



Crawley u3a

Lockdown News 1/21

January 2021

Dear members,

Another year, another lockdown. We were very fortunate to be able to celebrate Christmas with our older son who lives locally. The grandsons (6 and 4) brought delight to the day and it was their sister's first Christmas. But it was business as usual with our younger son who lives in Australia, as along with many in the country, we enjoyed a virtual celebration.

What a difference a year makes. This time last year we were heading off for a month down under in Australia and New Zealand (and thank goodness we did!). On our return we enjoyed several outings and walks and other physical group meetings. Now we are living under lockdown restrictions and having to continue our activities virtually. This includes the AGM, see below for more details.

We know that some of our members have already received the vaccine and as the months progress and more people are vaccinated we should be able to start thinking about some return of normality. Let's hope it's not too long to wait.

As we enter another period of Lockdown please bear our **Member Support Team** in mind. If you, or someone who know in the u3a, is struggling for whatever reason, please contact the team. 07555 021879.

AGM

Our AGM will be held by Zoom on Friday 12th February at 2.30pm. The paperwork for this meeting will be issued shortly. You will need to book a place on the Zoom call; more details to follow. Once the business of the day is concluded we can all enjoy a talk about Ecuador, delivered by our membership secretary Ann.

Once again we are putting out a plea for volunteers to take on the Events Coordinator role, booking speakers for our monthly meetings and organising coffee mornings and other local events. Please consider taking on at least part of this role and contact one of the Committee for more information. Thank you.

Christmas Party

Our December meeting provided a Christmas celebration with a difference, the main one being we had to provide our own tea and cakes, and, of course, we were unable to enjoy the usual live performances from our different groups. However, with many festive jumpers and hats on display, (and some fancy dress!), we started to party with a difference, beginning with George's off the cuff poetry recital.

We were then delighted to introduce our guest speaker Judy Theobald, a radio presenter and writer. She began by showing us how to make a festive hat from old Christmas cards then kept us laughing for nearly an hour with her tales of ex husbands, Christmases past and many self penned amusing poems.

Bob Weddell treated us to a seasonal tale of a turkey at Christmas before the afternoon concluded with a musical quiz provided by Ann and Stewart Sole. A big thanks to everyone who contributed.

Walkers extra.

Towards the end of last year bubbles of 6 walkers enjoyed many local walks around the area including a Pound Hill to Rowfant circular, Handcross, the Worth Way and a very muddy 7 mile circular walk from Tilgate to Maidenbower. Other walks were in the planning but of course have had to be put on hold for the next few months. If anyone knows of a good walk please send me the details so I can share with our members.

Jigsaws

Like many others we have been enjoying jigsaw puzzles during lockdown. A few members have formed an informal puzzle swapping group. I'm keen to know if other members would also be interested in jigsaw swaps. I'm suggesting members send me a photo of their puzzle and their contact details and I will produce a list of available puzzles. All requests to borrow a puzzle must be made to the owner of the puzzle. Members must be prepared to share their contact details and to make their own arrangements to collect the puzzle.

If you would like to take part in this venture, even if you don't have any puzzles to offer, please email me at newsletter@crawleyu3a.org.uk.

Quiz

Heteronyms are words which are spelt the same, but pronounced differently, with different meanings e.g. August can mean a month or imposing

1. A numeral / a local anaesthetic
2. Arid region / to abandon
3. A type of phone / a town in Alabama
4. Very close / to suggest
5. A metal / to guide
6. A door or gate / to fill with delight
7. A unit of time / very small
8. A scooter / moved or acted aimlessly
9. Garbage / to decline
10. An undertaking /to cast an image
11. To start again / a C.V
12. A weather feature / to turn or coil

Message from Sam Mauger CEO The Third Age Trust

“I don’t know about you but last night when I heard all the announcements about another lockdown it felt like we had another difficult time ahead of us just when we were getting very excited about 2021.

However I spent some time thinking about this and I thought “No, that’s not what u3a is all about”. u3a is all about making the best of things, it’s all about being together, remembering our friends and doing things that we like to do. No matter what this lockdown brings, no matter what this time brings, I know that together we’re going to make that difference that we make every day.

I really want to hear from you about what you are doing. I want to share your ideas with me, the Trust and with each other.

I want us to get through this and I want us to make u3a as great as it can possibly be in 2021. I want us to gather in all of those members across the movement who might need us all together right now. As we come out of this lockdown period we are going to have a u3a movement that is as strong, connected and that has moved on to the great place it is supposed to be.”

