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Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

I hope that you, like me, are enjoying the return to u3a events after the festive break. Thank you to the coordinators, tutors, leaders, and courses team for providing such a rich programme of activities. We are always on the look-out for new topics so do please contact the courses team if you have a subject or activity that you could lead.

As we approach our AGM in April; please do not be daunted by taking on a committee role as it is important that members take an active part in running Canterbury u3a. There are lots of potential benefits to being a committee member. These include working with others to achieve a shared goal; developing new skills; and a sense of achievement (things that perhaps we miss if we are no longer working full time). Please contact me for an invitation to come and observe a committee meeting and see whether this could be a mutual opportunity.

I look forward to seeing you all on Wednesday 14 February, at St Mary Bredin, for our next monthly meeting. The afternoon is billed as 'Mysteries and Conundrums: Performance Poetry' presented by Andy Smith. We start promptly at 2.00 p.m.

Robin Terry



Important Dates

Friday 2 February: Joining Session: 10.30 to 12 at St. Peter's Methodist Church, St. Peter's Street Canterbury. If you know of anyone who would like to join our u3a this is an ideal opportunity to bring them along. If you are a new member and would like to meet some of us please come along for a chat and a cuppa.

Saturday 3 February: Film at the Gulbenkian. See messages from Robin Terry, chair, or members who do not have the internet contact Robin for information on 01304 842517.

Wednesday 14 February: Monthly Meeting at St Mary Bredin, Nunnery Fields, 2 pm prompt. 'Mysteries and Conundrums: Performance Poetry', Speaker: Andy Smith



Good-bye and Hello

At the beginning of the year we said goodbye to Lindy McDonnell, who for five long years has been our venues coordinator. Like all others engaged in u3a tasks, Lindy has done this work as a volunteer and we are very grateful to her for her time, efficiency and good humour, even when the going has been tough.—Thank you Lindy!

Just as miraculously, Heather Harrow has agreed to take on the task of venues coordinator and we are grateful for her willingness to become involved in this. She has been 'sitting by Lindy' to get familiar with the task but please remember there is much to absorb and think about, and treat her gently. Thank you Heather!



Why U3A?

Why indeed! Several years ago a grandchild asked me, 'Granny, why do people of your age choose to study when you don't have to?' My reply was that I enjoy learning new subjects or increasing my knowledge of subjects I am familiar with; I enjoy sharing ideas; I enjoy teaching students who show interest and enthusiasm; I make new friends. All in all, my involvement makes my life so much richer.

Then a wealthy lady of leisure, and close friend of my daughter, asked me a similar question and I gave her a similar answer. Years later, I learned that she had gone home and considered her lifestyle and found it shallow compared with mine. So she got her act together, and enrolled at a university to do a degree in psychology, after which she took up a career in helping young people with difficulties. Her life has been transformed and she is so much happier.

So *that* is why U3A!

Jane Ichajapanich



Update on the research group

The Canterbury and District u3a research group has been active since 2014, with 21 of our projects currently listed on the national u3a research database. Our aim is to learn research skills, and projects have largely been in partnership with our local universities, though recently we have also conducted independent work. Research topics have ranged across history (e.g. Canterbury Christmas Riots and Swing Riots for the Citizen: 800 project), the natural world (e.g. snail conservation for CCCU and bumblebee conservation for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust) and health and wellbeing, which forms the largest subject area (principally related to psychology and arts and health).

On 1st December the group presented our most recent project, which explored the potential benefits to health and wellbeing of engaging in arts and creative activities by u3a members during lockdown. We circulated an online, previously validated, questionnaire to individuals on the Canterbury u3a database, seeking information on activities which members had been involved in during lockdown and any related benefits. We also conducted a series of focus group discussions allowing participants to talk about their experience in their own words. From 173 responses to the questionnaire and 11 focus group transcripts we were able to identify a range of artistic creative activities which individuals had engaged in, with a variety of related health and wellbeing benefits being expressed.

Findings will hopefully add to a growing body of knowledge in this area and support the value of related u3a courses being provided. In addition, it has the potential to provide health and social care professionals, including social prescribers, with evidence to support care choices.

