

u3a Bromley



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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.

Front cover photo: by Bob Wells
Visit to Whitechapel, London by the EL2 group.

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Dates for your Diary

6th May Local Studies

David Allen
Blood, guts and gore Part II

20th May General Meeting

Andy Smith
Victim to Victory

3rd June Local Studies

Ed Richardson
Bromley & Sheppards Colleges
for retired clergy

17th June General Meeting

Andrew Baker
The Donald Trump
Phenomenon

1st July Local Studies

Lara Bolton-Patel
The Founding Museum
(including Westerham Homes)

15th July General Meeting

Nick Dobson
Swinging London

19th August General Meeting

Tony Harris
Hercule Poirot

2nd September Local Studies

Ian Bevan
The Crystal Palace Part 2

16th September General Meeting

Lucy Allen
Ship of dreams
(History of the Titanic)

All Local Studies and General Meetings
are held at

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

Welcome to Issue 3, May 2025

Dear u3a Community,

Since the successful launch of the **Curry Club**, social activities at u3a Bromley have expanded, giving members more opportunities to connect and take part in events. There are three new groups, each offering a different way for people to meet and socialise.

Any Excuse for a ... Shindig brings members together for fun and engaging events. **Pub Night** is a relaxed way to meet others, have a chat and a drink in good company. **Quiz Night** offers a friendly competition where members can test their knowledge and enjoy an entertaining evening.

In addition to these groups, members are invited to attend a **Lunchtime Concert** at Bromley Central Library, an event designed to offer a wonderful musical experience in an accessible setting. The concert provides an opportunity to enjoy live performances while connecting with fellow members.

These are just a few of the many groups and activities available at u3a Bromley, offering something for every interest. Full details on all groups and upcoming events can be found on the u3a Bromley website, making it easy to get involved.

The cover page photograph with its vibrant colours has been taken by Bob Wells during the EL2 group's visit to Whitechapel.

With so many activities happening, now is a great time to join in and be part of the welcoming u3a Bromley network!

Rashmi
Editor

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Members at the u3a Bromley AGM, 15th April 2025

Message from the Chair

35 Years to celebrate on Saturday 4th October at the URC

Those of you who were with us in 2020 might remember it was u3a Bromley's 30th anniversary and we had planned exciting events. You might also remember all was cancelled with the Covid lockdowns. Well, that was five years ago, so guess what? This year is our 35th anniversary.

We want to make ourselves better known to Bromley so this will be held in the Whitfield Hall at the URC and will showcase our groups and offerings. Heads up to Group Leaders, put the date in your diary, we will be asking who wants to have a table to advertise their group.

Emails will go out asking for help with the following:

- Have you the skill to design posters and leaflets?
- Can you advise on how we make the most of social media to advertise the event?
- Have you advertising or publicity expertise to suggest where else we could advertise at reasonable cost.
- Poster and leaflet distribution.
- General advice on PR.
- Help on the day.
- Telling friends and family

And More

By the time you see this, we will have held our AGM and be well into our programme for 2025. We are planning more events in the year, above and beyond our standard group offerings and best of all, new groups are springing up all the time.

Our Spring VE Day Social on May 8th is the first and should be a great evening. Our Events Team are doing a great job, but fresh ideas are always welcome, maybe you'd like to join them?

And please, think about joining the committee!



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



Handbag Horrors

Recently, I had my handbag stolen while I was in a restaurant. Dealing with the aftermath was quite stressful. So here are some tips from what I learned:

Take the following actions:

- Find out if the area where the theft took place is covered by CCTV.
- Report the theft to the Police. *This can be done on-line – Google "Police/ theft" or call 101. You will be supplied with a "Crime Number". This is essential if you intend to claim on insurance.*
- Stop any bank and credit cards. *Stop these from your on-line account or by phone.*
- Report your driving licence as stolen to the DVLA – *on-line at www.gov.uk, by phone at 0300 790 6801 – replacement costs £20.*
- Block your mobile phone SIM card. *This can be done from your Internet Service Provider's (ISP) website or by a phone call to them.*
- Ask your ISP to "Blacklist" your phone. You will need to phone them to do this. It is essential for this to be done before insurance companies will reimburse you for the loss.
- As well as your name, address and date of birth, your ISP is likely to want:
 - *Details of the bank your Direct Debit is with and the date it is paid.*
 - *The Mobile Customer Service Pin – they give you that when you set up the contract. Find it on the ISP's website when you log in. For my account, it was via "View your plans" then "Edit Plan"*
 - *The Model, IMEI and serial numbers of the phone. They are on your phone – Go to Settings / Scroll down to eg Linda's iPhone 14 / a screen will then come up with the details you need.*
 - *The Police Crime Number.*
 - *They may also want the date of purchase of your phone and the date it was Stolen.*
- Contact any relevant insurance companies. They will ask you for proof of purchase of any items you wish to report as stolen, so it pays to keep receipts for everything you buy. Some department stores can provide receipts from quite a long time ago. Bank and credit card statements and records of on-line purchases are also useful. Photographs of valuable items also help. My company accepted that some items in my handbag were gifts, and reimbursed me for their value.

○ I lost my purse (containing bank cards), mobile phone, driving licence and Freedom Pass, house keys and car key. Had I not been with my daughter, I would have had no means to pay for travel home. Customer Services at a station may be able to help with train travel. Bus drivers are also authorised to permit free travel under these circumstances. If challenged, stress they have a duty of care, particularly to vulnerable passengers.

- I had a diary with my address in it so I had to change house and car keys as a precaution.
- Replace a Freedom Pass – free if you have a Crime No. - best to do this by phone on 0300 330 1433.
- Replace loyalty cards and membership cards – contact each organisation.

It is useful to keep a log of all your actions dealing with the theft. Memory fades!

Linda Sokoloff



Any Excuse for a ... Shindig (3)

I have an idea and I would like to float it and gauge whether anyone is interested.

This is not a specific interest group but it occurs to me that some people might fancy a one off event from time to time. For example, I like live music and would occasionally suggest somewhere I'm going that others might like to join me. My 'vision' is that people in this group might suggest a pub night, a meal out, a party, a picnic or anything really. Especially useful when you're at a loose end and fancy a coffee or whatever. Everyone would be an organiser and could post suggestions.

