



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

U3A

NEWSLETTER No 326

JANUARY 2021

Covid – 19 edition 10



2021 A New Dawn?

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Hello everyone.

Did you know that since the shortest day on December 21st it is only now that sunrise in the mornings is getting earlier? This why it still seems so dark and gloomy when we wake up. The afternoons have been getting brighter however, and we have an extra 25 minutes of daylight since December– all due to the physics of the motion of the earth around the sun.

We have another Zoom presentation scheduled for the 22nd, entitled “an Armchair View of London”. We hope you will find this interesting and the invitation to the meeting can be found later in the Newsletter, on Page 5.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The committee decided that due to the exceptional circumstances that we had in the year 2020, and that very few activities that actually went ahead, we would reconsider the fees for renewal in 2021. The year starts on March 1st 2021 as you will be aware and renewal will be due as from 1st February.

It was decided that considering the fee we have to pay to the Third Age Trust, we would reduce the fee for existing members to £5 per person for the year 2021.

You will be aware that the cost of postage is now quite a significant sum and we cannot send out renewal forms by post to everybody. We also accept that there will be no meetings or get togethers before this date, so please help us by downloading a form that hopefully will be appearing on the website shortly, or send me a request via e-mail to membershipu3a18@gmail.com and I will return one to you. If you do not have access to a printer please ask a friend or relative if they can download one for you.

Failing that please phone me on 07960 564707 and I will do my best to get one to you, but please remember that if one is posted to you and then your membership card is posted to you, we have spent 2/5ths of your fee.

Here's hoping for a much improved 2021 Keep safe and keep Healthy

FROM THE THIRD AGE TRUST

Following the government announcement of a new national lockdown, Sam Mauger (CEO of u3a) and Ian McCannah (Chair of Third Age Trust) have recorded a message for u3a members.

This is available on Youtube using this link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcMYk2nqMks&feature=youtu.be>

It is followed by a short video showing the activities of some u3as during lockdown.

- There is also a series of keep fit sessions with Mr Motivator especially recorded for u3a and tailored for the correct age group! This is the link to week 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fMqIbXCbMY> “Mr Motivator fitness with U3A”

- And a series of weekly Mindfulness sessions. This is the link to week 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8MDuaojO8M> “U3A Mindfulness”

SECRETARY’S NEWS

Well, 2020 was a VERY “different” year wasn’t it? I hope you are all keeping safe and well and that the New Year will be a much happier one.

I would hazard a guess that you are all hoping and praying that, sometime after the latest Lockdown, 2021 will prove to be the turning point in combatting the virus and normality will begin to return and we can resume our monthly meetings and group activities.

Although it may appear that not a lot is happening at the moment, your Committee are still meeting monthly to keep things ticking over and to bring general information to all of you as members. Indeed a lot of you have already been entertained by joining in our Virtual Talks on Zoom by the great Tony Harris who spoke in the guise of Sir Winston Churchill in November and, in December, made us all chuckle with his stories of the history of Pantomime and presented himself as a very convincing Dame! Along with this he also regaled us with some anecdotes from his own acting career. These talks, organised so well by our Speaker’s Secretary Joyce, are a very welcome hour or two’s distraction. The next Talk is on 22nd January. See the information in this Newsletter. Give it a go! Zoom is very easy to use and is a very good way to keep everyone in touch and to continue your Group activities.

Now, after such a fulsome report on the merit of Zoom Talks and meetings, your Committee would like to understand how many of our members have access to either Personal Computers (PC’s), iPads, iPhones, Android Mobile Phones etc. and whether you would be interested in swelling the numbers joining us for further talks, meetings, Interest Group meetings and, especially, the U3A’s Annual General Meeting on 26th March 2021. Please take part in the questionnaire which you will find elsewhere in this Newsletter.(Page 4)

As I said last month, no organisation can run successfully without an active membership and good administration. According to the U3A Constitution, Committee members may only be in post for 5 years and there are some important posts on our own Committee that are still vacant. A U3A is not

allowed to run without there being a Chair, a Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Our Chairman, Alan, is due to hand over his post in 2022. We have a new Treasurer and Secretary (me) but our Website Manager is due to retire from his position as well. We would, therefore, be very happy to hear from volunteers to fill the following posts:-

Vice-Chair
Publicity Secretary
Website Manager (see advertisement in this Newsletter Page 6)

Please think seriously about taking up one of these posts, you will enjoy it. It is far from onerous, you will have great backup and you will be helping this brilliant U3A Branch to continue.

