

# the northern line

the magazine of north london U3A

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- Please send contributions for the next issue to [editor@nlu3a.org.uk](mailto:editor@nlu3a.org.uk) by 22 July.
- The editors may shorten or otherwise amend articles to fit spacing and style requirements.

# Editorial

Once upon a time NLU3A had away days, faraway days\*, summer and winter programmes, even five-day spring trips. Where are they now? Of course Covid has had a role in the disappearance of some, but for others it's simply a case of the long-time organiser having had enough and nobody stepping forward to take their place.

People have many reasons for giving up jobs, one being that they feel that they have done them for long enough and it's time for someone else to take the reins. That's how U3As work: remember, there are no leaders or bosses. Just volunteers. So if a group loses its coordinator and nobody takes over, it's likely to fold. This is even more true for activities such as those above.

**\*Stop press: Faraway days return in April, led by Melvyn Rees and away days, led by Frank Kelsall and Pam Lewis, later on.**

Someone has given their all pulling them together, making them enjoyable and educational for several years, and now it's someone else's turn.

This happened with Singing for Pleasure. The two long-serving organisers felt it was time to go, and the group would have folded if six of us (yes, six!) hadn't felt that it was essential, so we got together and divided up the tasks.

As I write, the job of monthly meetings organiser is up for grabs. Do you want these to continue? Then why not consider volunteering? And while we're on the subject, how about putting a summer programme together or organising some away days? Previous coordinators will help and advise, I'm sure. And you might even make new friends



and find it fun.

In this issue we look at a subject pertinent to many of us – downsizing. We discover what a king was doing in Finchley, and we learn about a brave NLU3A member's campaign to get everyone on public transport to wear masks.

Happy reading!

LENI GREEN  
EDITOR

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The cover picture of the Thames near the London City Hall building was taken by Barry Davies on a spring day. For a description of the activities of the Exploring the Thames group, read Judy Griggs's article on page 6, where she leads us on a sample tour of the lower part of the river.

# As I see it

How has the adjustment to pre-pandemic conditions been for you? asks  
**Patricia Isaacs**

Where are we now? After two years of confusion and uncertainty, and a complete turn-around of what each of us considered to be our 'normal life' we are no longer living under pandemic rules. So what next for the members of North London U3A? How have your groups got through those strange times?

Some groups have, sadly, folded; more have remained loosely together using emails and Zoom; and many have continued to meet via a WhatsApp friendship group, or with regular Zoom meetings, appreciating the ability to stay in touch despite technical difficulties and distorted voices. Groups can and do now

*Groups can and do now meet face-to-face in our homes or rented venues, and the pleasure of being together is immense.*

meet face to face in our homes or rented venues, and the pleasure of being together is immense. At first it was uncomfortable to adjust to mixing with a number of people, difficult to maintain

a conversation when we had become so unaccustomed to social contact, but with true U3A spirit we quickly returned to more normal behaviour – including the smiles I missed so much!

So is it really over? We can't know that, but springtime is here and we can delight in long, light days; we can find joy in new flowerings, blossom, buds on trees, birdsong, ducklings in ponds, and in the fresh greenness



of our many beautiful parks and heaths. And we can revel in one another, remembering how important our friends are. We lost so much; now that we have some of it back, we must treasure every moment. ☺

PATRICIA ISAACS IS A PAST CHAIR  
OF NLU3A.

## King visits Finchley

Why did the King of Prussia grace Finchley with his presence? Jo Velleman lets us in on the secret

In his article 'Fascinating Finchley' in the January edition of The Northern Line, John Dugdale mentioned the office block Winston House and the pub below it, the King of Prussia.

It reminded me of the time when I worked for solicitors in Winston House in the mid 1970s. There was a private underground car park to be used by only a

chosen few. This included two spaces with notices above them, both labelled 'Reserved for the King of Prussia', which always amused me.

What was the King of Prussia doing in Finchley?

Well, the painting overleaf by Hogarth, *The March of the Guards to Finchley*, now housed at the Foundling Museum in Bloomsbury, depicts a

fictional mustering of troops on Tottenham Court Road marching to Finchley to defend the capital from the second Jacobite rebellion of 1745. This was part of a series of uprisings that had been occurring since the late 17th century, aimed at returning the Stuart dynasty to the throne after the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

The painting portrays the

*Continued on page 4*



soldiers in a humorous light, placing exaggerated emphasis on their lack of training and respect for discipline.

