

news@u3a

learn
laugh
live

The newsletter of Crouch End & District u3a June 2025

Meet our new Chair, Andrew Sitch

I have been a member of Crouch End & District u3a (CEDu3a) since it was launched in 2017. I am an enthusiastic member of several interest groups including History, Current Affairs In-Depth, Wine Explorers and Lunchtime Concerts. I also co-convene Book Group 1 (see page 5 celebrating reading 100 books, 8 million words!) and I have participated in the Capital Ring and London Loop walks. I was Treasurer for two years from 2019 and then served as Vice-Chair. I have been Chair of the Publicity & Recruitment team since mid-2024. Beyond the CEDu3a, I spend quite a bit of time in Italy, play tennis, and try to see as much as I can of rather a large number of grandchildren. I have lived in Crouch End for 42 years. I started my career as an editor in book publishing then shifted to marketing and corporate work at City & Guilds, the vocational assessment and qualifications body.



Local History

The Parkland Walk features in the works of horror and supernatural fiction writers, reveals Sandra Clark, editor of the annual Bulletin of the Hornsey Historical Society.

The Parkland Walk is London's longest local nature reserve, running for five km, with some interruptions, from Finsbury Park to Alexandra Palace. It is on the site of a Victorian railway line built to serve the growing population of North London and particularly to transport visitors to Alexandra Palace, which opened in 1873.

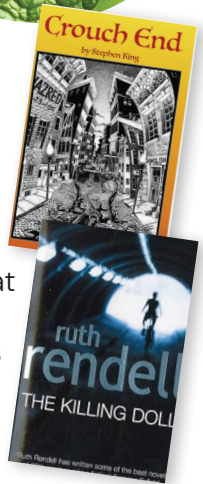


The line ran for passenger trains until 1954, closing bit by bit until 1971, when the tracks were finally lifted. Haringey Council bought up the land for housing in 1974, but their plans were rejected in 1978, and a warden, David Hope, turned the derelict railway into a parkland. It has survived efforts to convert it into a motorway and

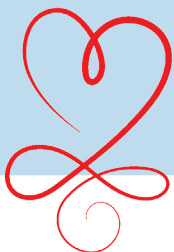
it remains a much-loved refuge for wildlife, where, according to Haringey's website, more than 200 species of wildflowers have been recorded. Hedgehogs, foxes, butterflies and a vast array of birds are regularly spotted, and on rare occasions, even muntjac deer.



The Walk has acquired a different sort of identity in fiction. In Stephen King's short horror story 'Crouch End' (1980) and Ruth Rendell's supernatural tale, 'The Green Road' (1981) it is a sinister place with more than the 'hint of weirdness' that Will Self identified in 'The North London Book of the Dead' (1991). In Ruth Rendell's novel, *The Killing Doll* (1984) in an abandoned railway tunnel on the Walk, the teenage protagonist sells his soul to the Devil. In these novels, the Walk is characterised by dark tunnels full of abandoned furniture and an atmosphere of neglect. Happily, the Parkland Walk of 2025 is far more like the wildlife haven, a green world where locals find refuge from the encroachments of urban life.



How CEDu3a has changed my life



Crouch End & District u3a has changed my life in so many ways. Friendships with men and women have flourished over the years and have become my support, my rock, and my lasting pleasure. My confidence has developed and delighted me as a result of working, talking and laughing with u3a members.

I've learnt a great deal from groups. As well as all this, I have found deep, true love in my later years. It began with a respect, a liking for a member of one of my groups and rapidly became so much a part of my life that I cannot imagine how I lived my life without him. Ending on a cliché: it is never too late to begin again!

Stephen Lustig, notre reporter itinérant, rejoint le groupe de CEDu3a.

Well, that's enough French! You neither have to speak it, nor wear a black beret, to join this lively CEDu3a group playing on a purpose-built court in Priory Park. On a beautiful sunny morning I observed 19 players play simultaneously in four separate games. They launched their heavy metal boules (balls) towards the target – a little wooden or plastic ball that's called the jack, though everyone called it by its French name, le cochonnet (literally "piglet"). They were aiming to get their boules as close as possible to it. I witnessed an alternative strategy, favoured by the more competitive players: aim for an opponent's ball close to the cochonnet, to knock it out of the way. A competitive game? Certainement oui, though

last year the Paris Olympics missed an opportunity to make it an Olympic sport.

