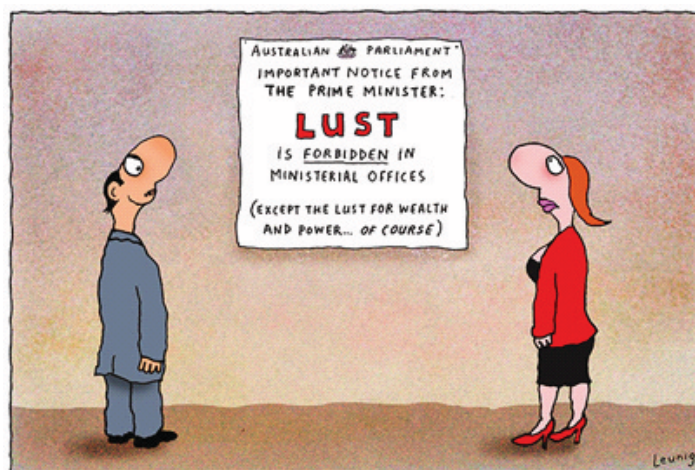
This term in Psychology we are focusing on the seven deadly sins based on the recent Radio 4 series called the 7 Deadly Psychologies. The concepts of sin and evil are linked with religious notions of good and bad and it was Pope Gregory in the 6<sup>th</sup> century who identified these cardinal sins which most societies, religious or secular, would agree identify undesirable/unhealthy/in some cases criminal behaviour. Pride, Greed, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Wrath and Sloth identify extremes of behaviours common to all humans. We all get angry, eat or drink too much sometimes or choose to stay in bed when we have pressing jobs to be done, but why? The programmes look at the psychology behind such actions and the first one focused on Lust.

Lust is a drive in humans whose evolutionary purpose is procreation, and there are certain neurotransmitters such as dopamine, noradrenaline and serotonin which are associated with sexual activity to facilitate and reinforce behaviour. But although the behaviour itself is a very basic instinctive one, how it manifests itself in people's everyday lives is very much dictated by the prevailing culture and subcultures in which we live.

There have been times in history when it has been perfectly acceptable, possibly even desirable, for older men to have relationships with younger ones. Women's sexual behaviour has always been more heavily policed than men's and for hundreds of years we were regarded as more lustful than men, our desires therefore needing to be kept under control by our fathers, brothers and husbands. Recent research by American psychologist, Terri Fisher, seems to suggest that, not only do young men think about sex twice as often as young women but they also think about food and sleep more frequently. The penalties for lustful behaviour can be physical as well as social or religious. In the permissive Regency times it is estimated that one in five Londoners had syphilis by the age of 35 – a very unpleasant and possibly fatal side-effect of overindulgence.

### Carole Blacher

The Psychology group is currently full – to be put on the waiting list please email me.



## Science & Technology (5)

At January's meeting, Ron Bennett, accompanied by a series of informative and colourful slides, explained how those familiar items – batteries and fuel cells – work. Anodes, cathodes, positive and negative ions, connecting wires to allow currents to flow, redox reactions and, of course, the salt bridge, were succinctly illustrated, maybe bringing back memories of the school chemistry lab to many.

Batteries and fuel cells both generate electricity. The single most essential difference between them is simple: a battery stores a limited supply of chemical reactants, which convert into electrical energy when connected to a circuit, but is used up, whereas a fuel cell requires a constant supply of fuel reactants to convert into energy; for as long as there is access to fuel, there is access to electricity anywhere or at any time and place.

As the world looks towards innovative technology to help reduce the planet's carbon footprint, scarcity of resources is posing a significant challenge. The most popular lithium-ion batteries use materials such as lithium, nickel and cobalt – elements that are in short supply. A green energy transition requires huge investments in both battery and fuel cell technology.

An increased demand of 25% annually will soon use up these rare elements, so the race is on to develop battery and fuel cells that can use more common elements like iron and phosphorous. Fuel cells already use plentiful materials like aluminium and stainless steel in their construction and hydrogen (the most abundant element in the Universe) as fuel. Given that energy loss (through heat, light or sound) is inevitable during the transformation

process, efficiency is always an issue. Batteries and fuel cells play a major role in a greener future. At present, lithium ion batteries are the choice for most automotive applications, while fuel cells are preferred for commercial vehicles such as buses, trains, trucks and aeroplanes. Certainly, the new 358 Orpington to Crystal Palace electric buses are a welcome and encouraging sight!