Ian McCannah
Chair of the u3a Trust

“I’m sure many of you were as deflated as I was to know that we are now in a third national lockdown. However, there will be a lot of activity taking place over the next few weeks to ensure that when this lockdown is lifted and we can return to u3a activity as normal, there will be many initiatives available to u3a committees to consider about how to relaunch their u3a.

Obviously one of the main concerns will be to retain existing members. Also there will be an emphasis on attracting new members. Unfortunately a large number of people in their 50s and 60s, through no fault of their own, will find themselves unemployed. They may well be looking for opportunities within their local communities to become involved in activities, u3a may be the answer to them during a difficult time.

The trust at the moment is working on various ideas that u3as may wish to consider about how to relaunch their u3a. When this time of lockdown does come to an end we will be able to bring back u3as to activity and to allow us all to enjoy membership in the way that we have done in the past.

Thank you very much and I’m wishing you all the best for 2021 and the revival of u3a activity hopefully in the spring but certainly as soon as possible. Thank you. “

Heteronym answers

- 1.Number 2. Desert
- 3.Mobile 4.Intimate
- 5.Lead 6.Entrance
- 7.Minute 8.Moped
9. Refuse 10. Project
- 11.Resume 12. Wind

Phew what a scorcher
A tale of the Great Fire of London
By Gerry Law, History Group

In the early hours of Sunday 2 September 1666 a fire broke out in a bakery in Pudding Lane in the City of London. By the time it was extinguished on Thursday 6 September some 13,200 houses had been lost along with 87 parish churches, St Paul's Cathedral and almost all of the buildings belonging to the Corporation. It has been estimated that 70,000 of the 80,000 inhabitants were made homeless.

Initially blame for the fire was placed on Alfred King, an apprentice baker who burnt the cakes he was preparing for the Feast of St Duncan the Biscuit, patron saint of Hob Nobs, but he was soon exonerated. Alfred went on to enjoy a successful career as Master of the Rolls.

The fire spread eastward and had almost reached the Tower of London which stored a vast amount of gunpowder, etc. If that had gone up it would have added a whole new definition to the Big Bang Theory. However, the wind direction changed and the flames headed westward.

The crowded streets, with houses made of timber and thatch, meant that the fire spread very rapidly from building to building. Civic order collapsed with England's current enemies, the French and Dutch, being blamed and subjected to lynching and assault. A Catholic plot was also mooted.

Attempts at putting out the fire in its early stages, with neighbours of the bakery dousing the flames, failed. The parish constables decided that the best course of action would be to demolish adjoining buildings to create firebreaks, but the affected householders protested. The Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Bloodworth, arrived on the scene but he refused permission for the demolition on the grounds that most of the properties were rented and the owners could not be traced.

Bloodworth is generally considered to have been a weak man who was appointed to the office because he was a "yes man" rather than for having qualities of leadership. When faced with the situation he panicked and made the remark. "a woman could piss it out". He refused the offer of soldiers to assist which was made by the King's brother, James, Duke of York. Bloodworth then returned home and

went to bed. Samuel Pepys reported after the event, on 7 September, that “people do all the world cry out of the simplicity (meaning stupidity) of my Lord Mayor”.

There was a brewery on the South Bank in Southwark, where the wine emporium known as Vinopolis now stands. It was owned by the Thrale family and the site included an ale-house. Pepys and his chums spent time sitting at a window position quaffing their ale and watching the burning embers from St Paul’s fall into the river.

Shortly after the fire was put out another possible suspect was identified. He was a man of Scottish/French ancestry named Donal d’Trumpe. It was said that he was miffed at not being elected Lord Mayor and he claimed electoral fraud even though the decision against him was unanimous. The Corporation even went to the extent of publicly stating that they would find the spawn of Beelzebub to be a better Lord Mayor than d’Trumpe. Initially it was believed that he had perished in the fire but it was later proven that he had emigrated to America.

The exact number of victims has never been determined – only 6 deaths were verified, one of whom was a house servant at the bakery who was too frightened to climb from the upstairs window of the bakery and into the property next door, which is what the family did. The intensity of the conflagration was so intense that it is probable that many victims were cremated. The figures do not include those who were done to death by locals accusing them of the action, and no account was made for the many who fled their homes only to die of starvation or exposure in the areas outside of London. In reality the total may well have run into the hundreds or even thousands.

