



Members Newsletter

February 2021

A Message from the Chair

Welcome to the first issue of our new style newsletter. I know we are all looking forward to a time when we can resume our normal meetings and getting together. Whilst having safety as a priority, I am hopeful that this may happen by September. Meantime, roll on Spring with its joys of new growth and life which come with the new season, regardless of lockdown or the weather, and are to be celebrated.

Kathy Platt

Contents

Message from the Chair	p1
Zoom Groups	p1
New Zoom Group	p2
AGM Report	p2
Maureen Stephenson	p3
Covid scam warning	p4
Hobbies and Interests	p5
Spotlight on a Group	p6
Tom's Tales	p6
Maureen's Memories	p7
No Longer With Us	p7
Pastures New	p7
Committee Members	p7
Alnwick u3a website	p8
End piece	p8

Zoom Groups

It's a sad time just now as we can't meet up with our u3a friends. Faces that we are used to seeing every month, listen to our speaker and share a cuppa with. Some of our groups, because of their nature, such as walking, discussion, languages, dancing and painting to mention a few, are on hold until we can meet up again in person. However, we are very lucky in Alnwick to have groups which are managing to run using Zoom. Some u3as in our region are running with only a couple of groups and some have even had to cancel altogether. You can join in with our Zoom meetings. The group leaders' contact details are in the Yellow Book, and if you have misplaced it you can contact me at groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com. Alnwick u3a groups still running using Zoom, and with the capacity to have more members, are:

Archaeology	Herbal	Poetry 1 and 2
Architecture	History	Popular Classical Music
Art Appreciation	Philosophy	Science (as of 26 February)

There is also a scheme running to enable you to temporarily join groups in other u3as until this pandemic is over. If you would like to see what's available, have a look at the Northumberland Regional Website. You can find a link on our Alnwick u3a website.

Anne McMillan, Group Coordinator

A New Alnwick u3a Zoom Group

The Science Group has been dormant since February last year. With the agreement of Group leader Stanley Trafford, Trevor Robinson has offered to temporarily take over during the period before we can resume physical meetings, by presenting via Zoom, as some other Groups have been doing (as described by Anne McMillan on page 1).

He will kick it off on Friday 26th February (the usual 4th Friday of the month), starting at 2pm with a presentation on Exoplanets, and invitations will go out to existing Group members before the meeting. Anyone else who like to take part should contact Trevor (his email address is included in Pat's recent circular about Committee and Group contact details).

At the time of writing, the programme of events up to May is:

26 February	Exoplanets – Trevor Robinson
26 March	A real-time virtual tour of Kielder Observatory
23 April	Biological Explanations of Criminal Behaviour – Cathy Robinson
28 May	The Moons of Jupiter and Saturn – John Godfrey

REPORT ON ALNWICK u3a AGM held on Zoom on 21st January 2021

The Chair welcomed the 43 people attending especially new members who had joined during lockdown.

Apologies and postal votes were received from 27 members.

Trevor Robinson and Tom Burroughs were appointed as 'Tellers'.

The Minutes of last AGM in October 2019 were accepted unanimously as a true record.

Resolution 1: The Treasurer explained that under Resolution 1 there were two amendments needed to the constitution to allow for on-line AGMs and online General meetings to take place in future. Proposed by M Stephenson. Seconded by B Wood and accepted unanimously.

Outgoing Chair's Report: Committee members and Group Leaders were thanked for their hard work. All members were praised and thanked for being willing to use new technology and other means to maintain the lifeline that is Alnwick u3a, during these exceptional times. Resumption of face-to-face meetings is eagerly anticipated.

Financial Report: George explained why an increase in membership fee to £24 will be required in September (smaller membership/same hall rental). After a couple of queries and praise for the good value for money that is Alnwick u3a, Ed Cartner proposed the new rate, Judy Williams seconded. Accepted unanimously. Bryan Ellis was appointed as Examiner and will examine our accounts at the end of our financial year.

Committee: All members of the committee were prepared to stand again except Maureen Stephenson who wished to stand down after more than 20 years service. The remaining members of the committee stood unopposed and were all re-elected. Sheila Abercrombie proposed. Tricia Macdonald seconded. All were accepted unanimously

Any other business: Kathy (incoming Chair) said that bouquets had been sent to Meryl (outgoing Chair) and Maureen in thanks for their work. Two acknowledgements of Maureen's contributions to Alnwick u3a were read out – see article below. Kathy also reported on the National EGM, which was held in December, mentioning the need to adapt to different circumstances such as holding virtual AGMs, the need to promote and expand u3as. Members were told that, in future, all would be welcome to include articles and information in our local newsletter which was to be re-vamped. Maureen thanked the committee for holding Alnwick u3a together during this Covid crisis.