## Rambles (2)



Famous venue in Soho

Here are our walks for March and April 2025, a mixture of London, suburban, and country. Don't forget that our "Pathways" circular enables you to receive last minute information of changes or cancellations. Email me if you need to join the distribution list; similarly email me if you wish to be removed from the list.

For any new ramblers, full information will be in "Pathways", but guidance in brief is:- Attendees are responsible for their own safety both in country & town. 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, so that we can offer more walks; assistance with planning or navigation is available if wanted.

### The Walks

**NB On Central London 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.**

**Tues. 25 Feb. 2025 – CHANGED to: Lewisham to Canada Water**

Meet at 10.30 at Lewisham rail station entrance for a linear walk to Canada Water.

**Leader:** Kate Irwin

**Tues. 04 March 2025: Farnborough Circular**

Meet at 10.30 on Farnborough High Street at junction with Church Road for a 4.5 mile walk in the Farnborough area. Served by 358 bus from Bromley.

**Leader:** Robin Burnhams –  
Mobile: 07759 536 415

**Tues. 18 Mar. 2025 – Kings Cross circular**

Meet at 10.30 outside the underground station in King's Cross Square underneath the station clock. A 2hr circular walk, looking at how the area has been transformed for life in the 21st century.

**NB: Contact the Walk Leader to book your place** by email or phone.

**Leader:** Marie Blakeley –

**Tues. 25 Mar. 2025 – Soho (repeat of January walk)**

Meet for a 10.45 start at Tottenham Court Road Underground Station, exit 4 at the top of the escalator. A walk from Tottenham Court Road to Piccadilly Circus through Soho. It's 2 miles long with 33 points of interest and public toilets  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way round.

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

**Leader:** Graham Haynes

**Mon. 07 Apr. 2025 – Penge to West Dulwich**

Meet at 10.30 at Penge East Station (exit by platform 1) for an approx. 5 mile linear walk to West Dulwich station, via Crystal Palace Park, Wells Park, Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Park. Some steep slopes; Cafe in Dulwich Park or by Dulwich Picture Gallery.

**Leader:** Maggie Nicol –  
Mobile: 07599 277 574

**Tues. 15 Apr. 2025 – Green Park to Baker Street**

Meet for 11am start outside Green Park tube Stn., Buckingham Palace exit by the coffee kiosk. A linear walk to Baker St. via Mayfair and Marylebone of around 2 hours.

**NB: Contact the Walk Leader to book your place.**

**Leader:** Alan Canham

**Wed. 30 Apr. 2025 Kemsing circular**

Depart at 10.30 am from the car park in Kemsing TN15 6NB for a 5.5 ml circular walk via Knockmill and Cotman's Ash. There are a number of high stiles and although hilly there are no steep inclines. Refreshments available in pub or deli/café afterwards.

**Leader:** Marie Blakeley

**Wed 07 May 2025 – Piccadilly to Saville Row**

Meet at 10.45am under Eros for a 3 mile walk in London with 30 points of interest.

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

**Leader:** Graham Haynes –

**Peter Wood – Rambles Group Co-ordinator**

## Social Studies (4)

13 September 2024

### Government Reform, led by Bernard

An interesting look at our present system and alternatives. It demonstrated how hard it is to come out with a "perfect" solution as all options had their pros and cons.

27 September 2024

### Early Years Education led by Ann

Ann gave us the benefit of her extensive knowledge of and experience in this subject. She ran through the history of provision and the present proposals, a very complicated subject and again, one which doesn't have easy solutions and certainly not cheap ones.

11 October 2024

### Pacifism, led by Richard

Richard explained his belief in Pacifism and ran through some of the history behind it and the fate of conscientious objectors in the past. An interesting discussion ensued as to how Pacifism can be the answer, especially in view of current events such as the invasion of the Ukraine and how to react to it.

25 October 2024

### Adult Education, led by Brenda

Brenda ran through the history of Adult Education and the wonderful

## Autumn 2024 Term meetings.

opportunities it had given people in the past who took advantage of the courses. Several of the group had either benefitted from this or indeed taught Adult Education. Sadly there seems to have been a massive decline in the provision over the last few decades.

8 November 2024

### Prisons Part 2, Juliet and Colin

The dynamic duo returned to give more details on the state of the Justice System and the state of prisons in particular. It was clear that the whole system is in crisis, exemplified by the necessity of the Early Prison Release scheme. Juliet in particular, was able to give insight into the problems in prisons, having been a Prisons Visitor. Some chink of light was evidenced by a review being conducted by (ex Conservative Minister) David Gauke and the appointment of James Timpson as Prisons Minister.

