



In March we had our largest turnout to date for a monthly meeting when 220 members came to the fascinating illustrated talk by Mark Lewis on *Sentinels of the Sea – The Amazing History of Lighthouses*. I hope everyone was able to see and hear everything.

In April the Current Affairs group invited Royston's Town Manager Geraint Burnell to a discussion on *The Future of Royston High Street*. Then at our April monthly meeting Kate Armstrong gave an enthralling talk on *Life in the Colonies at Empire's End*.

Later this month we will be sending out papers in preparation for the Royston U3A AGM in June.

Thank you to all members who have re-joined for the year ahead and welcome to the record number of new members.

Jackie Gellert, Chairman

## Revitalising Royston High Street

Town Manager Geraint Burnell gave an insight into the challenges of revitalising Royston town centre when he came along to the Current Affairs group.

His role with Royston First - funded by a levy to local companies - is to get businesses and local authorities working together to make things happen.

Successes so far include setting up the visitor centre in the library, launching Royston Picture Palace, free after 3pm parking, extending library opening hours and repaving Angel Pavement.

But the impact of the internet has made the issue of local shops a 'tough one' and Geraint said changes were needed from Westminster to recognise the struggle of high street premises paying big business rates.

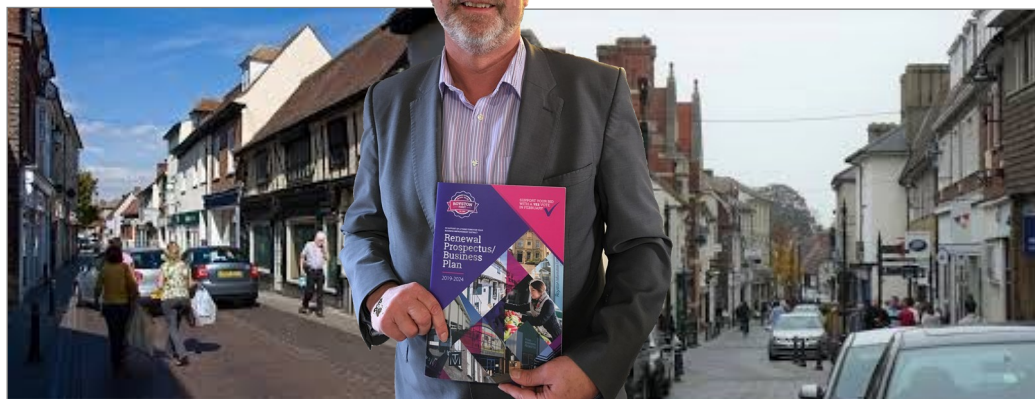
Members made suggestions about how to attract more footfall and Geraint said talks were going on with the Store One landlords about potential plans for an indoor market or a play and relaxation area for young families.

The meeting ended with the group's members stating their support for Royston First's endeavours and hoped that Royston would eventually become as thriving as Buntingford, Hitchin and Saffron Walden.

"We are able to support initiatives that people want supported," said Geraint. "Buntingford hit rock bottom. The retailers on the south end of the high street all worked with each other. That's the kind of impetus that gets things going."

Pam Dajda

Town Manager Geraint Burnell with the Royston Renewal Prospectus



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## Putting their hearts into Easter

Mixed Crafts group members got together to create some 'eggstra' special Easter decorations.

Using flowers, ribbons and eggs supplied by group leader Rosie Cowsley, they decorated their own willow hearts and miniature trees.

Future projects for the group include an acrylic painting session in May, trying their hand at quilling in June and using this skill to decorate gift boxes in July.

Mixed Crafts willow heart Easter decoration



## An unexpected journey to the end of Empire

*'wearing hats, gloves and stockings at 110 degrees in the shade'*

When Kate Armstrong's mother Margaret got married the furthest she had travelled was a trip to Southwold from her home in Cambridge.

