

August 2026 Newsletter

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Contributions to Alan:

<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

- By 22nd of month to ensure entry in next issue (or incl later issue)
 - MS-Word Arial 12 preferred
 - Max length 1 page please
 - No surnames for privacy
- NB Articles may be edited
Any **Photograph** submitted must have permission for its' use and publication from **all** those photographed.

u3a Contacts & Information

- B&D website
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/>
- B&D Committee Members
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>
- B&D Events
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/events/>
- B&D Groups
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/groups/>
- B&D FaceBook – to join:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1381609732656710>
- National u3a website
<https://www.u3a.org.uk>
- National u3a YouTube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheU3a/playlists>
- u3a National Newsletter
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter>

Welcome to our Newsletter



There is an important message from our Chair about Risk Assessments. These are important and necessary documents so please read and take action as appropriate.

On a lighter note, thank you to this month's contributors to our group's news. It's good to see what interesting things some of our groups do.

Alan (Editor)

Dates for your Diary: details on the website at

<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/events/>

📢 Thursday 13 August 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"Tales of a Film Prop Man" Peter Benson

👥 Thursday 27 August 09.30 Committee Meeting*

📢 Thursday 10 September 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"Open Afternoon" **NB** Doors will not open before 2.00 to allow for safe setting up of the room

👥 Thursday 24 September 09.30 Committee Meeting*

🏠 Tuesday 29 September 2.30-4.30
Coordinators & RUGS Volunteers *Thank You Tea Party*

🚌 Tuesday 6 October *Coach & Boat Trip to Windsor*

📢 Thursday 8 October 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"The Story of a 2nd World War Hero" Geoff Piper

👥 Thursday 22 October 09.30 Committee Meeting*

Monthly & Committee meetings are held at [Detling Village Hall](#). Non-members are welcome to come to two monthly meetings before joining.

*NB If you would like to attend a committee meeting, please contact our Chair, Graham
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

Committee

- **'From the Rockin' Chair'**



Serious note this month. Health & Safety has a bad rep. Frequently used as an excuse for inaction, it is easy to forget its true purpose and value. Our u3a has a duty of care to its members and while a Risk Assessment (RA) can be viewed as an irksome and unnecessary box-ticking exercise, it is when something goes wrong that a poor RA is exposed.

The committee will be reviewing our approach to RA and further guidance will follow. Meanwhile, I would ask you all, especially group coordinators, to read the Health & Safety protocol and incident procedures on the Small Print page of the website. You know it makes sense.

Learn, laugh, live

Graham Chair: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

- **From the Committee**



A recurrent item is Health & Safety and risk assessments and our Chair has written above on the subject. I must reiterate how important and necessary these documents are and they must be completed.

Promotion of our Open Afternoon was discussed, including a stall at Bearsted Market on 6 September and distribution of posters in Weaving and Tesco. We have an almost full programme of speakers for 2027. Following the success of the Bletchley and Amberley coach trips a further one has been organised for Windsor and others are being planned.

People who attend the monthly meeting will be aware of the parking issues. In an effort to reduce the pressure of parking we would recommend car sharing.

Peter Secretary: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>



Next month's speaker is Pete Benson, who will be telling us "Tales of a Film Props Man".

With two books published, in this humorous talk he will be relating experiences with stars such as Liz Taylor, Robert De Niro, Rock Hudson and others.

Rick Speaker Secretary: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/> For last month's click: [Monthly Meeting](#)



A coach & boat trip to Windsor has been arranged for Tuesday 6 October. By coach to Windsor, with optional two-hour Thames boat cruise. Explore Windsor and Windsor Great Park, and if cruising, enjoy views of Windsor Castle, Eton College and Bray Film Studio from the

Thames. There are various options for the day and, depending on the one you choose, prices run from £22 to £50

An e-mail has been sent to members giving more detail. Should you not have received it and are interested please contact me via the link below.

Steve Coach Trips Coordinator.: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

Groups Focus

Coordinators Update



With the Open afternoon coming up, it would be useful if coordinators could check that all names on the group membership lists are current. If a member hasn't been turning up, without giving a good reason, please contact them & ask if they would like to be removed. This will free up space to invite newer members along.

