Here & Now

Reigate & Redhill u3a Magazine

No. 95 Summer 2025

Editor's Welcome

What a Summer it has been, too hot for some, but generally enjoyed by most, especially if you have been sitting in the garden with a cold drink lounging or reading a book.

I hope you will enjoy reading this edition of the magazine. We thought we'd include a sporting theme which I don't think we have covered before. What's more English than watching a cricket match on the village green or watching Wimbledon from the comfort of your own armchair. Lots of you have probably been away, visiting new places and sampling new cuisine. The u3a group who visited Italy certainly had a lovely time.

Of course, the title 'The Good Life' can be taken in so many ways but we were reminded of the 50 years since the TV programme was first aired. The show was enjoyed by millions who watched each week to see the ups and downs of self sufficiency and the friendship between the Goods and the Leadbetters. The uptake in renting an allotment soared rather as it did in Lockdown.

I'm sure you will find all the information from the committee really useful, what's coming up and new groups that are starting.

Don't forget that we'd love to hear from you. Does your group have something to celebrate, do you have a poem or short story to share? We are open to any new ideas.

Stoolball

Tina Pankhurst

Stoolball can be traced back to at least the 15th century, originating in Sussex. It is considered a traditional striking and fielding sport. and may be an ancestor of cricket. It resembles, baseball, softball and rounders. The sport has been called "cricket in the air". There is evidence to suggest that it was played as a tradition by milkmaids, who used their milking stools as a wicket and the bittle, or milk bowl as a bat, hence its archaic name of bittle-battle. Stools were sometimes suspended from trees.

Stoolball seems to have been one of the earliest in which women participated. Activities for women before about 1870 were recreational rather than sport-specific in nature. They were typically non-competitive, informal, rule-less and emphasised physical activity. In contrast, stoolball allowed women to participate in a competitive sport.

A "fine match of stoolball" is recorded as having been played in June 1747 by a total of 28 women in Warbleton. The first inter-county stoolball match took place between the women of Sussex and Kent in 1797 at Tunbridge Wells Common on the historic border between the two counties. Sussex women wore blue ribbons to represent the county while the women of Kent wore pink ribbons.

Angela Austin

From the Chair

Reigate & Redhill u3a is all about "The Good Life" – enjoying retirement years with a range of group activities on offer, learning new skills and making friends with like-minded people. Here is a photo of our Cycling Group at the top of Box Hill in January – it's a social group and we always have a coffee stop.

A new activity for me was to join the Handbell Group and to connect again with music. This prompted me last year to pick up learning the piano again, not having touched it since I was a teenager.

I love languages and my French conversation group keeps the language going. I use my French on holiday, chatting when I can to locals, and finding places to visit which wouldn't normally be on our radar. For example, in the Pyrenees we watched a farmer making cheese in his summer workshop high up in the mountains; we joined a food tasting ramble with local people; and we went to a village soiree run by shepherds and volunteers, where we enjoyed wonderful local specialities and wine, and finished the evening watching a sheepdog demonstration.

My family history group has prompted me to explore my own ancestry. I've done presentations to the group about my paternal relatives who emigrated to Philadelphia in the mid-1850s, and on my father's wartime career as a navigator in a Wellington bomber. Our group have also enjoyed visits, the most recent being to the Foundling Museum in London.

The fun isn't just restricted to group activities – in May we had a super quiz evening (see article in this issue) and in September we are looking forward to TV Game Shows, u3a style. Our End of Year Show in December is in the planning stages!

As you read this magazine, think about what Reigate & Redhill u3a has brought you in terms of new activities, learning, fun and friends.

Gill Haimes

Padua Italy, RRu3a holiday

The Good Life!

Did you know that it's 50 years since the 'The Good Life' first aired on BBC television? It ran from 4th April 1975 to 10th June 1978. It was written by Bob Larbey and John Esmonde. The title had two meanings, the goings on of the Good family and living the life that's good. Once they had chosen the name Tom, it seemed obvious to have Jerry as the other male character!

Richard Briers was the first choice for the main character of Tom as he was well-known. Peter Bowles was originally going to play Jerry but he was unavailable so Paul Eddington was asked to fill the role. Felicity Kendal and Penelope Keith had worked together in a play that Bob Larbey had seen and he decided that they would be was brought in to play Margo and Barbara.

