



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
REGISTERED CHARITY NO 296975**

Issue No 87 Editor: Margaret Morgan email editor@guildfordu3a.org.uk

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2024 - GUILDFORD AREA u3a



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Gu3a members,

It is with great pleasure that I can tell you that we have succeeded in finding a replacement for me who will become chairman at the AGM on 25th November. Indeed, it is 2 people who are going to job share the rôle with the blessing of National Office. Apparently, this arrangement is not uncommon. Profs Bernie Cohen and Philip Harris will be taking over and I wish them every success as I am sure you do too.

The event which has most marked my time as chairman must be the pandemic. I remember writing what seemed endless interim newsletters, trying to give you ideas for things to do and links to interesting sites and activities. We tried a few cartoons and jokes but could not always attribute copyright so erred on the side of caution and ended up leaving them out, unfortunately. I was also one of the team who hand delivered all communications to members without email. That first spring was wonderful and it was a pleasure to be out. I dread to think what my total mileage was over the course of the lockdowns but it must have done me good.

This is the edition of the newsletter which comes with the AGM papers, including the voting slip. Please be sure to vote, either online, in person or by post. We have spent a lot of time redrawing our constitution which will need your approval.

This has been a most successful summer for the u3a. The first ever u3a festival took place on the university campus at York. There was a vast range of activities on offer all through the 3 days in the setting of the largest plastic-bottomed lake in Europe with all its accompanying birdlife. The weather was perfect. Another festival is to be arranged for 2026, perhaps a little further south as that was a long way to go for many members.

I can also recommend the South-East Summer School which took place as always on the campus at Chichester. I spent 3 fascinating days studying mediaeval manuscripts which quite took me back to my student days. The food was a lot better than I remember it being then, though!

I hope you are all enjoying the start to the new term and getting the most out of Guildford u3a.

With all good wishes,

Julie Beattie Chairman Guildford Area u3a

DIRECTOR OF STUDIES' REPORT

Group Enrolment Day 2024

We had another very successful Group Enrolment Day in August at The Spectrum Leisure Centre. About 250 people visited our Group Leaders, to find out more about groups and to sign up to joining new groups. About 90 of our groups were represented on the day. We also enrolled over 50 new members to Guildford u3a, and have continued to enrol more over the weeks since. Welcome to all our new members.

u3a is a self-help organisation and we rely on volunteers. We are always happy to consider new groups to add to our programme, but any group needs a Group Leader. Perhaps you would like to start a new group? You don't need to be a teacher, or an expert in the subject, but you do need to be an enthusiast, who is willing to take on the administrative role of running a group. Some of our groups are taught subjects, but most are not. We can give lots of help to new Group Leaders, to get things up and running. If you are interested in joining the team of leaders then get in touch with either the Group Co-ordinator for your subject, or me, Director of Studies. Alternatively, you could help in other ways, such as refreshments for meetings, giving IT support, taking on Committee roles. Talk to us about what you can do.

Moira MacQuaide

SURREY NETWORK STUDY DAYS

Understanding Lowry: The Man, His Life & His Works Presented by Maria Chester, Arts Society Lecturer & Berwick Visual Arts Researcher Places will be available in the hall or for on-line viewing. Bookings at [November 2024 Study Day](#)

MONTHLY MEETINGS - QE Park centre, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9LX at 2.30pm (after jigsaw exchange, ta and chat commencing at 1.30pm)

One of the many activities of U3A is the monthly meeting of talks – and chat. Held on the fourth Monday of the month (except November when it would clash with the AGM) they are designed to be different and cover a wide range of subjects, from a presentation from 'Blood Bikers' (the next one) to an 'introduction to gemstones'. Full details can be seen on the third page of the prospectus and also on the website.

The September talk was going to be in January, but the proposed speaker was unwell, so Susan Purcell stepped in with her very informative and entertaining talk, called 'The ups and downs of Crosswords'. (See Picture below) At present, it is hoped the proposed September speaker will be able to give her talk in January.



But before the talks, which start at 2.30, there is an hour of chat and an opportunity to swap books and jigsaws. You don't have to book, just turn up at QE Park centre, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9LX. You will be asked to sign in, with your membership number, and a guest. There is a bus route that stops nearby and ample parking but try to share cars if you can. And, if you think of an interesting subject that hasn't been covered in the last few years, contact me and I'll try to arrange something for 2025-26 but hurry, as I start booking speakers in January.