The CEDu3a pétanque group was created seven years ago and now comprises about 30 members who play with varying degrees of skill. The court is wheelchair accessible, and throwing a boule from a seated position would not be a problem. We've probably all seen men d'un certain age playing in French villages, but it's a game that's increasingly popular in the UK. Playing pétanque, (sometimes called "boules", though the latter word is the generic word for a few games using different weighted balls, and with slightly different rules) is a great way to spend a sunny morning! Quelle joie!



**BOOK
NOW!
July Talk**

Rewilding addresses the climate and biodiversity crises

'Rewilding' is the theme of the July 2025 talk being held at 10.30 am on Thursday 10th July at Hornsey Moravian Church, Priory Rd, N8 7HR. In 2023 Stewart McIroy bought 43 acres of land in north Norfolk and joined 30 other landowners rewilding a total of 30,000 acres. He firmly believes rewilding addresses the climate and biodiversity crises and delivers health and happiness benefits. Register for Stewart's talk at <https://cedu3a.org.uk/monthly-meetings//>

Gardening hints and tips

Rebecca Harrington says support is needed for tall delphiniums and lilies before summer storms.



*2025 brought early surprises –
rose buds emerging and geum
flowering in early April*

June is the time to cut back these early blooming plants to encourage another flush, leaving 2-3 buds to flourish and hide the cut twigs. Keep 15 – 25cm cuttings from softwood plants, for example salvias and fuchsia, around the edge of a small pot in gritty compost, keep damp but not wet and watch for the buds to burst into a newly rooted plant.

Support is needed for tall delphiniums and lilies before summer storms. Bamboo canes may be available from neighbours with unruly bamboo screening. Most gardeners love to share unwanted crops! As always, watch out for those brilliant red lily beetles, deadly to lilies and with no known benefit to the rest of nature. Remove and crush.

With weather being unpredictable you may have gaps in the borders to fill. Use your cuttings, or sow directly into damp ground for seedlings in a few weeks.

And for inspiration, try the wide variety of open gardens we have locally, raising money for charities through the National Garden Scheme.



The NGS website <https://ngs.org.uk/> shows many open days from April to September around North London and further afield. Many advertise their own propagated plants for sale and may also have excellent tea and cake! Enjoy the fruits of other people's labour for good causes.

Memories of VE Day celebrations

“ I was born in February 1940 in New Southgate and have some clear memories of the war and the VE Day celebrations. At that time New Southgate was a busy working suburb with a vibrant local community and although close to Muswell Hill and Crouch End, it was as different as if it was an industrial town in the north. I



was aware of the enduring deprivations of the war and there was a real sense of relief leading up to the VE Day street party.

The party that I remember was at the bottom

end of Palmers Road, by the junction with Lower Park Road, near the gasworks. Tables were laid out in the street and there was a kids' party atmosphere. The feast included jelly, which was a new experience for me. We queued up to play jumping off the roof of one of the street air raid shelters, landing on a big heap of sand and running back to join the queue. Later, there was a huge bonfire in Lower Park Road which was so hot the tar ran in molten black streams down the gutters.

I can just about remember The Beehive pub (long gone) serving drinks through the open front window to crowds of people in the courtyard that opened onto Palmers Road. Fifteen years ago I researched this area. I met some contemporaries who had similar memories and amazingly some photos, shown here. We talked about the absence of hats at The Avenue party, and the comment was "The Avenue people never 'ad no money for 'ats!" Note the absence of men, for obvious reasons. *Colin Marr* ”

“ For most of the war years I was at a small boarding school in Hertfordshire, and I remember nothing of VE day other than the teachers, matron and cook celebrating some event at teatime, at their table in the dining room. They had a cake, no doubt made with sugar provided by the mothers of the children eating bread and dripping. Unusually, there was laughter and some hand clapping at that table, but we children, all under 12 years old, were told nothing. My father came one Sunday to take me and my sister out, and he told us that the war had ended, which was an enormous relief, he said, for Jews like us. ”

Patricia Isaacs



© Imperial War Museum

“ I was 16 on VE Day and remember it vividly. My school had been evacuated to Keswick and on the evening of that day we danced around the bonfire at the top of Latrigg, the nearest small mountain. Huge bonfires, as big as houses, had been erected on every peak in the Lake District ready to be lit as beacons if the Germans invaded. On the 8th of May they lit every one of them ... you have to imagine the incredible view and wild excitement that night. ”

Do Burgess



Cycling for Fun and Fitness Group

Andrea Garman set up the Cycling for Fun and Fitness Group in Spring 2023, having cycled to work in central London and enjoyed cycling in Central America, Asia, Europe and in the UK.