My first such jaunt is on 30th April when I'm going to a musical afternoon at the Hit or Miss in Chatterton Road. It would be great if anyone would like to join me (2.30pm if

you're interested)...no cover charge but a hat would be passed round for the musicians and please buy a drink. I highly recommend these guys...da dah...prepare to be impressed. One of them supported Diana Ross some years ago.

If you would like to be a part of such a group, and would be prepared to actively suggest and host events, please contact me by email or phone.

Diane

The only way I can manage this is if people are on or happy to join **WhatsApp** so I'd need a mobile number too.

Art Appreciation (1)

1. Graham has given us four interesting talks. We went to Florence, touring galleries and churches to look at the rather crude and formal religious paintings of the C13. Giotto was the first painter of realistic landscapes and people but his frescoes are difficult to preserve. The wealthy Medici family were patrons and art improved under them, plus the introduction of the easier to handle oil paint from North Europe. The likes of Botticelli, Leonardo and Michelangelo gave Florence and the Renaissance its reputation. An interruption was the rise of the fanatical priest Savonarola, spreading fear and religion and casting people and art works to the flames - his own eventual fate.

2. We learnt about Isabella d'Este, the first woman art collector. The daughter of a rich Ferrara family and educated as a Humanist, she married Francesco de Gonzaga of Mantua. He spent his time fighting in wars and the talented Andrea Mantegna became the court painter under her

patronage, decorating walls and ceilings with mostly historical works (many were purchased by Charles I). His paintings are dynamic and colourful. 'Death of the Virgin' depicts a view of Mantua through the window. Isabella became Regent upon her husband's death and brought up their son to love and collect art. They also owned paintings by Titian and Correggio.

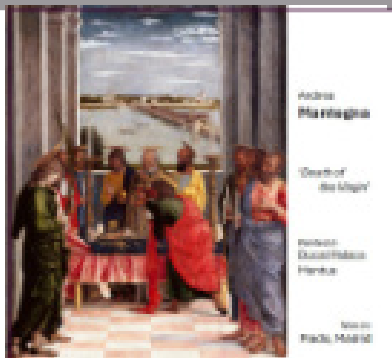
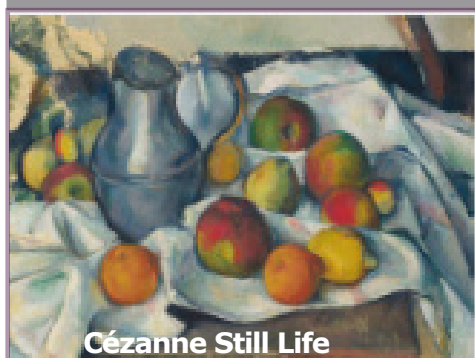
3. We revisited Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) who came from Aix-en-Provence, where he returned in his later years to paint many landscapes. He was an Impressionist and a great influence for upcoming artists, often using loose brush strokes and a palette knife. He 'invented' cubism, taken to extremes by Picasso and Braque. He painted portraits and still lifes and enjoyed painting the colours and shapes of the local sandstone quarries. By 1860 photography had arrived, threatening painters, but with the invention of tubes of colours they could paint 'plein air'. His work commands very high prices.

4. Northern Renaissance. The Alps were a considerable barrier in C15. Bruges was a thriving major port, shipping to Scandinavia and the Mediterranean. Oil painting commenced 1420 in N Europe and along with very detailed woodcuts, etching and printing made a thriving art world. Ideas soon crossed the Alps, merging with the Italian Renaissance which had rediscovered Greek and Roman art and literature and also anatomy and landscapes. Oil painting became the preferred medium. Jan van Eyck was talented in perspective and expressive faces. Dürer was exceptionally talented in painting and printing and visited Venice, bringing back sophisticated ideas and techniques. Religious disharmony caused Protestantism to gain over Catholicism so artefacts and statues were removed from churches. Painters turned to still lifes, landscapes and everyday life. Dutch artists came to England to paint portraits and country estates. Styles continued to change, as nowadays.

Lesley Godwin

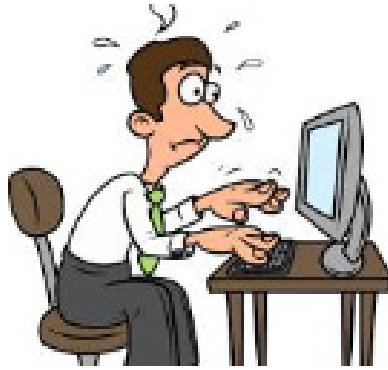
Summer Term

7 May	Elisabeth Frink	Anne Jones	Churchill
21 May	The Bloomsbury Group in Berwick Church	Diana Harte	Zoom
	Alphonse Mucha	Graham Taylor	Zoom
4 June	Embroidery past and present	Ann Woollins	Churchill
18 June	19 th Century Paris	Graham Taylor	Zoom
2 July	Social and Quiz	Graham Taylor	Churchill



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 you buying a coffee (other beverages are available).

Keith

Creative Writing (1)

A Farewell to Ella

(Ella was our dog for 14 years)

The early morning 'Woof' just after dawn,
The chasing of squirrels down the lawn,
Now gone.

Playing in the park with a bouncing ball,
Sniffing the bricks in a pavement wall,
Now gone.

The upheld gentle paw, just to say please
For a biscuit or a lump of cheese,
Now gone.

The joyful tail wagging at the front door,
When Mum and Dad arrive home once more,
Now gone.

Faithfully walking along at my side,
Trotting happily with matching stride,
Now gone.

The night-time walk, sometimes in pouring rain,
Then a brisk rub down 'til dry again,
Now gone.

Silently, near the table, just in case
Some crumbs of food should drop out of place,
Now gone.

Cuddling the feet of a visitor who ...
Wants to discuss a worry or two,
Now gone.

Those two dark brown eyes showing loyal trust,
Now lost in a box of canine dust,
Ella - all gone.

Peter Smith

Epitaph for a Town Mouse

Your tiny eyes gaze at me, although now lifeless,
Those once darting orbs have still retained their
brightness;

Last night inside my garage it was warm for you –
But from me a barbarous coldness did ensue.

A welcome source of nourishing food you had found
Lying there on what you believed was friendly ground,
For a potato, discovered the night before,
Had given you a Winter's appetite for more.

So, duly when Phoebe's moon was high in the sky
With not a sound and with your taste buds aiming high
You entered into the garage, just as before,
By way of the smallest gap 'neath its wooden door.
Once there your well-practised nostrils, with eager twitch
Sniffed potato – and made a hungry mouse feel rich.