28 October 2024 SERV Surrey and London: commonly known as "Blood Bikers"

Gerry Bennett is a retired London Secondary Head teacher. As a motorcyclist he knew about "Blood Bikers" and their work delivering Blood and Blood Products "out of hours" free of charge. He joined as a volunteer for three years

18 November 2024 From a Hard Place to a Rock – Timandra Slade

After her mother's death Timandra discovered a briefcase containing original maps, journals, etc of her father's extraordinary wartime escape. She tracked down fellow escapees and wrote a book about the soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force on the run in WWII

Jennifer Margrave

VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNINGS

Our fortnightly virtual coffee mornings started up during the pandemic lockdowns, but have continued as another way for u3a members to get together for a chat every so often. They're particularly good for anyone who is unable to get out and about for a while. Watch out for notices in the weekly bulletins, then contact me and I'll send you the Zoom link.

The dates will be 19TH November and 5th and 20th December - all at 11.00am on Zoom. Contact me to join in; details of how to join in are also on the Gu3a website and each one will be advertised via the weekly Bulletin.

Moira MacQuaide – Director of Studies – studies@quildfordu3a.org.uk

u3a YORK FESTIVAL

Three other members of Gu3a and I were lucky to be able to go to the first u3a festival in York from 18th-20th July this year. It was held on the campus at Heslington, a lovely setting which sports the largest plastic-bottomed lake in Europe and a huge variety of accompanying birdlife; it provided the perfect backdrop. You did have to watch where you put your feet first thing in the morning, though!

There was a huge range of activities on offer, ranging from life drawing to needlework, astronomy, poetry, Egyptology and just about everything in between. There were non-stop musical and sporting opportunities available and on the first evening we could choose between country dancing and a quiz. Being inveterate quizzers, we opted for that but one of the opposing teams included Ian Matheson, national adviser for quizzes, so no prizes for guessing who won.



The weather was wonderful throughout and we were able to spend much of the time out of doors. At one point we were treated to a brass band playing the theme tune from *Strictly* – with Katy Jones dancing to it! I was also able to see for the first time the u3a 40th anniversary quilt which is normally on display at the Blanket Hall in Witney.

Many thanks go to Margaret Fiddes for organising such a wonderful event. She was adamant that she would never do it again but now that the groundwork has been done, I am sure that this success will generate a further festival - perhaps a little further south next time!

Julie Beattie

SE SUMMER SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2024

It's hard to understand why I have been a member of Gu3a since 2008 and had never until now been to a summer school but I have finally put that right. Four members of Gu3a went to Chichester this year, doing courses on philosophy, mathematics and illuminated manuscripts. The philosophers had to discuss some very knotty topics (no right answers) and the mathematicians did some jolly hard sums (definitely right answers) while I traced the history of the Irish and Anglo-Saxon illuminated manuscript from the 7th to the 10th centuries.

We enjoyed comparing notes over coffee, lunch, tea and supper (we were very well catered for!) but I had some eye-opening conversations with people doing US politics (the outlook is not good, but you don't need me to tell you that), Latin, crochet and patchwork among others. On the final day all groups were invited to put on a display of their work. The crochet and patchwork won hands down!

Evening entertainments included a quiz (no, we didn't win), a trip to see *Oliver!* at the Festival Theatre, a showing of the film *The Great Escaper* and a talk from a former chief yeoman warder at the Tower of London. If you haven't done a summer school yet I can thoroughly recommend it!

Julie Beattie

PROFESSOR DAVID JAMES 1937 – 2024



David James was one of the founders of Guildford U3A (Gu3a). In 1979 he was head of the Adult Education Department at the University of Surrey and ran a programme of extra-mural courses which was decimated following the government decision to cut funding for Initial (Further, Higher and Adult Education) Education. This left several thousand students throughout Surrey without their courses and David was bombarded with demands for a solution. The cuts also affected students from WEA and local authority adult education services. David and his students set up a committee called AIMS Activities and Interests for Mature Students. At this time an energetic local lady, Margot Clegg, wanted David to be her supervisor while she read for a PhD in adult education. David persuaded her to take on the chairmanship of AIMS instead. AIMS successfully ran many courses and other activities throughout the county. The committee investigated the new U3A movement with a view to affiliating with it, but quickly hit a snag. AIMS covered Surrey, and U3As were local. The solution came after a public meeting of other local providers which set up Guildford area U3A in 1983 with Banstead and Womersley also setting up U3As to cover the rest of Surrey. Margot became Gu3a's chairman, and affiliated with the Third Age Trust in 1985.