Date of next AGM: 21st October 2021

Maureen Stephenson - The new Honorary President of Alnwick u3a

I remember John Lloyd telling me about being contacted by Maureen when he was on the Trust Executive. She told him she thought a u3a would go down well in Morpeth and wanted to arrange a meeting. On the day, Brian turned up. It turned out she was still working and was enquiring on his behalf!

She was part of the Development Committee with Joyce McKay when they set up many u3as together. Maureen also played a huge part in the Alnwick u3a entry to RITA competition set up by Jim Edwardson at the Centre for Ageing and Vitality and they were one of the winners.

When I first joined in with regional matters in the early 2000s, Maureen and Brian had become lynch pins of the Committee. Eventually Maureen took over as Treasurer and presented immaculate accounts. In those days we used to set the budget for the Regional Trustee. The Committee would work out how many events we were going to hold

and who we were going to invite to give support for our ideas- say an event for Group Leaders, with a National office volunteer representative. Maureen would calculate in great detail and make what turned out to be fantastically accurate estimates of costs, venues, travel, stationery etc.

Fortunately, we don't have that responsibility now, but I remember her quiet, insistent persuasion gently knocking away our resistance. Region has benefitted tremendously from her organisational skills – colour-coded rooms and lists of who should be in them during a Big Event showcasing the different local u3as is just one example of many which springs to mind. She was a tower of calm and sensible strength which is exactly what you need in a u3a! Long may she continue to be part of us. Thank you, Maureen.

Mo Brown – Chair, Northumbria Region u3a

Maureen was very active in Regional u3a before she became one of the founder members of Alnwick u3a. In her quiet, laid back way she had the idea in 2000 that retired people in Alnwick might benefit from joining an organisation that had been spreading throughout the UK from France. Maureen may be relaxed and unassuming, but she can also be dogged when it comes to bringing an idea to fruition.

So luckily for all of us here now, and the members who cannot be here today, Alnwick u3a began from its small beginnings with a few people in the year 2000, to having a membership of over 200 at its peak. As one of the other founder members said "If Maureen hadn't started it, would anybody else have got around to it? Fortunately, Maureen was always very keen". Another member there at the beginning said, "Maureen has always been there to give advice and understanding and if there was something she didn't know, she'd take time to find out for you".

It is because of her passionate belief in the u3a Organisation that, during the last 20 years, Maureen has been a mainstay in Alnwick u3a. This enthusiasm has been shown over the years by her desire to start and lead several interest groups – as diverse as French, Computer Studies, German, and Line Dancing – to give talks at the Monthly Meetings; to get several projects off the ground - such as creating the book 'Growing up in WW2' - and winning a prize for one of the projects. Also, either in the position of Chair of Alnwick u3a or as Secretary, Maureen has helped to steer the committee in the right direction regarding what can or cannot be done - and it's not true that we've only asked her to be Honorary President because we don't know how we'll manage without her!

The Committee, therefore, is delighted to be able to say that Maureen has accepted the position of Honorary President of Alnwick u3a.

Kathy Platt
Chair Alnwick u3a

WARNING - COVID SCAMS/VACCINE FRAUD

Pat Ashton recently circulated information about covid/vaccination fraud and scams. Here is a brief reminder:

The NHS will:

NEVER ask for payment. The vaccine is free

NEVER ask for your bank details

NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine

NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport

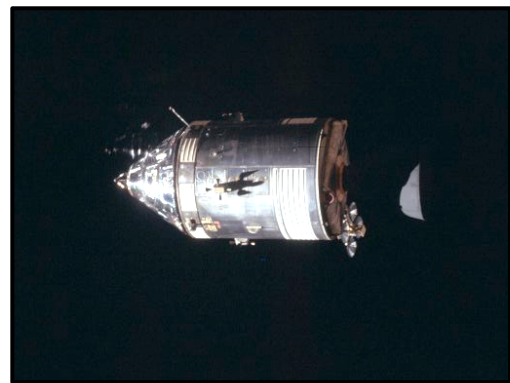
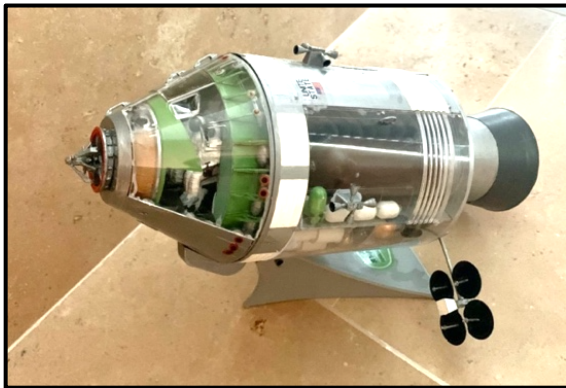
Hobbies and Interests