After extensive searching to find two neighbouring houses suitable for the Goods and the Leadbetters, Kewferry Road, Northwood, in North London was found, despite the TV series being set in Surbiton. The Good's Garden was returned to its original state after each series and all the animals were removed after each day's recording.

'The Good Life' was one of the greatest British sitcoms of all time. The story of a man who turns 40 and realises he's stuck in a rut, spending most of his working life doing things he doesn't want to do for the sake of making someone else rich.

The final 'one off' episode was filmed in front of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip partly to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and because it was supposedly one of the Queen's favourite TV programmes. Quite a few famous names have guested on the show, George Cole, Robert Lindsay, Angela Thorne.

Tromboncino triumph! - Carol Hicks

The TV series sparked a rise in the number of people wanting to rent allotments and lead a more sustainable lifestyle. Later, to celebrate the programme's 35th anniversary, a show fronted by Sue Perkins and Giles Coren called 'Sue and Giles live the Good Life' aired for four episodes where they tried to recreate the idea of two city dwellers adjusting to county life.

'The Good Life' led to all four actors making a name for themselves and led to them going on to front many other great comedy series and theatre plays.

To celebrate 50 years of the programme Penelope Keith is hosting a special show called 'The Good Life 'Inside Out', which will show rarely seen interviews, props from the show, and Penelope reminiscing about the show. A date has yet to be set when the show will be aired but it will be on USGold and I'm sure it will bring back many fond memories.

Tina Pankhurst

The Walking Group – the Good Life in motion?

Walking Group 2025 - Led by Bob for the last time

Everyone will have their own idea about what makes a 'good life'. But most people would surely include companionship, and a regular opportunity for fresh air and healthy, moderate exercise in their local area. Add the chance to experience the varied landscapes of the Surrey Hills around Reigate and Redhill and you have a perfect description of what the Walking Group has to offer.

The Group walks for about 2 hours and usually covers 3-4 miles between 10.00 and 12.00 on the second Monday and fourth Thursday of each month. Though it has a designated leader who organises the programme and leads many of the walks, all members are encouraged to research and lead their own routes. Over the years a repertory of over a dozen walks has been developed, and as new members have joined more have been added.

Notable regular walks include the intimate hills and valleys around the historic ironworking hamlet of Friday Street, just north of Leith Hill, from the top of Reigate Hill over towards Banstead Common, passing many Victorian coal-tax posts, a circuit from Tilburstow Hill through Godstone, and routes through quiet countryside north of Outwood, and north and south of Leigh. Then there's early September's walk up from Gatton Bottom onto the North Downs, with time for blackberrying, and routes north and south of Bletchingley.

A fairly recent addition goes from Betchworth Church up to the foot of the North Downs, past the remains of the once massive Brockham lime kilns, now reclaimed by nature. For walks closer to home there is a circuit south of Reigate Heath along part of the River Mole, and from Earlswood Lakes circling the East Surrey Hospital campus and the Royal Earlswood Estate, including part of the wartime "Canada Road" to Redhill Aerodrome.

For about 18 years the Group was led by Bob Boden. He finally hung up his boots as Leader earlier this year, after a walk from Crowhust Lane End with a traditional stop to pay homage to the ancient yew tree at Crowhurst Church. The photograph marks the occasion.

Leadership has now passed to Andrew Mason. He has created a digital library of all the established walks, which members can now track with GPS-reading apps. on their phones. He is always on the look-out for new routes and has some of his own for the Group to try. He is experimenting this summer with occasional longer walks of around 6 miles, extending over perhaps 4 hours with a picnic stop. This will show the degree of interest in this format, alongside the traditional shorter walks that fit comfortably into a morning, leaving the rest of the day free. These usually attract 5-20 walkers.

We are truly fortunate to be able to walk in such lovely and interesting countryside, from which to draw much that helps build a 'good life'. The Group currently has 87 members, and more are always welcome.

Lester Hicks

Holiday

9 October 2025 – 5 days from £779 The Historic Houses and Heritage of Suffolk

Visits include Gainsborough's House, Christchurch Mansion, Constable Country, a guided tour of Bury St Edmunds, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Ickworth House, Sutton Hoo, Aldeburgh, Snape Maltings, Audley End House and Gardens.

Contact Diana Cooper for details, email holidays@rru3a.co.uk, tel 07982 606943.

Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings are held in the lounge of The Light in Redhill meeting once a 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: Tuesday 12 August at **The Junction, 1 High St, Redhill RH1 1RD** (because of the busy school holidays for August only we are trialling The Junction as a quieter venue - they will open specially early for us. In terms of access, please note there are three steps up to the venue.) Thursday 11 September (back at The Light), Tuesday 14 October, Thursday 13 November (followed by a meeting for new members) and Tuesday 9 December.

Do check our website ***What's On*** calendar and under **Coffee Mornings** for the latest information.

Group news

Having been handed the baton of groups' co-ordination by Hilary at the AGM in June we have been looking at the range of groups that are currently on offer and are quite in awe of the breadth and depth of the interests that members of our rru3a have!

As at the time of writing there are 105 active groups, loosely categorised as follows:

Category	Number
Arts	13
Crafts	8
Fitness	5
Games	13
History	9
Language	15
Literature	8
Music	9
Science & nature	6
Social	8
The world around us	11
Grand Total	105

Group sizes vary from 2 to 88 and there are 1,453 group members but obviously a lot of people belong to multiple groups!

At the moment we are working towards setting up four more groups but there is always room for more and we welcome suggestions from members willing to lead any new groups.

Please let us know if you would like to join any of our groups by: Filling in the Groups' Enquiry Form on the website, or Email us at groups@rru3a.org.uk
Nikki Stoddart and Jill Flower
Groups' Coordinators

Outings

Thursday 11 Sep - Steam and Cream Tea Bluebell Railway
Depart Reigate 11.30 hrs for Sheffield Park Station, with time to look round the Locomotive Shed museum. Enjoy a light lunch (picnic or at the Bessemer Arms) before taking the steam train at 14.30 hrs for a return trip to East Grinstead with cream tea. Coach leaves Sheffield Park at 16.40 hrs. NB This is a working station and members should be prepared to walk along the platforms, over the bridge, and use a step into the train. **Cost £47.**

Christmas Lunch at Hever Castle Tue 9 Dec
(Details yet to be published and event not yet available to book) Members will be asked to make their menu choice at time of booking.

Outings cannot be booked until a bookings form is published on our website. Updates and details will be given in our bulletin and at Friday monthly meetings.

For bookings, please complete a form (help can be given for this at a Friday meeting), contact the Outings team email *outings@rru3a.org.uk*, or telephone Richard: 07929 715198. Advance payment must be made.

All details available on the rru3a website What's On page *https://www.rru3a.org.uk/post/outings* including link to the booking form and information about future outings.

Monthly Meetings 2-4pm

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

Friday 1 Aug
Simon Keable-Elliott - Utterly Immoral
Simon's grandfather, Robert Keable, wrote a scandalous semi-autobiographical bestselling novel after the war about an affair between a military chaplain and a nurse. He had been a missionary in Africa before becoming a chaplain in France in WW1. After the war, he ran away to Tahiti where he lived in Paul Gauguin's house and later married a Tahitian princess!.

Friday 5 Sep
Dr Ian Bedford – A Garden Bug: Cohabit – Conserve or Control?
What are the good and bad garden bugs that we often find in our gardens and what should we do with them? Should we control them or should we look after them? What do we do when foreign pests such as the Spanish slug invade our gardens? Ian is an entomologist with all the answers!

Friday 3 Oct
Mervyn Edwards –Walking the Beat to Nirvana
Mervyn is a former police officer, reaching the rank of Chief Superintendent. He served as a specialist firearms officer (Tactical Firearms Team) and was the Operational (Silver) Commander for the policing of the Newbury Bypass Protests. His many stories include the operation to detain Ugandan dictator Idi Amin; being first on the scene seconds after an IRA bomb exploded yards from the Ritz Hotel; and his involvement in the protection of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher immediately after the 1984 Brighton bomb explosion. He discusses his involvement in serious crime operations, murder enquiries and working with crime and drug squads.

Friday 7 Nov
Roger Browne – Not Father O'Malley
The hilarious stories of a Roman Catholic childhood in post war Salford, the music that inspired a budding, self-taught jazz pianist and the challenges presented by supporting the 'wrong' football team. Roger's love and passion for music stems from his early years, listening to bands in his local park and listening to radio. He will share that passion with you and play his favourite songs of the day, live on the piano. This presentation is a mix of fascinating facts, amusing anecdotes and wonderful live music.