You moved on spindly legs in no detected light,
Head forward and open-mouthed for that longed-for bite:

Then in the darkness, as that first taste you savoured,
Came such a crash – at which your frail neck was
severed,

And your blameless life was ended with scarce a jerk:
The potato-baited mousetrap had done its work.

I own I have plenty,
but you had so little,

My limbs are strong,
but your bones were
so brittle;

As your stiff body I
now cast aside

My sense of an
assassin's guilt is
hard to hide.

Peter Smith



Farewell Haiku for a President

Saying goodbye Don
Even though you're not yet gone
Wishful thinking helps

Carole Blacher

Curry Club (3)



After an overwhelming response for the new Curry Club we had a group of 23 who went to the Shampan on Sunday 23rd March. A good time was had by all.

The second meet was on Wednesday 16th April where 18 of us went to the Pink Garlic for dinner. Very positive feedback. Which is always a relief!

If you'd like to go to the next Curry Club lunch please contact me by email. The restaurant has been very accommodating and it's only fair to keep them updated and also offer the place to another member if you've booked and can't go. So could you please let me know and I can offer your place to someone else and update numbers with the restaurant.

Di knows she is a bit absentminded in terms of administrative tasks. If anyone who has expressed interest in joining the Curry Club, Any Excuse and Pub Night and has not heard from me please could they contact me again. It's not personal...she had an unusual attack of housekeeping and wiped a lot of computer stuff. It is now in a parallel "electronic universe!"

The next lunch buffet is on Sunday 18th May 12:30 pm at Shampan, Chatterton Road.

Please contact Diane for further details:

Daytime Disco (2)

Disco dancing continues every Tuesday afternoon at Bromley Little Theatre, 2-3 pm.

We have welcomed several new members and would like to welcome more, as members don't have to come every week, and often belong to two or more u3a activities which sometimes clash. The latest research says that dancing is good for our bodies and minds, so come and enjoy making your own moves to music from the sixties, with additions from the fifties and seventies.

For further details please contact Christine



Some of the disco group showing that they can still do the Twist!

EL2 (3) Whitechapel

EL2 had its first outing of 2025

Tuesday 4 March was our first meeting of the group this year. We met at London Bridge Station and walked to the Monument Underground station for the train to Whitechapel where we took in the busy market selling everything from Burkas to Fish heads!

On our way to Aldgate East we explored Altab Ali Park. Formerly known as St Mary's Park, once a whitewashed chapel from which Whitechapel got its name. The park was renamed Altab Ali, after a 24 year old British leather worker who was murdered in the race riots of 1978.

We visited the East London Mosque, which is one of the largest mosques in Western Europe, accommodating more than 7,000 worshippers. We were fortunate to be given a tour by a most informative guide which was very interesting and a highlight of the day.

Maintaining the Arabic theme we fell into Mehmet Effendi for delicious Turkish coffee and Baklavas

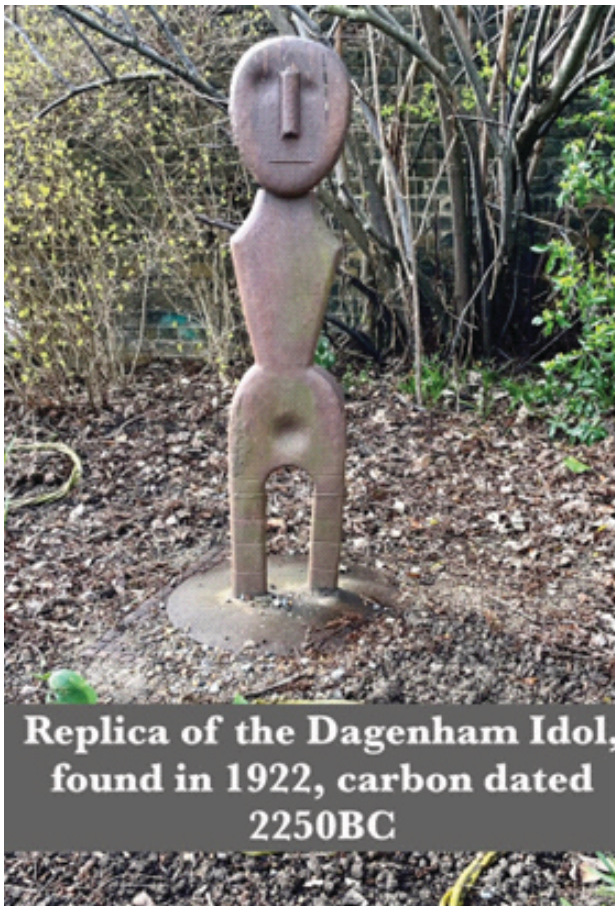
Crossing the road we ventured into the Whitechapel Gallery, and turning the corner walked the length of Brick Lane to sample beigels from the renowned 24 hour Beigel Bake which concluded our adventure.

Rosemary Gates



Bell foundry for Big Ben

ELLE (3) Chadwell Heath



Replica of the Dagenham Idol,
found in 1922, carbon dated
2250BC

The Railway came to Chadwell Heath in 1862 but the current building dates from 1902 when the station was extended to four platforms, although it is now a smaller structure having sustained bomb damage in 1941.

Between 1921-34 a temporary railway system was built between Goodmayes/Chadwell Heath and the Thames to facilitate the construction of what became known as the Becontree Estate – a public housing development which consisted of 27,000 dwellings. Part of the post-WW1 homes fit for heroes initiative promised by Lloyd George's government, the completed estate housed over 100,000 people. We learned all this, and much more, in the Valence House Museum, a short 2km walk from the station – well it should have been, but due to the lack of signposting, we overshot and had to double back on ourselves, making it nearer 3km. Fortunately there is a Visitor centre adjacent to the House with a delightful café where a cup of tea or coffee and a toasted sandwich cost around £5 – eat your heart out Costa. Furthermore, whilst sitting in the warm, comfortable café we saw the only rain that day through the picture windows.

The timber framed Valence House Museum is the only one surviving of the five manor houses of Dagenham. Situated in Valence Park off Becontree Avenue, the Grade II listed building is partially surrounded by a moat and has, in its 700year lifetime, been used as a manor house, a family home, a town hall, the HQ of the library service and now a museum. It contains permanent exhibitions on the history and life in Barking and Dagenham as well as displays from the 1945 Becontree Estate, and it's all free. We returned to the station in bright sunshine and were quite surprised on our return home that LBB had suffered heavy rain and hailstones.

