

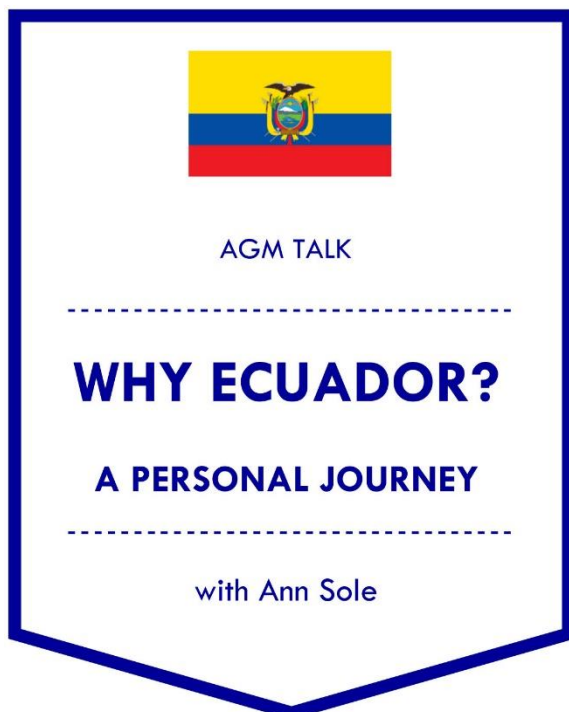
Dear members,

Welcome to the February edition of the Crawley u3a newsletter. I know many of you subscribe to the national u3a newsletter but for those who don't, I have included some detail from the latest edition.

The vaccine rollout continues apace and we're all looking forward to the day when restrictions are eased and we can resume some of our former activities. Watch this space.....

AGM

A reminder that our AGM will be held by Zoom on Friday 12th February at 2.30pm. You will need to register for this event and the link will be sent out a few days before the meeting. It is also possible for members without internet access to join by phone. If you know such a member please suggest this method to them. Ann Sole will then entertain us with a talk about Ecuador.



For one day only!

A tour around Ecuador, featuring:
history, geography, flowers, birds,
art appreciation, crafts, food, music,
languages, aromatherapy, geology,
mountains, volcanos...

All these group topics in one hour

And, of course, introducing:
Daisy and Buttercup!

From the National u3a

Chair of the Third Age Trust, Ian McCannah

"The COVID -19 vaccine roll out is great news and u3a Committees will now be turning their attention to the return of face-to-face meetings as soon as guidelines permit.

In parallel with this local activity, the new year sees several unique initiatives aimed at raising the external profile of the movement. The High Street Project is well under way with over 500 members researching the changing face of their local high streets. The results of this research will be of particular interest to the local and national media given the impact of the pandemic on our shopping centres.

In a different national vein, the Trust is in discussions with the Slow Ways Project about how a u3a walking group can contribute to mapping footpaths in their vicinity.

After postponement last year, there will definitely be a national u3a Day on June 2nd. Whether virtually or physically, u3a committees will be able to access funding and a variety of ideas on how to promote the value of u3a membership at a local level.

It is hoped that all these events will contribute to celebrating our 40th Anniversary in 2022 when, hopefully, COVID-19 is a matter of historical record. u3a members have been amazing at supporting each other over the last year.

u3a members have still been sending incredible photos in to our **u3a Eye** challenge. Have a look at the gallery now and get submitting.

<https://u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes/u3a-eye>

u3a members have been sharing their experiences and stories of living in the **Battle of Britain and the Blitz**. Read them on our learning pages and submit your own. <https://u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes/battle-of-britain>

To help raise our profile the Third Age Trust are recruiting PR Advisers across the regions. This is a role you can shape and develop locally working with the u3as in your area, the other PR Advisors across the country and your Regional Trustee. If you would like to find out more about the role, please get in touch with Margaret Fiddes margaret.fiddes@u3a.org.uk

To register to receive the national newsletter by email please visit:
<https://u3a.org.uk/newsletter>

U3a National Day

The first National u3a Day will be on Wednesday 2nd June when u3as around the country will hold events to showcase and promote our great organisation. Details are in the early stages but the suggested idea is to plan for both an actual event and a virtual one.

We need lots of help for this and are initially asking for volunteers to join a small working party to decide how best to promote our u3a. Later we will ask for input from groups and ask for volunteers to help on the day.

Please email to let me know if you can help: newsletter@crawleyu3a.org.uk

All things banned and censored

Once again, our committee, and especially Jean Elmer, came up with just the thing to lighten our mood in these days of gloom and doom. Our January talk, by Christine and Peter Padwick, was, as Jean put it, more of a performance than a talk, and what a lovely and talented couple they are. And they use their talents to raise money for charities; Cancer Research in this case.

Most of us are old enough to remember the olden days when swear words were, like a “glimpse of stocking” “looked on as something shocking”. It’s hard to believe now that George Bernard Shaw caused outrage by having Eliza Doolittle say “not bloody likely” in Pygmalion. And as Philip Larkin tells us, “sexual intercourse began in 1963 ... between the end of the “Chatterley” ban and the Beatles first LP”. I was a young library assistant when “Lady Chatterley’s lover” was freed from ban, in 1960, and we were solemnly warned that the public would be asking us for copies for loan, and not to be shocked or judgmental. Romantic encounters in films in earlier days were chaste kisses, with at least one of the actors’ legs firmly on the

floor in bedroom scenes, and it was 1968 before theatre censorship was abolished and we were queuing up to see productions such as “Hair” and “Oh! Calcutta” and a naked Diana Rigg in “Heloise and Abelard”. Come on! Not just me.