David kept his interest in Gu3a for the rest of his life, and at least this ex-chair was grateful for his wise advice behind the scenes.

The committee and membership send condolences to David's wife, Penny, and their children Lucy, Philip and Christopher.

Caroline Sawers

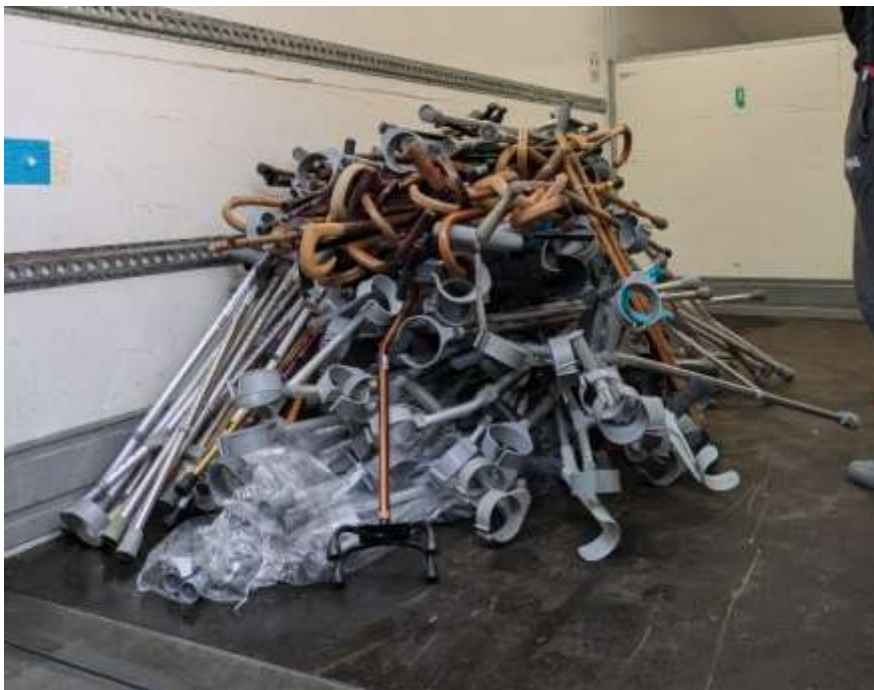
WALKING AIDS FOR GAZA

The sad death of a lady called Barbara Dewick occurred on 10 August. She was a very lively lady who was a long-term member of u3a Guildford. She was an enthusiastic member of two groups, both of which I led for a long time. The first of these was a bridge group playing on Tuesday afternoons. She was very keen and was always there early to help in the setting up. The second was a Pubs and Churches group, with which she visited about 70 churches in the Guildford area.

At the beginning of this year she started to lose her voice. This was sad because she liked nothing better than chatting with people. She already suffered from COPD and her health continued to decline. She was then diagnosed with a very aggressive form of motor neurone

disease. She became very unwell, but she struggled to attend her two groups as long as possible. The last time she played with friends from the bridge group was on 6 August and she died, four days later.

Barbara lived for about five years in Jordan and while she was ill, she had the thought that it would be a good idea to collect unwanted walking sticks and crutches to be sent to Gaza. She discussed it with the Anglo Jordanian Society who agreed that they could arrange to get them to Jordan and then into Gaza. Although she was extremely unwell, she was working to bring this idea into action. When this became difficult for her, I helped her out. The decline in her health continued rapidly and sadly, she died before the scheme could be put into action. I then took it on, working with her son and daughter. Barbara had decided that the collection would take place in September. I suggested postponing it but her family would not contemplate this as, immediately before she died, she urged her family to make sure that it happened without delay



This left little time for publicity, but Shere Surgery, who passed it on to other surgeries, u3a, Guildford Dragon News and other organisations were very supportive, and the word got around, including to the local churches. The campaign lasted for three weeks in September and the notice of thanks below gives details of what was achieved.