Carole Blacher

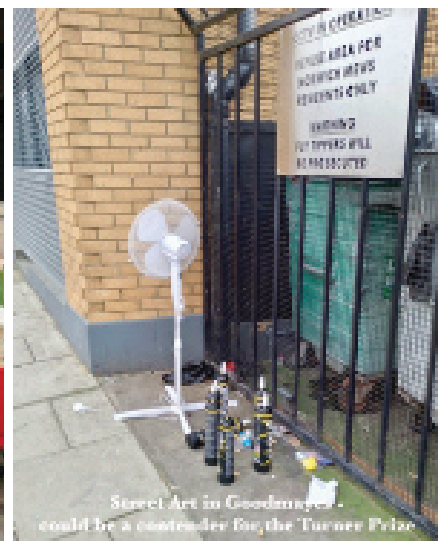
ELLE (3) Seven Kings to Goodmayes

The two stations we visited had little of interest to commend them; they were just the next two on the line so we had decided to walk between the two. Arriving at the station we spoke to several 'locals', including a very helpful *Customer Experience* assistant called Mr Grewal to ask where we might find local gems or highlights. Only one came up with anything vaguely interesting, describing an attractive park, but this was a bus ride away and in the wrong direction. Fortunately there was an attractive coffee shop opposite the station called *Coffee & Cream* so we piled in for what turned out to be an excellent, very reasonably priced beverage and a snack. Discussing our options and consulting the map, several routes were apparent. We opted for the Vernon/Ashgrove Road way since there was a place highlighted on the latter called *Mum's Delight* – a tantalising name which generated further

discussion on what it might be. We never did find it, concluding that mums in Seven Kings and Goodmayes have found alternative sources of joy and abandoned this one. With expectations raised by the arrival of the Elizabeth Line, these roads, which were lined with old, but fairly attractive housing stock, are obviously 'on the up' and many were being refurbished, some being restored to their former glory, but with new double glazing, while others had been less tastefully updated (one might say downgraded) by the addition of York stone cladding.

In the absence of local highlights we decided to have a photographic competition – there's always something worth photographing - to which I added captions. Some of these appear on this page.

Carole Blacher



Golf Lessons (2)

Our next session of Golf Lessons starts again on Wednesday 14th May at Chelsfield Golf Centre. These friendly groups are taken by Steve, a Professional at the Centre, and are suitable for beginners and improvers.

u3a Golf dates at Chelsfield

Summer 2025

Wed 14 May

Wed 4 June

Wed 11 June

Wed 18 June

Wed 25 June

Wed 2 July

Wed 9 July Texas Scramble

Price £10 per session – 6-8 persons per session

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



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

Gardening All Hands Group (4)

Visit to Holland Park



Well, I think we were all agreed that it was a beautiful day filled with sunshine for our outing to Holland Park on the last day of March.

The Kyoto Garden was everything we could have wished for in the sparkling sunlight. Built and designed by an eminent Japanese garden designer to commemorate friendly relations between Japan and the UK and to celebrate the 1991 Japan Festival in London and was opened in September 1991. Lovely colourful trees and shrubs descending by the waterfall which fed a serene pond full of large Koi, easily spotted and most likely a few smaller ones as well, judging by the interest shown by the heron keeping a close eye on the water. The three stone pillars represent Buddha and his two disciples I believe. The photo of the group was taken on the bridge. The space around was serene and tranquil.

Following on we came to the formal gardens including a chess game being played by a young family. Sadly, the tulips were not yet in bloom but the white

hyacinths were wonderfully scented and an unusual little dark blue forget-me-not was beginning to flower. Incredibly we spotted a wisteria on a south-facing wall with a couple of blooms already. Spring has brought out the best of the garden with so many flowering trees, like the magnolias and cherries, through the arches. Other interesting features included the sculptures: a man walking alone along a path but no indication as to who he was, the Annunciation (a conceptual bronze piece, couple of trumpets on cogs which resemble the voice and workings of artists), and as we left we came across a couple of very large tortoises walking across a sundial, no doubt representing the passage of time and longevity.

The cafe was very welcome as we stopped to recharge our batteries and have a good chat. Very well worth the visit and thank you Sheila for organising this outing and Donna for guiding those of us who met at London Bridge, safely to and from our destinations.

Gladys Donovan



2025 Outing Destinations

15 May	Leonardslee Lakes & Garden
17 Jun	Hever Castle
Jul	TBA Chiswick House & Gardens
8 Aug	Sarah Raven, East Sussex
Sep	TBA Great Comp, Claygate Cross TN15 8QS
Oct	TBA Franciscan Gardens, Canterbury
Nov	TBA Next planning meeting



Gardening Group – Monthly Talks (4)

In March Caroline Halfpenny introduced us to 'Four Gardens of Cornwall'. We learnt about the Lost Gardens of Heligan and their restoration. The sub-tropical climate enables many unusual plants to flourish and even pineapples could be grown in a specially heated cold frame.

In April garden historian Stephen Harmer shared his extensive knowledge of Vita Sackville-West, who lived at Sissinghurst from 1930-62. The Garden was renovated by Vita and her husband Harold Nicholson who designed it in the style of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Wednesday 7th May – Annual Plant Sale

This is your chance to pick up some bargain plants, but we do rely on members to supply the plants to sell. We will also be holding a short update, followed by a quiz. Feel free to comment on how we are doing, as your views are all-important.

Wednesday 4th June

Andrew Babicz – The Garden Year

Andrew is coming to talk to us again, this time about how to plan your garden all year round.