The full report is available on <https://u3asites.org.uk/files/c/canterbury/docs/research-u3a-rpt-final-7.8.23.pdf> or [here](#).

For further information please contact our Research Group organisers:

Ann Skingley and Jo Walker



Summer Programme

The above will once again be advertised through the News Bulletin on a monthly basis.

If you have a contribution please contact the relevant subject coordinator or Ursula at usteiger@u3acanterbury.org.uk or 01227 711 536 for further information and advice. We will be starting to feature summer activities and courses in the Bulletin from March onwards.

As usual summer courses and activities will be free of charge and bookings will be made via the tutor or a booking volunteer.

Please remember to submit your information to the bulletin in good time, always by 22nd of the month and let us know early if a venue is required. There are already courses and activities queuing to be published and we look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks,

The Courses Team

Messages from the Courses Team

We would like remind members that there are some Courses from the Autumn Programme that have not yet started and still have places available. They are:

Battle of Britain

Introduction to Sanskrit (3). A repeat, initially for members on the waiting list, now for anyone

Henry James: *The Turn of the Screw* (1898)

Music from Smetana to Zemlinsky

Astrophotography: a stumbling exploration

Mediterranean Diet for Our Age; history, science, myths and truth

What's so special about Earth?

What's your Religion? An Introduction to Kent's Faith Communities

If you are interested in booking a place, please do so in the usual way on line or contact Angela Tippett.



Interest Sharing Groups are different from courses and rely on members taking a part to share the leadership and administration of the group. Interest Sharing Groups are listed below and on our website. New groups will be advertised in our News Bulletin.

Interest Sharing Groups are open to all current Canterbury and District u3a members. Initially members wanting to join a group can contact the co-ordinator (details below) who will put them in touch with the group leader. After that contact will be with the group leader who maintains a register and shares the information with the co-ordinator.

Interest Sharing Groups are self-funding. If a hall has to be hired this is arranged through the venues co-ordinator with the cost being met by group members.

Groups and their leaders decide on the frequency, days and times of their meetings but, if they vary, the group must ensure that this is made public via the monthly News Bulletin and our website.

The following Interest Groups are currently active:

Bridge (2 groups)

Folk Music

Knit and Natter

Allotment Group

Green Fingers Group

For more information contact Chris Plant (Coordinator of Shared Interest Groups)



Green Fingers Shared Interest Group 2024

This group continues to meet on the Third Monday in the months March to October 2–4 p.m. with occasional changes of date.

This year we are going to be classed as a Shared Interest Group and as such shall not be in the main Programme to be booked as a course. Please contact Chris Cayley for further information.



Important message to all walks enthusiasts

As we already informed you, after carrying out this task for a number of years Pam Godden is no longer coordinating the walks offered by members. We are grateful to her and wish her well.

We now need someone to step up and take on the coordination of walks. Contact Ursula Steiger on usteiger@u3acanterbury.org.uk or 01227 711 536 in the first place. In the meantime, anyone wishing to lead a walk in March, please get in touch with Ursula by the 22nd February so that we can advertise it to all members in the March News Bulletin.

Many thanks for your cooperation.



'Bread and Roses', the English Folk Song Interest Group

In January we sang protest songs and talked about the struggle for equal pay for women working in the garment industry in America. The message of the song Bread and Roses, here sung by Judy Collins (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKEr5U8ERgc>)([here](#)) was that it's not enough to give us sufficient income to buy food, but we also have a right to equal pay, good working conditions and access to the arts, music, theatre and more.

The Digger's Song (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DD_v-5q5xwA)([here](#)) dates from relatively short-lived protests in the mid seventeenth century when waste and common land across Surrey, Gloucestershire and Kent was reclaimed for growing vegetables. The message was that land should be held in common ownership so that the rural poor had equal right to grow food for their own use. Powerful landowners made sure the protesters were denounced and punished. But the idea hasn't gone away, has it? What about today's Guerrilla Gardeners, or the struggle for access to the countryside?

