



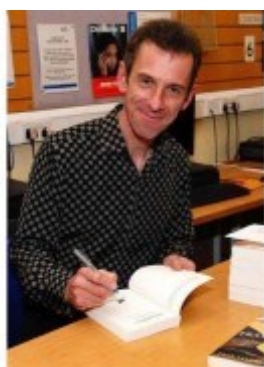
Our Speaker this month ~ Fran Sandham

Coast to Coast across Africa: a remarkable solo walk

Fran Sandham is an author and public speaker, who took on the challenge of a lifetime by walking 3,000 miles coast-to-coast across Africa, from the Atlantic on Namibia's Skeleton Coast to the Indian Ocean near Zanzibar.

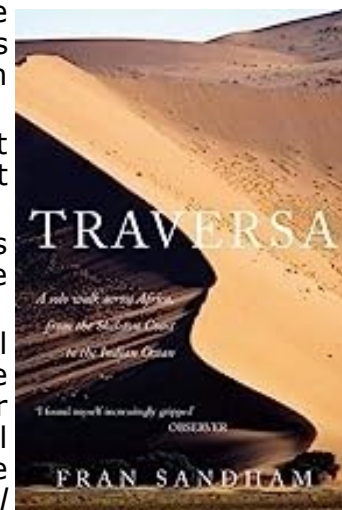
It was the first time on record that anyone has crossed the continent solo by this route, entirely on foot, and with no back-up, support team, or sponsors, or at least solo apart from a disastrous donkey.

His book *Traversa: A solo walk across Africa* is the account of this remarkable journey, and has received rave reviews and very wide press coverage in the UK and abroad.



Fran was an editor at Rough Guides for several years, and worked in book-selling and the voluntary sector before that. He has written for many newspapers, magazines and travel publications, including the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Observer* and the *Financial Times*.

From reports of Fran's presentation which have been received, with words such as 'excellent', 'entertaining', 'informative and amusing', we are likely to be in for a riveting afternoon. The meeting will also be zoomed for those unable to be present in the Hall.



Derek Carpenter

Malling Musings - July 2023

My focus, and that of the Committee, this year is going to be very much on Malling u3a and you our members. Covid has had a devastating effect in untold ways and our u3a has not been immune - for example, our membership numbers are still healthy but they have seen a significant reduction, this in turn has impacted adversely on our Interest Groups with some folding and others struggling to keep going. The numbers attending our monthly talks are slowly climbing back but there is still a little way to go before we return to pre-covid levels.

So our aim is to inject a bit of spark and get some of the buzz and enjoyment back into our u3a. A fledgling 'Events Group' has been established, full of enthusiasm and brimming with ideas, which is looking at a wide range of activities for existing members and to help attract new ones. These include a Quiz Night, a Jazz Evening and the restoration of the Christmas Lunch either in the traditional form of the past or something new. The group will also be looking at simple day trips and outings which are not overly onerous to arrange as well as special events such as the recent 'Astrodome Study Day' which was a great success.

If you have any ideas for events we would love to hear from you. Anything you think that would go down well with our members, do please let us know. Equally if you would like to join the Group you would be most welcome. Covid has blunted our senses in so many ways so, by arranging a few activities that we can all enjoy together, perhaps we can begin to rejuvenate our u3a and cast away the covid blues!

S
S Sangha, Chairperson

Genealogy Group

We have continued this year to meet in the afternoon of the 1st Tuesday of the month in the Davison room of Ryarsh Village Hall.

A very small number of members did not continue this year, but others 'signed up' and joined us in October, therefore maintaining similar overall numbers again for 2022/2023.

Each meeting has focussed on different topics of mutual interest and there have also been opportunities to support each other with individual research. Many of us have got as far as we can down a chosen Ancestor's path on our own individual efforts and reached what is commonly called a 'brick-wall'. The key advantages of meeting as a group are, firstly, sometimes fresh ideas can be put forward by others in the group and secondly other sources of records can be found, which can result in these 'brick walls' being 'knocked down'.

So, in essence, if you are curious about your Ancestors and would like to know more, do think about signing up in September to join us for 2023/2024.



Kevin Johnson

Singing Group ~ Calling all men

I was astounded on joining the singing group to find that I was the only man there apart from the group leader.

I have been to several u3a groups and the Malling group has been the only one with a leader who plays the keyboard, the ukulele, the guitar and is also a great singer. Joe is a veritable tour de force.

You don't need to be a good singer. The sessions are simply for members who enjoy singing. Examples of the songs are: "Putting on the Style", "Can't Help Falling in Love", "The Wonder of You", "Molly Malone", "Saturday Night at the Movies", "The Lincolnshire Poacher" and "Black Velvet Band".