Cycling places less stress on knees compared with walking and is good for existing knee pain or arthritis. Your bicycle must be in good order, your saddle at the right height and you need to be happy cycling up to 15 miles in two hours at 7.5 miles an hour. We keep to quiet backstreets, but you need to be confident cycling in a group and in traffic.



Planned rides are circular, with 10 people maximum, starting from Crouch End, cycling for an hour, stopping for coffee then returning. We enjoy a 'green' ride to Trent Park using linked parks and cycle paths and London Transport cycle routes to Victoria Park and the Lea Valley. We've discovered Branch Hill, Hampstead, where Constable painted 'en plein air' (out of doors) and the first meeting place of the Pickwick Bicycle Club in Hackney – the world's oldest cycling club.

Non-folded e-bikes aren't permitted on most TfL services. I was recently on a 210 mile four-day tour from Newcastle to Edinburgh along the Northumberland coast and over to Holy Island including a 70-mile day. There were moments I regretted hiring a road bike instead of an electric one, but I survived!

We meet: Last Thursday of each month. 10 am start from the Crouch End area getting back by 12.30 pm
<https://cedu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/cycling-for-fun-and-fitness/>



Our favourite café

The Pavilion Café in Priory Park has community at its heart, says Tricia Pearl.

The Pavilion Café in Priory Park is the clubhouse for the u3a pétanque group and a post-tennis stop off for two tennis groups and the Social Runners. Owners Sokol and Flora generously invited the Photography Group to use its walls for our exhibition opening on May 8th. Members and friends gathered to enjoy tea, coffee, ice cream, and slices of Flora's legendary lemon drizzle cake.

Built to mark the Festival of Britain, the Pavilion opened two weeks before the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. With its sunny terrace and indoor seating, it's the perfect spot for lunch, a cuppa, or a quiet chat. Sokol and Flora took over the café 15 years ago. Sokol rarely stays still, which is unsurprising for someone who drove 44-tonne trucks. Sweethearts since school, the couple take separate holidays to keep the café open seven days a week. However, this year, they went to Sorrento together – a gift from their children.

Home-cooked recipes include roasted vegetable and goat's cheese wrap. In 2023, Sokol and Flora partnered with the Friends of Priory Park to celebrate the café's 70th anniversary. Whether you're after a hearty lunch, a piece of cake, or a friendly face – it's at the Pavilion.



Priory Park Pavilion Café open 9 am – 6 pm every day (Closes 5 pm in winter)
<https://www.fopp-n8.org.uk/cafe>

Future Lives

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Healthcare

UK-wide u3a group Future Lives aims to inspire, influence and inform members about improving our future lives. The next free online talk on Tuesday 17th June at 2 pm is 'Use of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare'.

Speaker Ian Hawker has followed AI developments since retiring from BT Research Labs in 2016. AI will play a key role in diagnostics, personalised treatment, health screening, neurological health, new drug discovery and reducing medical administration costs.

Register online at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/our-impact/future-lives>



The group in celebratory mood with some of the books they have shared

Since October 2017, members have read 100 books – equivalent to around 8 million words for those who have read them all, says Tricia Pearl.

The group was founded by the remarkable Pamela Moffatt MBE (1938–2018), a disability campaigner and, by public nomination, bearer of the Olympic torch in 2012. Initially the group held meetings in pubs and then online, but now gathers in each other's homes and gardens. Reading and sharing was a great comfort during the Covid months. Members take turns selecting books, with no restrictions. This has led to a fascinating variety: six non-fiction works, 66 authors from outside the UK or Ireland, and 69 books published before 2010, only two of which are from the 19th century. Many books have won notable literary awards. On occasion, we have wondered why!

