

Dear Members,

Disappointingly no-one has volunteered to take on the role of Vice Chair. I find it hard to believe that there is not one of our current 1,196 members who is able to take on this role. Can I remind you that on joining Ware u3a, you agree to take on the Guiding Principles of the u3a, which includes the Mutual Aid Principle, which is all about the u3a being run by its members for its members. If you would like to volunteer to take on this role, please send an e-mail to chair@wareu3a.co.uk.

As a registered charity, we have to have certain policies in place. Our Safeguarding Policy has recently been updated and is available on our website under 'Policies and Documents'.

Our next monthly meeting begins with our AGM. Please note the earlier start time of 1.30pm, so that we finish at the normal time. We need 120 members in attendance for it to go ahead; it is normally very brief, but is a legal requirement. Please bring along your AGM programme if attending.

At the end of March, all those members who have not renewed will be removed from the current membership list. If you have not renewed, you will no longer be eligible to attend any groups or monthly meetings after March.

This is my last newsletter. I would like to thank you for your kind words and support over the years and wish you the very best for your future. Never forget, it is a privilege to grow old.

All the best,

Pauline

Concert

The next Concert is on Wednesday 25th June 7.30pm at the Royal Festival Hall

by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

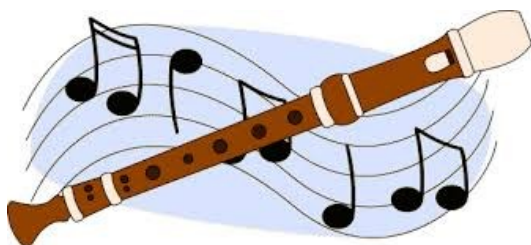
Programme: Dorothy Howell Lamia
Florence Price Piano concerto in One Movement
Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4

Cost : £40 inclusive

Last date to book tickets, if available, is 23rd May

Please contact Jeff Bergman via Debbie on groups@wareu3a.co.uk

Please note that seats can only be confirmed on receipt of payment.



Recorder Group

There is a free Recorder Concert at All Saints Church, Hertford on Wednesday 28th May from 1.00-1.45pm. This is a Sound Bites Concert. All are welcome.

Exploring London 6

The 7 Deadly Sins by Richard, Sue and Judi

Exploring London 6 walking group embarked on a fascinating historical walk to Covent Garden. The journey began with a reflection on the *Seven Deadly Sins*, an interesting theme running through the architectural details of the area. As the group wandered through the streets, they stopped to discuss the fate of King Charles I, whose execution in 1649 marked a dramatic moment in British history, changing the monarchy forever.

Next, they arrived at the iconic Theatre Royal Drury Lane, one of London's oldest and most famous theatres. It has hosted countless performances since its founding in the 17th century, earning a reputation as a hub for the performing arts. Continuing along, the group made a quick detour to *Rules*, London's oldest restaurant, which has been serving traditional British fare since 1798.

Nearby was the historic Beefsteak Club, where 18th-century gentlemen gathered to enjoy good food and conversation, an exclusive club known for its unique dining experiences.

The walk concluded at Waterloo Place, a significant historical location. The group reflected on the rich tapestry of stories embedded in Covent Garden's history, feeling enriched by the blend of cultural, political, and social histories that were explored during the tour.



Opera Appreciation

On 15th March, our Group met to see Beethoven's Fidelio streamed from the Met New York.

It starred Soprano Lise Davidsen as Leonore. After giving this, her final performance, as the wife who disguises herself as a man to save her husband, she will head home to Norway to prepare for a new role – as the mother of twins due in June.

The remaining cast included Bass Rene Pape as Rocco, Tenor David Butt Philip as Florestan, Bass-Baritone Tomasz Konieczny as Don Pizarro, Soprano Ying Fang as Marzelline and Tenor Magnus Dietrich as Jaquino. Susanna Malkki conducted .

The opera has been called a hymn to freedom and human dignity.

The Group's next meeting is on 10th April at 11.00am at the Waterside Inn

Making A Green Impact Group (MAGI) on 21st February

Houses for the Future

The government plans to build 300,000 new houses a year but actually the government doesn't build houses; developers do. Developers call the shots on housing and the planning system proposes sites via the Local Plan. This does not promote proper town planning. It is noted that the Government is now considering 100 new towns which may rectify this. Developers have no interest in reducing house prices and thus their profits. Given that for most of us, our house is our major asset, homeowners do not wish to see their asset value reduced.

The government target of 300,000 homes per annum was questioned. The need is probably nearer 450,000 but the rate of build has traditionally been around 240,000. The availability of labour and materials is problematic, especially post Brexit. The Hertfordshire annual target is 10,000 dwellings. Last year they built 5387. The planning system effectively promotes fringe of town, suburban development via a series of housing estates with little master planning or proper town planning. What is needed are well planned sustainable new towns or '15-minute cities' where residents can access facilities to meet their daily needs – shops, schools, cafes, doctors, post office, sports, social etc – and to be able to do this without using the car but by walking, cycling or public transport. The success of many new towns or garden cities built, in some cases, 100 years ago, was noted.

We explored the 'planning ladder' with the central government National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) setting broad brush policies and targets which local authorities meet the government requirement of a 5- year housing land supply. Furthermore, 1.1million homes have planning consent now where building could start tomorrow so if no new planning consents were granted for 4 years, developers could meet government targets. We need better designed environmentally sustainable housing with heat pumps, triple glazing, greywater recycling, rain water storage, solar panels etc but local authorities cannot insist on this without central government enabling legislation. System-built, factory produced dwellings which can be erected in days as is achieved in Northern Europe.

Sadly, houses are being built today with gas boilers and heating systems which will have to be ripped out in 10 years and replaced with heat pumps. We considered so called 'affordable' housing which is not affordable and the desperate need for social housing of which around 1.3 million are required to meet need. Few social or council houses have been built to replace those sold off under Margaret Thatcher's policy to sell council houses. Developers have no incentive to build social housing and local authorities have no money, nor architects and building departments to facilitate it.





In conclusion the need to build communities not faceless housing estates was stressed. The need for high environmental housing standards, underwritten by government legislation is vital, as is good planning and high-quality design. As a coda we looked at the place of the motor car and the frequent failure to address parking issues.

Nick Eden Green

The **MAGI** April event will be on Friday 11th at 2pm at Allenburys Sports & Social Club, Harris Lane, SG12 0DJ.

John Cherry from Weston Park Farms will talk about "Regenerative Farming". The methods they use to achieve this include: No-tillage, Herbal Leys, Cover Crops, No insecticides. These are practical solutions to producing nutritious food whilst increasing soil organic matter and biodiversity. Attendance fee £3

Ballroom Dancing This new group is starting on Thursday 3rd April at Wodson Park, 10am to 12 with instructors Harley and Thomas. The charge for this taster week is just £2 per hour to cover the venue hire, the instructors are not charging for this initial week. After that, it will be £14 for both Ballroom and Latin or £7 for just one hour class, either Ballroom or Latin. If you are interested in attending, please contact Debbie on groups@wareu3a.co.uk



Upcoming Monthly Meetings

9h April at **1.30pm** AGM followed by 'A Beginning, a Muddle and an End—Where do novelists get their ideas?' by Bobby Darbyshire

14th May at 1.45pm 'The History of Spoken English' by Charlie Haylock

11th June at 1.45pm 'Sheep across London Bridge' by Murray Craig