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

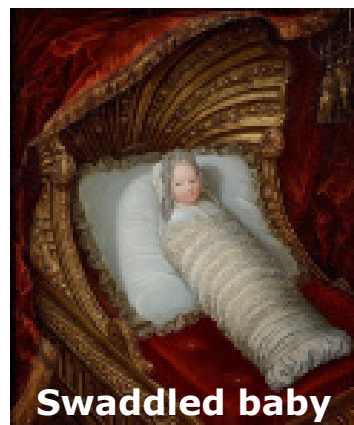
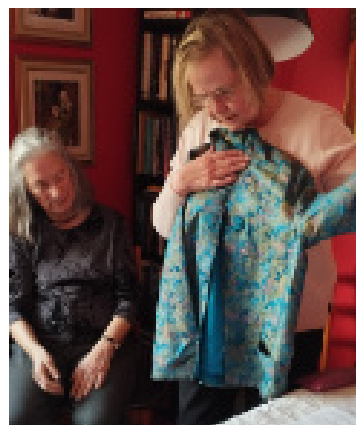
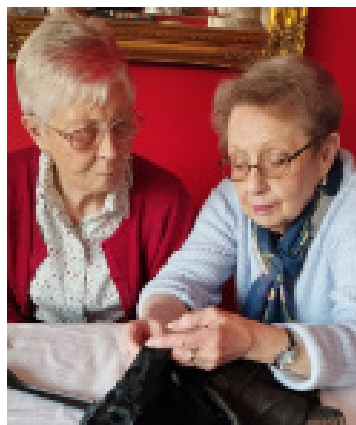


Sissinghurst

History of Fashion (5)

After March's meeting with me talking about Children through the Ages and the swaddling of babies it was time to hand over to some of the members for a Show & Tell session. We were interested to see a Victorian mourning dress, knitted socks, a 20s jacket, an 80s dress, a sampler, lace, a heavy gold belt and some evening bags. We have offers of more beautiful things for another session later in the year.

Laraine Burr



Swaddled baby



The Devonshire Hunting Tapestries are four very large and beautifully designed tapestries made between 1430 – 1450, depicting hunting scenes of boars, bears, swans, otters, deer and falconry. Very few tapestries of this scale and quality of design have survived.

Some of the members are coming for an extra meeting to learn about Medieval Dress and the Devonshire Hunting Tapestries

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 pm at the latest. These are Open Meetings, and all members are welcome.

Please note that, as from May, there will be a charge of £2 for admission. We would be very grateful if you could bring the correct money, please.

Forthcoming meetings:

6 May	David Allen	Blood, guts and gore Part II
3 June	Ed Richardson	Bromley & Sheppards Colleges for retired clergy
1 July	Lara Bolton-Patel	The Foundling Museum (including Westerham Homes)
<i>No meeting in August</i>		
2 September	Ian Bevan	The Crystal Palace Part 2
Steve Woods		

For further information, please contact Steve

Local Visits (4) *Lunchtime Concert*

Local Visits group invites you to join us on Monday **16th June** for a lunchtime concert. Many of our outings are restricted by numbers but, as this is a public event, all are welcome.

The concert is at Bromley Central Library in the 4th floor meeting room. Adrian Boynton is the host. Typically he brings three talented musicians to entertain the audience with classical and popular music.

It starts at 12 noon, there is a short interval when you can eat a sandwich or similar and the event finishes around 2pm. The cost is £8 payable in cash on the day. 2025 is Adrian's 34th year of bringing these tremendous concerts to Bromley.

Send me an email if you intend to be there. I will send you the programme as soon as it becomes available.

Outings by Public Transport (4)

The Outings for rest of the year are listed below:

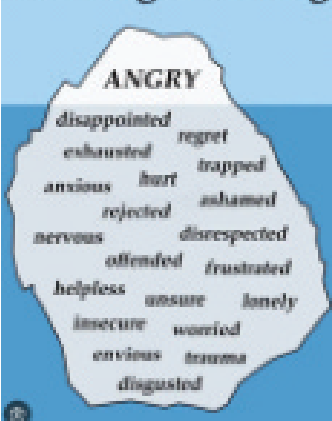
- 15 May **Wandle Industrial Museum**. This museum looks at all the different industries that once lined the River Wandle. One of them was the textile industry and we will have the joy of block printing our own fabric. (The fabric is provided)
- We will travel from Bromley South station (12:30pm) to Beckenham Junction (12:40). Take a tram to Mitcham Junction (13:30) followed by a bus to Lower Green. A two minute walk takes us to the museum ready for our tour at 2pm. Please let me know where you wish to meet us.
- The cost is £5. A packed lunch will be needed or an early one!
- 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.
- 22 July **Old Operating Theatre**. This is the only 19th 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 90min tour followed by free time to explore the herb gallery.
- It is a steep climb of 52 steps up the spiral staircase to the museum. There is no lift.**
- We will meet at London Bridge station at 10am. If you wish to meet me at Bromley South station, we will take a 9:30 train to Orpington, then 9:50 train to London Bridge.
- A short walk takes us to the museum.
- (I will give further details of where to meet at London Bridge in the next magazine).
- The cost is £20. If we have 20 people a refund of £5 will be coming your way.
- 12 Sep. **Wesley House**. The home of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, and now a museum. We will also visit the chapel. The nearest station is Old Street which can be reached by tube from Euston or bus from London Bridge. Details will follow when I've done the trial run. The cost is £10.
- Close by are the Bunhill Fields, established for Protestants who dissented from the Church of England – the Non-Conformists.

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

Ann Woollins

Psychology (3) More Deadly Sins

The Anger Iceberg



Deadly sins of the month in March were Sloth and Wrath but before we launched into – or in the case of sloth, crawled slowly into – our new topics, Linda talked to the group about her recent experience of being on the receiving end of someone else’s greed. She had her handbag stolen while on a trip to London and has written an article about it which appears in this edition of the Newsletter providing valuable advice on what to do if it should happen to you – a **must read!**

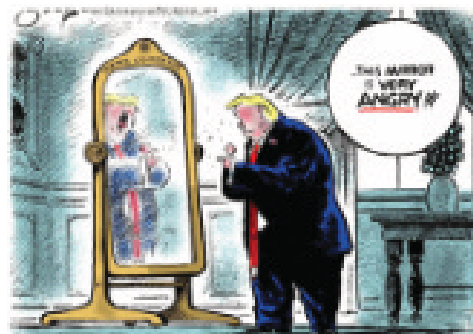
Sloth may be defined as an *habitual disinclination to exertion; laziness; indolence*. In the case of the mammal, it is their slowness which enables them to survive since they have a very low-energy diet and their inactivity helps them avoid detection by predators. The opposite could be said to be true for humans for whom quick thinking and a turn of speed have always been useful – possibly even more so in the modern world to keep up with the speed of change. Of course some individuals are always slower than others, and we all slow down as we get older, however, as anyone who has suffered from Long Covid, Fibromyalgia or ME/CFS will attest, there are some health conditions whose main symptom is extreme tiredness/exhaustion. We watched a fascinating video *ME-CFS Scandal explainer* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiwX9YONbiQ>). This explained how a physical health condition first recognised in the 1950’s had, by the 1970’s, come to be regarded as a psychosomatic condition. Its sufferers were mis-treated with psychotherapy and exercise therapies which were often

counter-productive since physical activity often exacerbated rather than ameliorated the symptoms. Only recently has this illness been reinstated as a neurological condition but many

are slow to change their attitudes, including the DWP, which is bad news for anyone suffering from this condition and trying to obtain sickness benefit.

