



# Here & Now

Reigate & Redhill u3a  
Magazine



**All  
Change!**

No. 93

Winter 2024





## Editorial



Welcome to our Winter edition. Our theme 'Change and Challenge' has led to a wide variety of articles which I hope you will enjoy reading about. There's the challenge of the Wainwright's walks in the Lake District, a stunning area of outstanding beauty to the challenges and changes of house renovation, plus much, much, more. I must thank the members for their help in putting this edition together. Don't forget to read Tina Read's article. A huge wake up call for all of us.

All the latest u3a news is available to everyone, whether it's via your computer or with a paper copy to keep you in the know about upcoming events or celebrating holidays and activities that have happened. There are several new groups about to start so why not find out more and maybe join them!

Don't forget that we would love to hear from your group if you have something to shout about. A new idea for the Friday monthly meeting is to display work created by a group. Look out for displays of embroidery, art and crafts coming soon. I know it's a while away but

***'Merry Christmas and all the best for 2025'***

## On my Agenda

In the days when I worked, long ago, I always hated committees. As a business-to-business magazine and newspaper editor who needed to make decisions on the fly they seemed a cumbersome, bureaucratic way of avoiding doing anything. And they were usually run by the cautious and the self-important.

Having been gently persuaded to join the Reigate & Redhill u3a committee I've changed my view. It's very unlike the trade association or publishing committees I encountered in the past. Members have defined roles, decisions are made and communicated quickly and efficiently and the whole exercise has a defining purpose – to serve the membership.

That's the whole point and that's why I allowed myself to be signed up. The u3a movement is "by its members, for its members" and I'm happy to engage with that. There's a lot to do – our u3a is now a numerically large organisation – but the challenges are more readily faced in company with eager like-minded people who put the members' interests first.

It's also fun and interesting to work on a committee made up of very different people with varying backgrounds and areas of expertise. In short, highly recommended!



**Peter Lloyd**



# From the Chair

Our Here & Now theme is "Challenges" and I'd like to focus on the challenge that our committee members (myself included!) and our volunteers have in juggling our time to support our u3a.

In mid-October, we held an afternoon tea at Reigate Manor to say thank you to volunteer members who help in our Really Useful Groups or RUGs! These teams comprise those who help at monthly meetings – Audio Visual, Furniture Shifters, Parking, Speaker Bookings, Tea Helpers, Welcome Team – and those who help with other activities like Entertainment Planning, Here & Now, Holidays, Outings, Website and Technical Support.

We have around 960 members. When you think about it, that's a lot of people with whom to communicate and for whom to co-ordinate activities. We are delighted as many as 120 of our members (around 14%) help in these groups. Our committee couldn't manage the job without our RUGs. The Thank You Event brought into perspective what we do and how successful we are. It's a massive operation!

- Look at how seamlessly our monthly meetings run, how people can park, are made to feel welcome, are made cups of tea, have somewhere to sit, enjoy the talk provided by our speaker team, can watch at home on YouTube if coming to Reigate Park Church is difficult.
- We hold monthly coffee mornings, where members are welcomed and our technical support team are on hand to help with computer difficulties – and who are also at the end of a phone or email, if a member is having computer problems.
- We've had some great outings this year – Fishbourne and Arundel, Rochester, Chichester theatre to see Oliver, Syon House & Park and Winchester with its Christmas market to come in December.
- We've also had two super holidays, to

the Dordogne and to historic Oxford and Warwickshire.

- Our Entertainment Planning team are currently working on a wonderful musical End of Year Show for us in December – if you haven't already registered to attend, do check our November or December bulletin for the online form (responses by 8 December).
- Whilst we manage the monthly bulletin within committee, this is supported by the super three-times a year publication of Here & Now.
- Everything is underpinned by our website support, so members can check What's On, see the groups and activities available, along with publications.

We hold a meeting for new members three times a year. This is a great forum to ask new members if they'd like to join any of our RUGs or support the committee's work, but we are equally delighted when more long-standing members step forward to help. We recognise retirement is a time for many activities, holidays and families, but also unfortunately sometimes ill-health. Having a bank of volunteers means people can take time out, as there is always someone else who can step in.