22 November 2024

### My Death, My Decision

We welcomed Nathan Stilwell of Humanists UK on behalf of the above campaign. This was especially appropriate given the impending vote in the House of

Commons on the Assisted Dying Bill. He supported the Bill (although Humanists would ideally like it to be broader in scope). He explained what the Bill provided for and how Assisted Dying is already provided for in 30+ jurisdictions around the world. He dealt with the issue sensitively and accepted that there were reservations about opening up a fundamental change in our law and the role of doctors in it.

6 December 2024

### The Prison System and Mental Health Presented by Pamela Taylor, Professor of Forensic Psychiatry, Cardiff University.

We were delighted to welcome such a distinguished guest and were indeed fortunate to learn from her extensive knowledge and experience, from her initial training as a Doctor of Medicine to her advanced position in the world of Psychiatry. A fascinating insight into the world of psychiatry and how many prisoners can, given the resources, be helped. Again, the system is under strain through lack of funding, so many do not get the support they, and society, would benefit from.

## Freda's Group

Freda's group enjoys meeting once a month at her home bringing different projects to work on. It is such a friendly social group and the ladies enjoy the friendships they have made over the time the group started.

Chatting over a tea or coffee, watching the different birds visiting her lovely garden and relaxing in a very pleasant and happy atmosphere. Parker the cat always finds a lap to snuggle up on.

A big thank you to Freda.

**Shirley Corney**  
Group Leader





## The Wordsmiths (1)

A very enjoyable productive morning at our first meeting of the new year at The Richmal Crompton - JD Wetherspoon pub.

We all enjoy writing within our group and some very good and interesting short stories, articles, poems etc., have been produced.

We do not just do writing but read out our work and discuss what we have written and receive constructive ideas where it is needed.

One day a book may be written by our Wordsmiths as they are very creative!

**Shirley Corney**



### ALICE by Christine Clavering (a Wordsmith)

The piercing cry of a baby withdrawing from heroin is a sound that will stay with you. Claire heard baby Alice Edwards before she saw her, although a full term baby in a ward of tiny premature scraps of life was easy to spot. In the other incubators and cots were little lives that should have been safe inside their mothers. Some lay motionless as if trying to conserve every bit of energy to keep their little hearts beating; others waived their arms and legs, trying to make a connection with this plastic box that now replaced their mother's womb. Beside most of the cots sat anxious parents, willing their baby to keep breathing. Next to Alice's cot was an older woman, streaks of grey in her untidy shoulder length hair. One of the nurses picked Alice up out of her cot and jiggled her up and down in the way that was said to comfort a baby in withdrawal. "Have you got a headache

darling?" cooed the nurse, pointedly ignoring the woman sitting by the cot. The woman in question was Carol Edwards, Paula's mother. She had dark circles under her eyes and her bottom lip was trembling as she tried hard not to cry. "Can I hold her?" Carol whispered. The nurse hesitated, then seemed to thaw a bit towards the wretched looking grandmother. She passed her the grizzling baby and showed Carol how to jiggle her to try and stop her crying. Carol held onto Alice tight and buried her face in the baby as her tears started to fall. Claire held back from introducing herself for the moment and instead asked to have a word with the nurse.

"That poor baby!" the nurse said. "Fancy making your child go through withdrawal like this, just so you can keep sticking needles in your arm. The poor wee thing is having to be treated for Hep C as well."

Claire knew that hepatitis C was widespread among injecting drug users. It was just a relief she wasn't HIV positive. "Has the baby's mother been in?" Claire asked the nurse. She knew Paula was being detoxed in the same hospital. "Oh, she wanders in occasionally, feeling sorry for herself, but she doesn't stay if her mother is here, which is most of the time. She'll never be able to look after that baby."

Claire glanced back to see Carol looking more composed and baby Alice sleeping in her arms. Claire introduced herself and told Carol that the baby would stay in hospital, under the care of the local authority, whilst an assessment was done on Paula's circumstances and recommendations made for Alice's future care. Carol just sighed and hugged Alice tighter. "I'd like to look after her" she whispered, "I'd like to have another go at bringing up a girl."

### Dabble with AI – ChatGPT demystified

Talk of AI (Artificial Intelligence) is everywhere and I hope this little overview will give you an insight and tempt you to have a go yourself. ChatGPT is an artificial-intelligence chatbot, one of many, but probably the best known. It was developed by the American AI-research company, Open AI and there is a free to use (but limited) version you can have a go with.

I used it to summarise a long document, transcribe to text a photo of a handwritten note and find a recipe using specific ingredients which barely scratches the surface of what can be done.