Friday 12 Dec
End of Year Show

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. For online watching at home cost is £7. Attendees should bring a packed lunch. Prior booking is necessary. All details can be found on our website. Booking forms are also available in the hall after Friday meetings. Details of forthcoming study days are below. There is no meeting in August.

Friday 19 Sep 2025
Vulcan & Concorde: Iconic Aircraft Presented by Guy Bartlett, Aviation Historian
This study day examines the origins, design successes, operational hurdles overcome, and numerous challenges met during the lifetime of the Vulcan (first flight 1952) and Concorde (first flight 1969) – the only successful supersonic passenger aircraft. Guy will help us understand how these aircraft became icons of 20th century aviation and reasons why they were retired.

Friday 17 Oct 2025
Guiding, Ghosts & Gossip at Royal Palaces Presented by Sarah Slater
White Badge Guide Lecturer, Hampton Court Palace (for nearly 20 years) & Blue Badge Tourist Guide, Windsor Castle. Sarah shares the human stories of those who lived and worked within Hampton Court Palace walls over the centuries and to the present day. Wearing period costume, she will regale you with tales of ghosts that haunt the Palace rooms and reveal the secrets and scandals of the royal court. Not for the faint hearted!

Friday 21 Nov 2025
The History of British Industry: Iron & Rivets, to Electronics & Jets, to Robots & AI Presented by Dr Richard Marks
This study day looks at the history of British industry from the heady days of the Industrial Revolution, and Victorian Britain to decline in the 1970s and on to the surprising 21st century. The state of British manufacturing today is a surprise to everyone as it is poorly covered in the mainstream media.

Evening Entertainment

Monday 15 September
Reigate Manor Hotel
7.30 to 9.30pm
TV Game Shows, u3a style.
Our TV Games evening will be expertly compered by David Fisher. It will be an entertaining evening based on panel games Face the Music, Call My Bluff and Antiques Roadshow. There will be participation from teams and the audience. The booking form is on our website, published in our bulletin, or you will be able to book in person at our August and September monthly meetings.

The Secret of Sport

From an early age I had been a sports nut. This was The Good Life. Marriage came in 1968 and with vows and added pressures things would have to change. Or would they?

We spent a few years living in South Africa and when we returned to the UK we bought our first home. In reality it was a wreck. The property had been in total neglect for many years. We set about rebuilding. The generous garden also needed a complete overhaul. A priority was to create a sizeable vegetable patch. Fortunately, at about that time, we had Richard Briers and Felicity Kendal to inspire us.

Among the prizes was a half set of golf clubs. I won and I asked my wife which prize I should take.

Then other pressures came along; our daughter was on her way. My days of playing football, cricket and the occasional game of tiddlywinks was under siege. They were time consuming sports and I was concerned that at some later date my wife and daughter might become a sports widow and sports orphan respectively.

I had a dilemma: was having 'The Good Life' about being a family man tending his flock as well as his veggie patch, rebuilding the family home, playing sport or all three? So I decided to give up playing football and cricket. So far so good. I didn't want to be seen to be neglecting my marital vows or any other obligations.

Decision time! A cunning plan evolved. I would give up playing football and cricket and take up officiating. This proved not to be a wise move as they became all absorbing and even more time consuming hobbies. As I climbed the slippery ladder these put even greater demands on my time. Cricket often involved a twelve hour day, what with travel, briefing and debriefing as well as officiating. Far too indulgent. Refereeing less so as the game is much shorter.

Once again I was forced to review my obligations to my family. Something had to go. It was umpiring cricket. Refereeing stayed and fifty six years later I still find myself in the middle of some local park on a Saturday afternoon with a whistle and notebook in hand attempting to manage twenty two alpha males looking to display their skills and machismo. Well why not? It keeps me fit and active.

But like all avid collectors of things that they are passionate about, rather than shed some sports, I have accumulated a few others but this time with the tacit agreement of my wife.

But back to those days with a young family, a career to think about and a mortgage to pay. My wife and I were at a company dinner dance – those ones with the ubiquitous prawn cocktail starters, black forest gateaux and a bottle of Blue Nun. There was the obligatory raffle. My ticket came up. One of the prizes was a half set of golf clubs. I won and asked my wife which prize I should take. You've guessed it. With Wendy's tacit agreement, that was when golf got added to my list of sports. Now there's a game.

