



Here & Now



Reigate & Redhill u3a Magazine

*Underneath
the Arches!*

No. 98

Summer 2026

Editor's Welcome

Hello Everyone,

Well! We have had a very hot May and a very soggy June so I wonder what else is in store for the rest of the summer?

Whatever the weather, I hope you will find time to read and enjoy our latest edition of 'Here and Now'.

I have been amazed at how the title '**Underneath the Arches**' has led the team to investigate so many topics and Carol's photographs, like this one and on the back cover, are stunning.

I always like to hear from the interest groups to see what they have been up to. If your group has studied something unusual or fascinating, please let us know, we'd love to share it with a wider audience.

I'd like to welcome all the new committee members and thank the outgoing members for all their hard work over their term of office. Like the Magazine Team we work hard to make Reigate and Redhill u3a the best it can be.

Don't forget we'd love to hear from you.

Tina Pankhurst



From the Chair



The theme "Underneath the Arches" can have many interpretations. For me, I think of interesting bridges under which I've sailed or walked. Take Clachan Bridge near Oban, known by many as the Bridge over the Atlantic. I visited here last year. It's a simple single-arched, hump-backed, stone bridge, where the flow of water goes two ways, depending on tide.



The Gateshead Millennium Bridge crosses the River Tyne between Newcastle Quayside and the Gateshead Quays. It is the world's first and only tilting bridge. Instead of splitting in the middle, the entire curved structure rotates on a giant



axis allowing ships and boats to pass underneath. We sailed up the Tyne in 2019, mooring on the quayside close to the bridge and witnessed it going up. I think it a privilege with a yacht when you can have a "parking place" right in the centre of a city!

In 2022, we walked near Balcombe and the Ouse Valley Viaduct. No doubt you have hurtled across this viaduct several times on the train to Brighton, without even being aware of it.



The photo of Brian standing within one of its 37 semi-circular arches puts its Victorian beauty into perspective.



I wish you all a lovely summer. Brian and I are looking forward to more walking and sailing adventures in Scotland, and then a ferry ride to Santander in August to Northern Spain in the hope of seeing the Total Eclipse of the Sun!

Gill Haines



The Archway Theatre

Over seventy years ago two amateur theatre groups in Horley came together and rented some arches under Horley railway station for a 98 seat theatre and for the next twenty years each produced two to three plays a year there. Twenty years later they decided to join forces and became The Archway Theatre Company.

This larger and combined force began to expand the theatre complex providing wider and more ambitious facilities including a Wardrobe, Rehearsal Arch, Bar, Studio and Function Room and it is this complex that is in constant use by the two-hundred plus theatre company all of which are amateurs and include, actors, directors, scenery makers, electricians, prompts, backstage staff and a big army of front of house staff to man the bar, the box office and front of house duties.



So, a very active and wide-ranging programme of theatre and entertainment.

Programmes are drawn up by a Rep Committee. Directors submit plays they would like to do, or the committee have plays they would like to see done and approach a particular director. The overall programme must include a range of plays that appeal to various tastes it also needs to consider casting so that plays feature casts of various numbers. Difficult to cast a large cast play if the previous production was also large cast.

Given the frequency of productions timescale is important. It is a three-month sequence starting with auditions

– which are open to anybody – then rehearsals starting two months before opening night, for five weeks in the rehearsal arch – the floor area being the same as the stage. Then into the theatre usually on the Thursday three weeks before opening. By this time the wonderful band of “scenery citizens” have built the set although not finalized or painted it, having dismantled the previous plays set on the Sunday before. So, it is a tight mechanical process to ensure everything is ready – month by month by month.

This year, so far, The Archway have presented Alice in Pantoland, Educating Rita, Curious Incident of the Boy in the Night Time, A History of Falling Things and Jack Absolute Flies Again. In July it presents a new play written by a company member, I Do Not. In August Wind in the

Willows at Tillgate Park and You Can't Stop the Rhythm, a journey through musical theatre at The Archway.

So fabulous theatre on your doorstep – don't miss it!

Michael Beach

Photos: The Archway Theatre Company

Alice in Pantoland, Educating Rita, Curious Incident of the Boy in the Night Time, A History of Falling Things and Jack Absolute Flies Again.

Additionally, there is an active and large Youth theatre within the company giving experience and opportunity to youngsters from eight to eighteen and producing an annual production within the main theatre.

The company presents ten productions a year in the main house for ten days (including a Saturday matinee). Also, in the Studio various productions such as bands, singers, comedy nights and slightly more unusual plays.



Underneath the Arches

A song by Bud Flanagan (born Chaim Weintrop) and Chesney Allen. It was first released in 1931 and was a song about the struggles of homelessness and poverty. It refers to sleeping on cobblestones with the pavement as a pillow and no sheets.