To get started type <https://chatgpt.com/> into a

browser, provide your email address and create a 12 digit password. There's an app version for your phone too. Type your query, or on the app version even speak it.

For the Nerds: The GPT stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer, which are the type of large language models (LLMs) used by the chatbot. The 'generative' means ChatGPT can create new content based on existing data, while the 'transformer' neural network enables it to learn context and meaning by tracking the relationships between sequential data - such as words in a sentence.

**Sandy Boden**

## Theatre Group (2)

The group meets at Bromley Little Theatre in North Street Bromley on the second Thursday afternoon of the month at 2.15 for a 2.30 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 all 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 as well as those attending meetings after the summer break who have not yet paid for the year. 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.

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

- 13 Mar *Social meeting* bring something to share  
 10 Apr *Michael Palmer* An Alan Bennett monologue  
 8 May *Dean Caston* Let's all go down the Strand  
 12 Jun *Susan Elkin* Dramatic Adaptions  
 10 Jul *Kate Boyle* Annual walk with Kate , **Blackfriars, Shakespeare's other theatre** Booking essential £5

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### The Accidental Death of an anarchist Bromley Little Theatre matinee 11 January 2025

Originally set in Italy, based on a true incident in Milan in 1969, this English adaption of Dario Fo's play is by Tom Basden. I didn't read director Pauline Armour's notes until after I'd seen it so I have to say in spite of the fact it appears to be just a farcical comedy the underlying matter of police and other corruption is cleverly made very clear so job well done!

A maniac has been arrested for impersonating various professional people and while being interviewed by police manages to pretend to be a judge who is re-investigating "the accidental death of the anarchist" who had been arrested and died after jumping out of a window. The Maniac's gifted way with words and fast talking confuses them and they find they are contradicting their statements and possibly admitting to murder - did he jump or was he pushed? There is so much more but it would take too many words!

The whole cast are amazing as always in this hilarious dark comedy but special mention has to be made of Robert O'Neill who is absolutely incredible as the fast talking, remarkably agile Maniac. How does he remember all those lines without faltering? What a wonderful start to 2025. Several of our group said it is the best production they've ever seen at BLT and that is praise indeed.

**Pat Ward**

### A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Barbican Theatre 16 January 2025

A group of 25 members managed to find their way to The Barbican Centre on a January day to see a modern production of A midsummer Night's Dream in the theatre. The theatre was packed for our matinee, and it was nice to see that it included quite a few school groups.

This acclaimed RSC production, which transferred from Stratford, is directed by Eleanor Rhodes and has Matthew Boynton as Bottom. He plays his part as Pyramus in the play, at the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, with a hilarious death scene and the rest of the mechanicals delight as ever with Peter Quince deftly changed to Rita Quince. Katherine Pearce as Puck also captures us with her tricks.

The setting and scenery are very imaginative with lights and lighting effectively transporting us to midsummer in the forest as well as the Athenian Court.

The production is well described by the Guardian as "a ravishing fusion of flamboyance and fun" and was an excellent choice of the theatre for their Christmas production with our visit being one of the final performances. The play was very enjoyable, and many favourable comments were made afterwards by those in the group who attended.

**Mary Garside**

### THE PRODUCERS Menier Chocolate Factory 2 February 2025

What could be more distasteful than two Jewish producers making a musical with Adolf Hitler as the hero. Well this is it! Over two hours of delicious political incorrectness, over two hours of hilarity. Don't think any minority group was left unscathed. Brilliantly outrageously funny.

In 1959 producer Max Bialystock, (Andy Nyman) has just had a show on Broadway open and close on the same night and is feeling rather down. His accountant, Leo Bloom (Marc Antolin) while looking through the books comments on the fact that Max would be better off having a flop rather than a hit. Max persuades Leo to become his co-producer and the hunt begins for a dreadful playwright who has written a dire musical that is bound to flop. They think they have found this in the script of Springtime for Hitler and Germany....! The two leading men are outstanding and supported by a dazzling cast and we were so busy laughing we were able to forget the uncomfortable benches we were seated on.

**Pat Ward**

## Theatre Group (2)

**THE MIRROR CRACK'D**  
**Bromley Little Theatre**  
**8 February 2025**

40 theatre group members attended the most recent offering from BLT which is one of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple mysteries. On this occasion Jane Marple is incapacitated by a badly sprained ankle and must rely on others' recollections of events to solve the latest murder in St Mary Mead, that of a guest in the newly acquired home of a glamorous Hollywood actress. The detective assigned to the case just happens to be Miss Marple's nephew which is very handy! In this production the relating of proceedings is cleverly done by using flashbacks where characters from past and present are on stage at the same time but it is never confusing, as it is done so well.

