



ZOOM Meetings
Booked for 2.15 p.m.
Chat 1.45 p.m. to 2 p.m.
Notices 2 p.m. to 2.15 p.m.
Times for This Month Only

Date	Speaker	Title
19 th August 2021	Saffron Summerfield	When Birds Sing
16 th September 2021	Tony Earl	The Charity Shop
21 st October 2021	Paul Barwick	The Mysterious death of MI6 spy and Code Breaker Gareth Williams
18 th November 2021	David Gedye	Bringing the Monkey Puzzle Tree to Europe
16 th December 2021	Sun Jester	The Bob & Dot Show
20 th January 2022	Jeremy Holmes	Shakespeare's Lost Women
17 th February 2022	Alison Wall	Pest Houses
16 th March 2022	James Redden	Journey with Ferocious Gods
21 st April 2022	Jonathan Jones	The Role of the Town Crier
19 th May 2022	Nick Dobson	An underground Guide to Historical London
16 th June 2022	Steve Baron	Medical Surgery
21 st July 2022	Tony Eaton	Windsor and the Nazis Traitor
18 th August 2022	Roger Mason	Robert Maxwell: Fell or Was he Pushed?
21 st September 2022	Eve Bacon	Spices and Medieval Society
20 th October 2022	Tony Ring	Wit, Wisdom and Lyrics of PG Wodehouse
17 th November 2022	Adam Smith	Travelling England with John Byng
15 th December 2022	Jonathan Jones	Christmas Cracker

Many Thanks to Jane Elliston for all the hard work in arranging these Speakers

Next Month (September), we will be Face-to-Face for all those members willing to take part in a monthly meeting at the Community Centre (1.30 p.m. for 2.00 p.m.). It is hoped that these will be hybrid meetings so those who are not yet sure of meeting together can still watch the talk.

This month, there is an illustrated talk with recordings of birdsong.
It will show how birds sing with the latest scientific research.

Just why does a small bird (Marsh Warbler) 'collect' up to 250 other bird songs and calls on its migratory path from Africa to Northern Europe? How can a tiny bird like our Wren sing 25 notes a second? What is happening inside a bird's brain when it sings? Why does the Dawn Chorus have such an emotional and *calming* effect on some humans? How have birds inspired Composers, Poets, Writers and Artists for thousands of years? What did Mozart learn from his pet starling?

All these questions will be answered!

Come and Book your u3a Summer Holiday Visiting AVON and CARDIFF June 9th to June 13th 2022

Monthly Meeting

Booking Process from Scratch

September 2021

Please sign Booking List

October 2021

Please sign Booking List or collect your Booking Form

November 2021

Please collect your Booking Form if necessary

December 2021

Please return your Booking Form to Julie Leach

Geoff Short – Chair

It is with sadness that I mention the passing of Brian Griffiths, formerly a member of our u3a, who died on July 11th peacefully at home. Brian was 88. The funeral was held at St. Alphege Church Solihull on August 2nd. I understand that he and his wife, Shirley, ran the Local History 1 group at one time and I'm sure many of you will remember them well. Brian and his family will be in all our thoughts.



Little response has happened this month so I repeat my Question:

Do you want this u3a group to continue?

This is, after all, your u3a and I imagine that you all enjoy both the monthly meetings and the various groups. However, we cannot continue without support – which means not only taking part in those groups but being willing to participate in the Committee and to take up the various roles as they become vacant. A number of our team intend to retire by the end of this year – that is March/April 2022. These are the roles that need to be filled at that time or, preferably, earlier:

Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Speakers Organiser, Hall Organiser, Committee Members, Vice-Chair (vacant)

The fact is that, without these positions being filled, continuing with Mid-Bucks (Aylesbury) u3a will be difficult or impossible. As you know, various officials have already mentioned within the Newsletter that they intend to retire and are looking for volunteers to replace them. So far this has not led to any response. Therefore, I ask the question again: Do you want this u3a to continue? If the answer is yes, then consider how you can help to keep us going. Do not rely on “someone else” to step forward! If you are willing to take part, then contact me or any of the committee and we will welcome you on board.