During World War II it became associated with British resilience, especially during the blitz, when hundreds of railway arches were repurposed into communal air-raid shelters. The thick brick construction offered significant protection from the bombing.

Whilst they offered protection and shielded many people from falling debris and blasts, if the railway lines above were targeted by the Luftwaffe and suffered a direct hit, then the arches could collapse. An arch at Druid Street in Bermondsey was hit in October 1940 and the collapse killed over 70 people. Sadly, this was not an isolated incident.

Conditions in the arches were not pleasant, due to overcrowding. But they did have sleeping platforms, chemical toilets and rudimentary First Aid Posts.

There are very few original WWII arch shelters which are



accessible today, mostly they were returned to their original purposes, usually storage or commercial use. I did investigate to see if the arches which are now being used as the Archway Theatre

had been used as a shelter, but I could find no evidence of this.

If you'd like to find out more about the use of arches as air raid shelters, the Imperial War Museums website is a good source of information and photographs. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/search/global?query=arches>



Why do we say...

Someone is an 'archenemy'? Well, the word arch comes from the Greek word arkhos meaning to rule and the word enemy from the Old French enemi, which in turn came from the Latin inimicus which is a combination of the Latin words in – meaning not and amicus – meaning friend, so literally an un friend. Thus arch enemy is a great un friend!

An archetype is the original pattern from which other things of the same type or kinds are copied. Did you know that there are seven female archetypes, Maiden, Mother, Queen, Huntress, Lover, Sage and Mystic? Men, on the other hand have four, King, Warrior, Magician and Lover.

An Archbishop is a chief bishop

Archival the primary competitor

Archangel chief angel

Deb Chapman

Wembley

For many people the twin towers of Wembley Stadium were an iconic landmark in London. They were constructed in 1923 and for so long were a distinctive symbol of the football grounds. In 1976 the towers were given Grade II listed status. So, when it was suggested that the towers should be demolished because the grounds needed to be redeveloped, there was a huge outcry and opposition to this happening. For a while English Heritage and Brent London Borough Council stood firm that the towers would not be demolished.

However, in 2003 the towers were demolished to make way for a much larger stadium. A new architectural landmark was needed and so the Wembley Arch was designed. The 133-metre-high arch, which is the world's longest single span roof support structure, was created in 2007. The Wembley Arch became a symbol of the stadium's transformation. Its sleek design and huge scale make it a striking addition to London's skyline.

Suspended from the arch are 68 steel cables which hold up over 7,000 tonnes of roof structure. This allows for there to be no roof supports obscuring the view for any spectators. More than just being a steel structure

that holds up a roof, it is a beacon, especially when lit at night, to show spectators their way to events held at the grounds.

Tina Pankhurst

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Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings are held in the lounge of The Light in Redhill, meeting once month on alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays. They are a great way to meet with other members. Computer support is always on hand so bring your laptops, tablets or phones. Coffees and teas are available for purchase.

We will meet from 10.15 to 11.15 on the following dates: **Thu 9 July** (venue tba), **Tue 11 Aug**, **Thu 10 Sept** (followed by a meeting for new members), **Tue 13 Oct** and **Thu 12 Nov**. Do check our website **What's On** calendar and under **Coffee Mornings** for the latest information, as there could be a revision to date or venue.

Introducing the new Group Coordinators

Firstly a huge thank you Nikki Stoddart who, after managing groups for the last four years, is now handing the baton over to Debbie Mann and Vivienne Winter Stuart. We wish Nikki all the best even though we know we will still be seeing her regularly at the various U3A events.

Debbie has been a member of the RRU3A for 3 years. Her own experience with U3A has been great fun, enjoying trying some of the many groups available as well as leading Italian for fun herself.

Vivienne has been a member of RRU3A for just over 2 years now and has joined a number of groups, including co-founding the Dutch/Flemish interest group.

They are both looking forward to getting to know more members and group leaders, hearing ideas and understanding what people want from the groups. They are keen to support existing group leaders and, where there's an interest and/or a need, to help get new ones started.

Let us know if you would like to join any of the groups, details of which can be found on the website, by filling in the Group Enquiry Form or emailing us at groups@rru3a.org.uk. Debbie Mann and Vivienne Winter Stuart Groups' Coordinators



Outings

Chichester Festival Theatre – My Fair Lady – Tuesday 4 August

Demand for this outing has been high and it is already fully booked. Cost £56.

