



The newsletter of Crouch End and District u3a June 2023



In this issue of News@... we say 'goodbye' to three trustees, two of whom, Diana Pavey and Andrew Sich, have been in that role for a good few years, and Liz London for the past year. Tributes to them and my sincere thanks for all they've done are recorded in the minutes of the AGM. In this issue we say 'hello and welcome' to our four new trustees – Barry Morris, Kathy McHale, Paul Wedgbury and Pat Spungin. I look forward very much to working with them. Once again, a fun-packed issue – featuring news from our groups; information relating to an upcoming talk; summer reading recommendations from our book groups; a member profile; summer wine and beer suggestions; an item telling you about the important work of the new EDI team; and the first report from our roving reporter.



Happy reading everyone – and as always, a big thank you to Graham Bennett, Lindley Smith and the new editorial team members for compiling the newsletter content.

Sally Whitaker, Chair, CEDu3a

John Plews

From Windsor to Highgate – a theatrical journey

Many of you will have enjoyed plays and musicals at Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate. Our July speaker will be John Plews, who has recently stepped down after running the theatre for the past 26 years. His talk will be on Thursday July 13 at our new venue, the Moravian Church Hall on Priory Road. Talks start at 10.30 with refreshments available from 10am. Do please book online, so we know how many will be attending.

The Gatehouse itself has a fascinating history – read John Hinshelwood's article later in this newsletter.



Fun Fact

*Upstairs at the Gatehouse
Is officially London's highest theatre! –
at 446 feet above sea level.*

NEW TRUSTEE PROFILE



Kathy McHale

I have been an active member of CEDu3a since it started and was originally in a group looking at potential venues for us to use.

I have lived in the area for over fifty years and been involved in many local interest groups. My background was in

the NHS where I had a very long and rewarding career as a nurse, mostly in the community. I also trained as a bereavement councillor, working with the people of North London for twelve years, so I had to learn to be a good listener.

I belong to several CEDu3a groups, host two groups and co-convene the Wine Appreciation group. I really enjoy the monthly meetings and look forward to my time as a trustee where I hope to be a productive member and use my skills learned over the years.

Out and About in London

The splendid **National Portrait Gallery** reopens after a 3 year refit on June 22nd, and, just opened, is an excellent new **Photography Centre** at the V&A, recommended by the Photographers and Photography group. If you like musicals, then do catch the exciting new production of *Guys and Dolls* at the Bridge Theatre, much enjoyed by the West End Theatre group on a recent visit.

NEW TRUSTEE PROFILE



Barry Morris

I'm a great supporter of u3a and joined when it first started locally. When I stopped work, I gleefully thought I would have lots of spare time for joining u3a groups, possibly taking up new activities, only to find that my increasing number of grandchildren, and in the last couple of years a dog, have taken up far more time than I could have imagined! Good fun, but very time consuming. However, now I'm a member of both a table tennis and current affairs group... and now a trustee too. In my earlier (paid) life I worked mostly as a management and financial consultant. For many years I was the finance director of a graphic design company, and when the company was sold to a massive advertising agency the new owners wanted their own financial director and I moved on. I then embarked on a different career and started working for a small management consultancy specialising in investigations in the NHS, which I enjoyed for several years before eventually retiring.

Two of my four children are adopted, and I have been a trustee of three different charities all concerned in one way or another with adoption. My other great interest is watching the Arsenal – an affliction I've passed on to both my sons although I regret that my girls have, at best, a passing interest!

What is Polymer Clay?

By convener Lindley Smith

Introduction to Polymer Clay is a new group that has just completed its first course, all in the name of helping you on your true path to becoming a creative genius.

Four curious members came together, over four sessions, to get hands-on experience, explore a new skill and grow their creative confidence. They conditioned, rolled, blended, sliced, caned and baked, picking up tips, and came away with their own handmade treasures.

So why not give it a go? The sessions will teach you the basics and how to master several simple but effective techniques and give you the confidence to make your own wonderful creations. You will learn how to create unique designs in fabulous shades. No prior experience of working with polymer clay is required; just a love of colour and an interest in learning something new. You'll get lots of help and guidance

throughout the sessions and won't need to bring anything except your imagination and passion as all tools and materials are provided. There is a modest charge to cover the cost of materials. Apply on the website.