We collected - 198 walking sticks, 148 crutches, 3 orthopaedic boots, 1 leg brace and 3 walkers

Thank you to all those who donated items in response to the appeal - Barbara would have been absolutely delighted.

Keith Childs

LESS OF THE STRICTLY

Julie Beattie and I were the only ones from Guildford who answered the call to go to Beare Green Village Hall for a three-hour Barn Dance session organised by Dorking and District u3A.



We joined perhaps 20 local members for a very jolly afternoon. Surprisingly there were about eight men as I had been imagining Joyce Grenfell's wonderful 'Old Time Dancing' lyrics about 'dancing bust to bust' but this is hardly an issue in Barn Dancing. Most people tended to 'walk' instead of skip. (I must discover if I can really still skip!) We had a most enjoyable afternoon (although I sat out more). We feel sure that Guildford u3a could muster far more, should the occasion arise.

Sheila Darzi

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

CARDMAKING & PAPERCRAFT





This group has been running since 2016 and is a chance to try out various techniques for making unique cards to send to friends and family. We focus on some seasons, such as Christmas and Easter, and the rest of the year varies depending on which techniques are chosen. From Quilling to Marbling, from Dye

Cutting to Stained Glass – there are lots of different ways to make stunning cards. This is not a taught subject, but is an opportunity to “come and play”, trying out new ideas – or even sharing your own ideas. We meet in Burpham Village Hall on the fourth Thursday afternoon each month.

Moira MacQuaide

MONDAY SINGING GROUP

u3a GUILDFORD AREA U3A u3a



 **A** 

**CHRISTMAS
CELEBRATION**

with

GUILDFORD u3a SINGERS (conductor - John Varney)

Start your celebrations with song and laughter
at

 **St Nicolas Church** 
Bury Street, Guildford (GU2 4AW)



at

2.00 p.m.

on

Wednesday 11 December 2024

Entry is free to all.
Voluntary retiring collection towards the upkeep of this beautiful church.

 **MERRY
CHRISTMAS** 

Wayne Richardson Monday Singing Group

NEW BALLROOM DANCING GROUP

I was pleased to see so many members willing to try out the Ballroom Dancing Taster Session in September. Some were complete beginners, others had learnt at school more than a few years ago, while others were really quite good. We will be continuing with these sessions on the first and third Wednesday in the month at Merrow Methodist Church Hall, Bushy Hill Drive, GU1 2SH. The Beginners session starts at 2.00pm with the Improvers at 3.00pm. The sessions are run by Kylie Jones, a World Amateur Ballroom Champion who appeared as one of the professional dancers in the very first series of Strictly, and now has a wealth of experience teaching locally. There is a charge of £6 per session.

Kylie is very patient with us all – giving clear instructions and plenty of practice (she knows we need to repeat, repeat) to be sure we've 'got it' and then gradually introduces more steps, such as a corner or a diagonal. Our first dance was the Social Waltz which she covered for a few weeks, and next will be something less sedate such as the Jive. I am watching Strictly now with much more of an understanding of what they are doing ("Arms, dahling!").



I am also pleased that a new member Antony, who is a cruise host, has offered to organise an occasional Social Tea Dance for us where he will give instruction on Sequence Dances – with tea and cake enjoyed.

We know there are many benefits of ballroom dancing for people of our age – improved physical health, cognitive stimulation, improved balance as well as the enjoyment of the music and social

engagement. Come along and give it a go! Anyone willing to be a lead in the Improvers session would be especially welcome.

Jackie Ring Please contact me for more information. Email – ring_jackie@yahoo.co.uk

NUFFIELD HEALTH BETTER MOBILITY CLASSES



These have been running for about 18 months, and have been very successful. Nuffield Health runs the classes as part of their Healthy Communities Initiative, and we have had a range of different exercises to do. From circuit training to Zumba, from Chair Pilates to Wellbeing Workout. The Nuffield Health

trainers adjust the exercises for those who find them a bit too challenging, but the majority of

our members have found them very beneficial. We run them as separate blocks, usually of six weeks, and each block is publicised via our Weekly Bulletin. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis, in response to the bulletin. Watch out for more information.