Rye Walking Tour – Tuesday 22 September

A full-day visit to the town of Rye comprising a 1.5 hour guided walk through its cobbled streets and narrow alleyways, highlighting the more whimsical aspects and interesting features of the town. After the tour there is the opportunity for a 20 minute sound and light show at the Heritage Centre Town Model, based on Rye in Victorian times. Free time will follow, with time to try one of the many eateries. You may wish to visit Lamb House (NT) once owned by the writer Henry James, or St Mary's Church Tower with its view overlooking the town. Bookings open on our website on 1 July. The tour is not recommended for those with mobility issues. Cost £33.

Hampton Court Palace Festive Fayre – Friday 4 December

A magical day with over 100 artisan producers at Henry VIII's iconic palace. You will be able to visit the 60 acre gardens and formal maze. Don't miss the enchanting Winter Palace event, where the famous palace's historic rooms are transformed with magical storytelling, live performances and mythical creatures – bringing an extra layer of festive wonder to your day. The day will be yours to choose how to experience the variety of exciting things on offer. At time of going to press, this outing is fully booked. Cost £43.

All details are available on the rru3a website **What's On** page <https://www.rru3a.org.uk/post/outings> including a link to the booking form and information about future outings. In case of queries, contact the Outings team email outings@rru3a.org.uk, or telephone Richard on 07929 715198. Technical assistance for completion of online booking forms is available at our coffee mornings.

Monthly Meetings 2-4pm

In person at Reigate Park Church, or watch live on YouTube with the link provided before the meeting.

Friday 7 August Racing through the Southern Ocean presented by Ian Worley

Ian will talk about his experiences whilst sailing as a watch leader, later promoted to First Mate, on the maxi yacht Great Britain II in the 1977/78 Whitbread Round the World Race. During that race they encountered storms aplenty, raging seas, icebergs and a lightning strike, all whilst he was filming for the BBC sports programme GRANDSTAND. Later, he made a film of his experiences which he sold to United Artists to accompany the James Bond film MOONRAKER. Hold on to your seats – we might be in for a bumpy ride!

Friday 4 September The Ghosts of Scotland Yard presented by Lindsay Siviter

Over the years, the HQ of the Metropolitan Police in London has been located at several sites including its current location on Embankment.

As a former volunteer in the famous Crime Museum, Lindsay has been collecting stories and tales about alleged ghostly sightings and strange phenomena within this famous institution's various locations. From accounts published in books and contemporary newspapers to personal tales and memories from former staff, you will hear about ghostly apparitions, mysterious sights and sounds, haunted objects and much more.

Friday 2 October Ethel Rosenberg: A Cold War Tragedy presented by Anne Sebba

In June 1953, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, a couple with two young sons, were led separately from their prison cells on Death Row and electrocuted moments apart. Both had been convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage for the Soviet Union, despite the fact the US government was aware the evidence

against Ethel was shaky at best and based on the perjury of her own brother. Anne's book is the first in forty years to focus on one half of that couple and she will be revealing more of this amazing story.

Friday 6 November The Sands of Time: A Surrey Cottage from 1450 to the Present Day presented by Dr Nicholas Dixon

The village of Limpsfield has long been appreciated for its wealth of historic domestic architecture. However, the identities of the people who owned and lived in its houses before the 20th century have been largely untraced. This talk will explain how Nicholas reconstructed the history of a Limpsfield cottage and the land on which it stands, resulting in a revised understanding of its age and the discovery of fascinating information. The story gives remarkable insights into the history of south-east England.

Study Days



Surrey u3a Network Study days are open to all u3a members and guests are very welcome. They are held in the Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon; starting at 9.30am with registration and running from 10am to 4pm. The fees, including coffee/tea and biscuits, are £12 for members attending and £15 for guests. To watch online at home cost is £7. Attendees should bring a packed lunch. Prior booking is necessary. All details, including how to book, can be found on the Surrey Network website. Booking forms are also available in the hall after Friday meetings. Details of forthcoming study days are below. If details are missing at time of going to press, visit www.surreynetwork.u3asite.uk/events.

Friday 18 September – The Bayeux Tapestry: Its Creation and its Interpretation Presented by Imogen Corrigan BA MPhil FRHistS FRSA
Lecturer on Medieval History (This Study Day includes a lunch-hour recital by Menuhin School Pupils)

Friday 16 October – World Affairs in the Middle East & Africa: Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Africa & Nigeria Presented by Steve Bird,
Lecturer on Military History & Current Affairs

Friday 20 November – The Music & Satire of Gilbert & Sullivan Presented by Bernard Lockett,
Gilbert & Sullivan Society (This Study Day includes a lunch-hour recital by Menuhin School Pupils)

South East u3a Forum Summer School – Monday 7 – Thursday 10 Sep 2026 University of Chichester
See the website <https://southeastu3aforum.u3asite.uk/2026-2/> for more information about this year's programme. At the time of going to press all courses are fully booked apart from Jazz Appreciation, Mah Jong and Spanish Beginners.