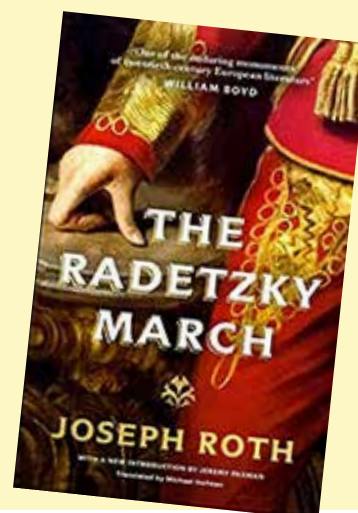
From the World Literature book group.
Convener David Hunter

The Radetzky March by Joseph Roth

Set in the last decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the book follows the rise and fall of the Trotta family over three generations. By the time the novel was published in German in 1932, the Empire had collapsed, marking Roth profoundly and leaving him feeling homeless. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Roth, now living in Berlin, fled to Paris, where he died in May 1939 aged just 44.

A member commented, "There is so much to like about the novel: the dark comedy and wry outlook on life; the vivid and sensual writing; the ambivalent attitude towards masculinity and heroism; the unsparing view

of the final days of empire and of the Emperor Franz Joseph in old age. The story is wonderfully managed and, in the Granta Books edition, benefits from a luminous and poetic translation by Michael Hofmann".



NEW TRUSTEE PROFILE

Pat Spungin



Born in a mining town in the north of England. I left home to study at the London School of Economics, the first in my family to go to university. After completing a master's degree, I became a Lecturer in Psychology at Middlesex University. I then went to live in Holland for four years where I completed my PhD at the Institute of Education.

On my return to the UK, I started working as a management trainer at one of the country's top

accountancy firms, specialising in interpersonal skills training, e.g. listening skills, feedback, team building and interviewing skills. When I moved on from that job, I realised that my psychology background with a particular interest in family psychology, and the skills I had been teaching, could be combined to help parents with issues arising when bringing up their children, so in 1998 I started a website for parents called raisingkid.co.uk. The site did well and in 2009 I sold it. Now fully retired, I am an active member of CEDu3a.

The History group steps outside

By convener David Pashley



We have trips as well as talks. Our first was to walk Roman London: fortifications, temple of Mithras, Thames wharves and the Guildhall amphitheatre. Recently, a group member (a guide at the V&A) showed us gorgeous Silk Road fabrics and a large early map on which we spent ages searching for places we knew – whilst some dressed up! Our next trip will be to Suffolk, a reconstructed Anglo-Saxon village, to see the life of farming families.

We started back in the 16th –18th centuries, exploring Ming China, Pacific-coast Canada, a pirate queen (Grace O'Malley), wars of religion and revolution, empires, fishing, witchcraft, trade, banking, Edo (old Tokyo), Macau, the South Seas Bubble, the War of Jenkins' Ear, the Haitian Revolution and the Black Jacobins. Whatever we fancied.

Last year we zoomed back to the collapse of the western Roman empire, the development of the

European polities that eventually became the modern nation states, and the survival of the eastern Roman (Byzantine) empire, which lasted until fifty years before Columbus.

We've talked about monasteries, village life, toilets, the Sogdian middlemen of the Silk Roads, Visigothic and Al-Andalus Spain, China, and Persia, and the Bayeux Tapestry. Now on to the post-1066 world!

All our own work. We knew little of this before we started. We've learned from reading, note-taking and talking. Join us on alternate Wednesday mornings at Hornsey Bowls Club next to Priory Park for talks, drinks and biscuits – and the occasional lunch. Click on cedu3a.org.uk/interest-groups/history/



Photo: Suzanne Mischyslynn

Who was Grace O'Malley, the Pirate Queen?

Grace, or rather Gráinne, lived from 1530 to c1603 and was head of the Ó'Máille clan, a seafaring people based on the west coast of Ireland. She was an intrepid mariner, pirate and shrewd political tactician. Over the course of her lifetime, marked by the Tudor reconquest of Ireland, she established herself as a powerful ruler on land and sea. Grace's pirating missions took her as far afield as Spain and the Outer Hebrides. Her powerful galleys held around 200 crew, and she introduced a new type of piracy – toll-taking at sea for safe passage!



Beer recommendation

By Seán Boyle convener of the Beer Appreciation group

The pleasure of a refreshing cool beer on a warm summer evening never palls, and golden ales are my style of choice when something more than water is desired to quench the thirst. Introduced some years ago as an alternative to gassy, mass-produced lagers, golden ales are less malty than traditional bitters, and the combination of English and American hops gives a zesty kick that reaches the parts other beers often don't. They are a perfect accompaniment to outdoor eating, so get that barbecue fired up!

