

AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUBS NEWS

North American Connection (NAC)

West Midlands

With the warmer spring weather, here at the North American Connection we are looking forward to some more exciting social events, some of which will be raising money for our chosen charity, MacMillan Cancer Support. We have our usual, and very popular, monthly coffee mornings planned. In April, we have the pleasure of welcoming chartered accountants, Dyke Yaxley, to give us an informal talk and advice on our US tax returns, all in good time before that mid-June deadline! In early May, for one of our evening events, we will be organising a "Cinco de Mayo" night. A quiz night kindly hosted at the home of one of our members which will include Mexican snacks and plenty of freshly made margaritas! Money raised from the quiz participation will be donated to MacMillan. The NAC organises a variety of monthly social events for its members throughout the year and this often includes educational and philanthropic activities. In addition to our popular monthly coffee mornings, we have mom and tots days, craft days, day time and evening book club gatherings. We also organise regular pub lunches, day excursions, dinner evenings and events that include spouses as well. We have a 'Third Thursday' evening event for ladies every month, which is well attended. It might be a cinema trip, a ladies meal out, or a show. For example, in June, we are very much looking forward to our theatre outing to enjoy the musical 'Oliver' in Solihull!

Most of us are women from the United States or Canada, but we welcome other expatriates with a particular connection or interest in joining. We're quite a diverse group ranging from short or long-term expats and we also have quite a few 'lifers', expats who have chosen to settle here in the UK permanently! We live in the West Midlands with members reaching

as far as an hour radius outside Birmingham, including Solihull, Leamington Spa, Lichfield, Stratford upon Avon, Worcester and Oxford. We are always happy to extend a very warm welcome to new members who wish to join our expat 'family'! We would love to meet you at one of our events! If you are interested in coming along and trying out an event or signing up as a member please visit us at www.naconnect.com

KCWC

Are you new to London or interested in attending lectures from leading experts, enjoying exclusive experiences, and meeting new friends? Then KCWC is a great starting point. As one of London's longest established and largest women's organisations, we have more than 800 British and international members from over 52 countries.

Each month KCWC holds a General Meeting with a high profile guest speaker at a prime London location. Past speakers have included HRH Princess Michael of Kent, Anthony Geffen, Zac Goldsmith, John Simpson, Earl Spencer, Anton Du Beke, and Rebecca Stephens.

The meetings are a good way to meet other members, sign up for activities, enjoy listening to a keynote speaker and join fellow members for an optional lunch at a prestigious local restaurant afterwards. The General Meetings are also a great opportunity to know more about discounts and promotions offered by our preferred partners as they display their products and offers at our showcase tables. KCWC members benefit from special discounts on these showcase tables.

In addition to the General Meetings, KCWC also offers approximately 35 activities. These are organised by members who volunteer their time and skills by running a wide variety of weekly and monthly activities. Topics include history, culture, art, design, fashion, music, theatre, local tours, UK and international travel,

special events, technology, sports, golf, tennis, languages, arts and crafts, food, dining, wine tasting, book and lecture groups, country walks, bridge, feng shui, and much more.

There are also a variety of evening and weekend activities which working women can enjoy. These include theatre, happy hour, dining out, jazz and music appreciation, evening speakers, and special events. For those interested in making a difference in the community, KCWC's Volunteers for Charity group works with several local charitable organisations. There is so much on offer at KCWC and members get to discover London while making new friends at the same time.

Recent Highlights

The festive season brought plenty of good cheer to our members and the club. At our December General Meeting, BBC Radio 3 presenter Dr. Natasha Loges introduced performers from the Royal College of Music who entertained us with a saxophone quartet, solo pianist and opera singers. Also in December, thanks to the generosity of our members' donations, we distributed holiday gift baskets to Befriending Plus, part of One Westminster.

Our guest speakers in the early months of 2017 covered a diverse array of topics. In January, author Anne Sebba spoke about her most recent book, *Les Parisiennes: How the Women of Paris Lived, Loved and Died in the 1940s*; in February, art critic Estelle Lovatt gave our members insight





will stop for lunch at the historic Mayflower pub. The London Walks and Treasures group has tours planned of Jewish Hampstead and Woodberry Down.