NOTICE OF AGM

Friday, March 26th 2021 at 2.30pm via Zoom

With this newsletter you will receive the documents relating to this U3A'S AGM.

- Formal Notification of the AGM
- Agenda
- Nomination form for the election of Committee members
- Minutes of AGM October 2020

The Treasurer's Report will be circulated in the near future

ZOOM QUESTIONNAIRE

It would be very much appreciated if you could advise the Secretary by e-mail whether you are able and happy to use Zoom (with a bit of tuition if required) to join our Monthly Meetings, Group Meetings, Talks etc. Please answer the following questions and send an e-mail to:-

fletchu3a@yahoo.com

Your Name: _____

Do you have access to a PC, iPad, Tablet or iPhone?	Y/N
Do you use Zoom already?	Y/N
If you had a short tuition session, would you like to use Zoom?	Y/N
Are you interested in joining in Monthly Zoom Entertainment/Talks/Meetings?	Y/N
If you are not confident in using Zoom, would you like to learn?	Y/N
If you are a member of a U3A Interest Group do you already use Zoom?	Y/N
	(Name of Group)

PLEASE SEND YOUR REPLIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY

On November 27th we welcomed Tony Harris via Zoom who entertained us as Winston Churchill, with his signature top hat, glass of whisky and cigar. This was an interactive presentation talking about his road to leadership in politics, including Prime Minister through the war time, the famous V for victory sign, his time as Chancellor after the war, and his close relationship with the queen, including standing on the balcony at Buckingham Palace on V.E. Day.

December 18th saw Tony return via Zoom in the role of a Pantomime Dame. In true spirit of the season the audience dressed festively and Tony popped up in full make up, wig and costume. He talked about the history of panto, from Shakespeare's time through to the drag artists of the twentieth century. Tony shared quite humorous memories of his time as an extra, his flamboyant acting style and stage work alongside big names such as Sean Connery. Overall a most enjoyable interactive presentation.

JANUARY "New Style Monthly Meeting" on ZOOM

An Armchair Tour of London



Our next speaker is Peter Guide presenting An Armchair Tour of London, with an opportunity for Q&A at the end.

Please join us on January 22, 2021 at 2:30pm

To join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8700044872pwd=QXZDVTFqdkRmWkd0NWppOFhxN0lvUT09>

Meeting ID: 870 004 4872

Passcode: BBU3A

ACCESSIBILITY SECRETARY

Happy and Healthy New Year to you all.

I am hoping this latest lockdown will be the last and we soon have the opportunity to be vaccinated. The whole situation certainly isn't proving easy for anybody. Christmas came and went but I am just relieved no one close to me has had to be hospitalised or even worse. I am just feeling thankful for the basic things in life.

I am a great lover of the Christmas fairy lights, they always make me happy and I have one string in the dining room that aren't coming down until this is all over, they start my day off well.

I have to admit I didn't zoom the U3A Pantomime, however, having heard very positive reviews, I wish I had. So I am definitely going to log in for the next meeting talk.

My gardening group is meeting via Zoom later today and we are finding out about garden designers. Again it is making me make tentative plans to visit more gardens come the summer. We will not be going anywhere abroad for a while, our confidence needs to get stronger, but UK visits are a definite possibility, and may hopefully help UK businesses recover.

Keep safe and well.

WEBSITE MANAGER

NEW MANAGER REQUIRED

My 5 years in the role of Website Manger comes to an end at our AGM in March this year and therefore a replacement will be required.

I thought it might be appropriate to bring this to everyone's attention now as being a Website Manger might appear to be a very daunting task. In reality it is not. When I took over 5 years ago, I wasn't too sure what to expect as my knowledge of PC related work was, in my opinion, very basic. Word, Excel, Emails just about summed it up. I then discovered that maintaining/updating the site was in fact straight forward. The information sheets contained within the site are very comprehensive and my predecessor considerably helped me in the early days so I never felt alone. I will happily provide similar support to my successor as well as shadow him/her for the first few months until they are fully comfortable in the role.

So, if anyone has thoughts/desires to take on the role please contact me as I think that it would be quite beneficial to be familiar with the role in advance of the AGM.

