



Nancy Wake, the mouse who ran rings around the Nazis

This month's talk will be given by Paul Barwick, who spoke to us on Zoom in August 2021 on the Alexander Litvinenko story. Now he is returning in person to present 'The White Mouse', the story of WW2 spy Nancy Wake, a remarkable woman who lived with the daily threat of death for almost 5 years to help shorten the war for the allies. Her incredible courage and strength of purpose is an awe-inspiring tale of strength of purpose set against a world on fire. Overcoming every challenge posed, Nancy became one of the most decorated Allied women of the war. We explore her life, lived to the full, and salute her tremendous bravery.

Paul Barwick spent 34 years in the Police Service in many different roles and responsibilities both in plain clothes and uniform. He spent many years in police intelligence, focused on organised criminal networks and crimes of violence. In 2014 he acquired a national role in counter terrorism. He retired in 2019, and set up a central London walking tour company focused on London's rich history of espionage incidents and characters.

Derek Carpenter, Speaker Secretary

The White Mouse: Tuesday 24 January at 2pm, Ryarsh Village Hall



Gestapo's number 1 most wanted:
Nancy Grace Augusta Wake in 1945



*He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sun rise.*

William Blake

There was a dramatic rise in the sale of poetry books in 2018. In times of political uncertainty and anxiety people turn to poetry to try to understand the world in which we live.

The Reading Poetry for Pleasure Group certainly enjoys meeting together to read poetry discovering new or unfamiliar poets and rereading old favourites. We often find we know a few poems by a poet and then discover their output is prodigious. We take turns to lead on a particular poet and do our research or we take a theme and all contribute.

Reading Poetry for Pleasure Group

Corporeal and ethereal versifying:

A recent Malling u3a Poetry Group 1
hybrid meeting – in person and on zoom

This past year we have covered Elizabeth Barrett Browning, DH Lawrence, Philip Larkin and Sean O'Brien, all have connections with Hull, Shakespeare's sonnets and Edward Shanks. Themes chosen include Friendship, Wildlife, The Church's Year and Light and Dark. It is always surprising how rarely we overlap in our selection of poems.

Currently we are running "hybrid" meetings so that those who are able to meet together can do so and for those for whom it is more practicable join us on Zoom.

Poetry is a special way of using words but best understood and appreciated by being read aloud which is what we enjoy doing.

Eileen Rowe, Convenor Poetry Group 1

The Short View

It is good to see the spring flowers starting to poke through – I already have snowdrops in my garden, a sure

sign that spring is on its way. February sees our first study day since pre covid and is now fully subscribed and we are hoping to put on more events over the coming year – if anyone is interested in

helping or has ideas please contact me
So wishing you all a happy, healthy and peaceful 2023

Chrys Short, Chair



Interest Groups roundup

After almost a week of rain I was worried – I hate cycling in the rain for a number of reasons – visibility is not so good, roads are slippery – especially when covered with wet leaves – and bicycle brakes don't work so well. Added to which, you don't know if a puddle covers a dip in the road or a big hole, and you can't take a chance, you have to swerve to avoid it.

Anyway, Thursday dawned a bit chilly, but dry, with patches of blue sky between fluffy white clouds. And you could feel the heat from the sun, when the clouds moved out of the way.

It is always difficult parking at ASDA because we know that we have to be back within three hours, or face a big fine. As far as I know, none of us has been fined so far, but we don't really want to take that risk.

So we set off at 10 at a good speed. It is lovely gliding effortlessly down the long hills to the river but there is always the knowledge that we will have to climb back up on our return.

The ride along the Medway footpath is lovely, and the swollen brown river gurgled along beside us as we rode and walked (yes walked past the houseboats) – we obeyed the signs.

At one point, under a motorway bridge, we paused for a group photograph and I love the bright colours of the graffiti matching the hi-viz colours of the cyclists in the group.

We followed this interesting path round to Aylesford – (one of our members who has lived in East Malling for many years said that he had never realised that this path existed). We said good morning, hello and thank you to the many hikers and dog walkers who also enjoying the warm weather and sunshine, and then at Aylesford we took to the road again to get back to Ditton. We went through Ditton to East Malling via the ford – then through West Malling station to get back to Kings Hill.

At this stage we realised that we were running very close to the 3-hour parking limit. Some of the e-bikes raced ahead to move cars out of the Asda car park to somewhere – anywhere else. We all missed the deadline but I believe there is usually a few minutes (perhaps as much as half an hour) grace, so we may just have got away with it. We will find out soon!

But it was a nice, unusual and interesting ride.