Wrath can manifest itself at the other end of the activity continuum since many people act out their anger which primes their bodies for a *flight or fight* response. This is a very basic survival response which we share with all other mammals, reptiles and birds and has its origins in the **Limbic system** which is located in the most primitive area of the brain. There are three components to anger which determine its intensity and the individual’s reaction to it: (i) Trigger – the event that provokes the anger. (ii) Qualities of the individual – traits like narcissism, competitiveness and a low tolerance for frustration plus pre-anger states such as hunger, anxiety and exhaustion. (iii) Cognitive appraisal – an individual’s interpretation of a situation. Some children are born with an irritable temperament and people who are easily angered often come from families that are chaotic and disruptive. Anger is an emotion that is easy to see but it is often just the tip of the iceberg, other emotions lying hidden beneath the surface either unrecognised or suppressed. In order to deal with anger effectively these must first be recognised, acknowledged and owned.

Carole Blacher

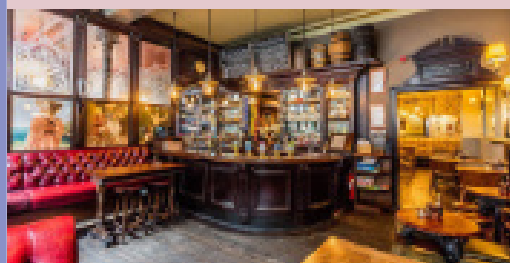


Pub Night (3)

On 31st March Wetherspoons in Bromley was host to 20 of us who would otherwise have been at home watching telly or something. A convivial couple of hours was spent chatting and generally getting to know each other. We’ll be repeated the exercise on 14th April at 5 pm but at the other Wetherspoons, The Greyhound, which is at the other end of Bromley, which in my opinion at least, is more conducive to large groups of people. I’ll be there at 5 pm for future dates and will accost anyone I see who might be one of us! It would be nice to know if you are coming but feel free to just turn up.

**Future date: 19th May 5:00pm
The Greyhound, Wetherspoons**

Please contact Diane for further details:



Quiz Night – Thursday 26 June 7 – 9pm

Come along to the Bromley URC Veryan Hall to join us for an evening of head-scratching fun with friends.

Bring your thinking caps, drinks and nibbles.....We will supply tea and coffee at half-time, the Inquisitor, the Questions and the Prizes

There will be five rounds of 10 questions and the maximum team size is 6. It would be great if Interest groups could get a team together, or just come along with friends, or on your own, and join with others when you get there.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

This is a Members Only event and there is limited space so you need to book in advance. You can do this by emailing the Events Team with the word QUIZ in the subject line.

If you are booking for other people as well as yourself, please list all the names – we will not be issuing tickets but if your name is not on our list you are unlikely to gain entry. The cost is £3pp and you will be asked to pay on the door – coins or small denomination notes would be much appreciated. Don’t forget your drinks and nibbles and bring a pen!

Rambles (2)



The Regent's Canal behind Kings Cross station



Apartments built within the old Gasholders

These are our walks for May and June, 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 rambles, 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.

Wed. 07 May 2025 – Piccadilly to Saville Row

Meet at 10.45 am under Eros statue 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

Wed. 21 May 2025 – Hayes Circular

Meet at 10:30 am at Hayes Station for a circular walk of about 5 miles in the Hayes area; options for refreshments at the end in Hayes Station Approach.

Leader: Kate Irwin –

Thurs. 29 May 2025: Farnborough Circular

Meet at 10.30 am on Farnborough High Street at junction with Church Road for a 4.5 mile walk in the Farnborough area through fields, lanes and woodland. Lunch available in the village cafe or pub.

Car parking in the village roads or 358 bus from Bromley.

Leader: Robin Burnhams

Thur. 05 June 2025 – Thames Path: Rotherhithe to Cutty Sark, Greenwich

Meet at 9.45 am outside Bromley South station to catch the 10.00 train to Denmark Hill, changing there for the Windrush line to Rotherhithe, arriving at 10:43 am. Approximately a 5 mile linear walk, following the Thames Path to the Cutty Sark, Greenwich. There will be a short refreshment and toilet stop at Surrey Docks Farm. Multi choice options for lunch at the end.

Leader: Kevin MacNamara

Thur. 12 June 2025 – Piccadilly to Saville Row (repeat of 7 May walk)

Meet at 10.45 am 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

Wed. 18 June 2025 - Caledonian Rd to Kings Cross Granary Square

Meet for 11am start at Caledonian Rd. Tube Stn. on the Piccadilly Line. A linear walk to King's Cross/Granary Square, via Caledonian Park, Culpepper Community Garden and Regents Canal. Around 2½ hours.

NB: Contact the Walk Leader to book your place.

Leader: Alan Canham

Tue. 24 June 2025 – Old Street circular

Meet at 10.30am outside Old Street underground station (Northern line) at the Old Street West exit, for a 2 hr circular walk. There is much to see in this area, recently named Europe's answer to Silicon Valley.

NB: Contact the Walk Leader to book your place.

Leader: Marie Blakeley

Wed. 02 July – We may be able to provide another walk on this date – If this is the case, it will be published via email to the "Pathways" members list.

Thur. 17 July 2025 – Soho (repeat by public demand of January/March walk)

Meet for a 10.45 am 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 ¾ of the way round.