We haven't kept the Consultation Group going, to which some of you may have contributed. The committee reviewed and concluded we get good ideas from our members without needing this group. For example, Tina Pankhurst came up with an excellent idea – to have a rota of displays from groups at our Friday meetings: a display from the Embroidery Group is planned for the November meeting and starting in January we would like a rota of displays from other groups. Our Thank You Event proved a great forum for generating further ideas for groups, activities, future talks, support for new members and committee support, which we are looking at within committee.

Do please keep your ideas coming – email [bulletin@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@rru3a.org.uk)

Wishing you all the best for the festive season

**Gillian Haimes**





# Telephone Exchange?

## The way our traditional telephones work and how our technology connects to the internet is changing. Things you should know.

The technologies we use to talk to our friends, send e-mails, etc are changing, affecting both traditional 'landline' telephones and computers (e.g. laptops and tablets) that use broadband and the internet. Already over 50% of UK households have had their old copper telephone wire replaced by a 'Full Fibre' optic cable, though rural areas are behind in this queue. The aim is to provide faster and more reliable data and voice communications to all households and businesses.

The changes should involve only minor inconvenience. A small survey of R&R U3A Members revealed that most who had already experienced the changes had no problems, and their supplier contracts did not change.

However, there were several exceptions, ranging from 'appalling experience' to being left with problems requiring specific technical knowledge to resolve. One Member was charged extra expenses (probably wrongly), another had to accept a more expensive broadband contract, but another saved money by changing supplier (though this hit snags). Some Members were unaware of the imminent changes and the potential for problems, especially with older 'analogue' pendant or wrist-worn care alarms that you can press to get help in an emergency (e.g. if you fall). Hence this article.

N.B mobile phone services and newer 'digital' care alarms that rely on the mobile network are not affected by any of the following. Nor is the following relevant to those who use the fibre optic cable network originally laid by Virgin Media. There are too many cases to explain in detail, but everyone should be aware of at least the following.

- The Government (all Parties) has set a target that the old telephone system relying on copper wire will be phased out by January 2027 and all properties will be directly served by fibre optic cables. The upgrade work is being carried out by BT's Openreach subsidiary or via the other main suppliers (Vodafone, Sky etc).

- The upgrade should cost you nothing. Your current supplier will suggest an appointment for the work, which should take 1 to 1 ½ hours. You can reject this appointment if inconvenient. As well as a new cable to your house, you will get a new wi-fi hub (or 'router') to enable your computer(s) to connect to the internet.

- The commonest problems after the upgrade seem to be getting other devices, such as your traditional phone, printer, Alexas and the like, to communicate with the new wi-fi hub. How to do this varies with the device, so try to get the person who does the upgrade to check these devices are all working before they leave. Two very important points about contacting emergency services:

- If you have an older 'analogue' pendant or wrist-worn care alarm, your new wi-fi hub will need special measures so that your alarm can still communicate with your emergency care service provider. Therefore, as soon as your supplier proposes an appointment for a Full Fibre upgrade, get in contact to tell them about your alarm. The person who does the upgrade should then come suitably prepared. You have the legal right to refuse the upgrade until the supplier can guarantee continuity of service for your existing alarm.

- The wi-fi hub that comes with a Full Fibre service relies on the mains electricity supply (unless the hub comes with a battery as needed for an analogue alarm, see above). So if you have a power cut, you will not be able to use a traditional phone, even in an emergency to call 999 or 111. However, a mobile phone will still work. So consider replacing your old analogue alarm by a modern digital alarm or getting a simple mobile, if you do not already have one, keeping it charged for emergency use.

Finally, remember if you need help on any of these or other computer-related problems, we can help.

- 1) Come to a monthly coffee morning where you can chat with a U3A Tech Help member.
- 2) E-mail your problem to [techhelp@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:techhelp@rru3a.org.uk)
- 3) If you do not have e-mail, call David Fisher or Charles Symons on 01737 243 585 or 01737 763 674 respectively.

The short answer is no. If anyone, including the phone provider, tries to access your data it will be wiped – all that key information lost for ever.... unless you set up one or more legacy contacts. It is very easy to do – takes seconds. Your Legacy Contact can be anyone you want so long as they're aged over 13.