It was originally intended to be a gift to the incumbent King of England, George II. However, George was insulted by the apparent jibe at his best troops and rejected it when it was offered to him.

Upset at the King's spurning of his work, Hogarth changed the name from *The King of England* to *The King of Prussia* and presented the painting to the King of Prussia, Frederick II, who was reportedly much more satisfied with the gift.



Source: The Foundling Hospital, London/Wikimedia Commons

And he is now commemorated with a pub and two parking spaces

in Finchley Central!

You can read more about it at [wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_March\\_of\\_the\\_Guards\\_to\\_Finchley](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/The_March_of_the_Guards_to_Finchley)

As an aside, the office block above the pub, called Winston House, is now backed onto by a new block of flats named Clementine Court. I will leave you to work out why ... but it is nothing to do with oranges! ☺



Source: The King of Prussia

## Keeping in 'Shape' during the pandemic

The pandemic did not deter the Shape of London group: it changed its shape but not its spirit, says **Michael Lewin**

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Shape of London group met every Tuesday at Lauderdale House, Highgate, during the autumn and spring terms, moving to a programme of walks or visits throughout the summer term.

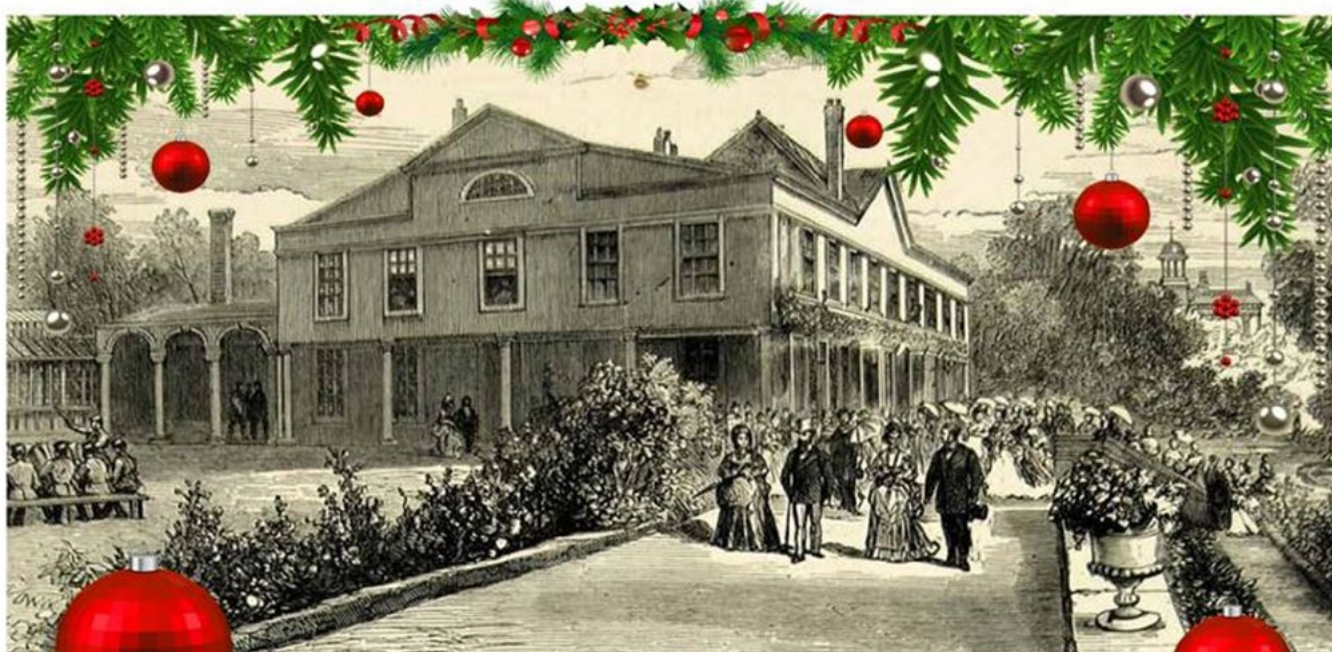
When the pandemic arrived at the beginning of 2020, the idea of meeting up physically was obviously put on hold.