My parents had an LP of Max Miller, and I remember them and their friends falling about with laughter at his double-entendres, rather like those of Marie Lloyd in earlier music hall days. How innocent they seem now. If anything, we would frown at some of their sexist and racist attitudes, rather than the innuendos.

My scribbled notes do not begin to cover even a small part of Christine and Peter’s entertaining talk, from the first film of a belly dancer in 1897, what-the-butler-saw slot machines, through the BBC censorship under John Reith, the film classifications of John Trevelyan, dear old Mary Whitehouse, and taking in such unlikely bed-fellows as Workers’ Play-time, Round the Horne, George Formby, Eartha Kitt, the Beatles and Cliff Richard. Even Very Lynn got a mention, as Winston Churchill thought she was “too slushy”.

After the talk I found myself reflecting on past attitudes and comparing them with today’s, particularly when I watched a television drama a couple of days later which had F and C words in almost every sentence, to say nothing of explicit sex scenes. Shocking? Rather boring, I thought. Have we changed for the better? I wonder.

Jean Austin Jan 2021

Big Ben and the Elizabeth Tower.

We recently enjoyed a virtual tour of the Elizabeth Tower which was one of the regular broadcasts by Mirthy. These talks are held twice weekly with a free edition on Thursdays and a paid broadcast on other days. See <https://mirthy.co.uk/talks/> for more information .

There is often a misconception that the tower on the Houses of Parliament is called Big Ben whereas the tower is actually the Elizabeth Tower (renamed as part of the Queen’s diamond jubilee) and Big Ben is the name of the largest bell.

The belfry is accessed by a spiral staircase of 334 steps, which we were fortunate enough to visit a few years ago. En route the steps pass the clock faces which are currently under renovation. The clock’s framework is cast iron as were the original hands but the material proved too heavy causing the minute hands to drop so they were replaced with gunmetal. The clock faces are filled with hand blown glass which was replaced in the South face following world war 2 bomb damage and the minute hands are 14 feet long while the hour hands are 9 feet. The colour on the

faces is provided by 23 carat gold leaf which is more resistant to pollution than paint. The metalwork is currently black but will be restored to the original blue during the renovations.

Next on the ascent is the machine room which houses the clock mechanism. They have a very technical way of ensuring the accuracy of the timepiece, using pre decimal pennies to balance the weights.

The belfry houses the bells, 4 for the quarter hours and Big Ben itself. The original bell cracked and was melted down and recast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry (which we were also fortunate to visit a few years ago). Weighing 14 tons it was carried through the streets pulled by 16 horses. It then took a team of 8 men 32 hours to haul it up to the Belfry. It first struck in July 1859 but by the October had developed a further hairline crack. The skirt (bottom) of the bell is 9 inches thick and tests revealed the crack as penetrating 2 or 3 inches. The solution was to drill a hole at the top and bottom of the crack to stop it spreading. The bell was rotated a quarter turn and a lighter weight hammer installed and the bell has worked perfectly since.

During our physical visit to the tower we were in the belfry at 12 noon. Luckily they provided ear plugs as the noise was deafening!

This talk was a great reminder of two lovely day trips to London; hopefully they will resume soon!

Philosophy for Old Age George Carlin on age102.

Do you realise that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about ageing that you think in fractions.

'How old are you?' 'I'm four and a half!' You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead.

'How old are you?' 'I'm gonna be 16!' You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life You become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony. YOU BECOME 21... YESSSS!!!

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're Just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40.... Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50 and your dreams are gone

But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday!

You get into your 80's and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30 ; you REACH bedtime. And it doesn't end there Into the 90s, you start going backwards; 'I Was JUST 92.'

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. 'I'm 100 and a half!' May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay 'them'
 2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
 3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever... Never let the brain idle. 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
 4. Enjoy the simple things.
 5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
 6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person, who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
 7. Surround yourself with what you love , whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge .
 8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
 9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.
 10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.
- AND ALWAYS REMEMBER : Life is not measured by the number of breaths we by the moments that take our breath away.

History of our u3a

We are still working to produce a history of Crawley u3a. If you have information or anecdotes about the early days, please let me know.

newsletter@crawleyu3a.org.uk

And finally.....

I went to the pet shop and asked for 12 bees. The clerk counted out 13 bees and handed them over. "You've given me one too many" I said. "That one is a freebie" was the reply.

The problem with kleptomaniacs is that they always take things literally.

Never trust atoms; they make up everything.

I accidentally rubbed ketchup in my eyes. Now I have Heinzsight.

Why are fat penguins so popular at parties? They know how to break the ice.

My friend called me for help, claiming he had turned into a harp. I raced over there only to find he was a lyre.

At the restaurant:

'Good evening, Sir. Do you have reservations?'

'Well, I'm not too happy about that wallpaper'.

A man came to my door the other day who was just over 3 feet tall. He said he was the metre man.

Mummy an aeroplane has appeared in my bedroom. Did you leave the landing light on again darling?

Thought about opening a specialist garden centre, but I couldn't see a fuchsia in it.

I've taken up speed writing. I can read 'War and Peace' in three seconds. It's only 3 words, but it's a start.

Whatever you do, always give 100% unless you're donating blood.

Jan Morris

Crawley u3a Communications

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