Moira MacQuaide

PHILOSOPHY

Things may well change But I don't currently have a hearing impairment and have struggled to grasp the challenges faced by people who do. It was mortifying when Celia said she hadn't followed some of last year's philosophy presentations and almost all of the discussions. After all my banging on about everyone, newcomers and old hands, being entitled to 'do philosophy': to hear, reflect and talk about philosophical issues! Already feeling out of my depth as group leader, this was yet another hurdle to overcome. Not least because the smaller room we all preferred in the hall where we meet lacked a working T-loop. To begin with and using Celia's equipment, patience, enthusiasm and expertise, we installed a temporary loop each meeting and relied on a lapel mike for the presenter and a roving mike for discussions. Climbing onto tables to put up the loop didn't necessarily follow health and safety best practice, though. Sections of the loop fell down; the lapel mike jerked out of excited presenters' lapels; the roving mike didn't rove far or fast enough. Paul Kassell's demonstration at a meeting of Windows' 11's subtitles was the game changer. With Celia's new microphone and laptop powerful enough to drive the subtitle facility on PowerPoint, almost all of us could read pretty accurate subtitles. Useful to those with hearing impairments but also to those without who experienced that (very rare!) flicker of inattention.

Not everything's perfect. Subtitles aren't entirely accurate yet. None of our presenters, so far as I'm aware, is a communicator by trade, and we're having to speak clearly and pace ourselves so the subtitles can keep up. All without becoming so self-conscious that we never want to present again. But things are changing. More of us are 'doing philosophy' and, yes, spelling Nietzsche correctly.

Nigel Smallbone

OUTINGS AND VISITS REPORT

In July we enjoyed a very interesting day out to **Beaulieu to visit the Palace and National Motor Museum** – where there was a choice of a guided tours. In the palace we were told the history of the Montagus – and shown a large number of family portraits with detailed explanations of who their ancestors were! In the Motor Museum, the range of nearly 300 vehicles covered the first motor carriages right up to the modern day, plus F1 cars, record breakers and luxury cars. On the site we could also visit the ruins of the original monastery, the church and gardens, plus special exhibitions including WW2 Special Ops Agents, Top Gear, and famous on-screen vehicles such as the Trotters' Reliant Robin – easy to travel around by vintage bus or on a monorail.



Dining Room in Beaulieu Palace



Group by the vintage bus at Beaulieu

In the afternoon we all went to nearby Bucklers Hard, a lovely village on the Beaulieu river with a history of shipbuilding – with time for a look around the museum and various houses, a drink in the pub and then a boat trip to finish off the day.



Bucklers Hard



For what seems to have now become an annual event, we went to **Chichester Summer Festival** in early September to see **Oliver!** This was a magnificent production, 'freely adapted' from the original Charles Dickens' novel by Cameron Mackintosh, it included all the well-known songs and music by Lionel Bart, and choreographed by Matthew Bourne. The production was darker than the 60s film – it's a story of child poverty, criminality and domestic violence, but with memorable showtunes! I thought

the Fagan and Nancy characters were particularly good. It was up to Chichester's high standard and is now showing in the West End. A few of us took the option of having a back stage tour in the morning, while others explored Chichester town and the shops. On the tour we were shown around the various departments, including costumes, make-up, wigs, dressing rooms, etc and then went onto the 'thrust stage' where it interesting to see the different parts of the scenery and the way in which it was all moved around. No photos of that allowed, I'm afraid.

Also in September, we visited **Buckingham Palace State Apartments**. These were very grand and colourful and felt full of history. However, in the Throne Room we were surprised how small the thrones were. It was an atmospheric and regal visit as



we walked through the magnificent apartments, imagining we were royalty. The Picture Gallery, flanked by many masterpieces, was a feast for our eyes and we could imagine how the Ballroom was used for huge state dinners. After the tour, some of us took advantage of the tea and cakes served on the terrace of Buckingham Palace, sitting in the sunshine, enjoying the view.

In October, we had our second visit to **Ham House and Strawberry Hill House**, which was again fully subscribed. The weather was kind to us as we managed to escape the drizzle for our garden visit at Ham House with a sunny afternoon for our Strawberry Hill visit. The contrast between the two houses was as fascinating as ever and we enjoyed learning about the previous owners of the two houses

Ham House is one of the best preserved 17th century houses in England and was remodelled by William Murray, Charles I's "whipping boy". Strawberry Hill House is a fine example of Georgian Gothic architecture and was created by Horace Walpole in the 18th century.