Despite what Mark Twain is alleged to have said about golf that 'it was a good walk spoiled' I enjoy every moment of playing this most frustrating of games. It takes you out onto some beautiful terrain, from seaside links courses, to locations in hills, valleys and mountains, and in my case all over Europe, parts of the United States and even Swaziland.

It is a game where the best can play against the not so good on a level playing field courtesy of some complicated mechanism called the World Handicap System (WHS). You also get to play – at a price – on the same courses as the greats and among the favourites that I've played are Royal Lytham, Royal St. Georges and Hunstanton. When would you get to play football at Wembley or Cricket at Lords?

The sport has been graced by some legends with exceptional talent who I've been lucky enough to see, Seve Ballesteros among them. I've also been lucky to meet some of the greats. When holidaying in Egypt with my wife in 2010 we were in the Valley of the Kings when I spotted a couple nearby with their guide. I said to Wendy 'That's Phil Mickleson'. He had just won the US Masters at Augusta, one of the Four Majors. She said, a little too loudly 'Phil who'? Undaunted I went over to him. We shook hands and had a brief chat. A magic moment for a sports nut like me.

We shook hands and had a brief chat. A magic moment for a sports nut like me.

Golf can be a quirky game. It is played over a course of typically 6,500 yards. If that isn't hard enough, you can encounter lakes, trees, dunes, ravines and the occasional alligator. To add to that, course designers put in bunkers – deep areas of sand – of varying magnitudes. With a warped sense of humour they then give them names. There is a bunker called 'Hell's Half Acre' on a course in New Jersey; one called 'The Coffin' at Royal Troon and another called 'The Himalaya Bunker' at Royal St. George's.

To make things even harder for the average golfer, in 1990 the governing bodies of golf unified the size of golf balls; they made them larger (1.68") but failed to increase the size of the hole. Golf club technology continuously improves ball striking and players get fitter but courses don't get any longer. To counteract that the word is now out that there's talk of manufacturing golf balls that don't go as far. Some courses choose to cut the fairway nap the 'wrong' way so that the ball won't travel so far.

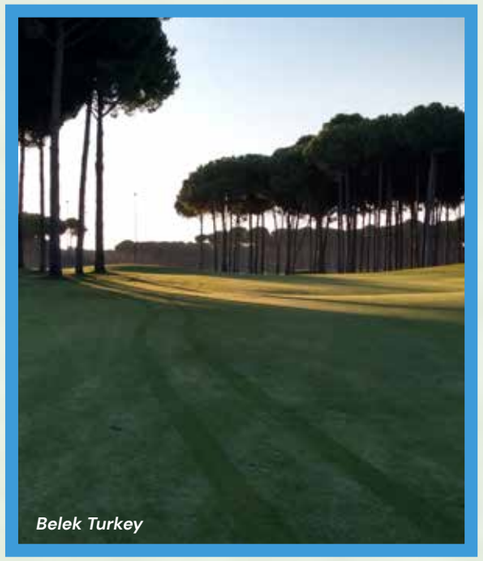
Ayrshire with Ailsa Craig

18th hole at the Carya Turkey

More latterly I managed to squeeze in yet another sport. Bowls. But this is the trick. I persuaded Wendy to give it a try. She was hooked. Now we play together two or three times a week. So where does all this leave us? Our marriage is still intact and the family a bit larger. Our daughter is a successful clinician with her own family and everyone is happy and healthy. That's The Good Life.

Tony Reason

Belek Turkey accomodation



Belek Turkey

'Golf is a good walk spoiled'

according to Mark Twain, but occasionally one good round of golf will make the walk well worth the effort.

I started playing a few years ago after turning up to a 'give golf a try' day at the 9 hole course next to East Surrey Hospital. Another lady also came along to the same session and at the end of the hour we decided to sign up for group lessons. That friendship led to many happy, and frustrating, days on golf courses across Surrey and Sussex. The golf might not have been good but the fresh air, long walk, and good company, always left us feeling better than when we started.

It's a game you have to work at, like most things, but it's certainly worth the effort as golf courses come with acres of lush grass, beautiful trees, lakes, and the occasional bunker. Ladies are always in the minority at golf clubs, so ladies if you get the chance give it a go, you might enjoy it!

Claire Fulston

My summer of Football 1996

One early morning in late May 1996, I found myself walking through the hallowed portals of The Football Association, then in Lancaster Gate, London. What on earth was I doing here, I asked myself. Well, it had all started about a fortnight earlier, when I had taken a phone call from the H R Director of The Football Association.