### On your iPhone, iPad, iPod touch or Android phone

1. Go to Settings
2. Tap your name
3. Tap Sign-In & Security
4. Tap Legacy Contact – and choose a name(s) from your contact list
5. Tap Add Legacy Contact
6. Authenticate with Face ID, Touch ID, or your device passcode

Print off or send the certificate to your legacy contact(s) and ask them to keep it safe, in case they may need it one day.

## Legacy contacts for your Phone

There was a story of a man on the radio recently, whose wife died suddenly after 6 years of marriage. She had all her friends' contacts on her phone and photos of happy memories of their life together, as well as her favourite music. Her husband wanted to be able to contact her friends to tell them of her sudden death and to invite them to her funeral. He would have liked to play some of her favourite music at her funeral, but apart from tracks he could remember, he was totally unable to access her phone records and so many memories of their time together.

Have you got a Phone with all your key contacts, lots of important family photos, files, apps, favourite music etc. safely loaded? Would your loved ones be able to access your digital life?



## Where are all the Red Telephone Boxes?

Have you noticed the red telephone boxes disappearing? Growing up, the one at the end of our road was in constant use with its own number so people could call you back if you ran out of money. Sometimes we'd call someone who had a telephone installed in their house and shout for them to call us back, then pressed button 'B' to get our money back! Button 'A' of course connected you and took your coins with a loud clatter. Alternatively you could call the operator and ask for a reverse charge call but they charged extra for that service.

The 'speaking clock' meant you could check the time on your watch if you could find the right number to dial in the huge telephone directories. These listed everyone's name, address and number (unless you were ex-directory of course). Lots of business cards plastered the sides advertising taxi services and other 'useful' numbers.

With everyone seeming to have a mobile phone or at least a landline nowadays the good old telephone box has become obsolete along with horse troughs, which can occasionally be seen filled with flowers in pretty villages.

There are around 3,000 red telephone boxes left in the UK with most having ended up in The Red Telephone Box Cemetery in Carlton Miniott, North Yorkshire. Some



have been lovingly restored and sold as on to feature in art installations around the world, as well as being used as green houses, housing defibrillators, tiny libraries and even a coffee shop in Brighton. Perhaps most fittingly, they are sometimes used as mobile phone charging ports.

How much longer will red post boxes last I wonder...?

# Afterlife...

or learn to love (and use) your smartphone, it might just help to save your life!

Out of the blue in early August, I started to feel everything was closing in on me but had no pains or other symptoms. Thankfully I had just learnt how to put an emergency contact number in my phone\* and knew that I could call my son just by pressing one button on my phone. All Smart phones have this facility which allows anyone to use your phone, even if locked, to call your emergency contact, (not to be confused with the 999 system). By that stage I was not capable of making a call via the usual method.

My first bit of luck was that my son, who lives nearby was at home and responded immediately to my "please come". My second piece of luck was that an ambulance was available and responded within a few minutes. My third piece of luck was that I 'waited' until the ambulance to have my first Cardiac Arrest! Although I have no memories of the next 36-48 hours, I understand that the first ambulance needed back-up as I had a second Cardiac Arrest. I was very fortunate to have two amazing ambulance crews working to bring me back to life but the specialist Cardiac medic on a motorcycle, who also attended, was not in the end needed. I was taken to the Cardiac unit at St George's in London where two stents were inserted into one totally blocked artery.

The next time I really remember anything was waking up to find my Texan son at the end of my bed – he had last been over to see his father a few days before his death, so there were mixed emotions running through my foggy brain at that point. After a few days of brilliant care and the companionship of some lovely (mainly younger) ladies in the ward, I was able to return home to my 'afterlife'. First proving I could walk up and down a flight of stairs and make a cup of tea – the Physio and Occupational Therapists were amused to learn that just six days previously I was one of three people making, serving and washing up tea for about 150 plus.

I know I had a huge amount of luck, but I went from someone on no medication, with no family history of heart disease and a clear "no action required" cholesterol blood test result a few days previously, to a lifestyle rethink and to taking ten pills a day!

The moral of this story is learn to love, and use, your mobile phone; it can do so many things to help you with daily life; I love my phone even more now as it was the first step in saving my life. I am hoping to sponsor an accessible Defibrillator in Reigate, just north of the railway, as I can't find any listed in the immediate area.



\* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R9SEUTQ550>

Tina Read





## Holiday

The History, Art & Palladian Villas of Northern Italy & Lake Garda 6 days from £1,299 Departs 11th May 2025.

Details of this holiday are available from Sally Baker at [sally.baker@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:sally.baker@rru3a.org.uk) or 01737 221766

## Group news

We mentioned in the last publication that several new groups have been suggested by our members, most of which are now up and running, thanks to the enthusiasm of those who have expressed interest and joined.

The **Advanced French** group is meeting twice a month on Thursday afternoons. Our **Calligraphy** group have had a couple of organisational sessions and will have their first "hands on" session in January. They aim to meet twice a month too. There are enough members to form a **Lunch Group**, though more would be much appreciated! Again, January seems to be the best time for them to enjoy their first month due to the run up to Christmas often being pretty busy. **Advanced German**, yet another twice -monthly group, very recently formed, has enjoyed a couple of meetings, at the time of writing.

Please contact the Groups' Coordinators if you would like to join any of these groups, or if you have ideas for your own group, at: [groups@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@rru3a.org.uk) or fill in the online groups



## Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings are held in the lounge of The Light in Redhill meeting once a month on alternate 2nd Tuesdays and 2nd 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. There is usually a Book, CD, Jigsaw puzzle swap. We will meet from 10.15 to 11.30 on the following dates: **Tue 10 Dec, Thu 9 Jan, Tue 11 Feb, Thu 13 Mar (followed by a meeting for new members) and Tue 8 Apr.** Do check our website What's On calendar <https://www.rru3a.org.uk/whats-on> and under Coffee Mornings for the latest information.

enquiry form which you will find on the website or phone 01737 929104  
**Hilary Loney and Nikki Stoddart**  
**Groups' Coordinators**

**New Group - Sustainability and Climate Change**  
'Think global, act local for sustainable living'. Climate change is the most important existential issue facing human society. A new group is starting up to provide a forum for members to discuss and better understand the many aspects of this complex subject and identify ways in which we can mitigate the impact on our own lives, family, friends, community and society at large through awareness, education and action. There is already a network of groups in other u3a regions addressing the topic, the objective is to link into the national network and represent u3a in projects in Surrey such as home energy audits, sustainable gardening, biodiversity river health and zero-waste living. Meetings will be held on the 4th Thursday of each month 2pm at St John, The Evangelist Community Centre in Earlswood. Members will have the opportunity to get involved as volunteers in local community projects.

## Outings

During 2024 the Outings Team arranged 5 very popular day trips, planning has already begun for 2025!

Theatre trip to "Chicago", New Victoria Theatre, Woking Wednesday 30 July 2025, 14.30 matinee. Cost £48 "Murder, greed, corruption...." so begins the multi award-winning musical. Set amongst the razzle-dazzle decadence of the 1920's with show-stopping songs. Leaving mid-morning by coach to arrive in Woking with time for coffee and lunch before.

Contact the Outings team to book, email [outings@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:outings@rru3a.org.uk), telephone Richard on 07929 715198 as soon as possible, as advance payment must be made.

All details are available on the rru3a website What's On page, including a link to the booking form and information about future outings.



Outings Team  
[outings@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:outings@rru3a.org.uk)

# Monthly Meetings 2-4pm

We are currently holding meetings with some people present at Reigate Park Church and others watching at home.

**Friday 13 December**  
**End of year show**  
An entertainment by our musical groups 14.00 to 15.30 followed by refreshments including mince pies in the hall (until 16.30). If you haven't registered online or at a monthly meeting to attend, please do so by telephoning Heather Earl on 01737 929001, and leave a message if no reply. (No visitors please for this event, unless assistance to attend is required.No livestream)

**Friday 10 Jan**  
**Andy Richardson – Britain's Nuclear 'V' Bombers – The Ultimate Peacekeepers**  
Andy has been involved in Aviation throughout his adult life. He started with an 18-year flying career in The Royal Air Force which included crewing the nuclear armed Avro Vulcan during the cold war. For over a

decade, the RAF 'V' Bombers and their crews provided Britain's nuclear deterrent and in so doing kept the country safe during the height of the cold war. This is history so amazing that it could be fiction.