We have recently advertised our autumn and winter trips to **Greenwich, Kew Lights, John Rutter Christmas Concert at the Royal Albert Hall and to the Mill Theatre in Sonning to see *White Christmas***. Please remember that we accept firm bookings on a 'first come' basis and can't reserve places.

We are currently planning our spring programme of visits which include **Sandham Chapel** to see the artwork of Stanley Spencer, and **Greenham Common Control Tower** to learn about what went on there during the 50s to 60s. We have already booked for **Salisbury Cathedral Flower Festival** in May. Details of these and other trips will be circulated when finalised.

Ann Elms and Jackie Ring

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY OUTING TO WINCHESTER AND WHITCHURCH SILK MILL

So much to think about when you organise an Outing. The weather is fairly significant as is the sudden closure of the venue. Having planned that no one should be exposed to excessive



Round Table in the Great Hall

heat or a steep uphill gradient, we found ourselves in Winchester on the hottest day of the year with the centre closed due to the annual Freedom Parade. Who does not enjoy a challenge even if it means a compromise too?

Winchester really is a magnificent city and possibly we lose sight of the fact of its historical importance not to mention the huge military reputation. Those of you who came on my Southwark trip will be reminded of the Crossbones Garden which, sadly was not open when we were there. In 1161 Bishop Henry of

Blois was granted the power to license prostitutes and brothels in the liberty by King Henry II. The prostitutes were known as Winchester Geese, and many are buried in Cross Bones, a consecrated graveyard. Lots of history there, and some people managed to visit the Great Hall and the Round Table whereas others headed straight for the magnificent cathedral in the limited time.

Those who stayed with me opted for the Peninsular Barracks with several small Military Museums in particular the Gurkha Museum. What an extraordinary surprise. So much detail and so well presented. Where do the Gurkhas come from? Gurkhas are traditionally recruited from the hill people of Nepal, who trace their roots right back to an 8th century Hindu warrior, Guru Gorakhnath. They first encountered the British in 1814, when the British East India Company fought against them during the Anglo-Nepalese War. The Gurkhas have been part of the British Army for over 200 years and there are now around 4.000. During the second

war, many battalions fought in Burma. The museum explained that the soldiers attempt to maintain the individual culture of their villages, each one having different customs. Above all they have the reputation for being the finest and most feared soldiers in the world.

On to the Silk Mill at Whitchurch not far away. The Mill was built in 1813-15 by an iron founder to make brushes but was converted to silk 1817-19. For many years the mill wove silk linings for Burberry. At one stage Stephen Walters & Sons, silk manufacturers based in Sudbury, Suffolk stepped in to buy the Mill to keep it operating and producing silk. In 1871 Ede & Ravenscroft, makers of legal and academic gowns, took ownership of the Mill. Ottoman silk became a mainstay product. As the name implies, these are based on opulent Turkish designs with large motifs and often shimmering



After 1985, falling into a state of disrepair, the Mill was rescued by Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust (HBPT), who began restoring the buildings. The Mill opened as a working museum, under the management of Whitchurch Silk Mill Trust, to ensure the survival of winding and weaving using traditional machinery and method. The Mill underwent a major programme of restoration and revitalisation, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other donors. It was not working for our visit because the noise is too disturbing; It is a lovely setting, and I was promised tea on the lawn by the river but unfortunately, we were somewhat crammed in on the first floor, but the tea was good and the cake was large. In all my years, it is the first time I have ever pre booked refreshments. It is also the first time I have ever arranged an Outing away from London, apart from Oxford and Cambridge.

It was good to see at least ten new faces amongst the 'regulars' too. Everyone loved Winchester with so much to do that suggestion of a second, all day visit was greeted with enthusiasm - watch this space.

Sheila Darzi

THE DEADLINE for the **SPRING 2025** newsletter is **14 MARCH** please submit your contributions as a **Word.doc or compatible** in Calibri font, single spacing. **Photos as individual jpg files** please. Anything sent after the deadline will be held over until the next newsletter