Despite rarely agreeing on whether a book is a good read, we unanimously appreciate being introduced to works we might never have chosen ourselves. Some members source their books from libraries in Haringey. Two members prefer reading on Kindle. Our discussions ensure that every member has an opportunity to share their thoughts. Ultimately, reading remains a solitary pursuit, but it's a unique pleasure knowing our thoughts will be shared with the group.

Football used to be of the
community
And it had a heart of gold
Increasingly commercial
That heart of gold is being sold

Stadiums the size of cities
Dwarf former pitches and their
stands
And expensive season tickets
Diminish the number of local fans

Players are sold and
transported
Like goods between each team
Money is the main player
And profit the main theme

Lost is that community
Buried is that heart of gold
As that local kind of football
Is consigned to days of old

*Poem and illustration by Carol
Ann Uszkurat*

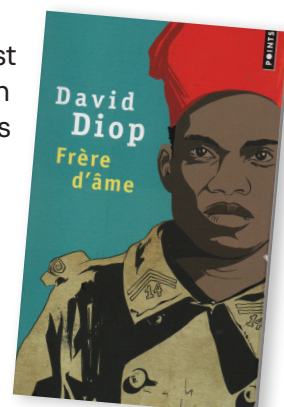


Roving Reporter Stephen Lustig delves into French Literature.

A foolhardy reporting assignment? This group would be discussing a book in French. Zut alors! I used to be fairly fluent, but now my French is rusty. Would I be able to follow the discussion? I was met with a friendly 'Bienvenue' by the group's members. Relief followed – the members' spoken French was slower than the average Parisian's, so I could understand them.

They jointly choose a title for discussion, mostly using recommendations and reviews. This time it was *Frère d'âme* by David Diop. It's possibly not generally known, at least in the English-speaking world, that thousands of Senegalese soldiers fought with the French in the First World War. Their French commanders armed them with coupe-coupe machetes and encouraged them to behave like savages to terrify the enemy. One of them, a young man from a Senegalese village, narrates this novel. Confronted by the horrors of war he becomes a brutal killer himself. The book depicts his descent into madness and shows how war makes monsters out of men.

The group's members, sometimes quoting from the book, discussed the writing style, with its graphic depiction of the brutality of war, and the unravelling of a man's sanity, along with an exploration of love, friendship, and what it is to be human. The meeting ended with general conversation (in English), the choice of a book for next month and a delicious cup of coffee.



Beer Appreciation Group

Some enchanted evening

Seán Boyle, Group Convener, Beer Appreciation checks out the best pubs for alfresco imbibulation

What better way to pass the time on a warm summer's evening than to chat with friends over a cool beer in a pub garden?

I can think of at least 20 pubs within a couple of miles of the Crouch End Clock Tower worth seeking out. In Crouch End the most pleasant settings can be found along Park Road at **The Maynard Arms** (70 Park Rd, N8 8SX) and the recently re-opened **The Good Reader** (120 Park Rd, N8 8JP).



The Good Reader, Crouch End

Way, N22 7AY). **The Famous Royal Oak** (73 St James's Lane, Muswell Hill N10 3QY) can't offer a view, but the ingenious arrangement of the TVs means that you can quench your thirst while enjoying the tennis or the cricket.

The Phoenix Bar, Ally Pally



The Maynard Arms, Crouch End

Despite its elevated position, Muswell Hill's drinking dens don't offer many opportunities to survey the city. However, during the summer the view from **The Phoenix Bar** terrace is unbeatable (Alexandra Palace

Highgate likes to think of itself as a rural hamlet and sure enough, there are a few taverns that wouldn't be out of place in deepest Sussex. **The Woodman** (414 Archway Rd, N6 5UA), **The Flask** on South Grove (77 Highgate W Hill, N6 6BU) and **The Red Lion and Sun** (25 North Rd, N6 4BE) all have extensive outdoor spaces. I find the structures detract from the traditional ambience and bring to mind furtive teenage drinking in a bus shelter! With more terraces than gardens, you can sit outside **The Bull** (13 North Hill, N6 4AB) and **The Wrestlers** (98 North Rd, N6 4AA).

For true enchantment, **The Faltering Fullback** (19 Perth Rd, Finsbury Park, N4 3HB) has converted its backyard into the nearest thing



The Faltering Fullback, Finsbury Park

the area has to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. It's a verdant maze of snug drinking dens accesse by multiple levels of ivy-covered decking, and if you can get in (it's oftenpacked) you risk getting lost forever among the all-encompassing greenery.