Please think carefully about this in the coming month and let us know.

Dave Rogers – Editor

The History of the Union Jack

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia (Ireland & Wales)

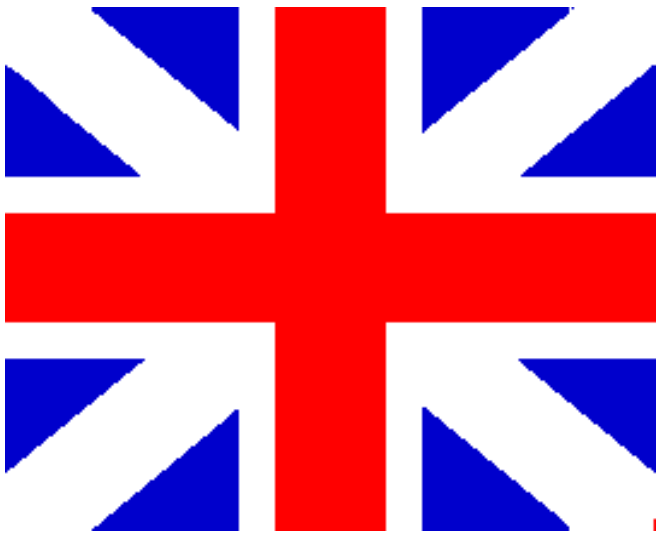


“The Gaelic kingdoms of Ireland ended with the Norman invasion of Ireland (1169–1171), when the kingdom became a fief of the Holy See under the Lordship of the King of England. This lasted until the Parliament of Ireland conferred the crown of Ireland upon King Henry VIII of England during the English Reformation. The monarch of England held the crowns of England and Ireland in a personal union. The Union of the Crowns in 1603 expanded the personal union to include Scotland. The personal union between England and Scotland became a political union with the enactments of the Acts of Union 1707, which created the Kingdom of Great Britain. The crowns of Great Britain and Ireland remained in personal union until it was ended by the Acts of Union 1800, which united Ireland and Great Britain into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from January 1801 until December 1922.”

“The Principality of Wales (Welsh: Tywysogaeth Cymru) existed between 1216 and 1536, encompassing two-thirds of modern Wales during its height between 1267 and 1277. For most of its history it was ‘annexed and united’ to the English Crown except for its earliest few decades. However, for a few generations, specifically the period from its foundation in 1216 to the completion of the conquest of Wales by Edward I in 1284, it was de facto independent under a Welsh prince of Wales, albeit one who swore fealty to the king of England.”

The Edwardian settlement of Wales was severe on the Welsh, but for those times not unduly so. It ensured English political authority – but a rather tenuous authority. Welsh affairs were still plagued by feuds, and by the administrative confusion of Principality and Marches. This confusion was resolved in Henry VIII’s reign by the Welsh Act of Union (1536), the work of Thomas Cromwell, and a supplementary Act in 1542. The Marches were abolished. For the first time, Wales had a definite boundary.



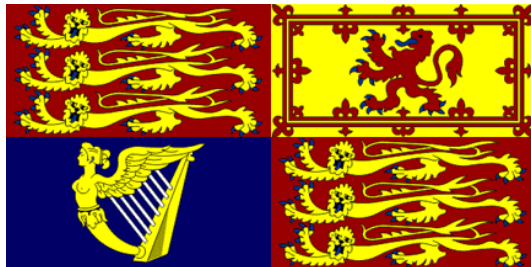


King James VI of Scotland inherited the English and Irish thrones in 1603 to become King James I of England. Although the three kingdoms remained separate countries; each with its own parliament; the first version of the flag was created on 12th April 1606 when he decided that the union of two of the countries (England & Scotland) into Great Britain should be represented by a new flag – **The British Flag**. It consisted in the red cross of England superimposed on the white cross of Scotland. What was supposed to be a symbol of unity became a symbol of controversy. The English resented the fact that the white background of their cross had disappeared except for a small border needed to meet “heraldry” requirements - red can’t touch blue.