JAZZ APPRECIATION GROUP

History of Jazz in 16 Recordings (Part 2)

Here are the final 8 recordings I've chosen as part 2 of my history of jazz:-

1). Charlie Parker...Koko..1945

In the early 1940's a group of young black musicians, embittered by the appropriation of their 'music' by white musicians and excluded from participating in the popular Swing Era big bands, gathered together informally to explore and develop the harmonic and rhythmic changes that came to be known as **Bebop**. The leading figure was the alto saxophonist, Charlie Parker, a player of astonishing technical ability and virtuosity who influenced virtually every jazz musician who followed.

Koko is from the white heat of the bebop revolution and captures Parker at his creative peak. It is based on the tune **Cherokee** and is one of the examples that simply stunned other musicians with his incredible virtuosity and astonishing flow of invention at a breakneck speed.

2). Art Blakey...Moanin'...1958

The drummer and bandleader Art Blakey was one of the leading figures of the era that followed on from bebop, which came to be known as the Hard Bop style. This incorporated influences from rhythm and blues and gospel music, and was extensively documented by the iconic Blue Note record label. Art Blakey led a small group called the Jazz Messengers and over many years the changing personnel included a host of the best new talent around

3). Gerry Mulligan...Bernie's Tune...1952

Meanwhile on the West coast of the USA there arose a school devoted to the cool, controlled manner that embodied elements from European music. Many of the players lived in California and earned their living playing in the lucrative Hollywood and TV studios. The genre became very popular and the Gerry Mulligan quartet was a typical example. It was an unusual group in that it was piano-less and included the young trumpeter, Chet Baker who with his lyrical playing and matinee idol looks ensured their popularity

4). Dave Brubeck.....Take 5...1959

Another group originating on the west coast was the Dave Brubeck quartet who also went on to become hugely popular throughout the world. In 1959 they produced an album **Time Out** which explored different time signatures, which are now commonplace in jazz. **Take 5** is a composition by the saxophonist in the group, Paul Desmond; an immediately catchy tune in 5/4 time (try tapping your foot to this). It was a best seller and is ubiquitous on TV as background music.

5). Charles Mingus.. Better Git in in your Soul

Charles Mingus was a double bass player, composer, and band leader. He had a fiery, temperamental character with an explosive temper and his compositions have a direct emotional appeal as in this number which expresses the atmosphere of a gospel meeting

6). Miles Davis... So What

This is from the album **Kind of Blue** which became the biggest selling jazz album ever. The music introduced a new approach in that the tunes utilised musical modes replacing the conventional, complex chord-based harmonies. They give the music a wonderful, unhurried, spacious quality. The tenor saxophonist on this recording was John Coltrane who would go on to become the most influential jazz musician post 1960.

7). Bill Evans.....My Foolish Heart

The most influential pianist in jazz since the pianists of the bebop era was a conservatoire trained white pianist Bill Evans. He brought with him a beautiful touch and a harmonic palette reflecting the influence of the classical impressionist composers, such as Debussy. His music has an introspective quality illustrated by his beautiful reading of this ballad.

8). Stan Getz... Desafinado

In the early 60's jazz musicians returned from Brazil enthused by the new Bossa Nova music being written by some outstanding young Brazilian composers such as Antonio Carlos Jobim. In 1964 the saxophonist Stan Getz together with the guitarist Charlie Byrd recorded an album called ***Jazz Samba***. It included a host of wonderful Bossa Nova tunes such as ***Desafinado*** which married the lilting bossa tunes to the lyrical, cool sound of Stan Getz's saxophone, and became an instant best seller.

Control + Click on the link below will take you to the playlist on Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6xfV3t1F7BQ7d3FEzj8GDt?si=lovRAKR5SvOgq55iDlxjA>

Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon on Wednesday, February 17th 2021**

I am always happy to receive your report or comments at any time before the cut-off date.

Please send all items in editable format to **bbu3newsletter@gmail.com**

If you are sending photos please send them separately in JPG format.

Only send photos that you have taken yourself. We cannot use photos or pictures that have been downloaded from the internet, unless copyright free.

All contributions will be acknowledged.

Current and past newsletters can be viewed on our website <https://u3asites.org.uk/bb>

Please note that, in the interests of security, all details of individuals (name, address, phone number) have been redacted from the on-line versions.

Editor