**Friday 7 Feb**  
**Pete Allen – Through the Stage Door – A Dramatic History of the London Theatres**  
Pete is the Director of The RC Sherriff Trust, an arts charity established through terms set down in the will of the playwright and author RC Sherriff. He spent six years as Assistant Head Flyman at The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane before training as a theatre director at Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama and undertaking a master's degree in Film and Television Studies at the University of Westminster. Pete has been

involved in many theatre groups and productions, including groups for young people. He works extensively as a professional theatre director and film-maker. Let's travel through London's Theatre-land with Pete and enjoy his interesting facts and stories.

**Friday 7 March**  
**Andy Thomas – The Crop Circle Mystery**  
With stunning visuals, Andy explores the extraordinary phenomenon of crop circles, the intricate shapes which appear in fields around the world each year and still defy total explanation despite media scepticism and much debate. This inspiring presentation reveals the fascinating history of the mysterious patterns up to the present and explores both the amazing designs and the many varied and imaginative theories put forward to explain them over the years.

## 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 watching at home and £15 for guests. Attendees should bring a packed lunch. Prior booking is necessary. All details can be found on our website. Details of the first three study days for 2025 are below. Booking details can be found on the Surrey Network website. Booking forms are also available in the hall after Friday meetings.

**Friday 21 February 2025**  
**Pioneering the NewSpace Revolution**

**Presented by Professor Craig Underwood, Emeritus Professor of Spacecraft Engineering, University of Surrey**  
This study day examines how the University of Surrey came to pioneer a new approach to carrying out space missions using small satellites. This work has developed over many years, with Craig being involved since 1986.

**Friday 21 March 2025**  
**Exploring Johann Sebastian Bach's St Matthew Passion Presented by Sandy Burnett, Musical Director and Broadcaster**  
Sandy Burnett joins us for a special presentation on J S Bach's Matthew Passion, a masterful work which combines tunefulness, craftsmanship, dramatic power and spirituality in equal measure. Initially

composed for a Good Friday service in Bach's Leipzig, the St Matthew Passion has since been performed infinitely more often than it ever was in Bach's own lifetime. During the course of this study day, Sandy explains why this work is so special; he guides us through music examples, picks out details in the score, examines Bach's autograph manuscripts, and reflects on the extraordinarily vivid Passion texts. After an overview of Bach's life and work, we explore each dramatic stage of the Passiontide drama, before reflecting on the work's context as one of the greatest Western art works of all.

**Friday 11 April 2025**  
Study day planned – no details available at time of going to press.





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# The Challenge of Ringing the Changes

Have you ever listened to the sound of church bells, weaving intricate patterns of sound, and wondered how it's done and who does it?

The art of church bell ringing or 'change ringing' (as distinct from hand bell ringing) originated in England in the 17th century. Of course, church bells had always been rung, for joyous occasions, more sombre occasions and to warn of invasions or other emergencies. The idea of ringing bells in sequence came later. The addition of a wheel, rather than a simple lever, attached to the bell gave the ability to swing the bells through a complete circle and importantly to pause with the bell upside down.

This enabled the ringers to vary the interval between each stroke (each dong). This meant that the bells could be rung in changing patterns, i.e. 123456, then 214365, then 241635 etc.

## The simplest method using 5 bells

- 1 2 3 4 5
- 2 1 4 3 5
- 2 4 1 5 3
- 4 2 5 1 3
- 4 5 2 3 1
- 5 4 3 2 1
- 5 3 4 1 2
- 3 5 1 4 2
- 3 1 5 2 4
- 1 3 2 5 4
- 1 2 3 4 5

- 1 2 3 4 5
- 2 1 3 5 4
- 2 3 1 4 5
- 3 2 4 1 5
- 2 3 4 5 1
- 2 4 3 1 5
- 4 2 3 5 1
- etc.

By slightly changing the speed of each bell they move a maximum of one position in each sequence.

Each of the sequences is called a 'change', hence the term 'change ringing' and the expression 'ringing the changes'. A complete set of changes will return the bells to the original sequence i.e. 1 2 3 4 5 going down the musical scale from the lightest treble bell (ding) to the heaviest tenor (dong).

There are various ways of ringing changes with variations and these are called 'methods', with names such as Grandsire, Stedman etc.