It goes without saying the performances by all on stage is immaculate, but what amazes me is how good and sturdy the sets always are, the costumes so authentic and lighting effects adding that extra dimension. It's so easy to take all these things for granted as we do when visiting West End theatres where we pay in the region of five times (or more) as much!

*Pat Ward*

## Walking Tennis (2)

**u3a Bromley Walking Tennis  
 at Wickham Park Tennis Club**

**Promoting Fitness and Fun for All Ages**

### Introduction

Walking tennis is a fantastic adaptation of the traditional game, designed to cater to individuals who love tennis but seek a less intensive form of exercise. Bromley u3a is offering a unique opportunity for members to engage in physical activity, socialise, and enjoy the sport they love at the Wickham Park Tennis Club.

### The Essence of Walking Tennis

Walking tennis retains the fundamental rules and structure of conventional tennis but introduces modifications to suit the needs of participants who prefer a slower pace. The key differences include allowing two bounces before hitting the ball and prohibiting running and jumping. This ensures that the game remains accessible and enjoyable.

### The Benefits of Walking Tennis

- **Physical Health:** Walking tennis provides a gentle yet effective workout, helping to improve cardiovascular health, strength, and flexibility. It is an excellent way to keep moving and stay active, which is crucial for maintaining overall health as we age.
- **Mental Well-being:** Engaging in regular physical activity can significantly boost mental health. Walking tennis encourages social interaction, reduces stress, and enhances mood, contributing to a better quality of life.
- **Social Connections:** The social aspect of walking tennis cannot be overstated. It fosters camaraderie and friendship among participants, creating a supportive community. This is particularly important for retirees who may be seeking new social outlets.

### Walking Tennis at Wickham Park Tennis Club

Wickham Park Tennis Club, located in Pickhurst Rise, BR4, provides an ideal venue for walking tennis. The club boasts well-maintained courts and a welcoming atmosphere, making it a perfect spot for Bromley u3a members to gather and enjoy the game.

### Scheduled Sessions

Walking tennis sessions are scheduled regularly, ensuring that members have ample opportunities to participate. These include a session on Mondays at 11.30 am.

### Inclusive Environment

One of the standout features of the walking tennis program at Wickham Park Tennis Club is its inclusive nature. The sessions are designed to accommodate players of varying skill levels, from complete beginners to seasoned players looking for a gentler way to enjoy tennis.

### Getting Involved

Joining the walking tennis sessions at Wickham Park Tennis Club is straightforward. The sessions are affordable at £4 a session, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate. Contact Christine for more information.



## Wider Horizons (4)

**GOOD NEWS:** The Wider Horizons Group relaunches in March 2025 with new joint leaders - Margaret Caddy and Pam Shuttleworth.

Originally created for those living alone who find themselves at a loose end at weekends, it now welcomes any u3a member who enjoys an interesting and engaging day out by public transport in good company.

The outings will take place on the 4th Saturday of every month with destinations, both inside and outside London, announced in the dedicated WhatsApp group and in this newsletter.

Our members are encouraged to lead a trip of their choice occasionally, which gets fitted into the programme, so ideas will be well received

The first three outings that have been planned for 2025 are:

**22 Mar 2025** The Wellcome Collection, Euston Road.

**26 Apr 2025** The Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road.

**24 May 2025** The Charles Dickens Museum and a short walk in the Bloomsbury area.

New members are welcome!

If you would like to join us, please email a reply to Margaret or Pam giving your mobile number to join the WhatsApp group.



## Wine Enjoyment (2)

Another full house enjoyed a terrific evening of wines from Spain and Portugal – even the most modest served was regarded as eminently quaffable. Value for money should never be understated, and there is a way around the swingeing tax rises placed in February for that same bottle of wine.

We finished off the evening with a tawny port, just 10 years in barrel, and duly agreed that the next event would focus on the wines from the Loire. Spaces are necessarily limited by room size and so the group has to operate on a first-come first-served process. What was most evident was that the same wine has totally different appeal to different people. So we propose that at the next tasting (Friday evening March 28<sup>th</sup>) each attendee bring along a bottle of their favourite wine. This would then be opened at the subsequent meeting for all to enjoy.

Everyone was safely away afterwards by Uber or taxi service leaving a glass or two to be washed up, the snacks having been encouragingly demolished.

**Joe Weiss**  
Group leader



Age and glasses of  
**Wine**  
should never be  
**COUNTED**