Here are some of my favourites.

Crouch Vale **Brewers Gold**. From Essex brewery Crouch Vale this multi-award winning beer is light with plenty of citrusy-hoppy tang to go with the gorgeous aromas of tropical fruits.

Oakham Ales's **Citra** is a blindingly fruitful concoction. The first UK beer to use American Citra hops, it is light gold in colour, bursting with citrus and tropical flavours, and sensationally refreshing.

Also from Oakham, **Cambridgeshire Golden Ale** is exclusive to Marks & Spencer. Brewed with English Challenger hops for bitterness and American Mount Hood hops for its distinctive clean citrus aroma, it has a great initial burst of flavour on the palate followed by a lingering subtle bitterness.

Hopback's **Summer Lightning** is the original that defined the golden ale category, and it still pleases with a terrific fresh, hoppy aroma and an intense pleasant bitterness that leads to a long, dry finish.

Camden is full of interesting buildings, as Stephen Lustig, our roving reporter, found out.

Do you look at buildings as you walk around? I suspect not as much as the members of the Architecture and Built Environment group do on their periodic walks. I joined them recently in Camden in my role as the CEDu3a Newsletter's new Roving Reporter, and what an interesting couple of hours it was! Co-convenor Anthony White led us past buildings old and new, large and small, knowledgeably talking about their various architects, their influences, and how the buildings were, and are, being used. To name a few: James Stirling and Erno Goldfinger (1950/60s "brutalism" style), Serge Chermayeff (Academic House, formerly Gilbey's House, built for Gilbey's Distillery in 1937), and Grimshaw & Partners (Sainsbury's in 1988).



Camden used to have factories of all kinds because of its proximity to the Regent's Canal and main line stations. Many of those buildings still survive, including

the Old Piano Factory (now offices) – an example of the three Fs of architecture: form following function. It was designed in 1851 for Collard and Collard, the largest piano manufacturer in the UK. The circular shape gave the maximum floor space and light for the minimum number of bricks, and a central lift moved pianos from floor to floor during the manufacturing process.



Among the more modern buildings we saw was the European headquarters of the media giant Viacom, designed by Jacobs Webber in 2014. Its façade has a wall of colourful fins protruding from the metal mesh facade, and a "living green wall" at one end.



If you, like me, enjoy having your eyes opened to the architectural history all around us, the waiting list to join this group is open.



From Book group 2
Convener Roz Hudson
Old Filth by Jane Gardam

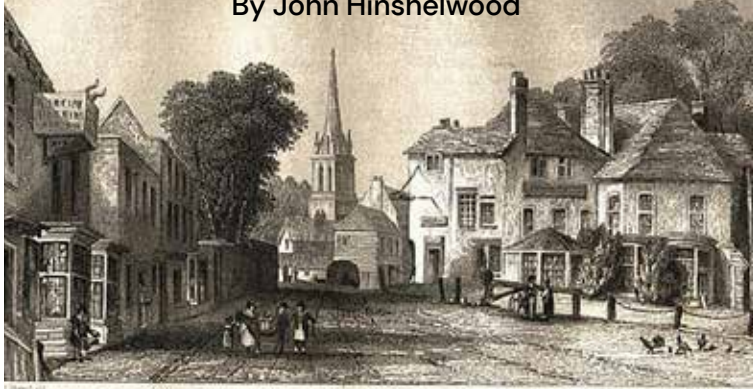
Initially we were intrigued by the title 'Failed in London Try Hong Kong' and no-one was disappointed. This is a novel which transports you from rural Dorset to Hong Kong and many places in between, which is clever, witty and poignant.

This isn't another orphan of the Raj to riches tale but much, much more.



The Gatehouse in Highgate

By John Hinshelwood



GATE HOUSE, HIGHGATE
MEDLEY

The name Highgate was first recorded in the 14th century and refers to one of the gates that provided access to the Bishop of London's Park of 'Haringeye' or Hornsey. The Gatehouse site has probably been occupied by a building as long as any in Highgate, being one of the three entrances to the park, the two other gates being at the Spaniards and at Newgate by East Finchley Railway Station. The earliest mention of The Gatehouse in the licensing records is 1670 when an Edward Culter made an application to the borough of St. Pancras

For the use of the road across their park from Highgate to Finchley, the Bishops exacted tolls at the Gatehouse. The gates were removed in 1892 with tolls having finished by 1876.