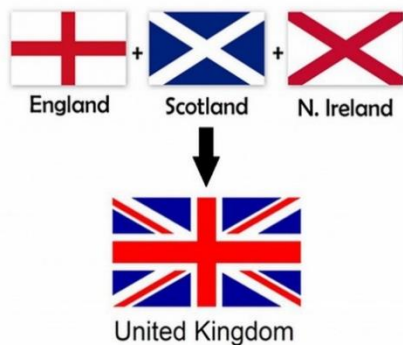
On the other hand, the Scottish resented the fact that the English red cross had been superimposed on the Scottish white cross!! The Scots designed their own “unofficial” symmetrical version of the Scottish white cross superimposed on the English red cross to rectify the sense of injustice felt at this innovatory flag.



Some historians believe that the “unofficial” flag was flown when the king visited Dumfries in 1618. The controversy was destined to last!! Today, there are two Royal Standards – one to be flown in England; the other in Scotland



England (Left)
Scotland (Right)



An attempt was made to modify the British Flag under Oliver Cromwell. A harp was placed in the centre representing Ireland but the original flag was restored with the monarchy in 1660. It wasn't until 1801 that the third country (Ireland) joined in union with Great Britain causing the necessity for three national flags to be superimposed into one – **The Union Flag**. Wales does not appear on the flag because by the time the Acts of Union were enacted in 1707; unifying the kingdoms of England and Scotland into Great Britain; Wales had already been part of England for more than 150 years. In 1922, Ireland went on to form its own state, with just Northern Ireland retaining its British Status.

The official name for our country is “The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”.

Around 1674, Charles II proclaimed that the British Flag should only be flown by ships of the Royal Navy as a small flag at the bowsprit or “jack staff” – “jack” being the Royal Navy name for a small flag. Only the Royal Standard could be flown on land at that time. Thus, on 1st January 1801, the Union Flag became **The Union Jack** when flown at sea whilst retaining its name when flown on land or in harbour. In 1902, it was announced by the government that either version could be used as the name

for the National Flag but Parliament changed its mind in 1908 when it stated that **The Union Jack** should be regarded as the **National Flag** of the **United Kingdom**.

In November, 2007, a Welsh MP, Ian Lucas, asked Parliament why the Welsh Dragon could not be in the centre of the Union Jack? He was told that the heir to the throne was always the Prince of Wales, so, although Wales was a Country, it was still a Principality and not a Kingdom. Now that all four countries have returned to possessing their own parliaments, how long will it be before all seek independence again? Each retains its own National Flag of St. George, St. Andrew, St Patrick and St. David - the latter is an alternative to the Welsh Dragon.



Jasmine Reeks – Membership Secretary

MEMBERSHIP

Membership stands at 145. Birthday Greetings to all you August babies. We have family and friends celebrating through this month. Enjoy your other celebrations too.

YARN CRAFTERS

[Is there anyone who would like to take over this group?](#)

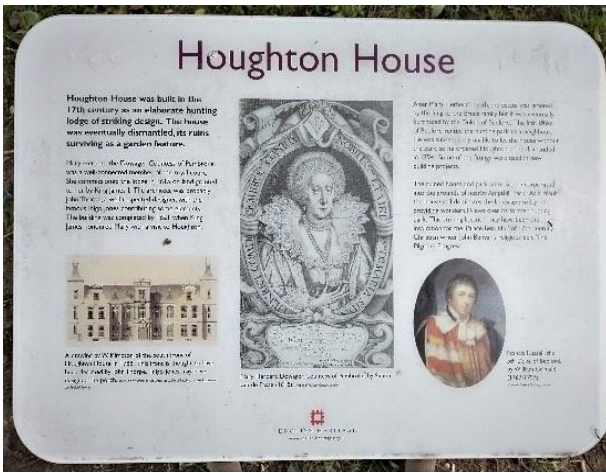
LOCAL HISTORY

We have just had our first tentative face-to-face meeting for many a long month. 16 members gathered and walked around College Lake, ending with coffee, for some, at the Visitor's Centre. A gentle ramble with wild flowers, butterflies, turquoise damsel flies and some nippy birds. Geese and coots splashed and preened on the far edge of the lake. We were then treated to a goose display of synchronised paddling and flying. A good time had by all.