Holidays

27 Sep – 5 days from £859 The Historic Houses and Heritage of Norfolk and The Sandringham Estate

It is planned to include Ely Cathedral, a guided city tour of Norwich, a cruise on the Norfolk Broads, Blickling Hall Garden & Park, Felbrigg Hall, the Sandringham Estate, a scenic drive along the North Norfolk coast road, Anglesey Abbey Garden and Lode Mill.

Contact Diana Cooper for details, email holidays@rru3a.co.uk, tel 07982 606943. All participants are expected to undertake scheduled visits unless they choose to remain at the hotel for the day, having informed Diana in advance.

At the time of going to press this holiday is fully booked.



Reigate Town Hall



Built in 1901 to replace today's landmark old town hall in the High Street, the current building was designed in the Arts and Crafts style. It has seen a chequered history, starting life as the police station for Reigate, then becoming the fire station with stabling for horses, and a magistrate's court. The rather quirky tower was added to accommodate the fire station's hoses which in those days had to be hung out straight to dry and uncurl.



The former council chamber was also decorated in the Art Nouveau style, with a fine decorated ceiling, windows and fireplace.

Carol Hicks asks – What is the future for Reigate Town Hall, a Grade II listed building, once local government reorganisation takes place next in April 2027?

Where did it all begin?

A plaque outside the current Council Chamber relates the story of Thomas Dann, a lime and coal merchant from Reigate, later joined by Clair Grace, a solicitor from Redhill, who campaigned for better public services. They eventually managed to persuade enough people to sign a petition to Queen Victoria for a Charter of Incorporation of Reigate as a municipal Borough in 1863. Thomas Dann became the first mayor, presiding over six aldermen and 18 councillors, with Clair Grace as the Town Clerk. Within a few years the Borough at last had a police force, a fire brigade and public services including running water and gas, and subsequently an electricity and sewerage system.

150 This plaque is to mark the celebration in 2013 of 150 years of Reigate and Redhill as a Municipal Borough



In 1859 Thomas Dann, a lime and coal merchant from Reigate, began a campaign for more effective, co-ordinated and accountable local government in the ancient parish of Reigate, which included the newly established Redhill.

At this time there was a wide diversity in the provision of public services, with no running water or street lighting in most places, inadequate protection against crime and fire and no sewage system, creating serious health risks. Responsibility lay with the six small and ill-resourced 'boroughs' within the parish.

In 1860 Thomas Dann was joined in his campaign by Clair Grace, a young solicitor from Redhill.



Despite considerable opposition from vested interests, they eventually managed to persuade enough people to sign a petition to Queen Victoria which, after an enquiry by the Privy Council, led to her granting a Charter of Incorporation of Reigate as a Municipal Borough in 1863, with an elected council of six aldermen and 18 councillors, presided over by a Mayor.

Thomas Dann became the first Mayor of the Borough and Clair Grace became Town Clerk, serving for 40 years.

Within a few years a Police Force and Fire Brigade had been formed and public services such as running water, gas and subsequently electricity were installed throughout the borough, together with a sewerage system.



In 1974, when the Borough of Reigate and Banstead was formed in the previous local government reorganisation, the newly enlarged Council took over the magistrates' court for its Council Chamber and extended into the adjacent room to allow more space for public viewing. The police, fire service and magistrates had all moved out by that time.



Paul, the current mace bearer, looks after the Mayoral robes and regalia. He affectionately calls the mace 'Myrtle.' What will happen to these historic and unique items when all the East Surrey Councils merge?

In the corridor between the old and new council chambers are an interesting series of displays, including the battle ensign of Ark Royal III, which was presented to the Borough of Reigate and Banstead and hung in the Mayor's Parlour for many years. Reigate had 'adopted' the Ark Royal III. Launched in 1938, she avoided serious damage and was known as a 'lucky ship' until her luck did run out in November 1941 when she was torpedoed. The Borough's Sea Cadets took the name T S Ark Royal.



The Current Council Chamber

Town Twinning



with Brunoy 1993-94



10th Anniversary of Twinning with Eschweiler



Also in the corridor are Town Twinning Agreements signed with Eschweiler in 1985, and with Brunoy in 1993-4.

On the staircases accessing this corridor are portraits of all previous mayors, and a superb stained glass window with the Borough's coat of arms.

What will be the role of this historic building in the heart of Reigate after Spring 2027? And where will the new East Surrey Council meet?





Quiz night

The U3A quiz night was a real success for everyone that turned out. The room the church gave us, normally used by the U3A for teas and coffees after the monthly lecture, was just the right size. The questions were also just right, not too hard and not too easy either and the technology worked a treat! At least until the audio round when all I remember of that is Deb and Lloyd saying it had worked perfectly at their house.