At this time, I was temping on a regular basis, with a little set of employers which I returned to on a regular basis. If I was sent somewhere that I didn't like, I didn't go back when that assignment was finished. At one of my 'regulars' I had met Sarah, just back from travelling around the world, who then went on to get a job at The FA. We had stayed in touch, and when the FA decided that more staff were needed to cover while Euro '96 happened, Sarah thought of me.

I had to ask when the tournament was, which floored the HR man a bit! Oh, not a football fan then he said, perhaps a little disappointed. He told me the dates were from Saturday June 8th to Sunday June 30th, and asked if I would be interested. Well yes, was the answer, but I already had a booking for the last week, at one of my regulars, Philips in Salfords. They were celebrating an anniversary that week and I had been booked to be there. There were lots of nice things planned for the staff and I didn't want to miss that. After a bit of negotiating I agreed to do most of it. We negotiated a fee, and that was that! I went in for a recce that late May morning and felt at home straight away. The staff were great; I met lots of great people and had a lot of fun. I did get hugged by a referee, which my two football mad brothers felt was a step too far!

I do still have my FA Euro 96 T Shirt, and have been known to wear it when England play!

I was mainly on the front desk, taking calls, quite often from angry football fans demanding to know why El Tel (Terry Venables) was fielding that particular player and not another. We all gave up trying to explain that we couldn't simply ask him, because we were in Central London and he was at Wembley, or St James' Park or any of the 8 stadiums that were used!

Sadly, I was also 'on duty' on Saturday 15th June, when a bomb was detonated in Manchester City centre. Russia were scheduled to play Germany that day. The phones went crazy, with calls from the press all trying for a comment. It was a really sobering day, in the middle of a sporting tournament. Over 200 people were injured, but thankfully, there were no fatalities. The match was rescheduled and played at Old Trafford the next day.

I was also there, my last day, on the morning after **THAT** missed penalty by Gareth Southgate, a local lad from Crawley. To say that the FA staff were disheartened was an understatement, it was awful.

I was also there, my last day, on the morning after THAT missed penalty by Gareth Southgate, a local lad from Crawley.

It wasn't all doom and gloom though. I can remember following a Scotsman up the escalator from the tube at Charing Cross, trying not to see what he was or not wearing under his kilt! A load of Scottish fans had been playing in the fountains in Trafalgar Square, and alcohol had been taken! We were 'invaded' one afternoon by a contingent of the orange army – Dutch fans, dressed entirely in orange, including curly orange wigs. They seemed really incongruous in the Gentleman Club setting of the FA! They looked at the trophy cabinet, took a few photos and then departed, having charmed us all!

A wonderful couple of weeks, and I continued to temp at the FA on and off for a year or so, then I got a 'proper' job. I do still have my FA Euro 96 T Shirt, and have been known to wear it when England play!

Deb Chapman

Balls

Tennis ball

Real tennis balls have been traditionally made from a spherical stitched envelope of leather or cloth stuffed with rags, horsehair or similar material, while modern tennis balls have always been based on rubber. "Clover-Leaf Balls". Originally tennis balls were made solely of rubber, but the wearing and playing properties of the balls were improved by covering them with flannel stitched around the rubber 'core'.

Water Polo

Water polo balls are of varying colours, weighing less than a pound. They're made of waterproof material to float on the water and contains certain textures to allow players to have a better grip on the ball.

Stoolball

A stoolball ball looks similar to a baseball but is smaller and lighter, specifically made for the game from leather and stuffed with a soft material like wool. The leather provides durability and good grip whilst the filling makes it softer for safety in play. The ball weighs between 2½-3 ounces and measures 7-71/2 inches in circumference in contrast to the much heavier cricket ball which weighs between 5.5-5.75 ounces and has a circumference of 8.81-9 inches.

Angela Austin

Sailing Holiday Tale

Over a number of seasons I was extremely lucky to be invited to sail on a friend's yacht. One summer we were sailing along the foot of Italy, hoping to get across to Messina, Sicily. Rounding the corner into the Straits of Messina, the wind changed direction and increased in an instant from 13 to 29 knots so we had to tack towards our goal, avoiding the many swordfishing boats buzzing all around us like flies. Unfortunately the port of Messina was full and our only hope of finding somewhere for the night was to cross the Straits back to a commercial port on the Italian side. Eventually we found refuge in the very industrial part of the port alongside a delightful French boat. We later learnt they had had their dinghy stolen earlier that day when they were at anchor off a beach, resulting in them having to swim back to the boat.