The Antiques and Design group will visit the collections of Clive Christian Perfume Town House Mayfair, and also tour Crosby Hall on the Embankment. The After Six in the City group has planned a dinner at the riverside Sea Containers Restaurant at the Mondrian Hotel and a series of evening lectures at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Learn More About KCWC

KCWC General Meetings are open to non-members for a guest fee of £10, redeemable if joining on the day. The meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month between September and June. Prospective members are welcome to attend a Coffee Morning or a Happy Hour where guests can come along for an informal chat over coffee or a drink and enjoy the company of other international women. There is no need to pre-register to attend a Hospitality event and the cost is your own tab. For further information please contact potential@kcwc.org.uk or visit the website: www.kcwc.org.uk. To join KCWC, please visit www.kcwc.org.uk and click on Join Us or email potential@kcwc.org.uk.

American Women's Club Of London

Gerard Manley Hopkins once said: "Nothing is so beautiful as spring." One can hardly disagree. At AWC, we are loving the sunny days, the chirping of the birds and all the fun events we planned for our members in the next few months. However, before I give them all away, let me tell you what the club has been up to in the last few months of this never ending winter.

Have you heard about Aerial Yoga? It is the kind of movement that draws from the alignment and techniques of yoga, using a low hanging, wide, Aerial Sling to aid in moving through traditional yoga postures. Sounds interesting? We thought so... And so in January we took the stress of the week away by indulging in a professionally led Aerial Yoga class. The 'weightless' aspect of the class assisted in allowing us to access a wider range of movement, moving through poses that would otherwise be restricted. It was interesting to say the least, so stay tuned for more of the similar experiences that will keep surprising you.

In February, we had a lovely 3-course lunch with 10th floor views of London at the Four Seasons Hotel with our guest speaker from the October's monthly meeting, Emma Dupont. While Emma covered everything from how to set a table correctly to making appropriate small talk at a British luncheon, we all had an opportunity to ask "that" embarrassing question about English etiquette. The event took place on a Saturday, to accommodate members who work during the week, as well as some partners who wanted to join.

into the art world; and in March, Anton Du Beke of 'Strictly Come Dancing' delighted us with tales from the ballroom.

In January, in exclusive partnership with the English National Ballet, our special events team welcomed members for a private reception before a performance of Mary Skeaping's *Giselle* at the London Coliseum.

Meanwhile, our activity groups stayed busy through the winter months with numerous diverse offerings. The Antiques and Design group added a diamond sparkle to the festive season with a visit to Chalfen of London. Both the Evening Speaker Series and Travel Groups toured the new Design Museum in Kensington.

The After Six in the City ladies hosted a Christmas party at QP LDN Restaurant and Lounge in Mayfair, and the Asian Culture group celebrated the Chinese New Year at the Phoenix Palace restaurant. The Foodies group conducted a healthy snacks demonstration workshop, a finger foods class followed by brunch, and an Italian sweets and Sicilian delicacies workshop.

The Art History group continued its successful Western Art Survey lecture series, now in its 21st year. Spanning 18 lectures and ten museum visits over a period of six months, the survey covers art from Ancient Greece and Rome to modern art movements. Art History also hosted the lecture series A History of English Portraiture, a Picasso Portraits lecture, and a day outing exploring Post Impressionism in Paris. These lectures and excursions were led by expert curators and teachers from renowned art institutes and museums.

The Classical Music and Opera group toured Leighton House, the former home and studio of leading Victorian artist Frederic Leighton, followed by a recital by the Phoenix Piano Trio,

one of today's leading chamber ensembles. KCWC's Theatre group attended performances of *Dreamgirls*, *Death Takes a Holiday*, *An American in Paris*, and *42nd Street*, to name just a few. The London Walks and Treasures group laced up their walking shoes for tours of Clerkenwell and the Jewish East End.

In the early Spring months, the Travel group headed to Portugal to tour picturesque Lisbon and Sintra, to Petworth House in the South Downs, and to BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, popularly known as the Neasden Temple.

Upcoming Events

The spring promises to be an exciting and busy time for KCWC. The club has a full programme of events and activities planned, beginning with the April General Meeting which will be held at the Royal Geographical Society on 6 April. The guest speaker will be Alexandra Shulman, editor-in-chief of British *Vogue* and author of the recent book *Inside Vogue: A Diary of My 100th Year*. Later in April, members will be treated to an exclusive evening reception at the Urban Retreat at Harrods which will feature luxury treatments and services, drinks and canapes, and special discounts.

Activity leaders have been busy planning a variety of events and excursions for the spring. The Country Walks group will hit the trails from Milford to Godalming in search of bluebells. The Tennis and Golf groups will resume regular play, and the Dog Walking group will explore London's parks with their four-legged companions.