But that all changed when she became the wife of colonial officer Patrick Reardon and embarked on a life in Africa in the dying days of Empire.

She recorded her amazing experiences and the

challenges she faced in letters, diaries and photographs – and in her early nineties sat down with Kate and granddaughter Phyllis to write a book about the key role she played.

Kate gave us a glimpse into Margaret's 37 years as a supportive colonial wife in places like Eritrea in the late 1940s and Tanganyika and Botswana in the 1950s and 60s.

It included taking her baby son on safari, doing voluntary work in clinics, travelling under armed guard and with a machine gun on her lap, and 'wearing hats, gloves and stockings at 110 degrees in the shade' at official events.

The book highlights her deep sense of duty and love for the work she was helping her husband carry out, in at times challenging and remote conditions.

Kate said it had been a thrilling experience to tell her mother's story and urged everyone to think about recording their own lives and memories.

"It's been such a privilege and a wonderful journey," she said.

Pam Dajda

*Kate Armstrong and the book about her mother's life*

*The Four Power Commission at Keren, Eritrea*



Image with acknowledgements to Kate Armstrong

## The illuminating history of lighthouses

*'much of the fascination with lighthouses is that they were incredibly challenging to build'*

Lighthouses have an enduring appeal because of their extraordinary locations.

But the story of the engineers who designed them, the workers who built them and the men who lived in them is equally extraordinary, as revealed by life-long lighthouse fan Mark Lewis at our March meeting.

He shed light on the two thousand year history of lighthouses - from the ancient wonder, the Pharos of Alexandria, through to a shambolic system of early wood fired beacons, which led to a lighthouse building programme peaking in the nineteenth century.

One early designer was Henry Winstanley from Saffron Walden who

constructed the first lighthouse at Eddystone Rock in 1698, a notorious spot for shipwrecks.

Much of our fascination with lighthouses is that they were incredibly challenging to build in

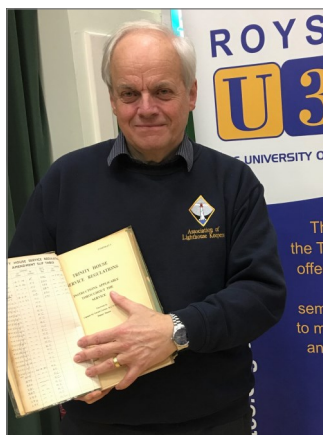
remote locations where workers were at the mercy of the elements and the power of the sea.

We heard that lighthouses were built on land first to test that the stonework fitted - like a giant Lego - before construction at sea.

The automation programme in 1998 ended the era of lighthouse keepers with their duties of cleaning, painting, cooking and baking as well as lamp lighting.

Mark who has spent years visiting lighthouses all over the world said: "Some are stunning pieces of architecture in extraordinary locations. I'm mad about them all."

Pam Dajda



*Mark Lewis with the lighthouse book of service regulations*





## Stepping back in time

The first Royston U3A outing of 2019 took place in late March with a visit by 38 members to Burghley House and Gardens near Stamford.

This imposing country house was designed and built between 1555 and 1587 by William Cecil, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Burghley. The house was inherited by his descendants the Earls and Marquesses of Exeter and is still lived in by a direct descendant of William Cecil, Miranda Rock together with her husband Orlando and their four children.

Burghley is one of the largest houses of the Elizabethan age. The main part of the house has 35 major rooms and more than 80 lesser rooms as well as halls and corridors and an exceptional collection of art. The house guides were well



*A few minutes time out during an unforgettable day*

informed and happy to share their knowledge with us. Burghley House is a place on which to feast your eyes.

As we were lucky with the weather, after a quick visit to the Orangery restaurant, we decided to walk off lunch in the

beautiful historic parkland that was laid out by Capability Brown. Masses of daffodils were still in full bloom and looking stunning. Although we didn't see any fallow deer that apparently occupy the parkland, we did see some striking animal sculptures in the Contemporary Sculpture Garden.