C'mon you men of Malling, I need some support.

Phil Pretty

Discover London

The June walk for the Discover London group was 4 miles long and took in the areas of Highgate and Hampstead – the two hilltop villages that border Hampstead Heath. Both areas have more famous dead residents than many areas of London and more living people who are 'on the telly' too. But we didn't concentrate on that. We focused on the scenery and it really didn't feel as if we were in London at all.

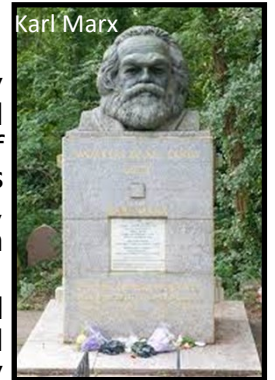
The walk started at Archway and we went first of all to Highgate and its famous cemetery. Most of us went into the cemetery and could see the graves of novelist George Eliot, pop artist Patrick Caulfield, social philosopher Karl Marx, and the particular favourite of the walk leader, author Douglas Adams (*Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*).

The area of Hampstead started out as a quiet Saxon village, and today it is very up-market and best known for the host of famous literary figures who once lived there, including the poet, John Keats.

Walking on Hampstead Heath has been likened to walking in a country village. There was not a lot of traffic on this walk and as Hampstead Heath has paved and cobbled paths, there was no mud.

It's one of the city's best areas for wildlife and we saw it looking its best in the June sunshine.

Carole Lawrence



Tea Rota

July Pat Lander & Eve Burborough

August Judy Barnsley & Sally Brailsford

Beth Minall



Bring your own.
Help the environment by
bringing your own reusable
mug

Astronomy Study Day – June 2023

The Study Day in June was entitled "Journey into Space" and promised an exploration of worlds beyond our own. Attended by a capacity audience of 80 members, including guests from neighbouring U3As we were divided into two groups alternating between the two displays.

The inflatable blow up astrodome fitted nicely into Ryarsh Village Hall, and it was an interesting experience entering and exiting, avoiding the gently sagging canopy. We obviously didn't expect the pinpoint precision of a fixed installation astrodome, but the presenter made up for that with his enthusiastic breadth of knowledge, as he took us on a whistle stop tour of the heavens, including illustrating the night sky in Australia with its Southern Cross.



The Astrodome



Inside the Astrodome

In the parallel morning session, Helen Strotton in her presentation asked us to imagine how an estate agent would present the International Space Station for sale. What would be its selling points? – plenty of rooms – spectacular location with breathtaking views; a quiet neighbourhood but with good communications. This was rounded off by a short YouTube clip describing the astronauts 'life on the station'.

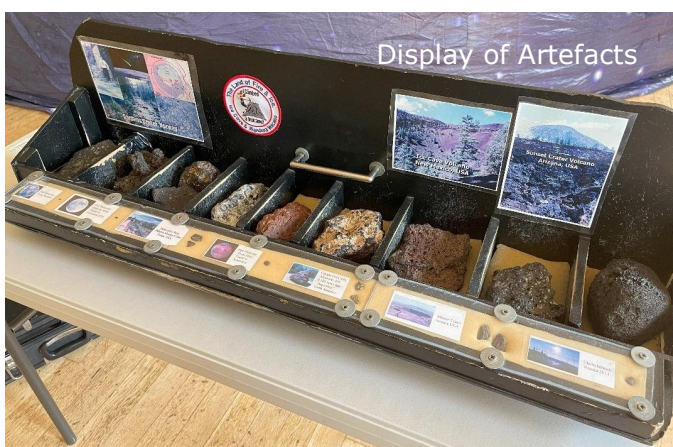
After lunch in two lectures by amateur astronomers from the Mid-Kent Astronomical Society, Arthur Fentaman's subject was 'Our Night Sky'. He drew a graphic comparison between the size of our sun, the planets, the vastness of the solar system and of course our own galaxy and deeper space beyond.

Ian Hargraves told us of Exploding Stars, Black Holes and the origins of the matter that makes the world around us. Taking us from its origin in the big bang and the processes that followed, forming the lighter elements and ultimately building up the heavier ones. What is the mystery of what lies at the centre of our own galaxy and probably every other one of the countless systems that cover the observable night sky? Ian illustrated his talk with his own impressive astro photographs and described how modern technology has put the achievement of such impressive images in the hands of amateur observers – you just need patience and a clear sky, of course.

The presenters also brought displays of meteorites, including one which came from the planet Mars and rock samples from various volcanos. A working model of a moon rover illustrated how it was transported to the moon and then unfolded.

A thoroughly entertaining and educational day with many thanks to Helen and the members of the Study Day sub-committee that worked so hard on the organisation and for the support from the Mid Kent Astronomical Society.