Joan Baez was one of people who sang our peace song: Last Night I had the Strangest Dream (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lw6xYXSLFs>)([here](#)). Written in the 1950s, it has been sung on many important occasions and I am sure we can all agree with its clear message about dreaming of a time when we can put an end to war.

A good time was had by all! We meet once a month and the next meeting is Thursday 15 February 2.30 to 4 p.m. in the Community Room at Asda in Sturry Road. New members very welcome. Contact Chris Plant in the first instance.



Trips: Exciting News

This year we are planning outings in spring and summer and around Christmas. We will try and keep the coach journey times down and include meals where possible. We will also try to keep costs down if we can, but trips are likely to be £5–£10 more expensive this year as everyone's prices have soared.

Our first announcement is for the last trip of the year. A trip up to London to see the Christmas lights, experience choral evensong in St Paul's and go shopping round Covent Garden. Oh, and a lunch too. Full details will be announced later in the year when we will start taking bookings, but please save the date: Sunday 1st December.

It is a way ahead but if you are interested, please email us at outings@u3acanterbury.org.uk subject 'London Lights' or drop a note into the U3A Office so we can get a sense of the level of interest.

The first trip of the year will also be to London but this time the East side. We will be going to Walthamstow to see the William Morris Gallery, then having a short drive around Epping Forest, with a DIY lunch in Epping, and boat trip down the river Lea with a cream tea included. Please save the date: Wednesday 29 May. We will be sending out full details with the March newsletter.

We want to thank all the people who have given us suggestions for trips: we have received well over 50 ideas and it has helped us gauge the range of people's interests and limits. If anyone does want to organise trips themselves—either for U3a members or others—we are happy to share tips on how we do it.

Rose and Tim



Book Review: *Termination Shock: 'A Techno Thriller about Climate Change'* by Neal Stephenson.

It's quite a long time since I read any science fiction because I thought it was mainly aimed at children. I was wrong! A friend recommended one of the relatively new novels based in a future when the planet is in the grip of climate change.

The opening scene of *Termination Shock* shows a plane crashing in Texas because of giant pigs and crocodiles on the runway. The passengers are saved by Rufus, who makes his living shooting the feral pigs running wild across the country, eating everything and everyone who gets in their way. The queen of the Netherlands and her entourage have come for an introduction to the big idea of an American entrepreneur called T. R. McHooligan—an interesting choice of name! Everyone needs air-conditioned earth suits to go out in the unrelenting sun of overheated Texas, in a world where people have continued to fill the air with carbon dioxide. TR's experiment is to shoot sulphur into the upper atmosphere to cool the climate by creating a shield between the earth and the sun.

The main characters are well drawn with details of their mixed heritage, back stories and family relationships.

I found the storyline gripping, though I did trip over some incomprehensible American slang from time to time. I guarantee that by the last few pages you will be desperate to find out how it ends.

Helen Howard



Quiz: Cryptic historical figures

- 1 I can make you better and get this scientist (5)
- 2 A new type of solder for EU architect (6)
- 3 Could be on a roof or in No 10 (8)
- 4 A King and his crown make a great statesman (6)
- 5 A ruler follows a bird and almost an instrument maker for this American (6,6,4)
- 6 In South America it's unfashionable to put wallpaper on walls (5)
- 7 He evolved from being inward looking (6)
- 8 Troubled lives find this singer (5)
- 9 Flowery French actor (8)
- 10 Rolling so fast he didn't gather any British currency (8,4)

Chris Anspack



Answers to January's Quiz

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Franco | 2. Spain | 3. Eisenhower |
| 4. Einstein | 5. Custer | 6. Admiral |
| 7. Secretary General of the UN | 8. Patton: Lust for Glory | 9. Medical |
| 10. Buster Keaton | 11. 16 | 12. January 2025 |
| 13. General Tom Thumb | 14. Alan Turing | 15. Church of England |
| 16. Farthing | 17. General Zia | 18. Robert E. Lee |
| 19. General Motors | 20. Ulysses Grant | |

Mike Fletcher



Thank you for all your contributions, from a couple of sentences up to 250 words.
Keep them coming, as this is your News Bulletin.
Send them to Ursula Steiger: ursulae@btinternet.com.