We meet: In the evenings, from 7 pm first Wednesday of the month at various venues. Accessibility varies with location.

Open to new members.

<https://cedu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/beer-appreciation/>



Portuguese Conversation



Farid Aitsiselmi, Convener of the Portuguese Conversation group, offers relaxed learning

Portuguese is the fastest-growing European language after English. What do members speak?

English, French, Spanish, German, Italian and Arabic.

Differences between Brazilian and European Portuguese?

They are mutually intelligible but, like British and American English, there are differences in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. One major difference is the use of second-person pronouns. In Brazil, você (you) is used. In Portugal, tu is common. This affects verb conjugations. Choose the language of the country you are visiting.

Group experience?

Personal attention and practice in the relaxed atmosphere of a small group.

You discuss?

Social activities, written texts from newspapers, magazines and short stories. We're more interested in making sense of the texts and improving our grammar and vocabulary than the topics themselves.

Where are London's Portuguese-speaking communities?

Lambeth around Vauxhall and Stockwell has numerous Portuguese cafés, bars, and food shops. The Borough of Brent has a growing community mostly from Brazil.

Where can you hear Portuguese Fado?

Two Portuguese fado singers, António Zambujo and Miguel Araújo are performing at the Union Chapel, Compton Terrace N1 2UN on 16th July 2025.

Best pastel de nata?

My preference is Aldi in Archway, in the morning when they bring the pastels fresh from the oven. Delicious and only 69p.



Spanish Conversation 1



Jane Palmer, Convener of the Spanish Conversation 1, and her members concentrate hard

¿Cómo estás? (How are you?) Jane. How long have you been Group Convener?

Me va bien, gracias. Since January 2018.

There are over 600 million Spanish speakers worldwide. We have one fluent speaker in our group of 10.

What fired your interest in Spanish?

I visit Spain regularly as my daughter lives in Madrid and my grandson is Spanish.

What level are members?

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has six levels, from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient). Many of us get stuck at B1 (intermediate) and B2 (upper-intermediate), wrestling with multiple uses of the subjunctive.

To a non-linguist, Spanish sounds rapid and dramatic.

We concentrate hard. Latin American and South American native speakers talk more slowly.

Are there online sites for pronunciation?

Duolingo <https://www.duolingo.com/>

What aspects of language do you cover?

Mostly Castilian Spanish although Latin American variations are equally valid. Catalan is a separate language, as is Galician and Basque. Folk from Valencia would claim Valencian is a separate language but let's not go there.

You avoid?

Politics.

Popular subjects? Cinema, books, food, music and exhibitions.

Football?

Football? ¿Qué? We have an excellent hockey player in the group.



The ukelele group headlines at Alexandra Palace's Café Palais.

Roving Reporter Stephen Lustig attends their gig



Never played a musical instrument? That didn't deter ten CEDu3a members from joining the ukelele group back in 2017. There are now two CEDu3a ukelele groups, both led by Paul Soper and Roger Bohan. They comprise 40 players although they don't all attend every rehearsal and gig. Reading traditionally notated music isn't necessary as players read numbered chord patterns. The

group I calls itself The Ally Pally Ukelele Band and plays in care homes and at community events.

I recently joined an audience of people living with dementia attending a performance given by 19 excellent players in the old Transmitter Hall underneath the BBC's first studios in Alexandra Palace, renamed Café Palais for the occasion. The hall, which hosts events for people living with dementia once a month, was refurbished a few years ago by Dulux Paints, together with the Alexandra Park Palace Charitable Trust and other interior decoration companies. By applying the principles around healthcare colour scheme research, they created a calming and inspiring space for vulnerable people taking part in activities run by the Palace's Creative Learning Team.

Each week the hall is used for specialised programmes for hundreds of people, including young adults with learning difficulties; mindfulness workshops in partnership with the NHS and mental health support, and there's a wellbeing café to combat loneliness.



Can your group help? The Ally Pally organiser of these programmes would welcome other CEDu3a groups, maybe in the creative arts, contacting her at jen.blackwood@alexandrapalace.com to discuss possible creative and/or immersive learning events.