Zoom was fast becoming the medium for preserving contact with family, colleagues and friends, and the organisers

agreed to use this communication tool to provide fortnightly presentations online for those members who could navigate the technical issues. With the frequency of the talks being extended, and to maintain a







## BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A MORE NORMAL NEW YEAR

### Next Zoom Meeting – Christmas Get-together

The next Zoom meeting will be on **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> December** when there will be a **Christmas Get-together** with the answer to the newsletter quiz being revealed together with addition quizzes and festive activities. Members will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting in advance and the meeting will begin at 10.30.

regular contact with members at a time when they were largely confined to their homes, it was also decided to supplement the talks with a new newsletter that would alternate with the Zoom meetings.

The first Shape of London newsletter was issued on 28 April 2020, with an indication of how the organisers proposed to continue running the group during the very difficult times.

The newsletter, which was restricted to two A4 sides so that it could be printed for those not on the internet, included items

such as 'Building of the week' and 'Meet the member'.

An initial exploratory Zoom meeting, held on 5 May, was followed by the first actual Zoom presentation on the Crossness Engines, given by Steven Marston on 16 May.

With most members still confined to their homes, we decided to take the unprecedented step of continuing this alternating programme throughout the summer and for the rest of the year, including a special Christmas newsletter (above) and a Zoom 'get-together'

with a quiz that was held on the Tuesday after Christmas.

This arrangement was extended into 2021 but with the terms and breaks observed. With the arrival of the vaccine and easing of restrictions, at the start of the autumn term we decided to relaunch the weekly programme of talks and resume meeting at Lauderdale House. As several members were still reluctant or unable to meet in person, we proposed a hybrid meeting format, with some people

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*Continued from page 5*

gathering in the venue while others joined the group online via Zoom.

After some initial problems this version of our meetings worked well, with an average of 15 people meeting at the venue and the same number joining on Zoom.

The arrival of the more virulent Omicron variant required us to revert to Zoom-only meetings at the beginning of 2022, but with the situation improving, the hybrid meeting arrangement was reinstated for the presentation on 1 February.

The Zoom experience works for this group because its activities largely involve the presentation of a talk by one person to the remainder of the group. It also



**A 'Shape of London' hybrid meeting held in Lauderdale House Conservatory on 14th December 2021. Photo by Michael Lewin**

enables those not able to attend in person to participate in a group that they would not otherwise

have been able to join. ☺

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## Exploring the Thames

The Thames, at 215 miles long, is the longest river in England. Our walking groups have been exploring its length since 1994, when NLU3A began.

**Judy Griggs** takes us on a sample tour along its lower reaches

**T**he joys of walking the London Thames, of telling its many stories, admiring its bridges and grand riverside buildings! But none of this would be very enjoyable without my good companions – the members of our Exploring the Thames group.

We start with Edwin Lutyens' graceful bridge (1933) at Hampton Court that blends so charmingly with the palace itself and we end with the mighty engineering feat of the Thames Barrier (completed 1982). Our monthly morning walks vary from



Photo by Barbel Daly

**Thames foreshore at Putney**



'A great day  
out – always look  
forward to the next  
month's walk!'  
Ruth Hakim

two to five miles at a reasonable pace, giving us time first to enjoy the sylvan Thames with its many islands, some covered in greenery and others built over like Eel Pie Island, where the Victorians came to picnic.

As we near central London, we look at the work of the Victorian engineers. Joseph Bazalgette is our great hero, because he gave us pleasant embankment gardens to walk through as well as designing sewage works beneath (from 1860 on), which turned our Thames from a stinking sewer to the attractive river we so love.

We have our heroines too. Marble Hill House (completed in 1729) was created for Henrietta Howard, and here she held court with the literati of her day – Alexander Pope, Dean Swift, John Gay, Horace Walpole. We cross the river by ferry to Ham House, a great Jacobean pile skilfully preserved by Elizabeth Murray



Photo by Barbel Da

Another aspect of the foreshore at Putney

through Cromwell's 'reign' and on to Charles II's.