Burghley House is a WOW ! You have to see it if you haven't already. A big thank you to Sandra Walker for organising this most enjoyable outing.

Jackie Gellert

*'Burghley House is a place on which to feast your eyes'*



*Modern sculpture of cows in the landscape gardens*

## Putting Peru on the wine tasting map

Wine Appreciation group members are helping to put Peruvian wines on the map - thanks to a unique tasting session.

Wine merchants Corney & Barrow are the sole importers in the country of Intipalka wines from Peru and a selection was brought along to the Wine Appreciation group.

Members enthusiastically rose to the challenge of sampling and judging a variety of wines in an exclusive tasting test. And they got a real flavour of Peru from export manager Erick Figueroe who explained how the winery in the foothills of the Andes has been in the hands of the same family since 1880.

Ben Pym from Corney & Barrow who organised the session said: "We love trying new things and this is a chance to forge new ground with a family winery producing a variety of great quality."

Our tastings included a Sauvignon Blanc,

Chardonnay, Rosé and Malbec - with a Syrah and Tannat coming top of the class.

The extremely convivial afternoon was voted a winner by all!

Pam Dajda

*'Judging a variety of wines in an exclusive tasting test'*



*Intipalka export manager Erick Figueroe, centre, with Ben Pym, right, and Jonathan Silva both from Corney & Barrow*



## Book group gets quizzing

Book Club 1 members put their thinking caps on to complete the latest School Readers Quiz.

The charity raises money for school readers who can provide extra support for children who are having problems with literacy.

Group leader Deirdre Smith said they answered all 30 questions - without cheating - and felt very proud of their efforts.

We did the quiz last year and scored 22 out of 30 and we believe we have done better this year," she said. "It was fun and gets the old grey matter working!"

Questions included children's literature, the meanings of words and the nom de plume of various authors. The group also composed a limerick as a finale for extra points.

Watch this space for results in the next couple of months.

Deirdre Smith

**Schoolreaders**  
improving literacy • increasing life chances

*'extra support  
for children  
who are having  
problems with  
literacy'*



Group leader Deirdre Smith, top right, with Book Club 1 members

## The shady side of gardening

When considering what to plant in a shady part of your garden you should start by thinking of a woodland and what grows beneath the canopy of trees.

That was the advice of the Gardening group's April speaker Neale Homes-Smith who explained the different types of shade found in a garden starting with deep shade where most plants will struggle.

Some plants will tolerate these challenging conditions but they are generally not showy apart from

Golden Woodrush with its yellow foliage which can brighten up a gloomy area. Woodland plants tend to be more seasonal and from May to October little can survive because of the shade caused by the canopy of leaves. However early spring flowers such as primroses and violets will make a show.

Neale is passionate about trees and woodlands and enjoys leading woodland walks and tree identification.

Walls, hedges and buildings can create a shady site but

if there are good light levels a wide variety of plants will grow. Dry shade is a problem especially if there are tree roots which take moisture from the ground. He advised enhancing the soil with leaf mould and compost to help retain moisture. Raising the canopy of trees can also help.

Neale showed slides of numerous garden settings with varying amounts of shade and the plants that would grow in these areas, explaining their various needs.

Maureen Hersee

*'some  
plants will  
tolerate these  
challenging  
conditions'*



## Blowing in the wind



Twelve intrepid Five Mile walkers set out from the Star Inn in Standon on a fine but blustery day. The weather was set to get much more blowy as the morning progressed - which it duly did.

The route took a circular path taking in the old Buntingford railway track bed and then onto field paths south of the town.

The later stage of the walk provided a distant London view around Canary Wharf, some 25 miles away.

Everyone enjoyed the morning, the sun shone throughout and we retired to the Star for a well-earned and most enjoyable lunch.

Peter Andrew



## Lights, Camera, Action!

Film Group members have been rolling up for 'Sharing and Enjoying Recommended Film for Free' screenings every month since the balmy days of last summer. As a result of an initial questionnaire for the group to choose from we put together a programme for season one and are now working on season two for September.