'X set Man Traps but, unfortunately for her, failed to catch one'

I was very reluctant to leave the boat with no one on board, so the rest of the crew went to collect pizza for supper. As the evening wore on there was a certain amount of 'pedestrian' traffic along the quay and I became a little concerned. My berth was in the main cabin and after the others had gone to sleep in the fore and aft cabins, I decided to deter any potential nighttime visitors by placing pan lids concealed on the steps, kitchen implements scattered on the floor and all important items concealed. Then I started worrying that one of the crew might need to get up in the night. Luckily for me (and any potential insurance claims), no one did and I managed to restore the boat to its normal state before anyone else got up. I confessed to the skipper what I had done and he duly entered the following into the boat's Log: *'X (name withheld to protect the author's blushes) set Man Traps but, unfortunately for her, failed to catch one'*.

Christina Read

The Quiz

Our quiz evening in late May was a great event - a new venture for the current committee! Initially people booked in dribs and drabs, so a decision was necessary when we reached around 35 as to whether the event would be a "goer" or not. It was decided to proceed on the basis too much energy had been invested in making it happen – and we would get more people! u3a events always prove tricky to budget in order to achieve "break even". In the end, with 67 participants and food provided (with a discount!) by Dovers Green Fish Bar, a small profit was made!

Team 'Recycled' tackling questions

The booking system worked well. Whilst some members would have preferred to book a table in one person's name (specifying food preference and just turning up on the night), we wanted to offer flexibility for members to come on their own or in small groups. This enabled smaller teams to form a table on the night. Our table plan worked seamlessly and everyone was paired into teams with friends or others they knew. We did have one member who just turned up on the night (no names mentioned!) – and we managed to squeeze that person into a team and buy an extra dinner!

We had nine teams including Bringing up the Rear, Bird Brains, Stiff Competition (the u3a Pub Quiz Group), Les Bavardistes (French Conversation group), Vespas, The Magnificent Seven, The Wooden Tops, Recycled (the Cycling Group) and Odds and Sods.

Quiz Master Phil Wright and his assistant Lynn

Our Quiz Master, Phil Wright, ably assisted by Lynn, didn't make the questions overly difficult, but included sufficiently tricky ones to differentiate the teams. Les Bavardistes used their language skills to work out that a nidologist is someone who specialises in the study of bird nests (from "le nid" in French or "nidus" in Latin).

Phil later provided an analysis. Out of a total 116 points available, the winning team (Stiff Competition) scored 109. Second equal were Les Bavardistes and Bird Brains, each with 100. The Wooden Tops scored the booby prize, and were awarded peanuts (as opposed to wooden spoons)! The average score for teams was 94. Adding all the scores together gave an average for the night of 73%. Phil's target for his quizzes is to get an average of between 70% and 80%. It was pleasing rru3a met expectations!

Definitely an event to repeat for next year – to give another team the chance to unseat Stiff Competition!

Gill Haimes

The winning team "Stiff Competition" – apologies to Julia who was "out of shot" – blame it on the photographer!

Sample Quiz Questions:

1. In which year did the European Union adopt the Euro?
2. Who wrote the book 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'?
3. Which Italian city is credited with inventing the pizza?
4. In which European city could you visit the Rijksmuseum?
5. What was Snickers known as before it was rebranded in 1990 ?
6. How many hearts does an octopus have, one, two or three?
7. What is the capital of Qatar?
8. A screwdriver cocktail contains orange juice, ice and which spirit?
9. Which is longer, a mile or a nautical mile?
10. Which flavour of Walkers Crisps sells the most packets?

Answers page 15

Postcard Challenge!

The u3a '**Art for Pleasure**' group were asked if they would like to paint a postcard of a favourite holiday or something with a holiday vibe. Here is a small selection from the group. Everyone seemed to enjoy the challenge, even if their painting couldn't be included. From the top, Bideford by Adrian Sayce, Sydney Harbour Bridge by Bronwyn Maltby, Venice by Cate Barrett, Bon Voyage by Mike Barnard and finally The Gite by Barry Apps.

Summer Snippets

The word summer was recorded in use before the year 900, and comes from the Old English word Sumor. It is related to the Dutch Zomer, and the German Sommer.