Coffee and lunch HAVE to be by the river, which leads us to many a riverside eatery – The Boaters Arms, set in public gardens close to Richmond; Morpeth Arms, by Vauxhall Bridge, with a prison cell in its basement (former Millbank Penitentiary) and upstairs a view of the river; at Limehouse, The Narrow, where the river seems to wrap itself round the building.

Occasionally we venture on

'These walks  
have given  
me a great insight  
into the history,  
majesty and beauty of  
the Thames.' Anoma  
Ranmuthu

the foreshore at low tide under the guidance of archaeologist Will Wrathouse of MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) and

discover clay pipes, pottery from Tudor times, old ship's timbers and animal bones. On the Isle of Dogs we see the remnants of the huge launch site of Brunel's Great Eastern (1857), then the largest ship in the world.

Now that



Ham House. Source Wikimedia Commons



Photo by Anne Scott



look back to the late Joanne Crawford, who started the Thames walks over a quarter of a century ago for NLU3A. I often think of her legacy and the pleasure it has given our group. ☺

### Thames Barrier

we have completed our gentle odyssey along the south and north banks of the Thames from Hampton Court to the Barrier, we are moving on to the Lee Valley and looking at how a

muddy, boring area around Cheshunt has been transformed into the delightful River Lee Country Park.

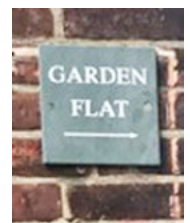
All our river walks

‘I thoroughly enjoy exploring new waterside areas with Judy – and all within the Freedom Pass zone!’ Helen Roberts



## Downsizing

Discussion about the property ladder is always about getting your foot on the bottom rung and climbing up. But some of us climb down again. In other words, we downsize, as **Judith and Malcolm Abbs** tell us



**L**ong-time NLU3A members Sue and Richard Gold moved to a flat because they were rattling around in a five-bedroom house which would soon need some serious money spent on it. And we were finding the stairs increasingly difficult in our three-storey house, so we moved to a flat to be on one level. We had been in our houses for more than 30 years.

People may downsize for the

location: to be nearer to family, within easy walking distance of shops and public transport, enjoy retirement by the sea or in a rural

*For years, moving home has been high on the list of life's most stressful experiences.*

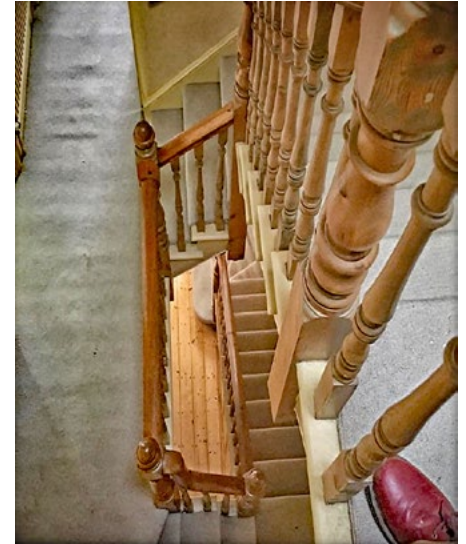
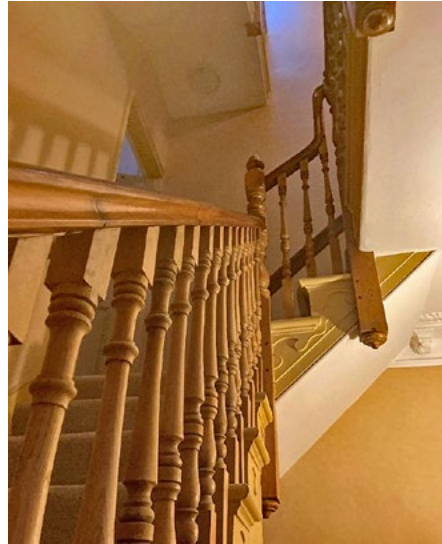
setting. It could be about money: to realise some equity or reduce running costs.

For years, moving home has been high on the list of life's most stressful experiences. Sue Gold's late father, who was a GP, used to say that he

had more people in his surgery for Valium because of the stress of moving than for any other reason!

