



Like so many others, I never met the Queen, though Pam and I attended a Buckingham Palace garden party six years ago; we stood only a few feet away from her, but were never introduced.

And yet, again like so many others, I felt I knew her. Whenever I was instituted into a parish as Incumbent I had to swear an oath of allegiance to her as 'Supreme Governor of the Church of England and Defender of the Faith'.

The moving and heartfelt tributes which have poured in from all over the world in recent days have shown how much she was held not only in respect but in affection, and probably very many of us have been deeply moved by it all. Hers was a life of total service, unselfish dedication, and wholehearted commitment to her people throughout our great commonwealth of nations. What can I say that has not been said or written a

thousand and more times in the past few days? One word which has been often repeated is the word 'constancy' and that steadiness which it implies has been one of the hallmarks of her 70 years. But with her own constancy she has also been a

constant: in an ever-changing world, when we are continually exploring and experiencing new things, as individuals and as both a national and global community, we need a homely base to which we can safely return, and the Queen has provided that for us all. The fact that the nation's 'grandmother', as she has frequently been described, was always there was, in a very real sense, a source of comfort and stability. That, of course, has now changed, and we are all likely, in some way, to be affected by it. Whereas our political system seems designed to create polarity and opposition, the Queen has been a force for real unity around the values that matter, always with such grace, humanity, and lovely touches of humour; she took on a role that she didn't choose, and gave it her all. Of that sense of vocation – indeed sacred calling – the Poet Laureate had it absolutely right in his poem written for

her Platinum Jubilee:

*Queenhood: vows taken among bibles and blades,
beneath braided banners and heralding horns;
the anointment of hand, breast, head with oil
of cinnamon, orange, musk and rose;
promises
made in secret under tented gold
so daylight won't frighten the magic away,
too sacred by far for the camera to see.*

All kings and queens of this nation have the title 'Defender of the Faith' but in few has that faith been so evident as in our late monarch. Her Christmas broadcasts often spoke of her own deep personal faith, a faith which clearly sustained her in times of distress as well as in the many times of joy and celebration.

Our National Anthem, in which for 70 years we have sung 'God save the Queen', is unusual in that it is a prayer and one which, at the end of all those years, has been answered for us in full measure; for God has indeed sent her victorious, happy and glorious, long to reign over us. And while we now return to singing, with heartfelt sincerity, 'God save the King', we can surely continue to say, as the Anthem says, 'with heart and voice' and with a sense of deep thanksgiving, 'God bless the Queen'.

Canon Derek Carpenter



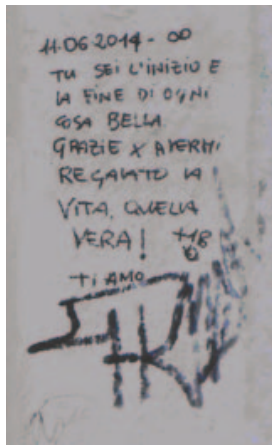
Group Convenors will be on hand to promote the different interests on offer at Malling u3a to enable you to follow new passions or continue existing ones.

As an added bonus the Singing Group will be performing a few songs at 3pm this year. I hope to see as many of you there as possible, to meet the convenors, to enjoy tea and cake and a sing song. Let's make it an enjoyable social afternoon, bring your friends too.

Anne Sargent, Membership Secretary

Interest Groups: Latest news & views

A monthly feature to spotlight the interest groups and activities available to Malling u3a members.



The Italian Improvers Group

We are a small and select band, but don't they say the best things come in small packages? We have been "beginning" and "improving" for a few years now, but still enjoy discovering the odd quirky little corner of the language that we stumble across from time to time. Like the difference between Anno and Ano. And I'm not going to tell you here. We use a collection of sources to test and teach us, including a few holiday snaps I took a few years ago. Our bi-monthly sessions are fun, and sometimes we get a lot done, sometimes it's a little.

Ray Lawrence, Convenor



The Italian Extra Group

We are six in our Italian group – all good friends. We start with each of us saying in Italian what we have done since the last lesson and this is followed by taking it in turns to translate our homework from English to Italian. We then progress to the unseen translation of a piece in Italian handed to us by Jenny all of which is interspersed with help on grammar and vocabulary. We also watch interesting Italian programmes on TV which Jenny has found for us. Finally we have tea and chat concluding an always fun Italian class.

Pauline Wilkinson



The Short View

We are always keen to support the development of new special interest groups within our u3a, if you have any ideas you will receive the full support of your committee – so please email your ideas. Also, in response to member feedback last month I asked for your ideas for social activities that we could put on. We are at the early stages of planning a study day for the early new year – more information about this next month. To date I have not had any suggestions so if you do want some social activities please tell me what sort of activities you would like to see and if you are willing to help set these up – that would be very welcome

Chrys Short, Chair Malling u3a



Make Tea not War

September rota:

Rosemary Lea, Christine Hewitt, Isabel Macdonald, Jan Holdsworth

Christine Barrett

Fill your own:

Help the environment & our volunteers by bringing a reusable cup.



Anne's knee slappers