Our team, the Sirens, was made up of 7 ladies that didn't really know each other that well. We all thought we would do really badly as between us there was little knowledge of sports and even less of 21st century culture. We confirmed this by doing really badly in the first few rounds but in the end our complementary skills must have counted for something as we won! After much amazement and disbelief we eventually came round to thinking there had not been a mistake in the counting, how could I have thought that when it was Sally Baker adding it all up.

The chocolates we were each presented with are still sitting on my sidetable and I am resisting the urge to open the box as I know when I start they will be finished all too quickly.

By the way, there were some great looking picnics on display and everyone brought way too many snacks with them. Many of which returned home with the donor!

Catherine Shevlin

TRIP	TEAM NAME	QUIZZY QUIZ	RECORD BREAKERS	IT HINGED IN JURY	MUSIC	WEATHERMAN	WHERE IN THE WORLD IN THE PICTURE	POUNCE	SLIT A HAND	WANT YOU KNOW!	TOTAL
1	St. Paul's	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
2	Magnificent	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
3	Magnificent	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
4	Recycled	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
5	Octopi	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
6	Sirens	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
7	Halfway	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
8	TK Movers	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

River Mole River Watch

Under the arches of the bridges at Sidlow, Flanchford, Betchworth and Brockham the once clear and biodiverse waters of the River Mole and its tributaries are sick and desperately in need of attention. In an enlightening and dynamic presentation by Simon Collins of the River Mole River Watch at our June meeting we learned that the Mole is one of the most polluted watercourses in the country, particularly near Reigate and Redhill. I was filled with admiration for the volunteers working on regular monitoring and testing of the water, and lobbying for Thames Water and the Environment Agency to deal with the problems identified. And as someone who has known and loved the Mole for my whole life, I was filled with sadness about the sheer scale of the problems and the agonisingly slow pace of change. It is all too easy to lay the blame at the door of Thames Water and the Environment Agency, but in truth our activities, individually and collectively, are part of the problem, and I suggest that we should, individually and collectively, take some responsibility for our actions. We take clean water for granted and often use it wastefully. We block the drains with cooking fats and oils and non-biodegradable wipes. Our household, pet and garden chemicals often end up in the drains too. We pave over front lawns, and we build on flood plains.



But what can we as individuals do? I am not about to become a citizen scientist or an ecowarrior, but on reflection there are several things that I can and will do.

I will join the River Mole River Watch and sign up to their newsletters. Numbers carry weight with politicians, and we can show that we are concerned about our environment.

I will make a small donation, gift-aided, to support the work of the trust. Funding from local communities helps charities attract grants.

I will redouble my efforts to avoid wasting water and to ensure that none of my cooking fats and oils, toiletries and garden chemicals go down the drain, and that nothing that shouldn't goes down my toilet, and I will encourage my family and friends to do the same. Small changes made by lots of people do make a difference.

I will write an article for Here and Now to invite fellow members of rru3a to consider joining me. Please do!

Gail Sperrin

Heron Nurseries



Sometimes you meet people whose energy is infectious. I first met Peter Chan, three years ago, at 'Clipfest', a charity event being held at Ichi-Coo Park in Charlwood. I had no idea he was 84 years old. He was demonstrating the art of **Bonsai** with such enthusiasm. Later he was taking young gardeners and visitors around the

16-acre garden, showing them how to clip the trees and shrubs.

Two years on and I managed to arrange for my Gardening group to visit his nurseries near the Mormon Temple, near Lingfield. Having come to Britain when he was nineteen to train as an engineer, he spent many years in the energy sector. His claim to fame was writing a speech for Margaret Thatcher, when he worked for the Civil Service.

As a hobby he was very interested in the art of Bonsai. He decided to turn his hobby, which had become an obsession, into his work and opened the nursery. Some of you may have seen his You Tube tutorials which are watched by millions. He has a collection of



Bonsai on permanent display at Wisley. Having won twenty 'golds' at the Chelsea Flower Show he doesn't see the need to show there anymore! Having shown

our group around the nursery and answered our many questions he showed us round the huge gardens that surround the nursery. Later, after tea and biscuits, he gave us a demonstration of how to transform three different simple seedlings into the start of a Bonsai tree. With such ease he wired the trunk and branches and then gently twisted the whole thing to make a pleasing shape. We watched in amazement as he clipped and shaped two more seedlings.

He generously suggested that I raffle off the plants. As everyone had donated £10 to St Catherine's Hospice, which was his charity of choice, I put everyone's name in a hat and three lucky winners went home with a Bonsai to care for. We all left with a tiny maple seedling so let's see if we can keep them healthy and happy in their new homes.