You have to deal with the sale of your home as well as buying somewhere smaller. It involves a great deal of admin: informing the council, energy companies, banks, credit cards and insurance, friends and relations, memberships and mailing lists ... The best advice is to downsize while you are still fit enough to cope with the move. Don't leave it until becomes necessary, by





**Stairs present an increasing threat. Photos by Judith Abbs**

which time you might not be strong enough – physically and emotionally – to deal with it all.

Of course, downsizing means less living space but – critically – it also means less storage and display space. The main task will be decluttering. This doesn't only mean stuff that has accumulated over the years but is no longer needed; you may have to make difficult choices about things that have a personal history. It's not just how much stuff you bring with you – it is also the size of furniture that is being moved into a smaller space.

There is plenty of advice about decluttering on the internet. This is what Sue Gold says:

'Start as soon as you can. It can never be too soon. Be

ruthless. But no matter how ruthless you are, there will still be too much "stuff" in your new home.

'A tape measure is the most important accessory. Measure your spaces religiously. Check and double check, triple check ... don't just estimate. You don't want to arrive to find that the bed doesn't fit!'

Full boxes can be a nightmare in your new home while you find a place for everything. Before moving day, identify somewhere to store them until you have finished unpacking and sorting.

A final tip from Sue:

'If you can, book yourself a hotel (Travelodge, etc)

or Airbnb for two or three nights so that you can just shut the door after a long and exhausting day and get some rest. By day three, the smaller property should be in much better shape!'

It takes time to get used to finding anything and everything and learning how to use new appliances. We have been in our flat for three months and our autopilot has not switched on yet for the cupboard where the refuse bins are stored. How do we turn on the washing machine? Which drawer is the tin opener in?

After all that talk of stress, we felt comfortable in our smaller homes right away and definitely made the right decision when we downsized. 🌸

## **We remember the following members, whom we lost in the early months of 2022**

Eve Brenner  
Lionel Halpern  
Audrey Jancovich

Margaret Kennedy  
Eva Rockwell  
Janet Thompson



# The house on the hill

On her travels through north London, **Christine Stammers** came across a forgotten treasure. Photos by **David Ramsey**



in another grand house, Wanganui. Huntingdon House was sold by Mr Francis in 1904 and was demolished to make way for a new building, which still stands.

The building in the garden of Huntingdon House is the associated coach house, with the entrance on Sunnyside



It has unsightly roll-up modern doors, and a small, modern inappropriate extension on the side facing the big house. It is totally overwhelmed by a 12-storey block of flats on the left side, a car wash and a garage and other odd buildings and a huge, damaged back extension.

It is a listed building, and there has been a proposal to develop the site by removing the infrastructure, restoring the coach house and building another block of flats on the right hand side to

Struggling up the very steep hill that is Sunnyside Road, Hornsey, in the spring of last year, I noticed a charming little building surrounded by a car wash and garage and hiding behind a lurid hoarding.

I decided to do a little investigation, and from the archives held by Haringey and Islington, I discovered it is a Victorian coach house, belonging to a grand Victorian house on Hornsey Lane. This was Huntingdon House, which was built on land owned by William Thomas Sargent and was at one time the home of Mr W S Francis, whose daughter Fanny married a neighbour, Walter Graves, an architect who lived

Road.

It is a charming two-storey building with stunning, decorative brickwork on the side facing the big house. There are curved arches over the windows with a double row of specially shaped bricks, carved decorations on the keystones, brick pilasters decorated with carved stone acanthus leaves at the tops, two plaques with the initials WTS (the landowner mentioned above) and a stone pick and a lantern with a weather vane with the letters L, O, V and E instead of N, S, E and W.

However, the building is semi-derelict, with a damaged roof from a falling tree, and is plastered with signs and adverts.







pay for it. Several objections have been raised and the issue went to Islington planning inspectorate, but the inquiry was adjourned and there is still no decision.

I met a gentleman in the garage who said he lived in the coach house for 16 years with his family. He loved the building and was sorry to leave. I was also

told that Karl Marx used to give lectures there. Additionally, in Victorian times the mail for the surrounding area was delivered to the coach house, and when it arrived a bell was rung and the local population used to come in their dozens to collect their letters and parcels. ☺

## Maskerade

During the lockdown, **Myrna Lazarus** was advised to stop telling strangers to put masks on, because someone might hit her. But she didn't stop, and she didn't get hit. The Northern Line wondered why. Interview by **Francis Beckett**; photo by **Harish Patel**

**I suppose being a former family therapist, mediator and counsellor helped?**

Well, if you can deal with dysfunctional families, you probably stand a chance with anti-maskers.