From its days next to the toll gate through to its use as a meeting house and courtroom, the Gatehouse has had a chequered history. Byron, Cruikshank and Dickens all used its services and the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution's inaugural meeting took place in the

pub on 16th January 1839. At the turn of the century The Gatehouse was famous all over London for its 'shilling ordinaries', gigantic lunches which filled many a Victorian stomach, and in 1905 the building was renovated in the mock Tudor style that remains today.

The auditorium that now houses the theatre was opened in 1895 as "a place suitable for balls, Cinderellas and Concerts" and its various uses have included a Victorian Music Hall, a cinema and a Masonic Lodge. In the sixties on one famous occasion a jazz and folk club based there featured Paul Simon (of Simon and Garfunkel fame). The production company Ovation acquired the lease on the first floor in 1997 and established 'Upstairs' as one of the leading fringe theatres in London.



WINE RECOMMENDATION

From Luisa Welch

GREECE IS THE WORD

This summer a white wine will dominate the supermarket isles: Assyrtikó . If it sounds Greek to you, it's because it is. Greece has been producing wine for longer than any other European country, yet, unlike Italy or France, its wines have not encountered the same success in the UK. But all this is about to change with the introduction of Assyrtikó , one of the world's oldest grape varieties, which originates from Santorini. This windy, volcanic island produces an exquisitely dry, savoury wine, with notes of lemon, lime, honeysuckle and yes – oyster shell – all wrapped in the salinity typically associated with the proximity of the vineyards to the sea, sand and salt air. True Assyrtikó from Santorini is not cheap, but it's worth it – try Artemis Karamolegos from Amathus in Muswell Hill at £25.99 per bottle. One sip and you will be hooked. Fortunately, the grape travels well within Greece so you will find decent Assyrtikó from Crete and more recently from Macedonia in Northern Greece at almost everyday prices. Here, the wine is altogether gentler but still very appealing. Aldi have Macedonian Athlon Assyrtikó at £6.99; fresh, lemony and zesty, a good first-timer Assyrtikó.

If you have not tried it before, this is a good place to start. Then trade up to Waitrose's Atma Assyrtikó at £11.99, made by the legendary winemaker Apostolos Thymiopoulos. It has aromas of fresh citrus and stone fruit, an elegant touch of floral notes, crisp acidity, and a long finish. Delicious.

Time to soak up the Greek sun in a glass!



Highgate Gatehouse Fun Fact

Curiously, the borough boundary between St Pancras and Hornsey once ran through the Gatehouse building. When the hall was used as a courtroom, a rope divided the sessions to make sure prisoners didn't escape to another authority's area!

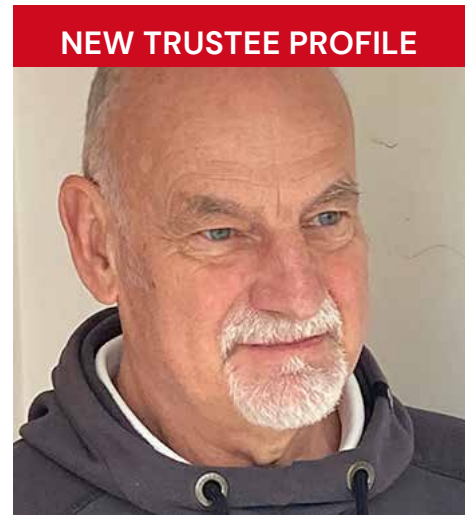
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Paul Wedgbury, EDI team member

Those who attended the AGM will be aware that questions asked indicated an interest in what the newly formed EDI team is exploring. The overall aim of the team is to identify issues around EDI in CEDu3a and how best to address the challenges they present. The team has begun by looking at what we know about Crouch End, Muswell Hill and surrounding areas – both the wards themselves, and the wider Haringey area that we are also open to and draw our members from. This will help us to become more inclusive by targeting under-represented groups. The team is using census and other data, combined with the knowledge that is being gathered about community, faith, racial, ethnic and other groups. An important link is with Haringey's Connected Communities programme, designed to improve access to council and voluntary support in Haringey.

The team is also looking at how best we can support our members and ensure that no-one feels left out, either when joining a new group, or attending an event. To this end the team is helping in the development of a buddying scheme which was due to be launched before the pandemic but had to be put on hold. It will be launched soon, together with a set of Event Planning Guidelines. Other projects in the pipeline include a review of all CEDu3a communications, to ensure they are accurate and appropriate, and a members survey to find out more about our membership – where they live, their age, gender, interests, needs and hopes.

If you're interested in joining the team, or contributing to any of these areas of our work, please get in touch via chair@cedu3a.org.uk.