We are hoping this will be a regular item for the Newsletter, where u3a members can tell us all about their hobbies and interests. If anyone would like to write something for a future Newsletter, please do contact us at Newsletter.Alnwick.U3A@gmail.com. The first contribution is from Trevor Robinson...

My interests include spaceflight and astrophysics. I became interested in spaceflight because of the US/Soviet

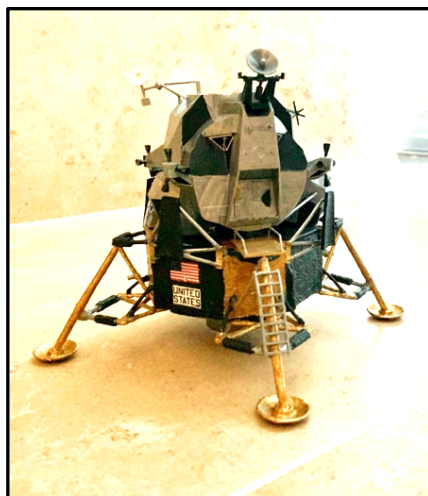
space race in the 60s and 70s, and in astrophysics because I took a course in it at University. The particular hobby I want to highlight here is making models of spacecraft and rockets. Over the past year I have made several and a few are featured here.

First off, below left is an Apollo Command and Service Module. Alongside it is a photo of Apollo 14 (50 years ago this month!).



Courtesy NASA

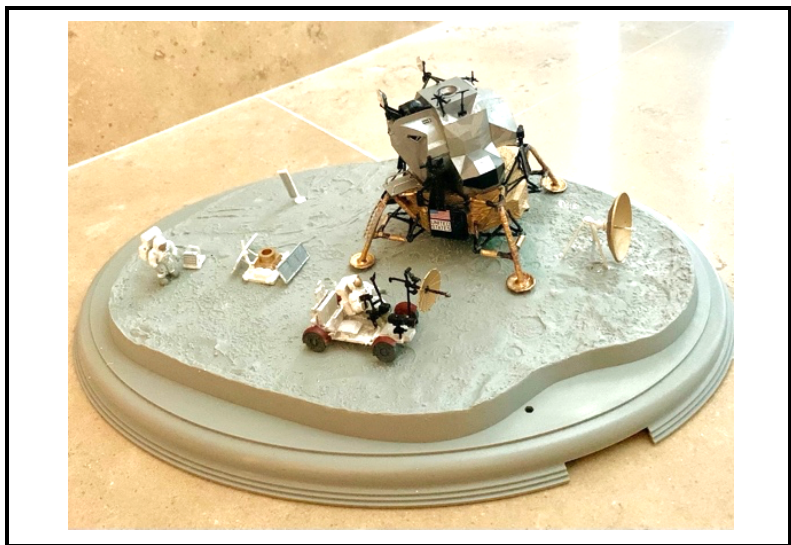
My Lunar Module model is below on the left. On the right is *Orion*, from the Apollo 16 mission.



Courtesy NASA

Finally, the model opposite is a scene on the Moon's surface, with the Lunar Module, some surface experiments, two astronauts, and a Lunar Roving Vehicle.

I have made other models, including a Saturn V rocket and a Space Shuttle, but there is not enough room to show them here!



Spotlight on Groups - Creative Writing

2020 - What a year! Could you summarise it? But in only 11 words? Our Creative Writing group could - and did.

Every other week or so since early April last year we have 'met' by email or telephone and have exchanged written work in genres ranging from thrillers to musings on works of art; from poetry to scenes from our life stories. Each 'meeting' - there have been 19 as I write - follows our well-established agenda. First - usually on a Monday - I invite 'attendance' by email or phone and give a hint of the theme for that session. On the following Thursday full details of the topic are

emailed/phoned and everybody is invited to create a piece of writing based on that.

The finished works come to me by email/phone and I compile and distribute an anthology within a couple of days. Thus, we share our ideas and writing techniques and also keep our imaginations alive while under confinement.

Joining-in could be easy. My email address is in the 'Yellow Booklet' - drop me a line.