## Part of a more complex method using 5 bells

This method involves 120 changes, the maximum number of permutations possible with 5 bells, until it returns to the original 1 2 3 4 5 sequence. Note that there is no musical skill involved, just the physical control of the bell and learning the patterns of changes.



© Association of Ringing Teachers

The challenges of change ringing start with learning to control the speed of your bell, and coordinating the striking of your bell with the rest of the ringers, known as 'the band'. The next challenge is learning the methods, which range from the simple to the very complex.

Bell ringers are a varied bunch of folk, with ages ranging from 9 – 90 from all walks of life and from all faiths or none.

In most churches you don't see the ringers as they are out of sight up in the church tower, but in some churches the ringers are at ground level at the back of the church.

There are a number of ringers in Reigate & Redhill u3a, who knows, there may be one in your group!

If you'd like more information, if you'd like to see it done, or to have a go yourself, contact Lloyd on [lloyd.chapman@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:lloyd.chapman@rru3a.org.uk)

Deb & Lloyd Chapman

© The Association of Ringing Teachers  
*A typical band*





# New Horizons

*Sundays were the loneliest days, nothing much to see  
The library and the shops were shut, just football on TV.  
The sun shone after weeks of rain had demoralised the nation  
It even filtered into her mean accommodation.  
No point finishing her book, no benefit in starting.  
Or should she watch the third repeat on TV of Doc Martin  
The future held no promise, the present felt quite black  
She made a quick decision, and she went and grabbed her mac.*

*She had always loved nice gardens so she walked along to see  
The lawns and trees and flowers in the local cemetery  
And as she neared the chapel, she saw a group of people  
Gathered for a funeral beneath the wooden steeple.  
Attracted by their presence she lingered on the corner,  
People turned and welcomed her, they thought she was a mourner!*

*She went in with all the others, the company was inviting  
Flowers and music in the church with tasteful subdued lighting  
They handed her a leaflet all about the dear departed  
Anonymous within the crowd she went on as she'd started.  
She sang enthusiastically the half-forgotten hymns  
No fuel bills to worry her, she warmed arthritic limbs.  
She had meant to exit after that because it should be ending  
But a smiling couple saw her and they thanked her for attending.*

*She was asked to the reception (which wasn't very far)  
Someone helped her with her mackintosh and took her in their car  
Her presence was unquestioned, she joined in with the party.  
Friendly people filled her plate, her appetite was hearty  
As she ate and chattered her confidence increased  
No one asked if she had known the recently deceased.*

*Warm, well fed and happy, she was driven safely back  
Where she searched through all her wardrobe, selecting something black  
With a new-found sense of purpose and belief in people power  
A brand-new future opened up  
There are funerals every hour!*

Pat King

# Lake District Mountain Challenge



My wife and I have always been keen mountain walkers and in the Summer of 2021 we bought a park lodge at a lakeside campsite in and near Pooley Bridge at the north east end of Ullswater.

I am fully retired but my wife, Helen, is not yet so on some occasions I go up there on my own. Although I had probably climbed at least 100 of the Lake District fells, I had not visited a lot of the less popular ones.

Routes up 214 of these fells have been documented by walker and author Alfred Wainwright, and the 214 'Wainwrights' are generally considered to be the definitive list of Lake District mountains. The majority of these fells can be walked from a starting point within 50 minutes of our lodge, so as a way of getting to know the area better, I set myself a challenge, mainly for my solo trips, to climb every Wainwright as soon as possible.

For a fit walker this task is easier than it might sound. It does not require 214 separate walks as many of the peaks are grouped together on the same ridge, so up to 10 can be completed in one walk as long as you are capable of at least 1000 metres of climb and 15km of distance in a day. This means coming up with an efficient plan to group them together. There is a lot of help, as there are books on how to climb them all in 36, 45 or 64 walks.

I based my plan on the 36 day option but I split a couple of the walks in two because they would have taken about 10 hours and I find that after 7 hours they become less enjoyable. My other rule to keep it enjoyable was to aim to keep below the cloud line and avoid bad weather. Although the Lake District has a reputation for unreliable weather, particularly in Spring and Summer, daylight hours are long and, as long as you are flexible about mealtimes, there is nearly always a 3 hour window in which you can climb a couple of smaller fells without getting soaked or disappearing into cloud. I typically did this with peaks which the author had grouped together but did not form a natural ridge walk. I also did shorter days with my wife and family.