Our September meeting is still in the planning stage. We have tentatively arranged for the Tuesday 28th September 10.30 for a guided walk around the buildings and park of Great Linford Manor Park, near Milton Keynes. We settled on that date as the facilities (toilets) are available, which is such a relief. For those who want to make a longer visit, exploring the park and walking along the canal would be a personal choice. We will email Local History members when we have finalised details with Ellie but it is a date to enter into your calendar. In November, Rupert has generously agreed to produce a retrospective presentation at the Methodist Church of Local History Outings; with possible indoor "picnic". This in the even more pre-planning situation! We are scratching our heads for October but hope inspiration strikes soon.

Houghton House – Bedfordshire

Simon and I went on a guided walk of Houghton House, an English Heritage property in Bedfordshire. There is very limited parking on site so we parked in Ampthill and walked, mainly off-road, for just under a mile to the ruined house.



The Houghton estate was granted by James I to Mary Herbert, Dowager Countess of Pembroke, nee Mary Sidney.



*“She was among the first Englishwomen to gain a significant reputation for her poetry and her literary patronage. By the age of 39, she was listed with her brother [Philip Sidney](#) and with [Edmund Spenser](#) and [William Shakespeare](#) among the notable authors of the day in [John Bodenheim](#)'s verse miscellany *Belvidere*. Her play *Antonius* is widely seen as reviving interest in soliloquy based on classical models and as a likely source of [Samuel Daniel](#)'s *closet drama* *Cleopatra* (1594) and of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607). She was also known for translating [Petrarch](#)'s "Triumph of Death", for the poetry anthology [Triumphs](#), and above all for a lyrical translation of the *Psalms*”.* (Wikipedia)



It was built from 1615-1621. It is not known but possibly the architects responsible were John Thorpe and Inigo Jones. It appears that the estate was granted only for her lifetime as it reverted to King James 1, who then granted it to Thomas Bruce, 1st Earl of Elgin in 1624. It stayed in the Bruce family but the 3rd Earl went into exile due to his loyalty to the deposed James II. He never returned to Houghton and in 1738 the house was sold to John Russell, 4th Duke of Bedford, whose principal seat was Woburn Abbey, seven miles away. His son and heir lived at Houghton from 1764 until in 1767, he died after a hunting accident.

The estate was inherited by the 5th Duke of Bedford, the 4th Duke's grandson. The 5th Duke let the deer-park to a neighbour but then found he was unable to let the house without its

grounds. He considered the house a liability so ordered it to be dismantled in 1794. The furnishings were stripped out, the roof removed and sold. The staircase has survived and is to be found in The Swan Hotel, Bedford. The ruins became a focal point in the landscape.

As you walk through the house, the view explains the location of a commanding building in the landscape. In 2006, English Heritage undertook conservation work to maintain the safety of the remaining structure. It proved to be a very worthwhile trip. The bare bones of the building illustrated the design and reasoning behind a 17th Century House.



Jane Elliston

ARTISTIC COFFEE MORNING

Art Coffee Morning Meet for the first time
7th September 10.30 at Jane's House.
50p for refreshment.

If you want to be creative, in any medium, or need inspiration or just coffee and chat you are welcome to join us.

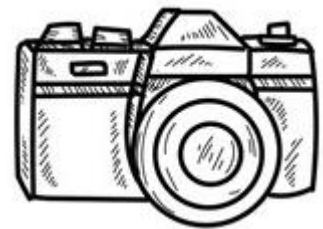
Phone Jane 07788494380 to find out more.