It's always refreshing to welcome "new blood" with fresh ideas into any existing group. If the person is keen to learn, they will soon catch up.

Lanyards & name badges Please let me know if you are still awaiting your lanyard.

Open Day Thanks to everyone who's offered to help at the Open afternoon on 10 September. We could still do with more people to help set up. Please contact Graham or me.

At the end of this newsletter, you will find a flyer which can be shared digitally or hard copy/print. Please invite anyone you know who may be interested.

Maureen: Groups Coordinator: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

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Groups Update:

Face The Music Group has a new coordinator. Thanks to Myra, who's stepping down after successfully coordinating the group since February 2020, initially on zoom owing to the lockdown. We wish the new coordinator, Graham M, every success. Please note, there are currently spaces in the group. Contact me if you are interested.

Maureen: Groups Coordinator: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

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Groups News

London Walks 1



On a pleasantly warm day in mid-June, we embarked on a tour of Parliament at the invitation of the MP, Helen Whately and in collaboration with a member of our group who had organised the day with MS Whately's Office. Helen Whately is the MP for the constituency of Faversham and Mid-Kent.

Security was tight, very much like airport security, but with pre warnings about not taking too large a bag, no drinks or sharp objects, our group of 20 seemed to pass through without any hiccups. We were allowed to take empty transparent water bottles through for filling up on the other side.

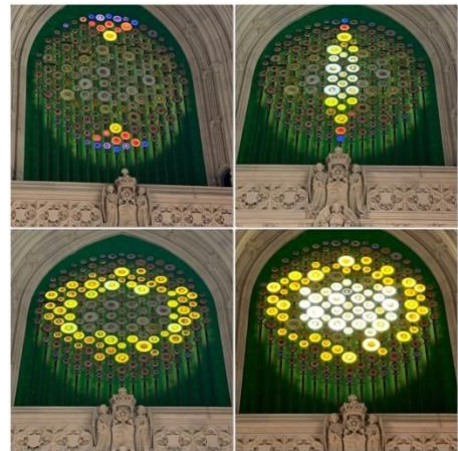
Our tour included Westminster Hall, St Stephen's Hall and the lofty central lobby. The Lords Chamber and later a chance to go up to the gallery of the Common's Chamber. Due to PMQ's starting at 12noon, we were unable to actually go into the Common's Chamber, and indeed Ms Whately was unable to meet us in the lobby as pre-arranged, due to PMQ's. We were however able to go into the viewing gallery over the Common's Chamber to hear and see the tail end of a debate.

We were met by an official tour guide who was extremely entertaining, very knowledgeable and gave us a first-class tour of Parliament, including a history lesson or two. We all immensely enjoyed our day and finished off near the shop and café off Westminster Hall.

The Glass 'sculpture' (right) by Mary Branson, called "New Dawn" shows changes activated by the moving tides of the River Thames

Patricia

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Village Visits

In July our Village Visit was to Pluckley. We were entertained with a PowerPoint presentation on the growth of Pluckley from an Anglo-Saxon settlement to its current position as a popular Wealden village. Interestingly, the Domesday Book tells us it had a larger community than Ashford!



From the 12th century the principal family were the Dering's, who became politically very successful and extended their influence throughout Pluckley and beyond; they even changed the design of the windows of the houses in Pluckley!



We also had a very detailed description of the church and its history and an interesting walk through the village to a viewpoint over the Weald. Would highly recommend the Pluckley Heritage Society to any groups interested in Kent history.

As usual we finished with an excellent lunch, at the Black Horse pub in the village.



Linda

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London Walks 2



Our group enjoyed a very informative walk around the prosperous neighbourhood of Hampstead. In beautiful sunshine, we saw many notable houses with plaques describing who had lived there and were told amusing anecdotes about the former occupants and their place in history including:

Sir Gerald Du Maurier (actor and manager), Sir Flinders Petrie (Egyptologist), John Galsworthy (novelist and playwright), Sir George Gilbert Scott (Architect), Robert Louis Stevenson (novelist and essayist) and John Keats (poet). We also saw some grand houses, like Burgh House, Cannon Hall, Admiral's House, Fenton House and Keats House.