I got off to a terrible start at the end of 2021. I brought with me two pairs of boots that I had not worn for over 20 years. On day 2, the sole separated from the top of the boot at the front after the first fell and I was

**'I got off to a terrible start'**

forced to return with an exaggerated kneelift to avoid tripping up as the sole flapped up and down! So the next day I got out the other pair only to have the same thing happen with the heel while descending Swirral Edge, a tricky ridge

about 7km from the car. The following day I bought a new pair of boots, with which I survived the rest of the challenge. After this slow start I ticked them off steadily in 2022 and 2023 before climbing the final 11 peaks earlier this year.

Completing this challenge definitely achieved the intended purpose of getting to know the area better. When I stand on the top of any fell now I can look



around and know the surrounding fells like old friends. I visited quite a few new peaks for the first time, such as Illgill Head that I will be keen to return to, while conversely other new ones such as the splendidly named 'Great Cockup' were disappointing.

Mike Airey



# Change & Challenges

Some are born with challenges; some attract challenges and some have challenges thrust upon them. (With apologies to Shakespeare).

Whilst being born lucky and having no inherited health-related issues, I certainly have courted a few challenges throughout my lifetime.

Whether it's been rebuilding houses – five to date and still going – or taking on sporting challenges – at least twice a week – or going up to the Base Camp of the world's highest mountain, I find this inescapable desire to set targets. The rewards for achieving them are immense but the downsides of failure can hurt.

Change brings challenges and is an inevitable part of life. They often can test our resilience and adaptability. In both personal and professional contexts, change can bring with it shifts in relationships, career transitions, or unexpected life events. While change can be daunting, it also presents opportunities for growth and self-discovery.

One of the most significant challenges associated with change is the uncertainty it brings. We are creatures of habit and find comfort in the familiar. When faced with change, our instinct can be to put things off or even to resist it, fearing the unknown. This resistance can lead to stress and anxiety, making it difficult to embrace new possibilities.

Confronting our fears and uncertainties allows us to navigate change more effectively, transforming anxiety into a driving force for adaptation.



Then there is the emotional toll that change can take. Whether it's losing a job, ending a relationship, or relocating to a new town, change often involves a sense of loss. My wife and I have learned that to our

**The guttering inadequacies of our current house**



**The workshop that I'm building single handedly, at 82 years of age**



**Me at Everest Base Camp at 71 years old**

cost in the last five years, having made a 'wrong' move after forty years in one house. This led to a testing four years until we eventually found the 'perfect' home, but it entailed much searching of both the mind and body, not to mention the pocket. And then there was the rebuilding process. The plumbing, heating, power, lighting, guttering, decorating, landscaping and more.

When grieving for what we had lost, it was essential to allow ourselves to experience these emotions. Processing loss can pave the way for acceptance, and it enabled us to open ourselves up to new experiences and opportunities.

Adaptability is key when facing change and helps in how we cope with new circumstances. Viewing challenges as opportunities rather than insurmountable obstacles can transform our approach to change. This perspective encourages resilience, allowing us to bounce back more effectively and embrace new challenges.

Sharing experiences with friends, family, or colleagues can provide not only emotional relief but also practical advice. Community support fosters a sense of belonging and reminds us that we are not alone in our struggles. Engaging with others can also spark new ideas and solutions, enhancing our ability to navigate change.

Embracing change and challenges requires courage and a willingness to step outside our comfort zones. By viewing change as an opportunity for growth rather than a threat, we can cultivate resilience and develop the skills necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

In summary, while change can be challenging, it also offers a pathway to personal and professional development. By approaching change with an open mind, seeking support, and nurturing a growth mindset, we can navigate the complexities of change and emerge stronger and more adaptable. Embracing change is not just about survival; it's about flourishing in the face of adversity.

**Tony Reason**



**Joan Apps**

# Craft and Chat group



Twice a month, on alternate Wednesdays, the Reigate & Redhill Craft and Chat group meet in the Posadero Lounge in Redhill for a couple of hours of crafting, coffee drinking and chatting – not necessarily in that order!