Barry Evans, Convenor Social Cycling Group

Take a ride on the wild side

Arrestable Art:

The joint Kings Hill/Malling u3a
Social Cycling group striking a pose



Herstmonceux Observatory

On an extremely wet November evening members of the Astronomy Group drove down to the Herstmonceux Observatory which is near Hailsham in East Sussex in the vain hope that the weather would improve. The Observatory has regular star-gazing evenings and they are very popular. We had booked well in advance for the November show.

Unfortunately the weather did not improve so our first stop after our arrival was the cafe to drown our sorrows and try to forget the awful weather. We then proceeded to have a play on some of the scientific game machines. They are really for children but... After that we went into a large tent where one of the astronomers told and showed us on a large screen what we would have seen in the night sky had the rain stopped. Then on to the telescopes where again the astronomers gave us lots of astronomical information

Although the weather was both wet and cold we enjoyed the visit and agreed that we would definitely go back again when hopefully the weather will be kinder to us.

Helen Strotton, Convenor Astronomy Group



Discover London Group

For our December walk we ventured a little further afield than normal, to the East End of London. This has a rich history of campaigns and battles fought to improve the conditions and rights of ordinary working men and women.

Our 3-mile walk led us from Bromley-by-Bow to Bethnal Green, during which we celebrated mass movements from The Chartists to the Suffragettes and renowned philanthropists and activists such as Annie Besant, John Passmore Edwards and the Pankhurst sisters.

Amongst the highlights of our walk was the magnificent Bryant and May match factory (still standing, but now luxury flats!) and the stirring story of the successful strike in 1888 by the matchgirls for better wages and working conditions.

A little further, we visited the Lord Morpeth pub which boasts a magnificent giant wall mural, honouring Sylvia Pankhurst who lived and campaigned for many years from the house next door.

Lunch was taken beside the lake in beautiful Victoria Park, where we enjoyed some welcome winter sunshine. The park itself is historically important, as the first major urban green space in inner London that was specifically built as a healthy respite for the

local community from the grim pollution which plagued Victorian cities.

In Bethnal Green we visited The Globe School, which possesses spectacular mosaics on all its surrounding walls, depicting animals of the world. A joint venture between the school and the creative collective Artyface, it is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of this trend towards large scale partnerships between artists and communities.

Finally, we ended our walk on a sombre note, standing in front of the humbling 'Stairway to Heaven' memorial. This records the names of the 173 people (62 of whom were children) who died in the 1943 Bethnal Green Tube Station disaster, the largest UK civilian disaster in the whole of World War Two.

We ended our walk conscious of how much we owe our own freedoms to the activities of earlier generations.

Ray Golland, Discover London Group



Science & Technology Group

We may be few in number, but we're an eclectic lot in Science & Technology. Some of us are interested in the shapers of our modern world, like Benjamin Franklin and Nikola Tesla, about whom we heard this year. Others want to understand the big stories in science today, such as the discovery of planets in other solar systems (the count for which stands at 5,297 as of this New Year), or why no-one nowadays worries about Covid (the death rate has dropped by a factor of a hundred in the past 2 years).

Several of us worked as engineers, and like to understand how things work. We had a presentation on how rockets and jets work, and are looking forward to our next talk on mobile phone technology. The undoubted highlight was a visit to Brede Steam Giants, a working museum of Victorian water technology near Rye. Ok, so some of us love big "boys' toys", and they don't come much bigger than these. But several spouses came along too, and enjoyed themselves. Perhaps that was the lunch in the Red Lion in Brede village? In February, we are off to have a dabble on the flight simulators at BAe Systems in Rochester.

If you would like to re-kindle an interest in Science or Technology, why not contact convenor

Richard Fox, Science & Tech Group

Scrabble Group

On two Tuesdays a month a group of 6 – 8 of us meet in each other's houses for our Scrabble fix.

Armed with dictionaries and the invaluable list of 2 and 3 letter words that nobody has ever heard of, we are ready to sharpen our ageing wits and battle for the triple word squares.

We scour the Scrabble dictionary and from ATTARS to ZUPA our vocabulary is eclectic – though we have no idea what the words mean!! What is a ZO and can you have more than one, asks the lucky person with an S.

It's not all cutthroat competition; there's always time for the experts to help a beginner improve and over tea news is exchanged and friendships cemented. A happy mix of mild mental workout and friendly tea party.

Jill Browning, Scrabble Group

Group Convenor Gerry Hunt (Mrs)

Make Tea not War

January Tea Rota:

Pam & Dick Wilkinson

Christine Barrett

Fill your own: Help the environment by bringing a reusable cup.