Tina Pankhurst



St Catherine's Panel

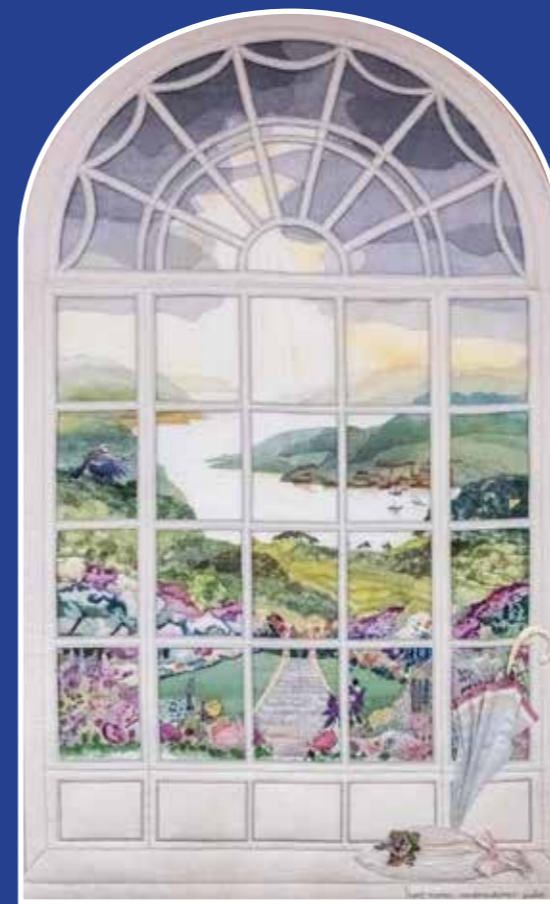
A Group project from 1993: commissioned by St Catherine's hospice for their quiet room which had no natural light, hence the window.

Designed and worked by members of the East Surrey Embroiderers Guild including Pat Jarrett, Anne Sillifant, and Joy Buchan.

Rediscovered in 2025 by a lady from Copthorne who spotted it in a jumble sale and thought it was special. She found the Guild on the Internet and contacted a member who fetched it back to what is now East Surrey Textile Group. We can only assume the hospice didn't want it and someone took it home. It had two cats on the windowsill, which are lost.

<https://eastsurreytextilegroup>.

Carol Hicks



Oranges & Lemons

We all know the rhyme but how many of us know the churches-- St. Clement's, St. Martin's, the Old Bailey, Shoreditch, Stepney, and, last but not least, Bow. Bow is St. Mary-le-Bow, in Cheapside, situated within yards of the financial heart of the city of London, and of St. Paul's, its spiritual heart.

The unusual name, originally Sancta Maria de Arcubus, refers to the Norman arches in the crypt, or undercroft of the church, "bow" being the old name for an arch.

It is worth visiting to see the Norman arches and the food is good.

There was probably a Saxon church on the site when the Normans invaded, but William the Conqueror wanted a Norman edifice, built to dominate London and as an object of oppression. It was founded by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, in about 1080, constructed of the same Caen stone as the Tower of London, and was one of the tallest structures in the city.

To Londoners, the Norman arches, which contained Roman bricks, were a novelty. As churches go, St. Mary's has had a disastrous history. Within a decade, in 1091, the building was destroyed by a tornado and had to be reconstructed.

In 1196, William Fitz Osbert led a peasants' revolt which angered clergy, and a fire was set to force William out of sanctuary in the church. He emerged, was stabbed, and later horrifically put to death, being the first victim to die at Tyburn.

The tower collapsed in 1271, and it was not until 1521 that restoration was complete. The Great Fire in 1666 destroyed the church again. This time, Sir Christopher Wren was deputed to rebuild it, along with the fifty other devastated city churches. Money for this mammoth task was to be raised from a tax on coal.

Wren rebuilt the body of the church in brick, and the tower in Portland stone. He relocated the tower to the north side facing the street. He mistook the undercroft, a space for meetings, to be a crypt, for burials, and thought it was Roman. From then on, the only access was by trap door and ladder.

The church thrived until the Second World War when the Luftwaffe bombing in the Blitz destroyed the interior and the bells. After restoration, it finally reopened in 1964. It is now the third tallest spire in London, after St. Paul's and St. Bride's in Fleet Street. St. Mary's is the London headquarters of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and was a royal peculiar until 1858, having previously been part of

the diocese of Canterbury. It is the centre for the Court of Arches, the ecclesiastical court of appeal for the province of Canterbury.

A curfew bell was installed and rung at 9 pm in the 1300s, and this practice continued until 1876.

The tower bells were sadly pealed in 1643, when the Puritans celebrated the demolition of the lovely but Popish Cheapside Cross which had been erected in memory of Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I. She had died near Nottingham, and twelve stone crosses were erected along the funeral route to London, the last being at Charing Cross.