Joyce

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Last Month's Meeting



Paul Whittle returned in July to tell us "The Malta Story". As on previous visits, Paul presented a well-structured and researched talk on the history of Malta, followed by sight-seeing tips.

With a population of 516,000, 90% of whom are Catholic, around 2 million tourists a year visit the island. Situated in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, it has always been militarily strategically important.

We heard that in 1530, Emperor Charles the Fifth granted Maltese Islands to the Knights Hospitaller (a group dedicated to pilgrims and the care of the sick and poor), in a defensive move against the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans however, repeatedly attacked from 1551 and in 1565, the Great Siege by the overwhelming Ottoman forces failed and they evacuated the island. This was widely celebrated in Europe.



The Knights Hospitaller ruled the island until 1798 when Napoleon Bonaparte invaded due to the Maltese not supplying water to his ships that were heading to Egypt. By 1800, Lord Nelson had relieved the island by blockading the ports, leading to the French starving and surrendering. In 1814, Malta became a British Colony until 1964, gaining independence, and then in 1974, becoming a Republic.

With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Malta's defences were significantly updated. During WW1, Malta housed 27 hospitals with 25,000 beds treating 100,000 patients. Japanese allies provided and maintained 17 destroyers and cruisers to defend convoys against German and Austro-Hungarian U-boats.

In WW2, Malta entered the war with just a handful of outdated bi-planes when Italy commenced bombing raids on the island that had become completely surrounded by the Axis forces. From 1940 to 1942, Malta suffered intense hardship in a blockade, until the arrival of Hurricanes and Spitfires (that crippled the Italian attacks), and in Operation Pedestal, 4 out of 13 relief ships reaching the island, supplies had arrived with only two weeks food remaining on the island. By the end of 1942, Malta had endured 3,340 air raids and 15,000 tons of bombs.

King George VI awarded Malta the George Cross (a civilian equivalent to the Victoria Cross), celebrating the bravery of its people.

The Knights still exist with a headquarters in Rome – there are around 13,500 Knights who employ 52,000 Doctors and Nurses.

Today, there is a rich variety of attractions to visit including the Grand Masters Palace, the National War Museum, and particularly, the Sacra Infermeria Holy Hospital plus many others, too many to mention here.

Rick: Speaker Secretary: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

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And Finally

On 2 August 1100, whilst hunting in the New Forest with, amongst others, his younger brother Henry, William II, or William Rufus, was struck by an arrow shot by Sir Walter Tirel, or Tyrrel, Lord of Poix in the Ponthieu. The question is, accident or by design?

It seems Henry and his friends left the corpse by the road, at a spot now called the Rufus Stone, and journeyed to Winchester for him to claim the throne as Henry I. This stopped the elder son Robert from claiming the throne.

As for Walter Tirel, he fled back to France and his territories there. None of the hunting party pursued him. In later life he swore under oath, before a French abbot named Suger, that he was not even in that part of the forest when the king was fatally hit.

So, accident or by design? Or perhaps a third explanation. It seems William I was cursed for taking land by force and demolishing churches and settlements in his conquest and subjugation of England. Rufus had an older brother and a nephew who also died in the forest, both it was said killed by the curse.

Naturally there are stories around the event. The ghost of William Rufus walks the path to Winchester where his body was taken for burial, having been found by a charcoal burner. It is said Walter Tirel washed his hands clean of blood in Ocknell Pond and so every year on the anniversary it turns red. There's also a great black dog, called Tirel's Hound, which appears in the forest as an omen of death.

Accident, by design or curse? I leave it to you!

Alan: Editor: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

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The Open Afternoon flyer for your use, as per the Group Coordinator section, is on the next page



Bearsted & District U3a



OPEN AFTERNOON

**Thurs 10 Sep 2 to 3.30pm
Detling Village Hall, Pilgrims
Way, Detling, ME14 3EY**

**Join us for a cuppa & a chance
to find out what our 50+ groups
get up to.**



Bring a friend



**For more info visit our website:
[https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/u3a
_events/open-afternoon/](https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/open-afternoon/)**

Or scan:

