

General Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 2:00pm  
at Great Baddow Millennium Community Centre, Baddow Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9RL

## A note from the editor

Welcome to the ninth issue of our News Round Up. As always a BIG thank you to those who have sent in articles and photos!! We need more! If you have anything to contribute please send them to me for the next issue in September *Jean*

## Round-Up of what our groups have been up to.....

### Art Appreciation members Leader - Debbie

Some members have written about their enjoyment of the group sessions....

"I joined the group approximately 3 years ago without any technical knowledge about art. I joined because I am interested in art and not interested in producing any art myself. The format of the group is that individuals provide pictures of paintings, sculptures, photographs and anything they like and find interesting and provide information about these items to share with the rest of the group. Sometimes there is a theme but mostly people chose something that they like personally and want to share. When new members join they are not pressured into doing something themselves at first and may do so as and when they feel they would like to. The group is relatively small and no one has need to feel awkward about speaking as we all give input into the discussion about each item. We can express our like or dislike of certain works but also can be shown aspects of a painting for example that one hasn't thought of. Although I am not an artist and have no technical knowledge of art, I have really learned a lot from other people and each session is different and very interesting and rewarding. It is sometimes surprising what others see in a painting for instance and what emotional impact the picture has on different people, but it is always interesting and rewarding if you enjoy looking at art." *Sue*

"I left school at 17 but always had an interest in art, I have tried many craft/art experiences over my 75+ years but never settled on anything in particular. I joined U3a couple of years ago and then found the Art Appreciation group. It has been so good to talk to people who have the same kind of interests, they are are friendly supportive bunch who made me feel very welcome. I have been on one outing to a gallery with them and had a fantastic time and I look forward to more interesting meetings and great days out." *Freda*

“I have attended three meetings to date and found each to be informative and interesting.

I am enjoying taking a fresh look at familiar works as well as being introduced to new artists, such as Beryl Cook, whose paintings I found very pleasing.

The presentations and comments give me much food for thought. Thank you.” *Fran*

## MEMBERS STORIES - The u3a Paint or Draw online monthly challenge

- Are you a dab hand with a paintbrush or pencil?
- Do you want to develop your skills or are you simply interested in the world around you and how to capture it in a piece of artwork?

The **u3a online monthly challenge** encourages people to paint or draw a piece of artwork, then take a photo of their work and submit their pictures via an online form. A different theme is listed each month and u3a members are invited to submit photos of their creations on that topic. u3a asks members to send in pictures of original artwork on a monthly theme to feature in an online gallery. No prizes, just prestige!

This is not a competition and it is not about artistic ability – just interesting pictures, possibly different perspectives on everyday scenes or objects, anything which has inspired you to paint or draw.

The May gallery included a painting by our newish member **Julie** who has never painted before. Julie recently joined Artful Adventures interest group which is run by Wendy



### 'Egypt' by Julie, Baddow & Galleywood u3a

'This painting is in response to a seascape theme set by Wendy, the leader of Artful Adventures, a group I have recently joined. The inspiration is from a holiday brochure and is a reminder of my own adventures snorkelling in Hurghada several years ago.'

Julie writes about how she came to enter....

'Looking to expand my horizons, I joined the Baddow and Galleywood u3a in November 2025. The first meeting I attended was a practical session creating Christmas table decorations run by the Gardening Club. Members of this friendly group soon introduced me to Table Tennis and Artful Adventures.'

'Although I have been home decorating for years I had a vague retirement wish to learn to paint for fun. Artful Adventures run by Wendy is calm and relaxed and when the family gave me a selection of paints and brushes, I was ready to give it a go.

I experimented with different styles and media but it took several months to be happy with my efforts. When I read about the Paint and Draw online challenge in the national u3a newsletter, I had just finished a seascape. The artwork fitted in with the theme Into the Blue set for the next gallery. I submitted a photo and was amazed several days later to see my painting, Egypt, had been featured.

This has encouraged me to continue. I certainly look forward to my painting afternoons either at home or with the Art group.

I have gained so much from joining u3a. New skills, an interesting selection of activities and a lot of friends.'

Julie

*What have YOU enjoyed about u3a? Are there any new skills you've discovered?*

### Transport group 🚆 Leader - Alan

The Transport group has had no meetings since our last report. The next meeting will be on the 22nd June and it will be an experiment, using videos as a source of transport related material. Many thanks to Ron for the idea and going ahead with it, and to the group members who will be guinea pigs. (See later report on page 9)



Transport group members in a pod above the Thames, note the narrow cable visible between Di and Trevors' heads

We went for a trip on the London Cable Car on Monday 18 May. This crosses the Thames in East London approximately above the Blackwall Tunnel. However this trip was almost postponed when I saw a forecast of thunder - there was no way that I would travel, along with other B&G members, in small pod suspended from a steel cable well above everything else in the area with a risk of lightning. Fortunately the forecast improved at the last minute.

During the period between announcing the trip and it taking place there had been a change of branding from the IFS Cloud Cable Car to the London Cable Car (thanks Jean for spotting this). However, as is often the case with rebranding, our trip was nevertheless dominated by IFS Cloud logos.

Some readers will question this trip - lasting several hours with frustrating rail fares for just a few minutes above the river. However the views were amazing, including a plane taking off from London City Airport and peeking into buildings as we passed. In the small visitor centre we saw a sample of the cable that spans the river, which I found quite frightening. Moreover we included a ride on a Uber boat which is effectively a bus service on the Thames (thanks Trevor for the suggestion) and gave us an excuse to have a lovely meal in Hays Galleria near London Bridge.



A view from the cable car looking roughly west towards London, with a Uber boat proceeding downstream in the centre of the picture.



A view of Tower Bridge from the front of our Uber boat with the City on the right and the Shard on the left. If this picture is magnified then the stern of HMS Belfast is visible just to the right of the left tower of Tower Bridge.

We sailed on one of the newer Uber Boats. Its engine made a wining noise and I went to ask if it was a jet engine? The answer was no, it was diesel, but would change to battery when the boat was in Central London. My timing was perfect and the engine soon became much quieter just as we approached Tower Bridge.

Please contact [Alan](#) if you are interested in joining this group.

*Alan*

**London Walks group** 🚶 **Leader - Jean**

June walk - A stroll through Bloomsbury

Fifteen of us arrived via the Elizabeth Line at the shiny glass canopy of Tottenham Court Road station for a guided walk through Bloomsbury. We visited six of the Bloomsbury Squares (Bedford, Woburn, Gordon, Tavistock, Russell and Bloomsbury) plus some cultural buildings of interest. Photos explained below



First stop was **Bedford Square**, the best preserved square with its grand classical architecture enclosing all four sides. We heard how the clever invention of 'coade stone' made the ornate decorations around the doors possible as it could be moulded, not sculpted.

Next, a building decorated with gilded bronze insects - the **London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine** in Malet Street. A world leading Teaching and Research Institute famous for one very important discovery, how the parasite that causes malaria is transmitted. A nod to the gilded bronze anopheles mosquito and a look up at some names of men who were influential in the world of tropical medicine.



Then over the road to **Senate House**, the tallish Art Deco building the press called London's first skyscraper in 1937. This admin building and library for the University of London has been well-used for various films (*Batman Begins*, *Spiderman*, *James Bond - No Time to Die*) and for TV (*Killing Eve*, *The Bodyguard*) It was also the model behind George Orwell's Ministry of Truth in his book, '1984'.




Our walk then took us past **Woburn Square** through to **Gordon Square** passing several homes once occupied by the unconventional Bloomsbury group (they were bohemians who famously 'lived in squares, painted in circles and loved in triangles'). In **Tavistock Square** we admired various commemorations of peace, including a bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi, as a tribute to his years as a law student at nearby University College London.

Next, with its impressively ornate decoration and overlooking **Russell Square** stands the **Fitzroy Kimpton Hotel**. Up until 2018 it was simply called the Hotel Russell - designed by Charles Fitzroy Doll and is an architectural feast for the eyes. It has links with RMS Titanic as Doll also designed the ill-fated ships first-class dining room, modelling it exactly on the one in the hotel. A 1994 meeting of academics at the hotel established the Russell Group of Universities.

**Bloomsbury Square** was the first space in London to be called 'a square' and was laid out in 1660. A hundred years later, the Gordon Rioters burned down the vast mansion of the Lord Chief Justice who resided there; a shocking event written about by Charles Dickens in his novel, *Barnaby Rudge*.

Our last stop was at the imposing grand south entrance of the **British Museum**. A detailed explanation of the sculptures within the triangular pediment above the colonnade, describes the story of the Progress of Civilisation and how man came to be enlightened. Something the museum still hopes to achieve when you visit. In September this year the museum will have the Bayeux Tapestry on display; one of the wonders of the medieval world and another remarkable work of art.

Jean (Guide) with a big thank you to Marjorie for the photo collage

**Photography Group**  **Leader - Mike**

Having just returned from an afternoon visit to the lovely garden at Blunts Hall, Witham, I thought I'd tackle the huge tranche of unanswered emails from you all following my article in the last newsletter. Top of your list of requests were a number seeking more details about RAW files and what could be done with them (I'll try to be polite!). Since this topic is likely to bore non-photographers to tears, I'll leave it until last and concentrate on what else has been happening at the Group and initially what we got up to at Blunts Hall.

Blunts Hall is a member of the National open Gardens Scheme (NGS) and hosts groups of visitors by arrangement. Since there is a minimum number required for a visit, this was organised as a combined outing between the Photo Group and the Gardens Group. This enabled us to create a party of 21 people, who were warmly welcomed by Alan and Leslie, the owners of the Hall. They have lived there for about 15 years and have spent the last five years making the garden their main priority. They have beautiful lawns due to having their own bore hole to supply the water that grass requires during extreme heat periods. After a talk and stroll round the garden, we were left to wander around at leisure and then meet back at the house for a cream tea and cake. All the money raised is given to charity and last year Alan and Leslie raised over £10,000.

Since my last scribblings, we have held another club competition, judged this time by an external expert rather than ourselves. Harold Mouseley was our visiting assessor, an experienced Photographer & a member Manningtree & District Photographic Society. Harold provided fair and constructive critique of all the entries. He even managed to award this image from yours truly second place.



Also in April we had a photoshoot at Copped Hall (near Epping) followed by an interesting and informative trip to the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance base at North Weald Airfield in May.

We have learned over the past month that Mike, our group co-ordinator, has decided to retire from the post in November having given us a wonderful and greatly appreciated 14 plus years of leadership. During this time Mike's wife Linda has also been providing us with much-appreciated half-time refreshments at our monthly meetings. Sincerest thanks to both Mike and Linda for everything that they've done for the group. So if there are any members out there who would like to pick up the baton, just contact Mike for a job description. (We may need to split the job over 3 or 4 people to achieve what Mike has done!)

and finally...

just when you thought that I'd spared you the misery/joy – here is the RAW truth mentioned in the intro. RAW files reveal exactly what the camera sensor recorded when the aperture was opened to take a photo. These files contain unprocessed, uncompressed data and need special software before they can be viewed. If looked at alongside a corresponding JPEG image of the same subject taken simultaneously, the RAW image will look dull, flat, lacking in contrast and generally darker. It may help to think of RAW files being like RAW eggs. They don't look very appetising to start with but by cooking them with a variety of other ingredients, it is possible to end up with something very pleasing (although not quite as satisfying as a Victoria Sponge perhaps). Each camera manufacturer (and sometimes even each model within manufacturer) will have a slightly different recipe in its cameras processor to create a Nikon-flavoured, Sony-flavoured, Canon-flavoured, etc etc. version of the RAW image. These recipes generally do a superb job in modern cameras and many photographers rarely bother to do any post-processing of their own. However in certain situations it may be necessary to retrieve hidden details from the RAW using software such as Affinity photo (free!!) or Photoshop. This will allow the image to be manipulated to an individual photographer's flavour, just as film photographers used to do with chemicals in their dark rooms in days of yore. In our monthly meetings we are currently looking at handling RAW files in post. Come along and join us if you're already an expert, because we're all about trying to learn from each other.

*Maurice*

## Art Appreciation 🎨 Leader - Debbie

May

Looking at art works and finding out the stories behind the artist and the picture is always fascinating, but equally fascinating is the reaction of the members of the group to the works we are looking at. Some pictures are mostly liked and admired, some are mostly disliked, some have the 'marmite' reaction and occasionally one is universally loved. And sometimes, after having things pointed out in the paintings, we will change our minds and then ourselves notice more and more.

Universal love was the reaction to a picture by John Craxton who was the topic of one of our presentations. Brought up in a musically creative family, John Craxton showed an early aptitude for art. It was suggested that as a homosexual before it was legal in this country, his work was sidelined in contrast to that of his friend Lucien Freud. He spent much of his life in Greece and Crete and many of his paintings are snapshots of his life there (although they took him a long time to paint). Dancers, sailors, drinking scenes and landscapes featured heavily in his output. He had no fixed style but mixed with other painters who influenced him heavily. So some works were fairly realistic, others more impressionistic while the cubist influence (along with van Gogh chairs!) was very strong in a lot of the pictures that we looked at.



He was passionate about cats and this was the picture that everyone loved. Impossible to put into any genre but it made us all smile.

*Debbie*

### June meeting

The Transport Group had a meeting in June. It was an experiment, with guinea pig Ron using internet videos to support a talk about airports in Greenland, and it was a great success. Ron delivered an interesting talk, and it is clear that there is a great resource available to support future talks.

The background to Ron's talk was a recent cruise to Greenland, a vast, beautiful and bleak country that was in the news earlier this year, albeit not for the best of reasons. Ron saw some of the airports, typically close to fjords where flying was sometimes obstructed by floating ice bergs.

Some airports were constructed in Greenland to create an air corridor between the USA and Europe during the second world war, with aircraft having a range of just 800 miles. This must have been challenging for pilots, finding airports in obscure places, often in poor visibility and with minimal fuel left. Ron's selection of videos illustrated this well, with aircraft weaving over a sequence of fjords and headlands with no airport in sight until the final turn.

This talk was followed by a short and contrasting video showing one of Concorde's first test flights, with the commentator at the time predicting that the aircraft would earn billions in export orders.

After this we went back to an archive of transport news items from a couple of years ago, some still current and others long since forgotten. Perhaps most interest was shown in a particular piece of local news, about the "hamburger" design for the Army and Navy roundabout. Although no visible work has started, signs have recently been posted about compulsory purchase orders so maybe ...

There will be no transport meetings this summer, although there are trips planned to Sudbury for a boat trip and to the East Anglian Railway Museum at Chappel. Meetings will resume in September with talks about the RMS Olympic (the most forgotten liner that should be famous, or the most successful troopship in the first world war) and about Transport in Switzerland.

*Alan*

## Did you know?

Did you know that sliced bread was first produced for sale 98 years ago in July this year? David Attenborough was 100 years old in May. So consequently the saying now goes "Sliced bread, the best thing since David Attenborough"

## Coming up at the General Meeting

Weds 15 July - '**Cleopatra's Needle**' an illustrated talk by Phil George  
(This is a change to the programme in the Yearbook)

Weds 19 Aug - No meeting this month

Weds 16 Sept - **Essex Therapy Dogs** - How the dogs can help people

**Newsletter contributions** - If you have any items please send them before mid-August for inclusion in the next issue.

Please note: in the interests of security, all personal details of individual members (surname, address, email or phone number) have been removed