Hornsey Parochial Charities

Hornsey Parochial Charities was founded in 1620. The first recorded gift of £250, was made in William Priestley's will to provide in perpetuity funds to support eight disadvantaged men of Hornsey. Over the last 20 years, Hornsey Parochial Charities has given £1,800,000 to build the resilience of vulnerable residents, 3,300 educational, organisational and individual grants. The charity takes a long-term sustainable approach to creating opportunities for people in Hornsey and helping with everyday needs when circumstances threaten to pull individuals into hardship.

To donate to the charity or for information about grants go to <https://www.hornseycharities.org/contact-us>.

Groups update

We currently have 127 interest groups, 53 of which are open to new members, 52 have an open waiting list and 22 have a closed waiting list. Six new groups including mixed media art, 5-7 mile walks, social media, Portuguese conversation, tennis 3, and birding trails have recently started. The first meeting of the hula hooping group will be on 11th June. All these groups are open to new members. A croquet group is in development and Iyengar yoga is seeking an alternative location.



"To keep up to date we all need to understand social media."



Phillip Benns, new Trustee and convenor of the social media group



What is social media?

The dictionary definition is "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking." The main ones people are aware of are Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter) and TikTok. However there are many more, some providing alternatives to the above, and some in specialist areas. For example Bluesky is an alternative to X, Strava is a specialist site for those into participating in sports like running and cycling. We should all take care when deciding when and how to participate – this is one of the topics we discuss in the CEDu3a Social Media Group.



Aren't some of them just addictive habits and advertising platforms?

They can definitely be addictive and highly saturated by advertising. The term for this is "Enshittification". However by being consciously selective about what you look at you can avoid this. For example, by only going to and looking at the CEDu3a Facebook page you can focus only on what our members are doing.

What do you avoid?

Don't be drawn in by the Social Media feeds which are like junk food for the mind. I also don't use certain social media eg X or TikTok because they don't work for me – it's either all entertaining but timewasting junk, or too chaotic for my personal taste.

So, it's not just about having a conversation with children and grandchildren to try to sound cool?

It can have a negative perception, and there are downsides, but there are definite positives and advantages in how it works and how it can benefit us in our lives.

Why is it important for the u3a generations?

u3a principles are learning and cooperation. To keep up to date we all need to understand it.

Where is the dark web in all of this?

I am no expert, but the dark web is the part of the web that search engines like Google don't have access to and so cannot be found through an internet search. This includes legitimate private company internal 'intranet' sites used for company internal activities but can also be used for illegal activities. Mainstream social media is not on the deep or dark web. We have just published *The Crouch End and District u3a Social Media Policy* available at <https://cedu3a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/CEDu3a-Social-Media-Policy-Final-v6-3.pdf>

Best use?

Ultimately it depends on what you want. For example, some platforms host games, and if you want to be entertained and play games then you can use them. The principle I follow is to ask myself what do I want to do and how can social media help me achieve it. For example I am interested in knowing what other CEDu3a members have been doing so I look at the CEDu3a Facebook page. I am aware of the "risks" that I could get distracted by the videos of cats playing with dogs!

How long to learn?

A few hours to get the basics. It's constantly evolving so there's always more to learn.

Tech background?

I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s when personal computers first became mainstream. I was 11 years old when the ZX81 came out. So since that age I've used tech as a tool for entertainment and work. I trained as an accountant and have since worked with companies in improving their processes and use of accounting systems.

Top tip for successful learning?

Tech is built not to break. Don't be afraid to experiment. Buddy up with someone to encourage one another and learn together.

We meet: Every other Monday at 4 pm at the Maynard Arms, 70 Park Road, Crouch End, N8 8SX. The group will sometimes meet on-line, so you should be comfortable using MS Teams or Zoom.<https://cedu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/social-media/>

Découpage: C'est quoi?

Roving Reporter Stephen Lustig goes on a mission

I bravely walked up the garden path of a house in Crouch End. Channelling my inner Tom Cruise, I was hoping that discovering the secrets of découpage wasn't going to be Mission Impossible. The house started to reveal its secrets. Mosaic pieces framed the front door, and once inside I noticed that the kitchen counter was similarly beautifully decorated. And in the garden we were shown several colourful hanging flowerpots. Jacqui, the group's convener, explained that the pots' weather-proof decoration, was, in fact, découpage. It looked rather wonderful, and I didn't have to wait long to see how this decoration was created.