Following their successful spring 2016 World War II lecture series, the British History group will be walking from London Bridge to Rotherhithe for a two-mile stroll through some of the city's most historic areas, after which they



For all the parents (and parents-to-be) we organised the discussion and Q&A with Veronica Morant, founder of Mavor Associates, which offers guidance to parents on educational opportunities for their children throughout their school career. Some independent nurseries and schools require registration at birth, and other schools have various other requirements. Veronica discussed the key undertakings that were helpful to do early on to give your child the best start on his or her educational path.

Are you a fan of poppies? Many of our members were curious about the popularity of the flower during the autumn months, leading up to Britain's Remembrance Sunday in November. So on Wednesday, March 8th, the Garden Group headed to Richmond upon Thames to visit The Poppy Factory for a 2 hour tour. The Poppy Factory is the country's leading employment charity for veterans with health conditions or impairments. It also employs around 30 disabled veterans to produce the poppies and wreaths for the Royal Family and The Royal British Legion's Annual Poppy Appeal – something they have been doing since being founded in 1922. We enjoyed a fascinating presentation and introductory film about the factory and its history and then visited the 'shop floor', giving us the opportunity to meet some of their colleagues and see how poppies and wreaths were made. A selection of souvenirs including Poppy Factory china was also available to purchase from the shop at the end of the tour.

The temperatures have been rising, so our Curiosity Shoppers group has been busy exploring. On Thursday, March 16th, they discovered Greenwich Market and its plethora of opportunities. Although not every stall was in full swing, there was still plenty to give us a full taste of what the market has to offer. Antiques, collectables, arts, crafts, food were all in abundance in the many stalls and shops. With so many to choose from, we were busy all day. After lunch a few members even went on to explore The Cutty Sark, The National Maritime Museum and The Royal Observatory. The day was a big success!

Ok, enough with the past events- here is a



little taste of what we have in store for the next few months.

Every year around this time we organise our biggest fundraiser - Founder's Day Gala. It's always an incredible event and this time it will take place on Friday, April 21st, 7pm – 11pm at the Hippodrome Casino and will be themed "Casino Royale"! There are still a few tickets left - £75 will buy you four drinks (welcome prosecco and three beers/wine or soft drinks), hors d'oeuvres, gaming tournament and live entertainment. In addition, there will be a silent auction to benefit the AWC with plenty of alluring items. The Hippodrome Casino is located above Leicester Square Station. Founder's Day will have a private entrance on Cranbourn Street with a separate coat check and the event itself will be on the second floor in the Matcham theatre. The attire for the evening is Bond themed (anything from suits/cocktail dresses to black tie, it's up to you!).

Have you ever wanted to experience a traditional British pub quiz, but didn't think you would know any of the answers? Well, this is your chance! Our fabulous quizmaster, Adam from AdVenture Quizzes, will be creating a truly special quiz just for us, so no need to study up on premier league soccer or 1000 years of British history. And it's not just a bunch of trivia - some of the challenges are visual, musical, and even edible! He will also put your puzzle-solving skills to the test and literally keep you guessing. What quirky questions will he come up with this time? Win or lose, you are guaranteed to have fun! On Saturday, May 13th join us in the private room in the back of the charming Queen's Head pub. We will compete in teams of 4-6 people, with multiple opportunities to win prizes. Partners and guests are welcome, and food and drink will be available for purchase at the pub. This is a popular event, so sign up early!

There are many ways to get involved with volunteering projects. Do you enjoy reading to children? Several AWC members are already volunteering at Doorstep Library and we will love it if more members join us.

At the Soup Kitchen the AWC volunteers help prepare and serve food, coffee & tea, as well



as pass out clothes to homeless and marginally homed, elderly, and poor individuals. AWC's volunteers work under the direction of the Kitchen Manager for food prep and serving, and with a church employee in handing out clothing and toiletries from the Clothes Closet. On April 24th or May 8th, team up with other ladies and feel great by the end of the day.

Whether you just moved to London or you have been here for years, we all share anxieties of being away from our families, friends, and home comforts. This is why every Wednesday morning at 10am you are invited to join us for a weekly meditation practice to calm the mind, melt away anxieties, cultivate mindfulness and create joy. We are practicing Tantric and Kundalini meditation, which is not all about sitting still. You will be moving, singing, dancing, doing breath work, etc. to clear the mind. It is led by our own Heather Berse, who has received Yoga Alliance advanced certifications in Yogic Lifestyle & Awareness, and Meditation. She has studied yoga for over 500 hours with master teacher Kia Miller and is an insured meditation teacher.