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**

Science Technology (5)

Archaeogenetics, the merging of two disparate scientific disciplines comprising grimy, earthy archaeology with clinical, molecular genetics, was the subject of March's talk, presented by Graham McIntyre. Extracting often degraded DNA from ancient fossilised bone fragments can be challenging for archaeologists and forensic scientists alike, as poorly-stored remains are unreliable for determining sex or race, even in children. Gender, sometimes, can be deduced from burial garb (clothes/accessories), as most cultures adopt distinctive styles for male and female attire; also, often prehistoric graves have weapons, tools, jewellery or 'grave goods', such as ornamentation – mirrors were popular valuables. It's surprising how similar male/female human skeletons are: the coccyx (tail bone) can show a marginal difference in shape between the sexes, and while female skulls can have smaller brow ridges, more vertical foreheads and pointier chins; surprising overlap is common within a wide selection range. Of course, there is the pelvis and distinct features adapted for child-bearing, but even these vary with age, being similar in both sexes in younger and aged bodies. Lucy ('in the sky with diamonds' as a reminder to old hippies) was discovered in 1974 in highly fragmented form and classified as an *Australopithecus afarensis* female hominid, dated to 3.3 million years ago. The oldest recovered DNA that could be amplified, cloned and sequenced satisfactorily, comes from a Neanderthal male, who lived approximately 400,000 years ago, probably an early example of that species.



Some primates, such as gorillas and orangutans, display >50% body mass dimorphism, i.e. obvious size and other distinctions between the sexes, while for chimpanzees, bonobos and humans, it is <15%. This may reflect mate competition and cultural practices such as harem keeping, though it has been observed that a lower sex dimorphism seems to indicate more advanced brain development as, presumably for those hominins with high sex dimorphism, growth energies are diverted to other body parts.

Brenda McCormack

Tennis Club (2)

The tennis group have enjoyed playing every week at Bromley Lawn Tennis Club, and rain has only stopped play twice this year. The club has allocated two courts for the u3a group, so a maximum of eight members can play each week. We would like to recruit more members so that we always have at least four players.

The sessions are from 1 - 3.30pm every Thursday, and there is a fee of £3 per person. If you would like to join the group, please contact Christine by email



Walking Tennis (2)

Some u3a members have joined the Walking Tennis group at West Wickham Tennis Club and are enjoying this less strenuous form of tennis. Existing club members have been very helpful in teaching the rules to new members, and the Coach has welcomed u3a members, encouraging them to join in without having to become a tennis club member.

For further details, email Christine on



Four u3a Bromley members and two tennis club members who have been showing them the ropes.

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. 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

- 8 May *Dean Caston* Let's all go down the Strand
- 12 June *Susan Elkin* Dramatic Adaptions
- 10 July *Kate Boyle* Annual walk with Kate, **Blackfriars, Shakespeare's other theatre** Booking essential £5
- July Theatre Group visit to Freda's Garden in Biggin Hill also in July. All welcome. Contact Mary if interested.
- 11 Sept Canal trip and cream tea. Fully booked

Boys from the Blackstuff Churchill Theatre 20 February 2025

Direct from a sold-out season at The National Theatre Alan Bleasdale's "Boys from the Blackstuff" is the acclaimed adaption of the Award-Winning TV series of 1982 which still has echoes today.

Brave, bleak and brilliant, and rightly relevant to today's economic situation, it is an insightful drama about hard hit times. Set in Toxteth, Liverpool L8, some of the 20 members attending found the accent difficult to understand at times. This depiction of life on the dole is a stark account of those most affected by the UK's record number of 3 million unemployed at this time.

It mainly focuses on the boys of the blackstuff (tarmac layers) as they struggle to support their families during the depression whilst avoiding the benefit fraud officer. The most famous character is the redoubtable Yosser Hughes whose mental health disintegrates under the strain of having no work, no money and ultimately loses everything including his children. His often-repeated phrase "Gis us a job" and "I can do that" entered the people's lexicon in Britain.

Sometimes a difficult watch but it certainly gave us something to think about and reflect on today's times.

Ruth Mackie

The Last Laugh The Noel Coward Theatre 26 February 2025

27 Theatre group members attended one of the very first performances of The Last Laugh direct from a sell out run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for a short run at The Noel Coward Theatre before a nation-wide tour. Described as "a brand-new laugh-a-minute play which re-imagines the lives of three of Britain's greatest comedy heroes - Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe and Bob Monkhouse"

Set in a ramshackle dressing room it imagines a meeting between the three comedians. The three actors had all played the comedians before and Simon Cartwright as Monkhouse was particularly realistic. The conversation sparkles with wit and excellent timing and there are plenty of jokes and songs.

The ominous references to health issues from them all and flickering lights add to the poignancy of Cooper leaving the dressing room to go on stage for what will be the last time.

The last laugh is a gently funny, affectionate and poignant show and was enjoyed by the members who attended and who came out of the show with their memories of the three comedians re-imagined.

Mary Garside

Meet Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe and a sun bronzed Bob Monkhouse. The Last Laugh offers both humour and poignant moments. Experience behind the scenes stories whilst literally laughing out loud. A fantastic dive into comedy - this should be available on the NHS

June Riley-Macfarlane

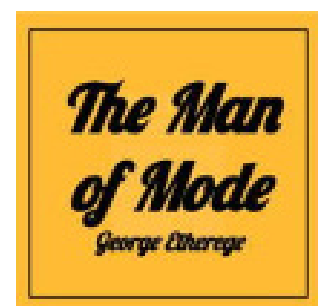
The Man of Mode Bromley Little Theatre. 8 March 2025

Many of us were reluctant to spend the afternoon indoors on such a beautiful spring day but it turned out to be well worth it and 40 members of the theatre group attended the matinee.

The Man of Mode is a 17th century Restoration comedy, in this production set in modern times but retaining the speech of the 1600s. Dorimant is a rich, amoral womaniser, trying to juggle affairs with several women at the same time. Surrounded by equally shallow friends, he romps through life without a care or feeling for anyone but himself.

The minimalistic set is brought to life with clever special effects and lighting and the costumes are truly stunning. The impeccable acting of Jimi Finn as Dorimant is supported by the flawless performances of the rest of the cast but I must admit the scene that will remain in my mind is of Sir Foppling Flutter played by Joshua George Lawson miming to Kate Bush's Wuthering Heights!

Pat Ward



Theatre Group (2)

“Oliver”
Gielgud Theatre
19 March 2025

Our West End theatre trip in March was to the new production of Oliver which had transferred from Chichester Festival Theatre where it had been the summer musical of 2024. We didn't make it to Chichester but everyone thoroughly enjoyed the show at the Gielgud Theatre. Produced by Cameron Mackintosh, with directing and choreography by Matthew Bourne, it's not surprising it has had good reviews.