Our aim is to show a wide range of the best in both historic and contemporary cinema from all generations and genres, and our programme is designed to be adventurous, stimulating and enjoyable.

Films are loaned by members from their own DVD collections, and as there is no charge to attend, we only ask that members buy a drink at the bar in our venue at the Royston Conservative Club.

Films from season one worth a mention for

producing lively comment and enjoyment include *Amelie* from 2001, Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* from 1968, and *A United Kingdom* from 2016, but all ten of the very varied films have been well received.

Feedback from our members has always been positive. People enjoy themselves!

Coming Soon:  
*Scent of a Woman* with Al Pacino

Carla Bailey



*'film for free screenings every month'*

## Dates for your diary

### May

Tuesday 28, 2pm  
Hardwicke Hall at  
Royston Town Hall

**Graham Harrison**  
will give a talk on

Poisons for Medicine:  
Victorian Pharmacists  
and Quack Doctors

### June

Tuesday 25, 1:30pm  
Hardwicke Hall at  
Royston Town Hall

**Royston U3A AGM**

followed by **Mike Levy**  
will give a talk on

The Life of W.S. Gilbert  
dramatist & librettist

### July

Tuesday 30, 2pm  
Hardwicke Hall at  
Royston Town Hall

And now for something  
completely different... COMEDY

**PULSATILLAS!**  
with **Sarah Harrison & Ros Holbrow**

### August



## Easy Guide to Interest Groups

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM		Art	Fitness	Birding	Walking: Strollers	Book Club 2
		Golf Croquet	Seated Exercise	Book Club 3		
				Five Mile Walks		
				Patchwork		
				Short Stories Reading		
PM	Solo Sundays	Current Affairs	MONTHLY MEETING last Tuesday of month	Clay Shooting	Gardening	Petanque/Boules
		Curry Club	Book Club 1	Film	Golf	Pilates
		French Conversation	History	Wine Appreciation	Mixed Crafts	
		Pottery (Hand Building)	Ukulele		Quiz	
		Tai Chi				
EVE				Jazz Appreciation		

For frequency and contact details about all interest groups please see the chart on the next page or check our website for more information. Announcements about future Events & Outings and Theatre Trips will be posted on our website when details become available.

## Interest Groups

If you have an interest that you would like to share with others contact Sharon Camilletti, New Groups Co-ordinator