On Thursday, May 11th please join our Garden Group for a tour of the Garden Museum. We will be among the first visitors to be offered a private tour of the newly reopened museum. It was established in 1977 to rescue from demolition the abandoned ancient church of St Mary's. Located on the south bank of the Thames next to Lambeth Palace and opposite Tate Britain, the church is the burial place of John Tradescant (c1570 – 1638), the first great gardener and plant-hunter in British history. His magnificent and enigmatic tomb is the centrepiece of a knot garden planted with the



flowers which grew in his London garden four centuries ago. Through its 5,000 acquisitions and donated gifts, the collection has become the country's single best record of how gardens have changed over the centuries.

Royal Ascot Final Race Day on Saturday, June 24th is the pinnacle race event of the year! Join us on the final day of racing at Royal Ascot for horses and a party! This is a weekend event, so feel free to bring your husband/partner/friends/ etc. And don't forget your hat! And in case you have one that you wore before to a different event- you are welcome to join us for a pre-Ascot hat Swap Party on Wednesday, May 17th- there will be hats, ladies, champagne and all!

If some of this sounds like fun to you, then we have some perfect opportunities coming up for you to learn more about the club and make some new friends.

Join us for a "New Member Wine and Cheese Party" on April 26th, from 7:30 pm till 8:30 pm. No need to explain this event! It's a great way to meet new friends, current members and do a little socialising! Come and learn more about the Club and London and mellow out with a glass of wine. It is open to everyone and please RSVP – we hate it when we run out of wine! It's at the AWC Office on 68 Old Brompton Road, SW7 3LQ.

If evenings don't work, then come along on May 15th at 10am for a "New Member Coffee". It is, just what it says, a coffee for women who are thinking about joining and want to know a little bit more about the Club. It's a great way to meet members or make a new friend. It's in this safe environment that you can ask all those silly questions we all have about being new and living in a new country. The coffee morning is open to everyone, but please RSVP so we have enough coffee and pastries! It's very casual and at the AWC Office on 68 Old Brompton Road, SW7 3LQ.

Each month we host a meeting with a special guest speaker to provide members with an opportunity to learn something new! We also use the time to talk about AWC club news and upcoming events, and of course, it is always fun to see and meet other women in a social environment. Our next meeting is on May 23rd, from 10:00 am till 12:00 pm. It is at the Marriott Kensington Hotel, 147c Cromwell Rd, Kensington, London SW5 0TH. For more information and to RSVP please email awc@awclondon.org

awclondon.org or call 020 7589 8292.

For more information about these events and to RSVP, or for more information about the Club in general, come by the AWC office at 68 Old Brompton Road, SW7 3LQ or call and talk to Lauren, our Office Manager, on 020 7589 8292, or check out the website at www.awclondon.org or email the office awc@awclondon.org. No matter how you look at it the AWC is a great resource and a wonderful way to make some new friendships! Start something new this winter!

AWBS

We kicked off 2017 with General Meetings at the beautiful Wentworth Club and the historic Great Fosters Hotel. We were graced with the presence of author and HRH Princess Michael of Kent. We were charmed by guest speaker Martine McCutcheon, charismatic actress and singer, known globally for the movie, "Love Actually." Our March meeting was held at the award winning Pinewood Studios, home of the 007 James Bond franchise, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Harry Potter films and many more. Our guest speaker Dr. David Hamilton, PhD spoke about how kindness is the 'secret ingredient' to healthy relationships and why kindness creates a domino effect.

During the first quarter, our members helped the community by donating food, art supplies, and gardening supplies to local charities which help children and people in need. In April, AWBS

will coordinate with 14 other FAWCO member clubs in our region for the FAWCO Target Project on Education fundraiser. The purpose is to support the empowerment of women and girls through knowledge and skills. We rolled out a members benefit programme, which offers discounts from a preferred list of businesses.

Members kept busy with many fun and exciting activities. We kept ourselves energised by going on country walks, playing tennis, practicing yoga and pilates, and meditating. We explored London neighbourhoods with iconic walking tours, toured historic castles and properties, and enjoyed cosy pot luck luncheons. We took cooking classes, found our spark, learned to draw, played mahjong, and discussed books over coffee. We went back in time and learned about the complex history of England. We also studied art history and its famous artists. We closed out winter with adventure by exploring Norway (Norway in a Nutshell) and travelling to Riga, Latvia.

Now Spring is here, flowers are blooming, and the excitement continues. Members have a bountiful of activities to participate in. Our annual Hats and Handbags Spring Luncheon is planned in May at the beautiful Beaumont Estate. We close the AWBS year in time for summer by honouring and thanking our wonderful members with a delicious appreciation luncheon at the fabulous Piccolino.

Visit www.awbs.org.uk