How did this decorative technique start? It's a long story going back to 12th century China, but today's découpage techniques developed from Far Eastern 17th century lacquer work. In Europe, prints and engravings were cut out and pasted on to objects with a smooth surface. Lacquer was then applied, thus producing furniture and objets d'art that closely resembled the work being brought by Far Eastern traders.

Back in the house, work started in an upstairs room that serves as Jacqui's workroom. Each group member chose a metal flowerpot, and then picked tissue-like, patterned pieces of paper from piles, roughly sorted according to their predominant colour. Equipped with a pot of vernis - colle (a hybrid varnish/glue substance) and a paint brush, each member set to work, gently guided and encouraged by Jacqui. The creative process was simply to tear off small pieces of paper and glue them on to the flowerpot, creating a unique abstract design. After about two hours the results were stunning, and the group's participants went home, proudly holding their beautiful flowerpots.



Welcome to Crouch End Open Space



If you haven't yet discovered the joys of Crouch End Open Space (CREOS), now is the time says Paul Secher, Secretary to the charity.

For the past 50 years, the Open Space has been managed by CREOS, a local charity whose twofold purpose is to protect and enhance the area for public recreation and to conserve the natural habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.



The Open Space is bounded by Wood Vale, Queen's Wood, Shepherds Hill and Park Road. It comprises woodland, playing fields and a peaceful, secluded meadow. There are a number of thriving tennis and cricket clubs. The area is perfectly suited to walking, jogging, bird watching and

simply enjoying the natural environment. The Meadow is a large grassy area much used for picnicking in the summer, surrounded by blackberry bushes and trees. In spring, the blackthorn trees offer a backdrop of wonderful white blossom.



Crouch End Open Space has several access points, including the Woodland Walk, which links the area to Queen's Wood. In 1984 the area was designated Metropolitan Open Land - the urban equivalent of 'Green Belt' - and CREOS has been heavily involved in contesting planning applications for unsuitable developments on the land ever since.

We publish a regular newsletter, hold occasional lectures, arrange guided nature walks and organise social events, including the annual summer picnic in the Meadow. Conservation volunteers and working parties maintain footpaths, install benches, cut back undergrowth and invasive vegetation, remove litter, arrange new planting to attract butterflies and bees and carry out surveys of flora and fauna. When better to enjoy the Open Space than in the summer? Do join us. You will be most welcome.

Find us at: www.crouchendopenspace.org or email us at info@crouchendopenspace.org

Worth a trip

Gwyn Headley goes to Hertfordshire to see a fine folly



Follies can be regarded as architectural eccentricities but are better seen as misunderstood buildings. Follies come from comfort, leisure and confidence. They appear in every country in the world, but only Britain, with its wry self-deprecation and surreal sense of humour, has the wit to describe them as follies. Cities are not conducive to folly building, and local councils abhor them, which is a fine argument for their preservation. So there aren't that many follies close to Crouch End.

However, the active church in Ayot St Lawrence in Hertfordshire (Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 9BP) is a fine example built in the Greek style by Sir Lionel Lyde. It was designed by Nicholas Revett, co-author with



John Stuart of *'The Antiquities of Athens: Measured and Delineated'* and built between 1778-79. There are colonnades running north and south from the body of the church. Each colonnade ends in a pavilion

containing a sarcophagus – Sir Lionel in one, his wife in the other. "Since the Church united us in life," rumbled Sir Lionel, "it can make amends by separating us in death."

CEDu3a member Gwyn Headley has written several books on follies including *'The English Folly'* (Liverpool University Press with Historic England, 2020) and *'Follies Grottoes & Garden Buildings'* (Aurum Press, 1999) available at Abe Books. His 40-ebook series featuring follies across England written with Wim Meulenkamp is available on Amazon. He has combined a lifetime in book publishing with writing books on architecture, follies, fonts and Mah-Jong; selling listed buildings; and founding fotoLibra, the world's first digital picture library. He reckons to have spent nine months of his life at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Gwyn is currently in the process of trying to set up a CEDu3a croquet group.

History Worldwide Group

Roving Reporter Stephen Lustig is taken back a few centuries

Does Crouch End and District need a Podestà?