The bells first came to fame in 1392, when they summoned Dick Whittington back to London to be Lord Mayor, as the pantomime declares. More recently, being born within the sound of Bow Bells meant you were officially a Cockney. In 1851, the sound could be heard as far as Hackney Marshes, Stratford, Limehouse and Southwark.

A more recent survey shows that the area has significantly diminished, and as there are no maternity hospitals in the city centre, the chances of becoming Cockney are now slim.

The bells' peal is world-famous. The BBC has used a recording as the World Service time signal since 1926, and it was used as a symbol of hope during Second World War broadcasts.

Bells have had to be replaced over the centuries. The present peal of twelve has an inscription from a Psalm or the New Testament on each bell, and the initial letters together spell D WHITTINGTON.

Another claim to fame is that the mileage from London to Lewes is measured from the church door, and way markers were placed along the route. A few still exist and are decorated with a cast iron bow with four bells below.

Oranges & lemons say the bells of St Clement's!

The crypt, or undercroft, was eventually reopened and now contains a restaurant and a small chapel. It is worth visiting to see the Norman arches and the food is good.

And the rhyme... it dates from the 1700s and is sung in a children's game where two form arches for the rest to walk through. When the rhyme gets to chopping, the two try to catch one of the others, then they are out. There does not seem to be any significance to the words and several versions exist as well as "oranges and lemons" used for dances.

Denise Moseling

Interior design arches

Timeless Elegance

Arches have moved in and out of style for centuries, but they always seem to find their way back into the spotlight. From classical architecture to modern minimalism, this graceful shape has been reinterpreted again and again. Today, arches are loved for the way they add elegance, soften transitions, and bring a sense of flow to a space. They also create visual interest without overwhelming a room, which makes them feel both timeless and current.

A Journey Through Time

Classical architecture gave arches their enduring reputation, using them to create strength, symmetry, and beauty in buildings that have lasted for generations. Over time, the form moved from grand public spaces into homes, where it became a refined design detail. But during mid-century modernism in the 1950s through the 1970s, arches were often dismissed as old-fashioned and replaced with cleaner, straighter lines. Designers of that era favoured simplicity, efficiency, and a more streamlined look. As a result, many homes lost their curved openings in favour of boxy doorways and flat edges. In recent years, though, arches have returned with fresh energy in contemporary design. What once felt dated now feels warm, sculptural, and full of character.



The Modern Revival

- Softens hard lines in modern interiors, making spaces feel more inviting and balanced.
- Creates visual flow between rooms, making homes feel connected instead of chopped up.
- Adds architectural interest without requiring a major renovation or structural overhaul.
- Instant appeal, giving rooms a sculptural detail that photographs beautifully.
- Works across design styles, from minimalist and Mediterranean to traditional and eclectic spaces.
- Can increase perceived ceiling height, especially when arches are used to frame doorways or alcoves.



Trending Arch Designs

Today's designers are using arches in ways that feel both nostalgic and new. Moorish arches bring a decorative, romantic quality, while Roman arches offer a more classic and grounded look. Doorway arches are especially popular because they instantly soften circulation spaces and make transitions feel intentional. Arched mirrors remain a favourite accent, adding height and a subtle curve to bedrooms, entryways, and living rooms. Arched windows let in light while giving a façade or interior wall a graceful focal point. You'll also see arched alcoves used for shelving, reading nooks, and built-ins, where the shape brings depth and charm to otherwise flat walls.

Arches are more than a trend—they're a timeless architectural element that adds softness, sophistication, and visual interest to any space.



Natural arches



Pont d'Arc
Pont d'Arc is a magnificent natural arch, carved out of the limestone plateau by the river Ardeche, in the Gorges de l'Ardèche, France. The arch is 54 m high and 60m wide. In summer there is barely a square centimetre to sit down and watch the canoeists, but on a rainy October day the views are spectacular.

Carol Bateman

Tianmen dong in China
A huge opening in the steep cliff face of Mount Tianmen (1,518 m above sea level), which is 130 m high and about 30 m wide. Tianmen translates as Gate to Heaven. There are supposed to be 999 steps up to it but you will not be surprised to hear that I didn't try it!

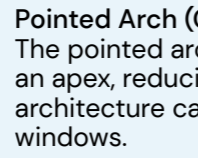
Catherine Shevlin

Arch Types

Arches span openings by carrying loads into supports, enabling stronger and larger structures.



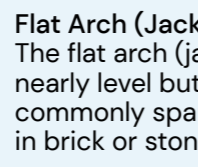
Round Arch (Roman Arch)
The round arch (or Roman arch) is a semicircular arch that carries loads in compression, common in aqueducts, bridges, and arcades.