Paul Wedgbury

I have lived in Crouch End for 34 years. I have observed, with interest, the many changes that have taken place in terms of demography, housing stock and the never-ending churn of cafes and coffee shops. I retired fully from a career in Children's Services – social work, youth work, education, management and consultancy – in 2016. I was Chair of Trustees for Fleet Counselling 2012 – 2015 and have been a CEDu3a member since its formation.

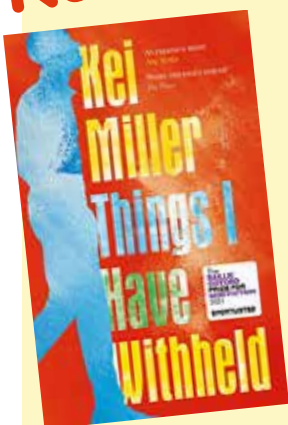
I have convened the Current Affairs in Depth group since 2019, during which we have covered many topics including: Climate Change, the US Elections, the Threats to Liberal Democracy, the Culture Wars, China, Iran and Afghanistan. I am also an enthusiastic member of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team that strives to apply the principles it enshrines across the range of CEDu3a's activities.

My interests include literature, tennis, theatre and travel. As a trustee I hope to contribute to the greater good of an organisation that has provided me with many opportunities for fulfilment, friendship and felicity.



From the Reading Race group.
Convener Rebecca Harrington

Things I have withheld by Kei Miller



Beautifully written, Kei Miller has titled his essays well, examining events which go unspoken, are withheld, because of the pain from racism, sexism and homophobia, but also the potential, often difficult, of discovering mutual understanding, connection and learning.

He is a poet, but in this book uses prose to bring us into his life, the effect of his physical presence as a tall, black, gay man. 'Haunted by history', he cannot avoid the assumptions and stereotypes of others.

With acute observation and nuanced description, he reflects on the experience of those others: 'Mr Brown' – *"unlearn the kind of privilege that is given to you daily and without question, so it does not seem like privilege at all but simply the every-dayness of life."* This is one to read and re-read. Deceptively simple, deep, important, moving.

Highgate Gatehouse Fun Fact

The problem of the borough boundary that strangely ran through the centre of the building continued as the names changed, most recently with Camden and Haringey sharing the building. In 1993 the border was moved a few feet to allow one licensing authority overall control and The Gatehouse is now the last pub (going North) in Camden!



Gardens and Gardening group

By Rebecca Harrington, co-convenor

Gardens and Gardening was one of CEDu3a's first groups and now has 80+ members. We arrange a garden visit or event on the third Tuesday morning of each month. In the growing season 15-30 members usually visit a North London garden open to the public under the National Garden Scheme, giving us a great opportunity to talk in more detail to the gardener.

Visits further afield have been arranged and over the winter we've had talks at local garden centres or in our homes, and occasionally walked in public gardens or woods, identifying (wet) trees!

Our WhatsApp group has 60 members, with a mix of Gardeners' Question Time problems, Chelsea flower show successes, and plant swaps.

A recent visit to Wood Green was to a cottage built for railway workers in the 19th century, which Jane has gardened for 40+ years. She has wonderful mature shrubs, roses and fruit trees, including an aged mulberry tree, pruned hard but now

sprouting strongly again and giving hope for future fruit. There were many unusual varieties which kept our members guessing; even the plant-spotting App was baffled at times.

Her front garden was once hard-standing for a car, but with a cluster of pots, gravel and a liberal approach to self-seeding, Jane has carried out an effective example of urban re-wilding - so beneficial to rainwater management and encouraging pollinators. The bees were loving it! This garden, and neighbours', will open for the National Garden Scheme charities on Sunday afternoon on 2nd July - well worth a visit!



From the Crime Fiction group.

Convenor Pauline Hudson

The Chalk Circle Man

by Fred Vargas

Group feedback ranged from "loved it" to "couldn't stand it" with variations in between. We invite you to decide.

The Parisian police team headed by Jean Baptiste Adamsberg, transferred from the provinces on account of his exceptional sleuthing skills, is mystified by the emergence on pavements of random objects encircled in chalk, culminating in the corpse of a murdered woman. Vargas creates tension as we move to the resolution and the motive is revealed. None of us had guessed it! We enjoyed the depiction of some very quirky characters and the darker side of Parisian life.