GROUP	DAY	TIME	FREQUENCY	GROUP LEADER	CONTACT DETAILS
Art	Mon	10:00am	Monthly 3rd Mon	Sylvia Jordan	sylviahjordan41@gmail.com 07599 212882
Birding	Wed	8:30am	Monthly 1st Wed	Carol McGeoch	carol.mcgeoch@hotmail.co.uk 01223 207354
Book Club 1	Tues	2:00pm	Monthly 1st Tues	Deirdre Smith	deidreroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 244700
Book Club 2	Fri	11:00am	Monthly Variable	Janet Burton	janet.a.burton@gmail.com 07984 600295
Book Club 3	Wed	10:30am	Monthly last Wed	Elizabeth (Lee) Towers	ladytowers@gmail.com 01763 241488
Clay Shooting	Wed	2:00pm	Variable	Frank Martin	thefmartin@outlook.com 07831 898234
Current Affairs	Mon	3:30pm	Monthly 3rd Mon	Marion Sweet	marion22roystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 273806
Curry Club	Mon	12:00pm	Monthly 2nd Mon	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Events & Outings (open to all)	Variable	Variable	Occasional	Sandra Walker	sandraroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241896
Film	Wed	2:00pm	Monthly 1st Wed	Carla Bailey	carlaroystonu3a@gmail.com 07968 261101
Fitness	Tues	9:30am	Weekly	Kathy Hounsell	kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Five Mile Walks	Wed	9:45am	Monthly 2nd Wed	Eric Heaton	ericroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 242989
French Conversation	Mon	1:00pm	Monthly variable	Barbara Fielden	fieldenbarbara@hotmail.com 07850 455211
Gardening	Thurs	2:30pm	Monthly Variable	Val Fairbanks	t.fairbanks@ntlworld.com 01763 230724
Golf	Thurs	1:00pm	Weekly	Ralph Gellert	ralphroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 248097
Golf Croquet	Mon	10:00am	Weekly	John Bishop	bishop190@btinternet.com 01763 246703
History	Tues	2:00pm	Monthly Variable	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Jazz Appreciation	Wed	7:30pm	Monthly 2nd Wed	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Mixed Crafts	Thurs	2:00pm	Monthly 3rd Thurs	Rosie Cowsley	rosie.cowsley@ntlworld.com 07809 047380
Patchwork	Wed	10:00am	Monthly 1st Wed	Maureen Strugnell	maureen.strugnell@ntlworld.com 01763 241967
Petanque / Boules	Fri	2:30pm	Fortnightly	Sue & John Bishop	bishop190@btinternet.com 01763 246703
Pilates	Fri	1pm & 2pm	Weekly	Kathy Hounsell	kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Pottery (Hand Building)	Mon	2:00pm	Fortnightly Variable	Rosie Cowsley	rosie.cowsley@ntlworld.com 07809 047380
Quiz	Thurs	2:00pm	Monthly last Thurs	Sharon Camilletti	sharonroystonu3a@gmail.com 07725 847303
Seated Exercise	Tues	10:45am	Weekly	Kathy Hounsell	kathyroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Short Stories Reading	Wed	11:00am	Monthly last Wed	Hugh Pollock	hugh.m.pollock@gmail.com 01763 260253
Solo Sundays	Sun	12:00pm	Monthly 2nd Sun	Sandra Restall	sandra.restall@gmail.com 07775 508533
Tai Chi	Mon	3:15pm	Weekly	Reg Hounsell	regroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241805
Theatre Trips	Variable	Variable	Occasional	Deirdre Smith	deidreroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 244700
Ukulele	Tues	12:00pm	Weekly	John Bishop	bishop190@btinternet.com 01763 246703
Walking: Strollers	Thurs	10:15am	1st & 3rd Thurs of month	David Walker	djwalker3@aol.com 01763 241896
Wine Appreciation	Wed	2:00pm	Monthly Variable	Jackie Gellert	jackieroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 248097

Don't forget to check our website for regularly updated information on [www.u3asites.org.uk/royston](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/royston)

## Royston U3A Committee

Chairman  
Vice Chair  
Treasurer & Speakers Secretary  
Secretary  
Membership Secretary  
Minutes Secretary  
Existing Groups Co-ordinator  
New Groups Co-ordinator  
New Members Contact  
Publicity  
Royston U3A News  
Co-opted Committee Member

Jackie Gellert  
Sandra Walker  
Barbara Andrew  
Karen Heaton  
Marion Martin  
Sylvia Fuller  
Joan Westcott  
Sharon Camilletti  
Carla Bailey  
Pam Dajda  
Ralph Gellert  
Eric Heaton

jackieroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 248097  
sandraroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 241896  
barbararoystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 245363  
karenroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 242989  
marionroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 246876  
sylviaroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 243006  
joanroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 220812  
sharonroystonu3a@gmail.com 07725 847303  
carlaroystonu3a@gmail.com 07968 261101  
pam@dajda.net 01763 246234  
ralphroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 248097  
ericroystonu3a@gmail.com 01763 242989

## Get it in the News

If you're involved in a group why not publicise it in Royston U3A News? Send in a short report of your latest meeting or outing - photos welcomed too - to Pam Dajda at [pam@dajda.net](mailto:pam@dajda.net) or phone 01763 246234

Next deadline for submissions:  
Friday June 14, 2019