PHOTOGRAPHY

The photography group will meet again on Monday 9th August 10.30 at Janes House.

If you would like to visit the group with a view to joining, please contact Jane on 07788494380.



Tony Vickers

BUCKS AT THE CENTRE OF WARTIME INTELLIGENCE



RAF Medmenham currently Danesfield House Hotel & Spa

Soon after the outbreak of war in 1939, Bucks became a vital centre of wartime intelligence. Behind the façade of three elegant country houses, intense secret activities, including 'spies in the skies,' were in full swing. Although much is now known about Bletchley Park, two other units in the county, Medmenham and Hughenden, also made critical contributions as invasion threats increased. The fall of France in 1940 brought the collapse of most British intelligence sources and to fill the information gap the focus turned to air reconnaissance and map analysis.

In April 1941 Medmenham, a large county house between Marlow and Henley, became the Central Interpretation Unit for RAF aerial photo interpreters. Housing over 1700 experts, including Sarah, Churchill's daughter, and laid out in huts in similar fashion to Bletchley, staff worked with basic stereoscopes and geographic models to provide two pieces of information. Firstly, a detailed analysis of photographs taken mainly from Spitfire and Mosquito pilots on reconnaissance missions and secondly to assess actual bomb damage after Bomber Command missions. This was a really contentious issue since many missions often missed their targets by miles and bomber accuracy became even more vital as the tide of war began to turn. Once assembled over a target, bombers stayed for about 6-7 minutes

before breaking formation and hopefully heading for home. The technology behind navigational aids then was quite basic and the pressure to improve became intense. Pilots flew by dead reckoning, there was no radar and few radio aids. Behind every raid, however small, there was intense target preparation. Without it and the mission would fail. During night time raids bomb aimers had the highly dangerous job of taking photographs as bombs fell, with the added risk of film suddenly exploding in front of them.

The photo analysts always worked at breakneck speed, taking the film from returning aircraft, then poring over the details before submitting reports on damage or potential targets. An experienced plotter could cover around 500 frames every five hours and by the time of D-Day some 155,00 prints were examined every week. They became extremely good in discovering complex camouflage schemes, such as trees planted on railway stations or hiding underground aircraft factories. Using higher scale prints, a major coup came in February, 1940 when the battleship Tirpitz was found in dry dock in Wilhelmshaven. Then, in January 1943, a further breakthrough came with the discovery in the Peenemunde area of possible rocket sites masquerading as small sections of railway track. These were the V1 and V2 sites ready to fire on London. Senior commanders were sharply divided over what they actually were, some feeling they were white barrage balloons on railway lines, but others, including Dr. R.V. Jones, adamant they were actual rockets. A key piece of evidence spotted by analysts were the scorch marks on the grass of a nearby runway, indicating that jet engines were now being developed to power the “doodlebugs”.

Medmenham was also prominent in providing the photographs, intelligence reports and models of the dams in the planning of the Dambusters raid. For the bombs, devised by Barnes Wallis, to bounce correctly the precise water levels in the three dams had to be known, alongside the location of anti-aircraft batteries. Medmenham’s role in two major campaigns, North Africa and D-Day also became vital. In North Africa analysts pored over desert terrains looking for troop movements, supply dumps, oil reserves and landing sites. By D Day in June 1944, Medmenham had prepared thousands of intelligence reports and millions of photographs to support what was the most complex invasion in history. As spies in the skies, each day they analysed the geographic features of the coastline, the major landing zones, railroads and fortifications, hidden gun emplacements, port installations, underwater obstacles, airfields and bridges around Normandy and inland.

Hughenden’s role will be covered in the next article.

Jim Wilding

PACE is a ground breaking children’s charity based in Aylesbury that transforms the lives of children and young people with neurodisabilities such as cerebral palsy. PACE provides support up to age 18 and is rated outstanding by OFSTED. We have received a request to support their activities.