We all felt like singing along as we seemed to have remembered all the songs from past performances but this new adaption was well done with some excellent performances, notably Fagin played by Simon Lipkin and Nancy played by Shanay Holmes. The part of Oliver is shared by four boys but the lad who performed for us was engaging and had a very nice singing voice. The Artful Dodger played by Billy Jenkins was also very well portrayed. It was a glorious performance of song and dance starting with “food, glorious food” by the children in the orphanage and at the finale a medley including, again, “Consider yourself at home” by the cast.

We all left the theatre humming and singing away to those familiar tunes after a very enjoyable afternoon.

Mary Garside



Gielgud Theatre

Radium Girls
Bromley Little Theatre
21 March 2025

Theatre group members attended an evening performance by the youth group of Bromley Little Theatre to see Radium Girls. At our performance there was an adjudicator for the Kent Drama Association Festival. The directors wrote that, “It is always challenging to find a script for the Youth Theatre which can stretch them, develop their skills and give every member a chance to shine.” Radium Girls has been a popular choice for such groups in the USA but is less well known in the UK.

Set in the USA it was challenging for the young actors to perform with an American accent and also portray the moving true story of the Radium Girls, factory workers who contracted radiation poisoning from painting radium on watch dials with self-luminous paint. They were told the paint was harmless and were instructed to point their brushes on their lips to give them a finer tip. The girls became sick with awful symptoms such as disintegrating jaws, horrible pains in their bones and death from haemorrhaging. The play follows the girls' fight for justice through the courts and their battle with their employers, the US Radium Corporation.

The actors played their parts very movingly with great performances from Rosa Davies playing Grace and Frank Sisley playing Roeder the manager. The set was also very innovative and adaptable and was cleverly moved round by the actors for different scenes.

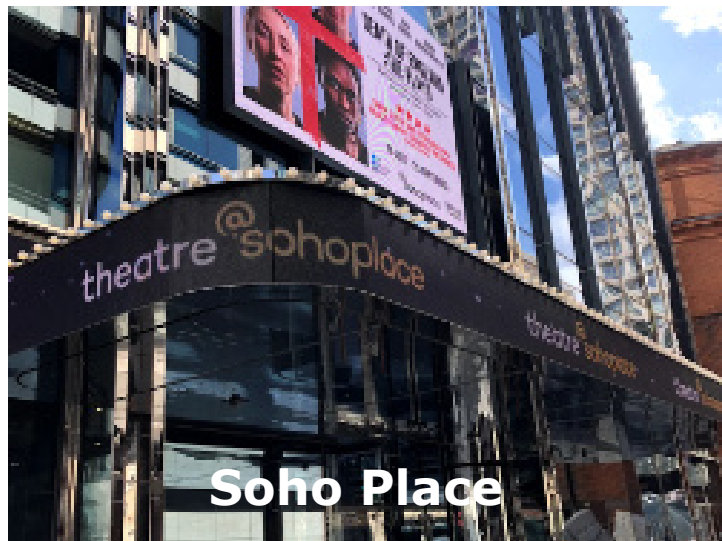
All in all a very enjoyable evening, though a challenging subject was being portrayed and well done to all the young people taking part.

Mary Garside

Kyoto
Soho Place
3 April 2025

One of London's newest theatres, Soho Place, is the ideal venue for *Kyoto*, as it's designed to show plays in the round. Who would have thought that a play about Climate Change Conferences could be so riveting? Whether you care about our planet or not you could not be more engaged in the action. The play is helped tremendously by the narration that weaves its way through the action – and yes there's a lot of action. Narrator Don Pearlman, lawyer and oil man, takes us through the various COPs (Conferences of the Parties), ending with *Kyoto*. This device works very well, and we are introduced to the Delegates from many countries as they sit in a semi-circle, sometimes waving their country's nameplates to take the floor, sometimes rushing out, then rushing back to take a different seat. It made for a kaleidoscope of energy and talking in corners, perfectly illustrating the making of alliances for and against the motions on the table. We too, were issued with lanyards, as delegates or media etc. A nice touch that, coupled with the fact we also sat in a semi-circle, both making us feel part of the Conference. The cast were uniformly excellent, and the human interaction cleverly interspersed with projection. The lighting and music enhanced the production. I urge you to buy a ticket, join an NGO and become a Friend of the Earth!

Nikki Packham



Soho Place

Wider Horizons (4)



*Human Body,
photograph by
Celia Thompson*

Visit to the Wellcome Collection 22nd March

We restarted the New Horizons group with an enjoyable visit to the Wellcome Collection which is conveniently situated opposite Euston station.

There was much to explore through various permanent and temporary exhibitions on the themes of connections between medicine, life and art.

The main exhibition at the moment is called, "Hard Graft: work, health and rights." It was wide ranging, interesting and we all learned a lot.

"Being Human" is a permanent exhibition, also fascinating and includes sculpture, artworks and a case displaying a kit claiming to include everything you would need to edit DNA.

Entry was free and there is a cafe with lovely ambient lighting, the colours of the bulbs constantly changing, giving a calm relaxed atmosphere.

Some of us had lunch together before returning back to Bromley, altogether a good day.

Margaret Caddy



*Refugee Astronaut,
photograph by
Celia Thompson*

Three planned monthly outings

28 June	The Guildhall Art Gallery
26 July	A day in Rochester
23 August	The Queen's House, Greenwich

Wine Enjoyment (2)

The evening of 28th March saw a packed event when we sampled the wine treasures from the Loire. We enjoyed the offerings of Chenin Blanc, Cremant, Vouvray, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir and Touraine. Furthermore we all learned about the remarkable Chenin grape that produces both dry and sweet wine, depending on time of harvesting and vinification - a white Loire wine that ages remarkably well. The supermarkets here mostly sell only the dry version (often from South Africa). I regret that our next evening is full but if you are interested in joining us then you are welcome to add your name to our waiting list.

Joe Weiss
Group Leader

**GOOD FOOD
GOOD WINE
GOOD FRIENDS
GOOD TIMES**

Dabble with AI – Play with ChatGPT

In the last newsletter, I explained how to log on to free Chat GPT. (reminder below) Now it's time to have a bit of fun.

I uploaded a picture of my cat and asked Chat GPT the following:

"Use this picture of a Tonkinese male cat. Remove all the background and create an image showing the cat eating fish in a restaurant like a human.

Add clothes to the cat".

After a first stab with the cat in posh clothes and with one human hand I ended up with a useful picture as you can see.

Sandy Boden



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



The Greyhound



The Partridge