Edward Cartner
Alnwick U3A Creative Writing Group

Alnwick u3a Quiz – a reminder

The Zoom Christmas Quiz was so successful that Kathy has agreed to organise another Quiz on Thursday 18 Feb. at 2 pm (our normal monthly meeting date). There will be a small prize!

Tom's Tales

A new priest was visiting the homes of his parishioners, but at one house, though it was obvious someone was at home, there was no answer. So he took out a card, and wrote "Revelation 3.20" on the back of it and put it through the letterbox.

The next Sunday he found that his card had been returned with the cryptic message: "Genesis 3.10". Checking his Bible, he broke into gales of laughter.

Revelation 3.20 begins, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"

Genesis 3.10 reads: "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked".

Thanks to Tom Burroughs for this

Maureen's Memories

From small beginnings...

6 people phoned in response to my letter in the Gazette in July 2000, asking anyone interested in forming a U3A in Alnwick to contact me. At a subsequent meeting in August, 21 of us decided to start Alnwick U3A and formed the steering committee necessary to open a bank account, in order to receive the start-up grant of £75 from U3A National Office. At that meeting, we also asked people what particular interests they had and whether they would be prepared to share those interests with others. There were a staggering forty-four responses.

We held a public meeting in October, to which we invited members of existing U3As in the region, so that they could tell us about their U3As and generally offer advice and support. We displayed the

possible activities on big sheets of paper around the room and asked people to sign up if they were interested. These formed the basis for activity groups. We wrote a lot of letters and newsletters in those early days, keeping people informed of developments.

Our first monthly meeting was in November, when one of our founder members, Lance Beacham, gave a slide show presentation on Flowers and Places. The year ended in December with a Christmas party, when we had wine and mince pies and a quiz and found that we had a number of very talented members, who provided the entertainment. By then we had just over 50 members.

Maureen Stephenson

No Longer With Us

Sadly, the following Alnwick u3a members have passed away during the past year:

Jean Brigstock, Shirley Bingham, Molly Cooper, Valerie West, Brenda Broxup and Barbara Nutt.

Pastures New

One of Alnwick u3a's Founder Members, Anne Bagley, has recently moved to Hexham for the next phase of her life and to be nearer to her daughter. We are sad to see Anne leave Alnwick, but we are grateful that, with boundless energy, she helped to start our local organisation in the year 2000 and continued to offer help throughout subsequent years. We send Anne our best wishes for her new life in Hexham.

Alnwick u3a Committee 2021

Maureen Stephenson	Honorary President
Kathy Platt	Chair
Anne McMillan	Vice Chair and Groups Coordinator
Meryl McConnell	Secretary
George Ellames	Treasurer
Pat Ashton	Membership Secretary
Trevor Robinson	Newsletter
Doris Hinshaw	Social Secretary
Julia Grieveson	Social Secretary
Tom Burroughs	Committee Member
John Godfrey (co-opted)	Website Coordinator

THE ALNWICK U3A WEBSITE – A Reminder about Groups

The Alnwick U3A website is there for the use of both existing members and prospective members looking to see what our U3A is up to.

Attending groups is one of the main reasons for joining and participating in U3As. It's important to remember that EACH GROUP HAS ITS OWN PAGE on the website. 'Group Leaders/Coordinators' provide updates as to the activities or programme of their groups so it's always worthwhile checking what these are.....important if you are interested in joining any group or, if you are already in a group, but may have mislaid information provided direct to you by the Group Leaders.

MANY GROUPS ARE NOW USING ZOOM (see Anne's update on page 1) so check out the website for the Group's details, as you might now find that you could be interested in joining a group that previously you thought you didn't have the time to join!! **Click on (or paste the following link into your address bar) to go direct to the Alnwick U3A Website:** <https://u3asites.org.uk/alnwick/home>

John Godfrey, Website Coordinator, February 2021

Feedback & contributions are very welcome!

Please send any comments on this newsletter, suggestions for improvement and contributions for future editions to:

Newsletter.Alnwick.U3A@gmail.com

The next newsletter will be published at Easter: contributions deadline is 29th March.

End Piece

Lockdown

What to do when things are flat?
Could practise yoga on the mat.
Maybe a jigsaw on the table,
Compose a symphony if I were able.

Perhaps some cleaning.
But it has little meaning.
Don't go out because of the weather.
Getting near the end of my tether.

The situation will improve one day
When we get back to the U3A.

Jen Armstrong

Haiku

*A kestrel quavers
music to the morning
moon
while the earth hums
frost*

Mary Atkinson