MEMBER PROFILE



Sheelah Sloane

I have worked in the performing arts all my life. I started by travelling around the UK and Europe as a Tour Manager and Lighting Designer for fringe theatre companies, ending up in Scotland, where I met my husband. Two children put an end to all the touring work. With an Arts Management Diploma, I then worked as General Manager with several theatre and music companies. Two highlights were producing a major piece at Sadler's Wells for the Islington mental health community and a musical about diseases with the Grand Union jazz orchestra at Wilton's Music Hall.

Since retiring, I have kept up my two main leisure pursuits - cycling and playing the flute in two orchestras. Cycling trips have included Vietnam, Cambodia, Peru (where I worked in a prison high in the Andes for three months) and a madcap cycle ride around the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro, ending up in the Ngorongoro Crater. Nowadays my cycle rides tend to be more sedate - around Hertfordshire at the weekends!

My volunteer work has included being an Independent Monitor for ISIS (the Youth Offending Institute attached to Belmarsh Prison), a trustee with two theatre companies and mentoring for a charity working with refugees.

Since joining CEDu3a over three years ago I have enjoyed meeting many new and interesting people. I take part in table tennis as one of the convenors, long walks, French conversation and fringe theatre. Life is busier than ever!

From Book group 1 Convener Andrew Sich
Swimming Home by Deborah Levy

This dark, complex and highly recommended novel set in Provence describes the sudden intrusion of a young, disturbed woman, Kitty, into a holiday being taken by a group of friends. Joe is a renowned poet and a none too obvious depressive. His wife, Isabel, is a driven foreign correspondent, well aware that her husband is a serial philanderer. Nevertheless she invites the homeless Kitty to stay in their villa, certainly knowing what will ensue. This is much more than a tale of infidelity, with a fascinating psychological slant, allusions and themes rippling backwards and forwards through the novel, and a final surprising twist.



**Take a digital walk in the woods:
 can you hear the birds singing?**

Stephen Lustig uses a new hearing test app

I recently responded to an invitation in the National u3a Newsletter to go to the Royal College of Art to test a prototype phone app which assesses one's hearing. The app, designed by Tom Woods with the support of the Design Age Institute at the RCA, took me for a digital woodland walk, with wind rustling in the trees, a babbling brook, and birdsong. I clicked an icon when I heard different birds' songs, all at different frequencies (itches) and volumes, come and go. The app then assessed my hearing as "moderately poor", and I was encouraged to have a professional hearing test.

Partial hearing loss affects about a third of people aged over 65, but many people are in denial. Some in our testing group said, "I'm a bit hard of hearing, but it doesn't affect my life", but then later said, "People on the radio and TV mumble these days don't they?" We speculated that resistance to

wearing hearing aids sometimes stems from people assuming that the hearing aid wearer hears badly, whereas they don't assume that people wearing glasses see badly. Illogical? Yes, we thought so.

I have been wearing hearing aids for the last few years because of partial hearing loss. Like most people in their late sixties, I was finding it increasingly difficult to understand people, particularly soft-spoken women (yes, those higher frequencies disappear first!) in crowded environments.

Maybe you need them too?

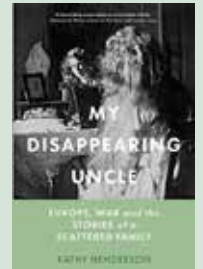
And, finally, it's worth pointing out that a simple referral from your doctor to an NHS audiologist will give you excellent hearing aids: free!



My Disappearing Uncle

Europe, War and the Stories of a Scattered Family.

By Kathy Henderson



Kathy is a CEDu3a member, and we are always delighted to introduce books written by our members. My Disappearing Uncle is about one scattered family and two hundred years of European turmoil told through the tales passed down by its undaunted women. A blend of memoir and detective work, it brings together oral narrative and political history in a family biography – our story, their stories and history.

Told on a toboggan in the Austrian mountains, in the back seat of an overloaded mini toiling through Europe, on a coal barge in Paris, folding linen in London . . . here are tales that range from Hungary to Austria, Italy, France and England, which offer a glimpse of the history of Europe from the 18th to the 21st century.

From the Historical Fiction Book group Co-convener Scott James
The Sealwoman's Gift by Sally Magnusson

An intriguing story from the sketchy record kept by one of about 400 people kidnapped from Iceland by Barbary pirates in 1627 and sold into slavery in Algiers. The main characters are Asta (an Icelandic storyteller), her husband, their three children and the merchant who purchased them from the pirates. Each has separate and very different lives in captivity.

Our group enjoyed this book as it encapsulates the goals of our monthly choices: learning about different cultures and experiences in an historic setting, all wrapped up in an interesting and enlightening story.