Maybe disagreements about felling trees and using Finsbury Park for pop concerts could be simply settled if there was just one person making decisions? That's what went through my mind after listening to a member's presentation at a recent History Worldwide Group meeting. John told us how cities in central and northern Italy in the 12th and 13th centuries solved their disputes. Peace agreements between factions? Family rivalries? Simple – the Podestà laid down the law.



Appointed by the city's nobles and other bigwigs, Podestàs held the highest civil office in the local government. They were given a one-year contract (often renewed), with a large house and a generous salary. Importantly, they always came from another city – complete independence of any local interests or prejudices was essential.

Moving on a few years, Pam told us about the Devonshire Hunting tapestries. Commissioned by the Duke of Devonshire in the mid-15th century and



probably made in Arras in France, these four enormous tapestries were not just works of art but also served as room insulators. The women depicted in the tapestries show off their fecundity by wearing voluminous dresses, making them look pregnant even when they

weren't. Plus, the more cloth you are wearing, the wealthier you are assumed to be. Pam also showed us the famous Arnolfini double portrait by Jan van Eyck which also demonstrated this. The tapestries can be seen at the V & A Museum.

What an educational morning! Members take it in turns to research a subject and then present what they've learnt to the group. As one member told me, "I hated History at school, but now I'm learning so much!" The group is open to new members – why not join them?

We meet: Every other Wednesday 10-11.30 am. Hornsey Library, Haringey Park, N8 9
<https://cedu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/history/>

Open Mic Night

Friday 27 June 2025, 7 p.m. – 10.30 p.m. at Holy Innocents Church, 134 Tottenham Lane, N8 7EL. Tickets £5. The night will feature more than 50 performers in 12 separate acts covering classical, folk, jazz and pop pieces plus poetry and finishing with a communal singsong. CEDu3a groups Acoustic Music and Singing, Sing and Sip and Singing for Fun will perform. The church has great acoustics.

Wine recommendations

Luisa Welch enjoys chilled Italian reds



Do you want to drink summer reds the way it's done in hot countries?

If so the answer is to chill your red wine. You would not want to destroy the fine tannins and elegant notes of a Barolo, the distinctive earthy flavours of a Chianti or the full fruit concentration of an oaked-aged Rioja. However, some reds taste fabulous chilled.

My go-to wine is Bardolino, the light fruity red from Verona in the Veneto region produced around the eastern shore of Lake Garda named after the town. A blend of Corvina, Rondinella, and Molinara grapes, it is refreshing, crunchy, cherry, and raspberry-scented, and ideal served with charcuterie, antipasti, trout, salads and light meats. Waitrose stocks Recchia Bardolino 2022 at around £10 (but often on offer). The same grapes make the prized Amarone wine – at three times the price.



Another favourite is Lambrusco. Long gone are the days when it was thought of as a low-cost party wine. The Consorzio del Lambrusco association protects the historical reputation of the wine which is produced in eight DOC regions in Modena. I enjoy the sparkling red Nivola Lambrusco 2023 from Majestic at £12.50. Made by the Charmat method, it comes from the Grasparossa grape, also known as Lambrusco, Grasparossa which produces 60 varieties. Archaeological evidence indicates the Etruscans cultivated the vine, as did the Romans.



Other red wines to enjoy chilled include those made from young Pinot Noir, Gamay (which makes Beaujolais), a young Merlot and a young Grenache.

Cellar temperature is the optimum temperature at which a wine should be served – normally around 10°C. No cellar? Refrigerate your reds for 30 minutes. Keep them cool by using a wine cooler or a thermal jacket.



Theatre Group

Graham Bennett enjoys the exciting return of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the round

You may have seen productions of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before but one of the best productions I have ever seen has returned to the Bridge Theatre until August 20th <https://bridgetheatre.co.uk/performances/?event=25564>. This critically acclaimed production first ran in 2019 and is directed by Nicholas Hytner, formerly the National Theatre Director. The Bridge Theatre is in the round for this production. If you buy standing tickets (£35) you follow the action as a modern-day groundling, moving around the auditorium as the hydraulic staging rises and falls for new scenes. If you prefer to sit (most of us would!), there are good seats at £65 or £79.50 in the stalls or Gallery 1 guaranteed to provide a great view for a lot less than most West End shows. It's a riotous, exciting and vivid production. See you there!

Use the QR code to get straight to the website using your phone, tablet or other device