The aftermath of the fire saw an advantage to rebuild the City and this task fell, primarily, to Sir Christopher Wren. Here too there was some confusion – some people claiming that the man who rebuilt London was, in fact, Sir Christopher Robin. The confusion probably arose because the stonemason who was to oversee the reconstruction of St Paul’s claimed in his bid for the contract that he could do St Paul’s and a neighbouring building thus “killing 2 birds with 1 stone”. Sir Christopher Robin had actually died just before the start of the fire, cause of death having been given as “he went down with a lice bite”. This later got corrupted to “Christopher Robin went down with Alice”.

E safety

Members may find the following guide useful. (distributed to Civil Service Pensioners).

Beat the fraudsters: due to the pandemic, there's been an increase in scams and attempted fraud. Read our 'cut out and keep' top tips on how you can stay one step ahead of the fraudsters.

How to spot and avoid COVID-19 fraud



Using trusted information from the following agencies, we've produced this guide to help you spot and avoid COVID-19 fraud:

- The Financial Conduct Authority
- The National Cyber Security Centre
- The National Crime Agency

Financial scams

The **Financial Conduct Authority** advises to watch out for:

- Emails, texts, cold calls, or WhatsApp messages about insurance policies, pension transfers, or high-return and low risk investment opportunities, including investments in crypto assets.
- Using the uncertainty around stock markets, advice to invest or transfer your existing investments into non-standard investments.
- Messages stating that your bank is in trouble due to the coronavirus crisis and pushing you to transfer your money to a new bank with alternative banking details.
- 'Loan fee fraud' asking you to hand over an upfront fee – usually between £25 and £450 – when applying for a loan or credit that you won't receive.
- 'Good cause' scams – where investment is sought for the production of sanitiser, manufacture of personal protection equipment (PPE) or new drugs to treat coronavirus.

How to protect yourself:

- Reject offers that come out of the blue.
- Don't click links or open emails from senders you don't already know.
- Never give out personal details (bank details, address, existing insurance/pensions/investment details).

Email scams

Cyber criminals are sending 'phishing' emails that try and trick users into clicking on a bad link that could download malware onto your computer, or steal your passwords.

The **National Cyber Security Centre** advises to watch out for:

- Emails claiming to be from someone in authority (doctor, solicitor, government department).
- Emails telling you that you have a limited time to respond (like in 24 hours or immediately).
- Emails that ask you to provide personal information. Your bank (or any other official source) should never ask you to supply personal information from an email. If you have any doubts about a message call them directly or visit their website.

How to protect yourself:

- Don't click links in emails like the ones above.
- For genuine information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19), only use trusted websites such as GOV.UK, Public Health England, or the NHS:
www.gov.uk/coronavirus
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19
- If you've already clicked, don't panic: open your antivirus software and run a full scan.
- If you've been tricked into providing your password, you should change your passwords on all your other accounts.

March Monthly Meeting

Friday 12th March with speaker Mary Smith telling us about A schoolgirls war. Mary was headteacher of a secondary school until 2014 and has recently produced a book entitled "A Schoolgirl's War". This features the exquisite and highly original art work of an art teacher during WW2, who set out to document in paint and pencil the lives of school children as the war unfolded. There is not a similar collection of paintings anywhere. She has recorded in paint the disruption to school life - the air-raids, the doodlebug attacks, the lessons in underground shelters - which were experienced by school children across the South-East of England.

TAT courses

The Third Age Trust are running a number of Zoom talks and events. For more details please go to: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Garden Talks – weekly with Marion Dale at 2pm 12/1 – 9/2.

Winter School. There are now a variety of courses available from the Third Age Trust. They are presented over 4 or 6 week, so please ensure you can commit to regular attendance.

Creative Writing weekly from Tuesday 5/1 to Weds 3/2

An Introduction to Philosophy weekly from Thursday 7/1 to 4/2.

Law For Fun weekly from Monday 11/1 to 1/2.

Latin Remembered weekly from Wednesday 13/1 to 17/2.

Recorder Ensemble weekly from Monday 18/1 to 15/2.

Winter and Spring in English Poetry weekly from Tuesday 19/1 to 23/2.

Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners weekly from Monday 25/1 to 26/2

New talks and courses appear regularly on the Third Age online events page of their website.

And finally.....

And finally, for those of you missing Out and About trips and Seasonal Outings, here's an anecdote submitted by one of our members.

Last year I went on a mystery trip on a coach with other members of the u3a. As part of the trip they ran a "guess the destination" competition to which we all paid £10 before we set off. The coach driver won it and I turned to the couple next to me and said I didn't think that that was particularly fair. "Your blooming right it's not" was their response. "He's won it for the last 8 years in a row!!"

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Keep well and hope to see you all in person in the not too distant future.

Jan Morris
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