The particular event for which they are requesting our support is a series of 3 peaks challenges; Snowden, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis or the Pennine peaks of Whernside, Pen-y Ghent and Ingleborough. They are inviting participants and I have pointed out that our members are unlikely to participate (I have, over the years done all six but couldn’t do them now!) but members might like to support PACE as a charity. Details of the event can be found on line at <https://thepacecentre.org/3peaks/> should you wish to enter or contribute to PACE through <https://thepacecentre.enthuse.com/profile> or <https://thepacecentre.org/donate> and refer to the “Three peaks challenge” in making your donation.

Pat Pickering - Gardening Group



Our September visit will be on Tuesday 14th September 2021 at 2pm when we will be visiting Hollytrees, Paris Piece, Holmer Green, High Wycombe HP15 6SP. The cost will be £6.00 to include refreshments. I will be emailing all garden members with these details.

Our October meeting will be a talk by John Tyler who has visited us before and is a very good speaker. His talk will be "Natural Signals" (How plants communicate and what they are saying). This will be held at our normal meeting place of the Aylesbury Tennis Club, at 2pm on Tuesday 12th October 2021 and the cost will be £3 which will include refreshments. Pay at the September U3a meeting where I will have a sheet to sign.

I am opening this October talk to all U3a members.

Ann Burman – Quiz Group

We hope to resurrect the Quiz Group on 18th January 2022, but need to know how many people are interested in attending. For those who do not know about the group; it is held on every third Tuesday of the month at Aylesbury Tennis Club (2.00 p.m. until 4.00 p.m.). It's an afternoon of light-hearted quizzing (no prizes unfortunately) with a break for tea and biscuits.



If you feel like giving it a try or are one of our regulars and would like to return, there will be a sheet circulating at the U3A meetings in September and October in order for you to register your interest. If you are unable to attend either of the U3A meetings but wish to join the Quiz Group please contact either myself on 01296 422084 or Chris Blaik on 01296 425964.

Simon Reeks – Gadget Group



A particularly busy month, involving such things as several upgrades to new SSDs (very fast Solid-State Devices as replacements of the older and inherently slow mechanical Hard Disk Drives), providing and setting up a couple of PCs, a laptop, speakers, a printer and a mobile phone), installing a webcam and generally sorting out computer issues such as installing a new Microsoft Office 365 subscription. I seem to be working harder than I ever did before I retired!

A gentle reminder about auto renewal of subscriptions for software which is normally rather more expensive than buying from Amazon (other retailers are available). Auto renewal of McAfee antivirus packages will normally cost about £60 to £80 a year, I can source

McAfee for £7. If you have BT Broadband there is an even better deal - McAfee antivirus is provided to customers FREE as a benefit, for 1 to 15 computers (depending on which package you have) - have a look at the website below for further details.

<https://www.bt.com/help/security/anti-virus-software/what-is-bt-virus-protect-and-how-do-i-get-it>

If you have a mobile phone with a Pay-As-You-Go SIM card, check how much you are being charged - most networks have stopped marketing the old style "321" style where you were charged 3p per minute of phone call, 2p per text and 1p per mb of data and have ramped up the prices for those who stay with the same SIM card. Only O2 still have a 321 offering, although they no longer market it, and I still have several of these SIM cards available free of charge. If you are interested, check the network coverage at your address using <https://www.o2.co.uk/coveragechecker> then let me know and I will pop around with a SIM.

If you need any help or advice about (non-Apple) gadgets, please contact me (01296 482735 or reeks@fangio.co.uk) and I'll see what I can do.

College Lake



Once a chalk quarry, College Lake is one of Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust's flagship nature reserves. The marshland is perhaps the most important of the reserve's homes for wildlife, as in the summer it supports a number of breeding waders. These include Lapwing and Redshank, both of which are rare species. In the lake, Common Terns nest on specially created islands. In the winter, the inhabitants of the water change with wintering wildfowl, such as Wigeon and Teal from Scandinavia, using the wetlands for feeding and roosting.

Next Contribution Date Friday 10th September
Contributions Welcome from ALL Members