Mostly the members pursue solo projects. One member is an avid sock knitter, a couple of members make garments for Stripecy Stork, which is a Surrey children's charity that collects donations of clothes and toys and then distributes them to wherever they are needed. Another member makes hats for the homeless and the rest make garments for themselves or their families, cute little figures to give away as Christmas gifts or items for the home.

Occasionally though we have a 'class' where a member of the group, usually the leader, Joan, will show us how to make lovely things. Recent examples have been paper boxes for gift giving, embroidered greetings cards and crocheted 'granny squares'.



More recently though, we have been engaged in making post box toppers. Our Remembrance Day topper appeared in the November bulletin and we are deep into the festive season now with a Christmas scene topper in production.

So, if you are in Redhill on the 1st or 3rd Wednesday of the month, pop into the Posadero Lounge and see what we are making!

**Deb Chapman**





# Holiday to Oxfordshire and Warwickshire

We began our holiday with a visit to **Hughenden Manor**, home to the Victorian Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli which gave a fascinating historical insight into his life.



The following day we explored the amazing art collection at **Upton House**, with works by Bruegel and Hogarth. In the afternoon we visited **Hidcote Manor** and fortunately it stopped raining long enough to enjoy the stunning gardens for which it is famous.

Next it was **Stratford**. A walking tour included Shakespeare's family house and Holy Trinity Church where he and his family are buried. We also went back stage at the Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre and were privileged to watch a ballet rehearsal and learn the intricacies of staging a performance.



Our day in **Oxford** included walking tours led by our Blue Badge guide Christophe and his sister, telling the story of the colleges and architecture of this famous city. We spent the afternoon exploring the Ashmolean Museum and again we were lucky with the weather.



On the way home we stopped at the impressive **Blenheim Palace**, home to the Dukes of Marlborough and birthplace of Winston Churchill but now famous as one of the locations for the 'Bridgerton' TV series.



Again the weather was kind although we were limited in visiting the famous gardens due to flooding. A bizarre sight was ducks swimming in the flooded car park!



But despite the rain it was a very interesting and enjoyable week.

**Sally Baker**



money. Our initial assessment was that his first language was not English and that he may have had underlying mental health issues.

Next point of call was the police. While we waited, my then young teenage niece tried to help, by speaking a little German. She was then almost six feet tall and dressed from head to toe in her new Dalmatian onesie. The poor man and his mental health.

The local constabulary were wonderful and managed to find him a bed in the nearby hospital overnight. What this homeless man would have reiterated to the staff must have been priceless and understandably, unbelievable.

"I've just seen a two metre German speaking dog."

## An Unexpected Visitor

Christmas 2010 was a very eventful and extremely cold day. It started with the usual excitement and joy from children of all ages at 6am. Lots of paper, glitter and edibles were discovered. Meanwhile our Christmas tree had been laden with more gifts the night before Santa's arrival. Picture if you will a five feet Nordic fir with a diameter of three feet. Gifts galore, saved for later, covering the floor space plus a further two feet – **yes excessive**.

Then as in many households, we had breakfast and prepared lunch for eleven guests. There was music, merriment and a little festive tippie to keep us going. A few of us went out for a chilly walk, and on return we began further gift unwrapping, in front of the open log fire, but there were so many.

Later, after our Christmas lunch had been consumed, we returned before the fire for a family favourite of charades and more gifts. By now, it was dark and the temperature outside was -10°C, so I thought it prudent to empty the glowing ashes in the front garden and add more logs.

The curtains were partially open, when one of the children noticed a shadowy figure come down the steps outside. We watched while he warmed his obviously frozen limbs beside the glowing embers. Two adults offered him warmth inside plus food, but he declined. All homeless shelters were full, plus he was reluctant to take any

To finish the day, we continued our game of charades and I drew out

'Murder She wrote.' After the usual signs, actions and guesses I decided to act the whole thing. Brandy laden, I strangled myself and fell into the Christmas tree.

So, this heralded a change in our family; from that day to this we have taken solace from our welcome visitor and thought about the Good Samaritan. We did think it was a sign. No more excessive gifts, just one Secret Santa for the adults, smaller stockings for the children and a donation to the homeless. I still drink brandy!

**Angela Austin**







*Christmas Cactus - Carol Hicks*