**Were you ever close to getting hit?**

The worst I got was a young woman on a bus who told me: 'You can bleeding well turn round because it doesn't matter how much you bleeding stare, I ain't wearing no bleeding mask.'

**That's telling you. What did you do?**

Oh, I turned round. Nothing to be achieved there.

**Was anyone grateful?**

Oh yes. One woman said she'd forgotten, thanked me for reminding her and put her mask on.

**What did most people do?**

Ignored me. A few put on masks though.

**What did you say to people?**

My best line was: 'I'm wearing this mask to protect you. I'd be very grateful if you would give me the same courtesy.'

**And your worst line?**

I once said to a man: 'Does wearing tattoos go hand in hand with not wearing a mask?' I'm not proud of that one.

**What did he say?**

He said: 'It's not illegal.' And of course that was the trouble – there was such weak government support for wearing masks.

**You think the government should have been clearer?**

Yes. In Europe they were much stricter. People all wore masks on trains and buses. Here the government gave weak, mixed



messages.

**Is it all over now?**

No. There's long Covid, and I know people who are still having a bad time with the infection.

**So are you still going round telling people to put on their masks?**

No. The prime minister says everything's all right now, and people want to believe that, even though it's not true, so what's the point anymore?

**Francis Beckett**, an author and journalist, is the former editor of the Third Age Trust's magazine, *Third Age Matters*. His latest play is *The Man at the Gate*, part of the Player Playwrights Showcase. You can see it at [youtube.com/watch?v=YsFqinDPGCs](https://youtube.com/watch?v=YsFqinDPGCs)



# Scamwatch

**T**hink the telephone is safer than email? Don't be so sure! In 2021, Isabel Raphael, a Highgate headteacher, fell for a phone scam that nearly cost her £30,000. Here are some of her tips on how to avoid it happening to you.

- Don't trust the telephone: it can be used in unimaginable ways to entrap you
- Don't answer calls from 'private' – hidden or blocked – phone numbers
- Don't agree to 'help' with anything to do with finance
- Don't believe callers who say they're from banks; banks don't ring you on the phone
- Don't use the number or email address the caller gives you to check their identity

- Don't give any information about yourself
- Don't think it's enough to say 'no'. They're professional persuaders!
- Do hang up as soon as they mention money
- Do ignore their demand that you don't mention their call to anyone else
- Do ignore the constant calls that batter down your resistance
- Do call the police or Action Fraud
- Do listen to your bank (if you're sure it's your bank!)

Extracted from an article in *Highgate Society Buzz*, Spring 2022

## Spring term monthly meetings

**M**eetings start at 10.30am at St Paul's Church, 50 Long Lane, Finchley N3 2PU. However, the venue is subject to change in line with prevailing circumstances. Refreshments are served from 10am.

**9 May**

### Simply Gershwin



**T**his talk will cover the life stories of the American lyricist Ira Gershwin and his younger composer brother George, who between them created some of the most memorable songs of the 20th century. They will be remembered as the song-writing team whose voice was synonymous

with the sounds and style of the jazz age.

We will hear musical clips, recordings acquired from all over the world and will see original photos from their arrangements and shows, all researched by the speaker, Howard Slater, a retired lecturer and teacher.

**13 June**

### Toulouse Lautrec and the cabarets of Paris

**A**rt historian Dr Peter Webb will use original film and sound recordings to investigate the work of Toulouse Lautrec and the Paris of the 1890s. We will look at Lautrec's posters of the Moulin Rouge singers and dancers, including the can can, as well as works by his friends Manet, Degas and Van Gogh.



Dr Webb's own works include *The Erotic Arts*, *David Hockney* and *Leonor Fini*.

## Term dates

The summer term runs from 18 April to 22 July. Easter and Passover coincide this year: Easter Sunday is 17 April, and Passover starts at sunset on 15 April and finishes at sunset on 23 April. This may affect your group if you meet in a synagogue.