On June 2nd 1975 snow showers caused several cricket matches to be abandoned across the UK.

The phrase 'dog days of summer' has more to do with the stars than our canine friends. The Roman's 'dies caniculares' began towards the end of July when Sirius, also known as the Dog Star, began to rise in the sky just before the sun. They believed that the star was so bright that it gave the sun extra heat, and thus was responsible for hot days in summer.

The coldest temperature ever recorded in summer in the UK is -5.6° C.

The Eiffel Tower can grow up to 17 cm on a hot day in Paris, due to the iron it is made from expanding in the heat.

The summer Solstice in Neolithic Northern and Central European cultures, may have been related to the timing of crops. It was marked by the Celtic, Slavic and Germanic peoples by the lighting of bonfires, to boost the sun's strength for the remainder of the crop season and to ensure a healthy harvest.

In over 136 episodes of Midsomer Murders there have been approximately 388 murders!

Estivation or summer dormancy is a state of inactivity some animals use to conserve energy and prevent dehydration. Snails, earthworms, salamanders and snakes do this, as do a few mammals.

Deb Chapman

Holiday Italy

In May, we enjoyed a lovely holiday to Northern Italy to learn more about the work and influence of the 16th century Renaissance architect, Andrea Palladio; and to savour the food and wine! The itinerary was strenuous but covered so much art and history of that part of Italy.

The first day was spent exploring the towns surrounding Lake Garda finishing with a boat trip from Sirmione, from which we saw the house of Maria Callas, Roman ruins and the spectacular villas and palaces that line the shore.

The next day was spent exploring Vicenza and visiting the Teatro Olympico, Europe's oldest surviving indoor theatre, designed by Palladio in 1579. The afternoon was spent back in the hotel where many people took the chance to swim or explore the local shops.

After an early afternoon flight to Verona, we were taken by coach to Abano Terme, a spa town near Padua, arriving at the Hotel Roma in plenty of time for evening dinner. The hotel had two swimming pools using the thermal waters and also offered spa treatments. We had an enthusiastic guide called Lara. She worked hard to make everything run smoothly, supported by Omar, the bus driver. Some people opted to not join the daily tours but to enjoy the spa treatments instead.

The third day was spent in Mantova, visiting the spectacular Palazzo Ducale, one of the largest palaces in Italy with over five hundred rooms, many with stunning frescoes and decorative stonework, although we only visited a fraction of them! The afternoon was spent at another palace, Palazzo Te, famed for its frescos and the 'Room of Giants'.

The following day saw us visit Villa Malcontenta, one of Palladio's finest buildings. Lunch was in the beautiful hill town of Asolo followed by a visit to Villa Barbaro at Maser, famed for the frescoes by Veronese.

Our last day began leisurely. Leaving the hotel for the last time we drove to Padua, where we had a tour of the Scovegni Chapel, decorated with Giotto's famous frescoes. We then made our way to the Marco Polo Airport in Venice for our flight home.

This was the last holiday that I will organise and I'm pleased to report that it was one of the best in the eight years that I have been involved. Lovely weather, comfortable hotel, delicious food, interesting visits and wonderful company!

Sally Baker

The Good Life Song

Oh, the good life
Full of fun, seems to be the ideal

A 1962 song, written by Sacha Distel. The original French Lyrics were written by Jean Broussolle. It was featured in the film The Seven Deadly Sins.

In 1963 it was recorded by **Tony Bennett**, with English lyrics written by Jack Reardon. Although not a chart success, it became a staple of Bennett's repertoire, and he named his 1998 autobiography after the song. His version was used in an American Airlines commercial in the early 1970s.

Other recordings include versions by **Billy Eckstine, Tony Orlando, Frank Sinatra, The Drifters and Lana Del Ray.**

Which is your favourite version?

Oh, the good life
Full of fun, seems to be the ideal
Mm, the good life
Lets you hide all the sadness you feel
You won't really fall in love
For you can't take the chance
So please be honest with yourself
Don't try to fake romance.

It's the good life
To be free and explore the unknown
Like the heartaches
When you learn you must face them alone
Please remember, I still want you
And in case you wonder why
Well, just wake up
Kiss the good life, goodbye.

Deb Chapman

Quiz Answers from page 12:

1. 1999
2. Ian Fleming
3. Naples
4. Amsterdam
5. Marathon
6. 3
7. Doha
8. Vodka
9. Nautical
10. Cheese and onion

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