Mike Rowe



Display of Artefacts

Science Experiments that you can do with your Grandchildren

I am offering a one-off session on simple science experiments that any grandparent can do with grandchildren, or you could do just for yourself if you wish. The session would be at Ryarsh Village Hall on a first come first served basis. There is no need for any science experience and there will be assistants to talk you through each experiment. The maximum number of people would be 12 but more sessions could be held if required.

One of the experiments is:-

finding the volume of different spheres, such as a football or cricket ball, by finding the diameter. Then measuring the mass with scales and then predicting whether the object will float or sink in water.

The session has been trialled with Kent Area Health Authority, Hertfordshire Health Authority and published in The Health Education Journal.

The cost would be about £6 to cover hall hire and the cost of materials.

Any profit would be given to the u3a treasurer.

If you are interested, please get in touch with me.

Tel: 01732 842599 email: philpretty@live.co.uk

Phil Pretty



Science
Experiments
for Kids

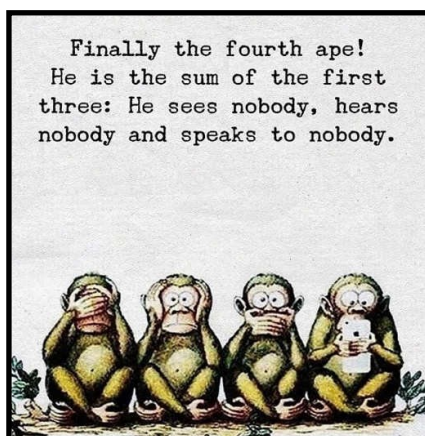
A New u3a at Borough Green and Wrotham?

About 100 people packed into Borough Green Village Hall on Monday 10th July for an introductory meeting about setting up a Borough Green and Wrotham u3a. They heard short talks about the u3a movement, interest groups and committee roles. I had been asked to share our experience of setting up Malling District u3a and explain how we had grown from modest beginnings to offer the wide range of activities we do today. There were a lot of pertinent questions from those attending the meeting and at the end volunteers were asked to come forward and leave their details if they felt they would like to get involved in the organisation.

As I left, a small group was gathering around the organisers but it is too early to say if this new u3a will get off the ground. If it does, it will add to the opportunities in the area. When Kings Hill and Meopham u3as opened it had no noticeable effect on our membership. With subscriptions so low a number of people joined both and no doubt the same would happen with Borough Green. There are often reciprocal arrangements whereby a member of one u3a can join a group in another if it offers a topic not covered by the member's home u3a. If Borough Green and Wrotham is established you, our members, won't have to choose between us; you can enjoy the benefits of both.

The existence of a new neighbouring u3a may provide an opportunity to share activities such as days out or holidays. A fledgling u3a may well be glad to offer its members the opportunity of joining some of our activities which will help to make them more viable. So here's wishing good luck to Borough Green and Wrotham. And if, in the end, it doesn't happen perhaps we can encourage any of those who are disappointed by that to join us!

Valerie Willsher

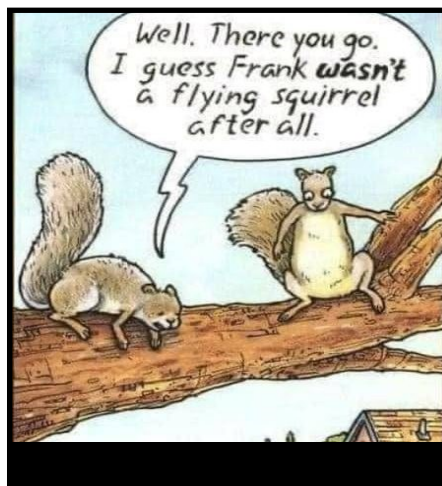


Apparently, when you drink a pint of beer, you shorten your lifespan by 9 minutes.

So according to my calculations, I died sometime in 1644.



When you're cooking & the recipe says "chill in the fridge for one hour"



A woman with a salad walked past me in the restaurant and said you know a cow died so you could eat that beefburger. I said if you weren't eating its food it might have lived. 🤔

PASSENGERS travelling first class on British Airways Boeing 747s are worried about a re-design which means some lavatories have windows. A woman travelling to New York complained there were no blinds. She was told by a stewardess, 'Madam, if some pervert is clinging to the side of this aircraft at 35,000 feet they deserve to see everything.'

The Correct term for gluten-free sugarless vegan brownies is "compost".

Waiting to see how long it takes this police sketch artist to realize I'm describing him.

Knee slappers supplied by Pat Meehan & Anne Sargent

The official winner of the "not my job" award.