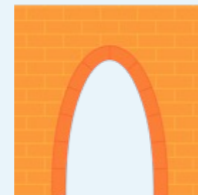
Pointed Arch (Gothic Arch)
The pointed arch (Gothic arch) meets at an apex, reducing lateral thrust so Gothic architecture can rise higher with larger windows.



Horseshoe Arch
The horseshoe arch curves inward past a semicircle, creating a more enclosed opening used widely in Islamic and Moorish architecture.



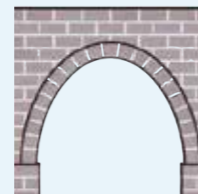
Flat Arch (Jack Arch)
The flat arch (jack arch) appears nearly level but works in compression, commonly spanning windows and doors in brick or stone.



Elliptical Arch
An elliptical arch uses an oval curve for a wide, low-rise opening, popular in Renaissance and Baroque arcades.



Trefoil Arch
The trefoil arch has a three-lobed outline and is mainly ornamental, often used in Gothic and Islamic architecture tracery and niches.

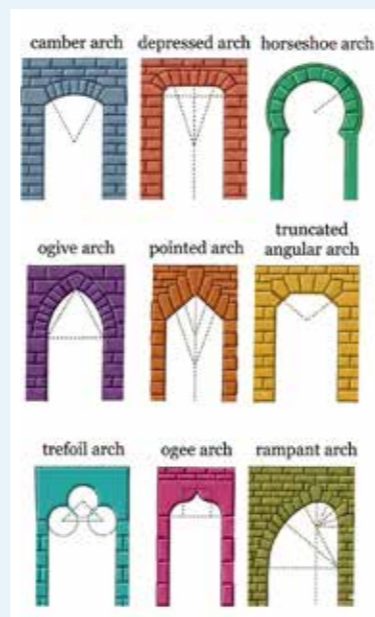


Mathematical Arch (Catenary Arch)
A catenary arch follows the catenary curve of a hanging chain, an optimal shape used in modern architecture and engineering for efficient spans.

Across styles, arches pair efficient structure with lasting design impact. There are many different variations on these themes.

Camber, depressed, pointed, truncated angular, Ogee, and rampant to name but a few.

Can you identify the arch type in the photos on the back cover?



Greece Holiday



After a very early start we arrived in Greece on our second Easter Sunday, Greek Orthodox. In spite of almost all restaurants being closed our Tour Leader had booked a restaurant for a much needed lunch. We then went to the first hotel of our stay for 4 nights before transferring to our second which allowed us to see a large area of northern Greece.



Some of the highlights we enjoyed were a boat trip to see the monasteries of Mount Athos - an orthodox spiritual centre since 1054. Along this spectacular mountain inlet, there were 20 monasteries high up on the mountain slopes, all built hundreds of years ago by monks. They are currently inhabited by 1400 monks. This holy mountain is forbidden to women and children.

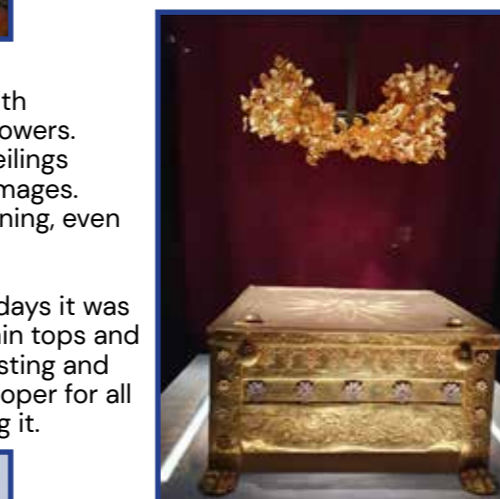
In north west Greece we explored the heart of the Pindos Mountains, considered to have some of Europe's most spectacular scenery, including stunning views of Vikos Gorge, the world's deepest valley.



We visited an area containing very high natural sandstone towers. On top were monasteries built by monks centuries ago. We were able to visit one, if you were able to negotiate the 150 steps to get there, but it was worth it.

There was a beautiful patio garden, with wonderful views over the sandstone towers. Inside the monastery, the walls and ceilings were covered by dozens of religious images. The quality of the paintwork was stunning, even though it was done centuries ago.

Tending to think of Greek coastal holidays it was surprising to see snow on the mountain tops and a vast range of countryside. An interesting and enjoyable holiday. Thanks to Diana Cooper for all the trials and tribulations of organising it.



Tricia Lawrence and Shelagh Roberts

Monastery at Meteora.
Dining out in Thessalonika
Golden burial casket & crown of Philip II
Tomb of Ali Pasha in Ioannina

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